

**MINORITY SEXUALITY IN THE CITY:
THE FEMALE ETHNO-RACIAL IMMIGRANT/REFUGEE EXPERIENCE
WITHIN CANADIAN CULTURE**

by

Priya Sharma

**A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
The University of Manitoba
in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of**

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

**Department of Social Work
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg**

Copyright © 2011 by Priya Sharma

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I would like to acknowledge my parents. From an early age they gave me whatever information and knowledge they had, planting seeds from an early age and giving me the ability to continue examining some of the ideas on which this thesis is based. Mom, you taught me how to advocate for myself and others. Dad, you taught me to love unconditionally, to be compassionate and to always do the right thing. Thank you to both of you for making my brother and me watch the movie “Gandhi” countless times. It is because of my parents that I believe in social justice and without them this thesis would not have been possible. I also wish to extend my gratitude to my extended family: My Buas and Masseys (aunts) – I will never forget your stories and you will live on in my work. I give thanks to all the males with whom I have had relationships in my life – for always wishing me success, allowing dialogue and encouraging me to discuss these very sensitive issues. I would also like to thank my friends - The Quattro Gelato (T, Ro & Nat), whom I hold very dear to my heart. You have been a constant sounding board throughout the years, where we have sorted out much of these issues together. Their love has given me an indescribable sense of belonging and acceptance, which have meant the world, particularly as an adolescent. A special shout-out goes to Neneth. Thank you for being a true friend and my pillar of strength. Here’s to my inspirational role models - the dynamic duo: Lainie and Glen. Without you both I wouldn’t have believed in myself enough to begin and I sure wouldn’t have believed I could finish! I would like to give a huge thank you to my committee for their support, well wishes and encouragement. Last, but not least, I am most indebted to the research participants, who had to recall and tell some very personal and not very pleasant experiences. I recognize that this was not very easy to do since no words in the English language depict or give justice to some of their stories. Thankfully, due to their efforts and research such as this, the English language will continue to evolve to become more inclusive. Their reflections on their experiences are a real testament to the character of each participant since it took enormous effort and strength to verbalize their complex realities. My most sincere gratitude goes out to the participants in this research you are all true sister-friends who have taught me much and it is my honor to share your stories academically through this thesis.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative interpretive analysis was to increase the knowledge base on an under-researched topic and population. The study population was comprised of first- and second-generation Canadian, visible-minority, immigrant/refugee women. Nine women of different visible-minority, ethno-racial backgrounds participated in the study. The interviews were in-depth and conducted one on one. The women reflected on how they created their sexuality as youth into adulthood, based on their experiences of Canadian culture as well as their particular culture of origin. The ingenuity they demonstrated in their successful integration into Canadian society as well as in their current status as adult women and mothers will be explored in the study findings. The recommendations these women offered the next generation, with a hope for a better future for all Canadians, will also be discussed.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction	Page 5
Chapter Two: Literature Review	Page 14
Chapter Three: Methods	Page 45
Chapter Four: Findings	Page 63
Chapter Five: Discussion	Page 103
Chapter Six: Implications for Social Work Policy and Practice	Page 126
Chapter Seven: Conclusion	Page 134
References	Page 143
Appendices	
Appendix A	Page 147
Appendix B	Page 148
Appendix C	Page 149
Appendix D	Page 152
Appendix E	Page 155
Appendix F	Page 157
Appendix G	Page 161
Appendix H	Page 162

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Problem and Personal Significance of the Study

I am researching this study because throughout my life as a second-generation Canadian racialized female I have watched many girls and women from my first and second-generation Canadian community deal with issues and conflicts regarding the integration of their sexuality. As early as elementary school I would often find myself put into situations by teachers in which I was designated the ambassador to help welcome newcomer children at school. Often these newcomer students looked to me for support regarding values around sexuality and integration. As a peer supporter, I helped them feel more welcome by drawing upon my own experiences with integration as well as the ways I had seen my parents integrate their values into Canadian life. Conflicts around sexuality often happened on an everyday basis and there was no one to understand such inquiries. I did not know it then, but due to these experiences my long-term interest in and commitment to helping racialized women with their sexuality was already developing. I wanted them to have socially just lives in which they could make safe and empowered choices regarding their sexuality. As a result of these very early experiences and, furthermore, thanks to the freedoms and options made available by a university curriculum, I decided to explore these ideas in depth. However, more and more I started realizing that only very limited academic research had been conducted on issues of sexuality with this significant group of Canadian society. At the same time I also found myself working for the Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba (IWAM),

coordinating a program called Challenges and Choices, where first and second-generation Canadian immigrant youth went out into the community to talk about what it was like to grow up bi-culturally. My work with immigrant youth led me to coordinate a research program that was being implemented at the Sexuality Education Research Centre (SERC), where ethno-racial minority or racialized youth were being engaged in community-based research on intergenerational communication, family relationships and sexuality. It was evident through the feedback of that research project that there were concerns about the choices immigrant youth made, such as the entrenched lying they utilized to help survive their bi-culturality. Service providers and the mainstream community often thought that this type of behaviour would be detrimental to future life choices and the quality of their relationships. These concerns motivated my individual research questions. I decided to ask women to retrospectively look back on the choices of their youth and talk about the later consequences, while also making recommendations, since some participants were mothers and in some cases were living in multi-ethnic and multi-religious families. These recommendations would be pertinent not only to new waves of immigrants coming to Canada but also for third-generation racialized Canadians.

Research Questions

There are four main research questions that this study aims to explore and answer.

They are listed below:

- How do immigrant women's cultures of origin influence their sexuality after spending their youth in Canada?
- How do immigrant women's cultures of origin affect their long-term, continual process of integration into Canadian society?
- What societal factors support or do not support immigrant women around issues of sexuality?
- How can school educators and service providers help support immigrant girls and women around issues of sexuality?

Methodological Framework

To best answer these research questions the methodological framework used for this study was grounded in Phenomenology as well as Intersectionality Theory. Phenomenology allowed me to research qualitatively the experiences of an under-researched population such as the participants in this study. To best research the sexuality-related "lived experience" or "lived phenomenon" of a minority population, where not much is known about their realities, a phenomenological qualitative methodological approach was beneficial. Phenomenology was particularly helpful for uncovering the context; it facilitated answering not just how, but also why the women of this research study chose to define their sexuality in the ways they did.

As Creswell (1998) states, phenomenological analysis “proceeds through the methodology of reduction, the analysis of specific statements and themes, and a search for all possible meanings” (p 52). This complemented the other foundation of my research approach - Intersectionality methodology - because of its ability the search for many meanings. Once I collected this data, Intersectionality Theory allowed me to help tell the stories of participants using a specific legitimate paradigm. I explain my approach more fully in the Data Analysis section of the Methods chapter.

Methodology

The research employed semi-structured interviews with visible minority immigrant refugee women who retrospectively looked back on their adolescence, when they merged cultural values around sexuality while living in Canada. Participants in this study heard about this research in casual conversation or by “word of mouth”, which facilitated snowball sampling. Monette, Sullivan and DeJong (2002) define snowball sampling as “a type of non probability sampling characterized by a few cases of the type we wish to study leading to more cases, which in turn, lead to still more cases until a sufficient sample is achieved” (p. 517). All the women spent their adolescence growing up in Canada and had a wealth of experience merging conflicting cultural expectations (between those of Canadian culture and their culture of origin) around sexuality. As these women told their stories they aggregately defined their sexuality for first- and second-generation Canadian women of colour and culture. Participants were assured of their confidentiality and were made aware of services that could support them through any

struggles with sexuality. All the women completed a short anonymous questionnaire (i.e., ethno-racial background, age, education, etc.), which was later followed by a semi-structured interview. The women were able to follow along during the interview with their very own copy of the interview guide. Interviews were tape recorded and were later transcribed and analyzed by the interviewer. Even though many women stated they had never talked about some of these issues, the women were very forthcoming with their stories, which allowed for very rich and extensive data. The data collection used a methodology employing a phenomenological approach. The data collected using this methodology was continually compared to an ongoing literature exploration as well as the previously produced literature review. The employment of a sustained, comparative method of data analysis helped determine codes, continually emerging themes and the final categories.

The following outlines the process used for generating findings from the interview transcripts, in which the data could be continually categorized using the Constant Comparative Method:

1. Read each transcript, using a single word or small phrase to describe findings, setting the stage for potential categories (Phase 1 – Open Coding).
2. Cross-reference each transcript for similar words/phrases for emerging larger themes. Write words/phrases onto small post-it notes to move around or regroup with other themes to assess if other themes emerged (Phase 2 - Axial Coding).

3. Post these phrases under larger, over arching themes (established in Phase 2), determining group commonalities and differences in experiences regarding the phenomenon (Phase 3 - Selective Coding).

As described in the methodological framework, Intersectionality Theory became more of an analytical tool to help describe how these women's experiences resulted from complex identities or realities.

Definition of Terms

The following is a list of terms and their meanings, which will be used consistently throughout the study:

Ethnicity - The term "ethno" or "ethnicity" refers to culture from the outset as a determinant factor in differences between people (Harrison, 1995). However, with culture as the sole reference of ethnicity, this term may overlook the impact of race in the experiences of many people.

Ethno-racial –This term addresses not just the ethnicity of an individual but also includes the aspect of race. Race describes how an individual has been socialized based on how others perceive him or her and how he or she perceives himself or herself (Helms & Talleyrand, 1997). In this study ethno-racial will refer specifically to non-white or racialized individuals. In Canada the government distinguishes these non-white or racialized individuals from the wider population by calling them visible minorities. Government statistics reports as well as government legislative acts (e.g. Employment

Equity) often refer to immigrants/refugees as visible minorities. For example, a Census Report (2001a) by Statistics Canada called, *The changing mosaic*, defines visible minorities in accordance with the Employment Equity Act as “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.”

Culture – In this thesis the concept of culture is referred to many times. To clarify this concept, I have quoted from *Chapter 5 - Theories of Assimilation, Acculturation, Bicultural Socialization, and Ethnic Minority Identity* in the book, *Contemporary Human Behavior Theory - A Critical Perspective for Social Work* by Susan R. Robins, Pranab Chatterjee and Edward R. Canda (2006): put in Bibliography, except for author names and date

“The organized pattern of values, beliefs, and behaviors developed and transmitted over time by a social group. Culture is constructed by groups from their symbolic representations of themselves and their environments and built up into language, codes of conduct, and social institutions. Culture is a quality of all human social groups at all social system levels. Each family develops distinctive patterns of child rearing, norms for communication, and rituals to deal with life events such as birth and death. Similarly, organizations develop styles of decision making, leadership, and regulations for staff and client behaviour. (p.130)

Youth – In Manitoba, laws dictate that individuals are no longer youths when they turn 18 years of age. Therefore services (i.e., CFS - Child and Family Services) do not offer protection or support to those over the age of 18. This definition of youth applies more congruently with the mainstream understanding of youth from an individualistic culture

rather than youth from a more collectivistic culture. Due to these laws and definitions of youth, social work policy and service provision are impacted.

Immigrant/Refugee youth – In this research I use the term “immigrant/refugee youth” to acknowledge the complex socio-cultural dimensions of ethnicity and race faced by minorities other than Aboriginal groups in Canada. As the focus of the study is on the experiences of immigrant/refugee youth within their ethnic groups and families, which are outside the dominant group, and in relation to changes they faced within intercultural contexts, this group of youth will also be referred to as first and second-generation Canadian immigrant/refugee youth. For the purposes of this research, and consistent with the definitions provided by Lorna Jantzen, in a publication of the Association for Canadian Studies, *Canadian Diversity* (2008), “first generation is anyone not born in Canada, second generation is anyone born in Canada with at least one parent not born in Canada” (p. 7). Refugee youth meet these same criteria but arrived in Canada specifically for protection from an unsafe pre-migratory context. As the author goes on to explain, “note that there are some methodological issues surrounding their use...Depending on the purpose of the research endeavour, it is possible to adjust the generational data to deal with these children” (p. 8).

As a consequence, this paper will alternately name the population being studied as either immigrant/refugee, ethno-racial, racialized or visible minority group.

Sexuality – For the purpose of this study, sexuality was understood as a broad topic that included issues dealing with dating, having sex, and conforming to community and family norms. All women in this study were born and identify as female. For the women

in this study, sexuality was socially constructed and for these women it involved personal choices of how, if and with whom they chose to date or marry. The way they chose to define their sexuality will be elaborated on in the Findings chapter.

Organization of the Thesis

Following the introduction, chapter two begins with a literature review on the research that has been documented on this population group. This is followed by Chapter three where the methods used to conduct the research will be explained in further detail, in particular, the process of the research. Next, chapter four will present my research findings, providing details of the participants' stories and using their own words as much as possible. Subsequently, chapter five will outline discussions occurring throughout the analysis. Chapter six will indicate specific implications for policy and practice. Lastly, chapter seven will conclude by examining the project limitations and future expansion on research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Exploring the Concept of a Community Education Program for Female Immigrant/Refugee Youth Sexuality

In 1967, Canada began accepting predominantly non- European immigrants due to changes in immigration policy (Immigration Act in 1967). According to Statistics Canada (2001a), the visible minority population is growing much faster than the total population. A study directed by the Canadian Council of Social Development (2000) examined demographics and lifestyle data for immigrant youth in Canada (ages 15-24). More importantly, this study identifies that, “while this is a fast-growing segment of the population, there is a lack of resources and funds to provide better services for these individuals and their parents” (p. 4).

According to Manitoba Labour and Immigration (2005), approximately 20% of newcomers to Manitoba were under the age of 25 in 2004 (1724 male and 1717 female). In 2002 there were 1056 males and 1000 females under the age of 25 who immigrated to Manitoba (p. 23). This comparison in statistics shows that immigrant/refugee youth are significant and are a constantly increasing part of our population worth researching. Currently, transitional and settlement services and programs for immigrant and refugee youth who reside in Winnipeg are provided by S.E.R.C (Sexuality Education Resource Centre), Women’s Health Clinic, I.W.A.M. (Immigrant Women’s Association of Manitoba, Inc.), I.W.C.S. (Immigrant Women Counselling Services), International Centre, Welcome Place, N.E.E.D.S. (New Comer Employment Education and Development), Mount Carmel Clinic and Y.M.C.A.

Although all of these organizations provide essential services and programs to immigrant youth, unfortunately, no one organization provides a specific service or program to immigrant/refugee female youth regarding sexuality and sexual issues. The purpose of this thesis is to explore the concept of a community education mentorship program for female immigrant/refugee youth that could be provided by one of the aforementioned organizations. Such a program would focus on the issues related to the women's sexuality and the development of their sexual identity.

Literature Search Methods

Peer reviewed journals have been used to gather background information to guide the development of this project. These journals were found in the University of Winnipeg and University of Manitoba libraries using the following databases: EBSCO host, Sociology Index, and Psychology Index. The key words used when searching for information regarding this research topic and question included: Immigrant Youth, Intergenerational Issues and Sexuality, Sexuality and Minority Youth, Cross-Cultural Issues, and Sexuality and Visible Minority Youth. Books were also sought out that documented case studies involving immigrant/refugee youth. For demographic information on immigrant/refugee/visible minority immigrant youth in Canada, I accessed web sites belonging to Statistics Canada, Canadian Heritage, Manitoba Labour and Immigration, and the Metropolis Project.

Limitations

The major limitation of this literature review has been the limited amount of available research on the experiences of visible minorities in Winnipeg and Canada. While immigrant/refugee youth make up a significant portion of the Canadian population in major cities, they are under-represented in academic research.

Age can also be considered to be a limitation to this literature review due to the ambiguous definition of immigrant/refugee youth in relation to culturally diverse concepts of the family cycle and of life stages. Life stages focus on individuals while family cycle focuses on others; as a result, life stages can differ for racialized families; in comparison to mainstream families due to cultural constructs and social inequalities. For example, in North America, family expectations of a teenager may differ significantly from what an immigrant refugee youth experiences. Some of these expectations involve sexuality and sexual issues such as when, who, how and if an individual dates.

Immigration policies and trends.

There is more information about immigration in general than about young immigrants. A new multicultural policy established in 1971 promoted cultural pluralism and discouraged assimilation within Canada (Mount Allison University, p. 6). Changes in immigration policies over the last few decades have resulted in the majority of immigrants to Canada now being non-Europeans. This federal multicultural policy was further re-enforced when Parliament passed the Canadian Multiculturalism Act in 1988. Currently, most new immigrants are from Asia or the Caribbean; Mount Allison University (2005) reports that “today, immigrants and refugees from the developing

world and from other non-European sources outnumber European immigrants by about three to one. As a result, visible minorities have become an increasingly important part of the national fabric” (Multiculturalism in Canada, 2005, p. 5). Since immigrant/refugee children and their families are able to maintain some but not all aspects of their culture of origin (due to Canadian laws and human rights) conflicts can occur. An extreme but relevant example of this would be cultural honour killings brought to Canada based on long standing traditions and cultural beliefs. The reality is that in some newcomers’ pre-immigration cultures, honour killings go unpunished and are even sanctioned in courts under religious context. Although they are not permitted in Canada killings have occurred due to cultural rules around sexuality, where typically the daughters’ behaviour (since women enjoy less leniency) is believed to have brought shame to the family. From a collectivistic perspective this is feasible and children have been killed by members of their own family to save face or restore honour to the family name.

Conflict can also occur between individuals within the same collectivistic household¹ who prefer different codes of cultural conduct when integrating into Canadian society. There is also the presence of not only the dominant culture but other minority cultures, which may in turn influence a collectivistic household within a Canadian society. Within a multicultural society such as the one that exists in Canada cultural expectations and expectations of sexuality remain elusive.

These Canadian trends are reflected in Manitoba. According to Manitoba Labour and Immigration (2005), the majority of Manitoba immigrants between 2002 and 2004

¹ Collectivistic cultures focused more on developing and sustaining a stable, mutually dependent group (Turball, Rothstein- Fish and Greenfield (2000, p. 2)

came from the Philippines. Specifically, 16.53%, 17.88% and 20.59% of Manitoba's immigrants came from the Philippines in 2002, 2003 and 2004 respectively (Manitoba Labour and Immigration, p. 15). In comparison, the other sources of immigrants had significantly lower percentages. For instance, the third-ranked source of immigrants to Manitoba, India, contributed 6.9 % of the immigrants to Manitoba in 2002. According to *Manitoba Immigration Facts 2009* (p. 14), Europe is the second largest source after Asia & Pacific for Manitoba, and the Caribbean is not mentioned at all. (See: http://www2.immigratemanitoba.com/asset_library/en/resources/pdf/manitoba-immigration-facts-report-2009.pdf.) During the next two years, 2003-2004, this figure fluctuated between 5.37% and 7.22% (p. 15). As well, Korea contributed approximately 5% of Manitoba immigrants during the 2002-2004 periods (2002-5.43%, 2003-4.65%, and 2004-5.36%). The remaining notable sources – China, Afghanistan, and Ethiopia – each contributed less than 6% in each of the three years (p. 15).

Winnipeg is home to most of Manitoba's new immigrants. In 2004, almost eighty percent of newcomers to the province of Manitoba settled in Winnipeg (Manitoba Labour and Immigration, p. 11). The question of accuracy should be recognized when considering all data concerning immigrant, refugee or ethno-racial minority groups. For example, large-scale government data collections, such as census reports, have limited accuracy when surveying large populations. This happens particularly in highly transient populations or communities where the official languages of Canada (English/French) may not be well understood because they are additional languages. Also immigrant/refugee people may in fact come from a background of political unrest in their countries of origin and distrust government surveys out of concern for personal safety. In-

depth probing through surveys that are predominantly conducted in English/French with individuals who may not be fluent in English/French can result in questions and responses being misinterpreted or skewed. Finally, the immigrant/refugee population can be considered highly transient in search of available jobs and economic stability. As a result of economic instability, moving can be considered highly likely, thus making long-term studies or current demographic statistics problematic.

Ethno-racial minority youth.

In this research I use the term “immigrant/refugee youth” to acknowledge the complex socio-cultural dimensions of ethnicity and race faced by minorities other than Aboriginal groups in Canada. As the focus of the study is on the experiences of immigrant/refugee youth within their ethnic groups and families, which are outside the dominant group, and in relation to changes faced within intercultural contexts, I define this group of youth as first and second-generation immigrant/refugee Canadians. The term ‘ethno’ or ‘ethnicity’ refers to culture from the outset as a determinant factor in differences between people (Harrison, 1995). However, with culture as the sole reference of ethnicity, this term may overlook the impact of race in the experiences of many people. As race describes how an individual has been socialized based on how others perceive him or her and how he or she perceives himself or herself (Helms & Talleyrand, 1997), I consider the use of “immigrant/refugee youth” as more accurate within the context of this research.

In reviewing the literature about this population, often government statistic reports as well as government legislative acts (e.g. Employment Equity) refer to immigrant/ refugee as visible minority. For example, a Census Report (2001a) by

Statistics Canada called, *The changing mosaic*, defines visible minorities in accordance with the Employment Equity Act as “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.” The report recognizes that the visible minority population is growing much faster than the total population and, if trends remain the same, by 2016 visible minorities will make up as much as one-fifth of Canada’s population (Statistics Canada, 2001a). As a consequence, this paper will interchangeably name the population being studied as either immigrant/refugee, ethno-racial, racialized or visible minority group.

Youth: varying definitions.

Due to negative stereotypes of youth in general, literature has seldom documented and produced an accurate depiction of immigrant/refugee youth. This thesis will help to fill the void in relevant, available information about immigrant/refugee female youth.

Wulff (1995b) states that little research has been done on youth in general (in particular females) and there is also a strong teenage stereotype which exists within our society which identifies “youth as problems, victims and resisters” (p.6). She notes that while youth is often defined as teenagers ranging from 13-19 years old, youth can last over several more years, partly due to prolonged schooling. It is also conceivable that immigrant/refugee youth may in fact take longer than mainstream youth to sort out questions during adolescence because they are not only battling with questions of identity regarding personal identity but also require time to discover and ask questions regarding ethnic or cultural identity. Desai & Subramanian (2003) express that immigrant/refugee “youth are confronted not only with the developmental challenges of adolescence, but

also with adjustment problems because of intercultural conflicts between the values of the host culture and their culture of origin” (p. 130). Moreover, identity formation, particularly during adolescence, is socially constructed and extremely important to consider when examining the interplay or the impact of such issues as skin colour, culture, sexual orientation, or abilities and capacities on immigrant/refugee youth identity within Canada. To fully understand the extent of identity formation, Desai & Subramanian (2003) quote Tatum (1997, p. 19), who defines the procedure as

simultaneous reflections and observations, a process taking place on all levels of mental functioning, by which the individual judges himself (herself) in the light of what he (she) perceives to be the way in which others judge him (her) in comparison to themselves and to a typology significant to them; while he (she) judges their way of judging him (her) in the light of how he perceives himself (herself) in comparison to them and to types that have become relevant to him (her). This process is, luckily, and necessarily, for the most part unconscious except where inner conditions and outer circumstances combine to aggravate a painful, or elated, identity-consciousness. (Desai & Subramanian, 2003, p.128)

Kendall, Murray & Linden (2004) reinforce Wulff’s definition of youth as flexible and varying for different people. However, while formulating a definition of immigrant/refugee youth for the purpose of this thesis, I must be cognizant of the transitory nature of modern society, where shifting social and cultural norms or increased life expectancy constantly push boundaries of who we consider to be “youth” in Canada. Immense disparity can be seen between immigrant/refugee youth and mainstream youth through their specific experiences and expectations of their families (social and cultural

norms). Immigrant/refugee youth mature into adults within the same Canadian mosaic society as mainstream youth but the expectations of their immediate family and culture force them to create a very distinct identity. Family is the basic unit of all society, and usually our first intimate or close relationships are with family members or are within a family context. As a result the contrast between immigrant/refugee youth and mainstream youth can therefore be largely seen between their family expectations, which we will explore further throughout the literature review.

For a very basic example, when a mainstream youth turns eighteen it is highly likely (if not encouraged by parents) for the youth to move out. On the other hand when an immigrant/refugee youth turns eighteen it is likely that this type of independence (moving out) is not valued and would be seen as an act of rebellion or family/cultural desertion. From a mainstream North American perspective youths who live with their parents well into adulthood (or throughout their life) can be seen as highly dependent or even a burden to their family. In comparison, from an immigrant/refugee youth perspective, at the age of eighteen an individual is still seen as a child (a source of spiritual and material livelihood for their family who must uphold a respectable image. In individualistic societies², such as North America, the influence of family is underemphasized in comparison to many collectivistic cultures of origin of the immigrant/refugee youth. In mainstream individualistic culture the predominant message always encourages separation from family, independence and a sense that your individual self and separate relationships beyond the family are the most important considerations.

² Individualistic culture, according to Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch and Greenfield (2000), does “stress self-reliance and personal achievement, collectivistic cultures focus more on developing and sustaining a stable, mutually dependent group. These fundamental values help form notions of people’s rights and responsibilities, what roles they may take within societies, norms of communication, and ideas of how to rear and educate children” (p. 2).

As opposed to many (collectivistic) immigrant/refugee youth cultures of origin the prime value is to preserve harmony among the relationships with the entire family group rather than strike out on one's own. Although in Canada we are multicultural, immigrant/refugee youth mediate a lifestyle between two distinct, extreme ideologies of cultural and social norms. Large amounts of information regarding cultural and social norms, in particular ideals of sexuality, are often passed along in Canadian society through language and images in mass media.

Desai & Subramanian (2003) state in their literature review that South Asian youth report that the media helps establish the dominant mainstream Canadian (individualistic) culture through the portrayal of cultural stereotypes re-enforcing mainstream "language superiority and cultural supremacy" (pp. 141-142).

Scope of immigrant/refugee youth research.

In most North American research about youth, immigrant/refugee youth are under represented and therefore my research will focus on these groups. In some immigrant/refugee youth focused research; they have investigated the experiences of African Continental, African Caribbean and the diverse Asian communities. A literature review by Desai & Subramanian, (2003) which attempts to locate existing studies on South Asian youth in Canada, demonstrates the need for more information on this topic. Although these studies were reported (from an adult perspective) on the needs of South Asians and their families in Canada, the studies (with the exception of one) did not directly report on the concerns and difficulties of the South Asian youth themselves.

Desai & Subramanian (2003) indicate that the majority of Canadian government reports contain statistical/demographical information, and inadequately do not report on qualitative information reflecting the diversity within ethno-racial minority youth. Due to this limited portrayal of immigrant/refugee youth, it can be construed as a form of racism, because there is limited information useful for service providers who are now serving a population with diverse cultural needs.

The one study in the review which did report findings from a youth perspective was conducted by Wadhvani (1999). Wadhvani states that out of one hundred and four youths interviewed, thirty percent had contemplated suicide. Fifty percent of those who contemplated suicide noted that it was due to “family pressures” (i.e., intergenerational differences on matters such as dating or marriage). Eighty percent of those who admitted to having engaged in suicidal thoughts were “always depressed.” Within this same study she reported that sixty percent of all the participants mentioned school as their number one stressor (p. 124).

Immigrant youth demographics.

For demographic information on youth in Winnipeg, the Department of Canadian Heritage (1999) found in 1996 that 59% of the children between the ages of zero to five; 60% of children from ages six to eleven; 60% of youth ages from twelve to eighteen; and 61% of youth from ages nineteen to twenty-four were from ethnic origins other than British, French or Canadian. This same study revealed that 53% of youth (children under twenty-five years of age) were from ethnic origins other than British, French or Canadian. Furthermore, to look back retroactively to the years 1996-2000, the number of

male immigrants (applicants from the Manitoba Nominee program) was consistently higher than female youth (ages zero to twenty-four). What can be concluded from this demographic information is that there is a consistently increasing immigrant youth VM population. Unfortunately, the literature reflects the fact that we generally know very little about issues of integration, identity formation and in particular the often taboo subject of sexuality.

Mental health issues.

Beiser, Hou, Hyman & Tousignant (1998), in their study, *Growing up Canadian – A study of new immigrant children*, examine the issues of poverty and mental health amongst recent immigrant children. Utilizing the same definition of poverty as Lezubski (2004), they further define mental health in relation to poverty as outcome measures. Specifically, the three disorders they identify are: “Conduct disorder, characterized by aggression, either physical or indirect, or a violation of social norms; Hyperactivity, characterized by inattention, impulsiveness and motor activity; and Emotional disorder, characterized by feelings of anxiety and/or depression” (p. 11). According to the authors there is a difference between immigrant children and native-born children concerning the relationship between poverty and mental health. They state that there is no doubt that “familial poverty jeopardizes the mental health of native-born children” (p. 3). However, when they refer to immigrant children, they feel there is no direct correlation between poverty and mental health. Specifically, the authors of this study state, “research among immigrant communities suggest a paradox” (p. 3). Although further research is required

to determine the reason for the paradox it is known there are new immigrants who develop mental health problems resulting from poverty. Thus, the poverty factors found in the native-born population are undeniably present in the new immigrant population. Alleviating the factors stated in this study – family functioning, parental depression, single parent family status, family drinking problems, parenting behaviours and child care by parents – could possibly impact the mental health of children as well as their socioeconomic status. Based on their research findings, they recommend changes to national policy regarding immigration settlement that could mitigate negative impacts on the mental health and poverty status of immigrants/refugees, including youths. They feel that if more assistance (i.e., creative job training programs, equity in job access and appropriate recognition of foreign credentials) is provided to immigrants, they could have a higher socioeconomic status. Although the authors identify a number of limitations pertaining to this study, the most prominent one regards the utilization of the data from The National Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY). The data provided by the NLSCY has a very narrow scope. For instance, it is not inclusive of other factors affecting socioeconomic status and mental health such as culture shock, language barriers, pressure to assimilate, conflict with parents, isolation, racism/discrimination, intergenerational communication, family relationships, and sexuality. The authors themselves state that “although they are potentially important, many of these variables could not be examined using the NLSCY data set” (p. 39). Shik & Curyk (1999) identify “that disjunctures between home and school values may jeopardize self-esteem” (p. 3); their potential impact on socioeconomic status and mental health should therefore be considered.

These studies demonstrate that the factors contributing to the socioeconomic status and mental health of immigrants/refugees, including youths, are complex and therefore need to be considered appropriately in measuring their impact on the youths' degree of integration and the development of their sexuality.

Role of culture in identity formation.

To comprehend immigrant/refugee youth identity formation, it is useful to refer to ideas of embeddedness/contextualism while using an ecological system's approach to examining youth in relation to their environment (family and mainstream society). Uri Bronfenbrenner (1994) explains "to understand human development, one must consider the entire system in which growth occurs. This system is composed of five socially organized subsystems that help support and guide human growth." He goes on to depict this system as comprised of five socially organized subsystems that impacts growth: "the microsystem, which refers to the relationship between a developing person and the immediate environment, such as school and family, to the macrosystem, which refers to institutional patterns of culture, such as the economy, customs, and bodies of knowledge" (p.37).

Whether in individualistic or collectivistic cultures, we are all embedded within a dynamic environment, where only those without any communication or any relationship will stand alone and be unaffected by social and cultural norms. Each relationship or event arises within a context of family influences, community connections, larger social groupings, an overall national culture, and even a world context. In most situations (mainstream and immigrant/refugee youth), the context of family influences has a large

degree of immediate influence in comparison to the diverse realms we are embedded within. Generally one's family is usually the primary influence that supersedes all other existing relationships. Amit-Talai (1995) considers that youth in general are "marginalized / eroticized"; however, immigrant/refugee youth cannot be seen as forming a separate society. They "operate within a wider social network which includes relationships with people of widely varying network which includes relationships with people of widely varying ages and statuses" (Amit-Talai, 1995, p. 224). Based on this theory of embeddedness, I believe that focusing on how immigrant/refugee youth incorporate aspects of both the culture of their mass surrounding society (Winnipeg, Canada) and the culture of their family, which has an ethnic and visible minority status, into their identity, including their sexual identity or sexuality, would shed some light on the identity formation of these sectors of the youth population.

Szapocznik & Kurtines (1993) also speak of the embeddedness of contexts as "the notion of the individual embedded within a family that is itself embedded in a culturally diverse context" (p. 405). Szapocznik & Kurtines introduced a bicultural effectiveness skills/training to immigrant Hispanic families (with immigrant youth) living in a multicultural context in which parents and children were continually exposed to both Hispanic and mainstream values and customs. They found that parents remained more stringent in upholding their traditions than their children, resulting in "compounded and exacerbated intergenerational and intercultural conflict" (p. 403) within the family unit. Unfortunately as a result of such conflict, parents lost their positions of leadership and children in turn lost the emotional and social support of their families. Furthermore, conduct problems occurred among these youth, who deviated from the norms and values

of their parents. Based on the theory of embeddedness, the authors chose a family-orientated intervention of fostering bicultural skills in all family members. The expected outcome would be to lessen intergenerational conflict while clarifying family boundaries. The authors note that the implications of the work could extend beyond the Hispanic community of the USA to immigrant families and second-generation youth in other social and immigration contexts.

Role of gender in identity formation.

Gender particularly plays a large role in the identity formation of immigrant/refugee youth. Immigrant/refugee youth often belong not only to collectivistic households but also to households struggling to maintain a minority culture within a dominant white European (once colonized) multicultural society. Karen and Kenneth Dion (2004) conducted “a study of self-description” with second-generation immigrant youth in Toronto in which they confirmed their hypothesis “that gender differences in ethno-cultural identity would occur among the second-generation (those born in receiving society) daughters and sons of parents who were immigrants” (p. 350) simply because family influences are an important contributing factor to identity development. In this study, young women identified much more than young men with the following two categories: “ethnic achievement,” which Dion & Dion (2004) define as seeking to learn about and understand one’s ethnicity; as well as with the category of “behavioural commitment,” which would, for example, involve efforts to maintain one’s cultural practices. In the category of ethno-cultural identity (pride or attachment to one’s ethno-cultural group), both male and female second-generation immigrant youth remained equal when reporting on the legitimacy of this as a part of one’s identity.

Based on the literature it is clear that family, ethnicity and specifically gender play an important role in the development of one's identity, particularly for immigrant/refugee youth. For example, a study on bicultural identity formation conducted by Kalsi (2003) with Punjabi women living in Canada found that parents and other family members, especially grandparents, are seen by these Punjabi women as positive advantages for preserving culture, language and religion. However, these important sources of positive identity reinforcement in these young women's lives could also become a source of negative identity reinforcement. This could be due to extended family living arrangements (one household) where critical thought or expression is not encouraged and lack of privacy may limit women's ability to explore the numerous possibilities for cultural integration within a Canadian context. As this article highlights, women play an undeniable role in multiple childrearing systems. Women also face gender elevated criticism by surrounding family. Women take on the role of passing on the family's manifestation of their minority culture to children living within the household. This can at times be stressful since women rear children under the watchful eye of multiple family members who live in the same household.

Kalsi (2003) also reports that "gender roles, cultural/language/religious preservation, and family expectations and responsibilities are enforced in most collectivistic households" (p. 2). These young women continually struggle between individualistic values – influenced mostly at school, where personal autonomy and independent decision-making are encouraged – and collectivistic values, received within the home/family and culture, which encourage conformity, family interest before one's own, group decisions and unconditional respect/obedience for older family members. As

a result of this continual value/identity struggle, Kalsi (2003) says that resentment to their home culture (including parent and male sibling resentment) may occur while concurrently trying to assimilate into the dominant culture. In the struggle to conform to the household expectations and fulfil personal goals, individuals may switch from one set of values to the other, depending on the environment in which they are located, reflecting what Kalsi (2003) calls “multicultural” or “hybrid identities”.

Role of ethnicity in identity formation.

Desai & Subramanian (2003) state that since identity is “socially constructed with a complex of psychological processes, identity development must be understood in relation to its social and historical context” (p. 130). Therefore self-identity (negative or positive) is developed through interaction with others. They studied the relationship between the culture of South Asian youth and the dominant mainstream culture. This study concluded that the experiences of the participants brought forth the “injustices which are at work, despite the professed ideology of egalitarianism and meritocracy” (p. 194.) of Canada. The participants also claimed that skin colour is the most “powerful social reality that compels them to become conscious of their status of other” (Desai & Subramanian, 2003, p. 153). The study also identified that language superiority and cultural supremacy are entrenched in the education system and media in our racialized Canadian society. Youth demonstrated the ability to cope within the Canadian context by embracing two value systems and expectations (“bi-culturality”) and taking pride in their culture of origin (p. 154). The youth in this study were aware of their parents’ sacrifices and therefore understood the reasons for “high parental expectations” and “excessive control.”

This study by Desai & Subramanian (2003) proved to be quite important to my thesis because it focused specifically on South Asian youth, in the context of Ontario, and explicitly concerned issues related to sexuality. My thesis research will analyze sexuality issues (in the context of Winnipeg), which were ignored in the literature review conducted by Desai & Subramanian (2003).

Seat (2003) examined the factors affecting the settlement and adaptation process of Canadian adolescent newcomers (sixteen to nineteen years old) and verified the unique and complex patterns of immigrant/refugee identity formation. In this study he highlighted many variables that particularly affect immigrant/refugee youth, such as: language fluency, age, sex, degree of identification with the host culture, and the amount of social interaction within the new environment. Furthermore, according to Seat, relationships between newcomer youth and their parents change in the new living environment, affecting not only the socialization process but also the children's psychological and behavioural well-being. Seat also pointed out that during their process of settlement, adaptation and integration, newcomer youth must cope with many new demands: they must meet new academic challenges, deal with new expectations from teachers and parents, gain acceptance into new peer groups, and develop new kinds of social competence. Throughout this process, they are also obliged to negotiate the differences between the cultures of their countries of origin and of their new home (Seat, 2003, p. 164).

The study by Seat used both qualitative (eighty-one newcomer youths and sixteen parents) and quantitative (300 newcomer/immigrant youth) methodologies to examine how immigrant and refugee youth experience their social environments inside and

outside their families in the city of Toronto (p. 172). The qualitative research produced a number of outcomes. Seat identifies the first outcome as English language difficulties. Within this outcome participants reported feeling “withdrawn, fearful, confused, guilty, depressed, isolated, and marginalized” (Seat, 2003, p. 173) due to their inability to make themselves understood or to express themselves adequately to teachers and fellow students. Fortunately, EAL (English as an Additional Language) programs were described as being helpful by the participants, but they were nonetheless critical of them. In particular, the students stated that participating in ESL programs made them feel “uncool” and/or like outcasts. However, ESL teachers were also seen as integral to the experience of ESL students.

The next outcome identified by Seat was that participants, for the most part, valued peer network affiliations and support, and communication within the same ethnic group. Many students agreed that communication with mainstream peers (who were associated with general popularity in school) was centred around school curriculum activities only. The fourth outcome was that more than half identified their experience with teachers as being positive. However, many participants mentioned that the attitudes of teachers were racist and sexist, and also downplayed the potential of visible minority students while showing insensitivity to immigrant/refugee families. This in turn resulted in making immigrant/refugee students feel “helpless and less intelligent than the other students in the classes” (Seat, 2003, p. 174).

A fifth outcome of the study was that it showed how the sense of belonging to (or fitting in with) Canadian mainstream society varied among youth from different cultural backgrounds. In particular, two-thirds of the youth saw a sense of belonging as related to

a promising future in Canada. Those who felt otherwise (e.g., those who believed that power plus money offered acceptance/belonging or those who expressed disappointment about Canada's foreign policies related to conflicts or wars in their country of origin) took "separatist" or "monocultural" positions.

The sixth outcome refers to how the traumatic pre-immigration conditions they experienced in their initial country continually produced overall difficulty when trying to integrate into mainstream society. Integration was made more difficult with the presence of prejudice and discrimination. Interestingly, participants stressed that peers' prejudice and discrimination (i.e., expressions of hate, teasing, rejection, shunning, exclusion, harassment, bullying, provocation, vulgar name-calling and verbal aggression) was one of the most significant and painful barriers to settlement. Another significant factor considered by participants was their age when they arrived in Canada. For instance, those who came as teenagers felt greater loss because they had already started school and developed strong friendships in their home countries. As a result, separation from extended family, already-established support systems, and other familiar relationships and arrangements increased their insecurities and decreased the chances for a healthy adaptation/settlement process. In turn these teenagers in particular felt more isolated, shy, uncertain, passive and the need to compromise in their relationships with mainstream peers.

A further outcome of Seat's study was that the incongruent lifestyles of participants (inside and outside their homes) were indicators of increased tensions with parents. For example, "the more these newcomer youth adapted to the new Canadian culture, the more the tensions with their parents increased" (p. 177). Consequently, large discrepancies between the home (personal) and public environments are cause for alarm

and should be given due attention in examining the formation of self-identity and self-concept as cognitive, emotional and social development are impacted all at once.

Adolescents therefore are caught between two worlds while developing their personal self-perceptions through their interactions with parental influences and peers, the school, teachers, and the media. Furthermore, parents notably regarded academic success as the only way of obtaining a successful future in Canada. Therefore, the majority of these parents spent large amounts of effort and time discouraging their children from pursuing anything non-academic. This resulted in disagreements on the standards of success between parents and youth. Consequently, more than half of the participants did not regard their parents as strong role models. They stated that their parents were not only preoccupied but wrapped up with their own integration/settlement struggles.

Additionally, youth were more likely at risk to turn to less positive role models in their easily accessible peer group or the media. Although these youth participants could be considered to be high risk, the majority were not aware of settlement or other social services. Additionally, many participants felt that it would be out of the norm to seek help for these personal settlement problems: “of the youth sampled, 89.7 per cent reported that they had never sought professional help for their problems” (Seat, 2003, p. 185).

Participants linked greater English language proficiency with the degree to which they interacted with peers and were involved in school activities and believed it resulted in reduced isolation and marginalization. Participants felt that it was important for newcomers, such as themselves, to have (both Canadian mainstream and minority) friends who could give them support and affirmation as they developed their views within the Canadian environment. Finally, newcomer youth expressed their appreciation

for the immense opportunities available to them in Canada as well as the enjoyable entertainment life in Canada.

The parent focus group (within the same study conducted by Seat) discussed four main issues: (1) “At the beginning of their life in Canada the parents felt excited; later they felt uncertain” (p. 190). Acculturation and integration caused parents to question their own identity/self-concept. The parents’ settlement issues, which were similar to what the youth faced, resulted in youth having to seek out answers and stability from other sources. (2) “Parents would like to see their children retain their cultural values, beliefs, and norms” (p. 191). The reality is that parents grew up in a completely different society and thus could not fully comprehend the issues confronting their children in Canadian society. (3) “Parents were concerned about their children’s education” (p. 192). An experiential and cultural disconnection compounded by a generational gap exists between parents and the education system and their own children. This illustrates the lack of knowledge parents possess regarding youth in Canadian society. (4) “Parents were concerned about communicating with and disciplining their children” (p. 193). Since parents have been socialized into a different culture and have only adopted aspects of Canadian society/culture when necessary, they have problems relating to their children, who want to embrace Canadian culture. These children want to be socialized into Canadian society while their parents want them to adhere to their chosen culture values. According to Seat (2003), “many of these parents also emphasized that mainstream Canadian culture emphasized individualism while they wanted to impress on their children a spirit of interdependence, mutual understanding, co-operation, sharing, and reciprocity” (p. 183). Parents do not realize these children are trying to create a culture

that blends the two together (i.e., their parents' culture with Canadian mainstream culture).

Intergenerational conflict.

Szapocznik & Kurtines (1993) describe intergenerational conflict that is unique to immigrant/refugee youth in the North American context as families exposed to a culturally diverse environment face “a family struggle in which some family members (the youth) struggle for autonomy and others (the elders) for family connectedness” (p. 403). These authors believe that intergenerational conflicts specific to ethno-racial minority families are more complicated as they are compounded by intercultural conflicts. In their case study with Hispanic youth, they found that parents perceived having lost authority and therefore were unequipped to manage youngsters who made strong claims for autonomy. These children who made strong claims of autonomy and no longer accepted their parents' traditional ways had lost components of their ethnic identity, but also had lost the emotional and social support of their families. The study also found that behaviour problems emerged as result of the conflicts.

A study by the Canadian Council of Social Development (2000) of demographics and lifestyle data for immigrant youth also identifies the complexity of intergenerational conflict amongst immigrant youth and their parents. The authors observe that immigrant youth are “capable of adaptation faster than their parents, which has been a central factor to intergenerational conflicts between child and parent” (p. 4).

Anisef, Murphy & Khattar (2003) specify there are five categories where intergenerational tensions and conflicts exist; they are curfew, fashion, lengthy

separation, gender discrimination and sexism, and loss of the mother's power. These categories of intergenerational tension and conflict are also present in other research studies. Specifically, Tyyska (2005) and Goodenow & Espin (1993) also identify issues that can be classified within these five categories:

Curfew.

All the research conducted so far agrees that immigrant/refugee youth are under a great deal of pressure from their parents to perform well in school. Educational excellence is considered so important that in some instances parents frown upon any extracurricular activities. Some youth are not allowed any social life because they have to return home right after school. This "parental pressure on...children to excel in school often results in conflict" (Tyyska, 2005, p. 7).

Fashion.

There is an intense pressure among Canadian youth to wear fashionable, in-style clothing. Anisef et al. (2003) note that immigrant/refugee youth were caught between parental and peer fashion standards. The youth wanted to meet peer expectations, which caused conflict with the parents. This conflict often escalated because parents disapproved of Canadian fashion and wanted to purchase the clothes they felt were appropriate for their children.

Lengthy separations.

Anisef et al. (2003) found that in instances where children and parents had been separated for extended periods of time difficulties resulted when they were reunited. One of the probable reasons for these lengthy separations is immigration policies. It is typical for a family member to come to Canada and get established before the remaining family members are allowed to immigrate or follow them here. The time that they are apart creates unfamiliarity between the family members. Thus when they are reunited youth often mistrust their parents and have difficulty adjusting to parental rules and authority (p. 224).

Gender discrimination and sexism.

All the studies (Anisef et al., 2003; Tyyska, 2005; Goodenow & Espin, 1993) found that female and male youth are treated differently by parents. There is generally more pressure on females to maintain traditional roles and adhere more strictly to the culture of origin. The reason for this pressure is that females are “seen as custodians of family values” (Anisef et al., p. 248). In comparison, “males are often encouraged to Americanize rather quickly” (Goodenow & Espin, p. 15) and are allowed greater freedom. However, in regards to dating, Anisef et al. state that “parents generally have difficulty accepting dating practices for both their sons and daughters” (p. 248). They note one of the reasons for this difficulty is that “parents can feel threatened by their children’s growing sexuality” (p. 248). Yet, even in the area of dating, gender discrimination exists. According to Anisef et al., “parents tend to be more strict with their daughters” (p. 248) because daughters are the custodians of family values. Within a

white-dominated or multicultural society, parents anxiously see these values as facing constant endangerment and fear their extinction (i.e., not being passed down to the next generation). This in turn creates more stress within females because women obviously not only bear children but are often delegated child care responsibilities. In general women tend to relate self-worth with close relational ties, but for racialized minority females who originate from a collectivistic culture, the pressure to preserve cultural values can be immense. Goodenow & Espin (1993) also found that females often come into conflict with their parents when they try to modify their custodian role by having a stronger voice within the family unit, especially when it concerns their independence.

Loss of mother's power.

As mentioned earlier, youth adapt faster to living in Canada than their parents. In particular, youth learn the culture and language quicker and thus are able to function better than their parents. This often results in a role reversal, where the youth have to assist the parents in their daily living. According to Anisef et al., this role reversal often leads to the youth losing respect for and confidence in their parents. Many youth also harbour anger towards their parents for having to come to Canada and facing a more difficult and challenging life (p. 225).

Media.

As previously mentioned, the media plays an important role in the lives of immigrant/refugee youth. In addition to being a source for role models and defining dominant culture, it is also a source of information (positive and negative). Although the media provides coverage of positive events and achievements within the community, it

also provides negative coverage. Anisef et al. note “the media’s perpetuation of existing negative stereotypes with respect to minority groups” (p. 255). Simmons, Ramos and Bielmeier (2000) also found in their study that the media perpetuates negative stereotypes of minority groups.

Immigrant/refugee youth experiences with sexuality.

Literature on immigrant/refugee youth experiences with sexuality (within the Canadian context) tends to recognize the recurring theme of value conflict between their parents’ values and mainstream Canadian values. In the report, *Teenage sexual and reproductive behavior in developed countries*, Maticka-Tyndale, McKay & Barrett (2001) consider the new demographic make-up of Canada. They affirm that as many as 64% of Canada’s immigrants can be generalized as falling in the racially visible minority category. This raises the question: Will Canada’s changing ethnic and racial composition influence the profile of adolescent and young adult sexuality? The report highlights a crucial point related to immigrant/refugee youth and their experiences within the Canadian school-based and public health programs. Based on the Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education and, increasingly, the curricular guidelines, the Canadian school-based and public health program approach is to

balance the encouragement of postponing first sexual intercourse, encourage abstinence and give consistent information on contraceptive and safer sex behaviours. Ideologically, these democratically oriented programs promote critically appropriate sexual/reproductive health decision-making within the context of the individual’s moral, ethno-cultural, and religious values. (2001, p.

31)

However, the report and literature demonstrate that there can be very distinct immigrant/refugee youth cases where these Canadian adolescents are often confronted with competing and, at times, inconsistent messages regarding what constitutes responsible sexual behaviour, since Canada is a culturally diverse country with a large and varied immigrant population. Matycka-Tyndale, McKay & Barret (2001) recognize that:

Young people with parents who immigrated from countries with more conservative sexual norms and values than contemporary mainstream Canadian society can find that their parents' perspectives towards adolescent sexuality and birth control conflict with the norms and values of the larger culture. In other words, parents from more traditional cultures may seek to instil in their children the sexual norms and values of the country of origin. In this respect, adolescents in such families must grapple with what are sometimes opposing messages related to sexuality. (2001, p. 31)

The report mentions that although the frequency and nature of communication is unknown, family is the main information source when Canadian youth seek out knowledge on sex and contraception. It also recognizes immigrant/refugee youth as a marginalized group along with street youth, Aboriginal and ethnic minority youth, and lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender youth. The report states that while most young adults have access to sexual and reproductive health services, the settings may not be optimally "user-friendly" for marginalized youth. As a result, these marginalized youth find it much harder to locate services geared to their specific needs.

This difficulty in locating services can have negative consequences. Kwong-Lai Poon & Trung-Thu Ho (2003) studied this issue, with a specific interest in the vulnerabilities of HIV infection among first and second-generation immigrant youth, in particular, among gay, lesbian and bisexual youth from Asian communities in Toronto. They found that the lack of sex education at home, homophobia in Asian families, unresponsive health and social service providers, lack of social support, negative stereotypes, ideal standards of beauty within the dominant society, and negative perceptions of safer sex practices all contributed to youth sexuality. These recurring themes and concerns further shed some light on immigrant/refugee youth sexuality within their own families and within Canadian society.

Rationale.

The resources were included in this review as much to show what has been researched as to show the gaps in research on the topic of immigrant/refugee youth sexuality and intergenerational conflict. The review includes the demographic resources on immigration to establish the fact that Canada has a large and growing population of ethno-racial minority youth. The few demographic studies on immigrant/refugee youth point to the need to study this particular group.

The few studies on ethno-racial minority families were included to note the immigrant/refugee youth issues that have been identified, but equally importantly, to show that immigrant/refugee youth issues have been greatly under-researched. The

Anisef & Kilbride (2003) book in particular highlights the need for our research in that it does not cover immigrant/refugee youth sexuality.

Final Words

This literature review demonstrates the gaps in research particularly regarding sexuality, and thus shows the need for research on immigrant/refugee youth sexuality in the context of Canada. With this thesis, I seek to contribute to the literature on immigrant/refugee youth and sexuality by specifically studying the relationship between intergenerational communication breakdown and sexuality in this population. By investigating the experiences that female adult immigrants/refugees recount of their youth in Canada, it is hoped this project will assist in the development of a more comprehensive program sensitive to the needs of immigrant/refugee youths.

The need for research in this area is great, as immigrant and refugee youth clearly face a multitude of challenges, including dealing with their sexuality within their family/cultural context. Immigrant/refugee youth experience a great deal of stress in the process of immigration and settlement. In general, immigrant/refugee youth grow up in a society with different values and norms from those of their parents' home country. This can lead to many issues including: culture shock, language barriers, pressure to assimilate, conflict with parents, isolation, racism, and discrimination. Immigrant/refugee youth sexuality is intricately related to and affected by all of these complex issues.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Introduction

This research project involves a qualitative interpretive analysis of the experiences of nine women who are first and second-generation Canadians. The women who chose to participate in this study were recruited based on specific criteria using the technique of snowball sampling. A questionnaire and a semi-structured interview technique were used. The semi-structured interviews were transcribed and then analyzed in accordance with the principles of qualitative methodology (phenomenology), University of Manitoba's Research Ethics guidelines, and the researcher's personal accountability.

Participant Criteria

In order to answer my research questions, I outlined specific eligibility criteria to qualify to participate in the study. I invited potential participants by word of mouth as well as on an advertisement poster which was put up throughout the city of Winnipeg. The poster illustrated several pictures of adult ethno-racial women. The poster read, "Attention All Immigrant & Refugee Ethno-Racial Minority Women!!! What was it like to grow up in CANADA as a YOUNG WOMAN of COLOUR and CULTURE?" Any potential participants meeting all these criteria were asked to please contact me, an MSW student at the University of Manitoba, through email. The poster did not work as well as word of mouth to attract participants. See the poster in Appendix H.

Snowball Sampling

Monette, Sullivan and DeJong (2002) define snowball sampling as “a type of non probability sampling characterized by a few cases of the type we wish to study leading to more cases, which in turn, lead to still more cases until a sufficient sample is achieved” (p. 517). Through this type of non-probability sampling (snowballing), characterized by a number of cases of a certain type, a significant sample was accomplished. The method of snowball sampling was used to collect data because the literature suggests that sexuality is an extremely unarticulated and highly personal topic. This method can prevent difficulties in accessing primary data or finding individuals who will be open, truthful and comfortable talking about their personal stories regarding sexuality. Through snowball sampling participants can feel more open about sharing their personal stories since they are referred by previous participants who have already been through the interview process. Based on the experience of previous participants, future participants can feel more at ease with the interview process. The participants in this study included first-generation (born in a country other than Canada) and second-generation (born in Canada but having one or more parents born in another country) adult immigrant women who have lived the majority of their adolescence in Canada. These participants were from a variety of visible minority, ethno-racial backgrounds (i.e., Africa, Latin America, South/South East Asia and the Middle East). I gave my contact information freely and allowed women to contact me based on mutual acquaintances, recommendations from previous participants or as a result of snowball sampling. Written mail-out information and telephone scripts (See Appendix A and Appendix B) were developed to ensure the researcher communicated essential information ahead of time to the participants. This

method would allow the women to feel safe knowing that their experiences could contribute to raising awareness and to shaping potential activities or programs for immigrant/refugee females in Winnipeg and Canada. The participants could also use the study experience as an empowering exercise.

Data Collection and Management

The recruitment of participants began by placing poster advertisements at post-secondary institutions, including the University of Winnipeg, the University of Manitoba, and Red River College. Interestingly, poster recruitment was not the most successful tool for recruitment since there was no response to the poster advertisements. Due to the sensitivity of the issues surrounding the topic of sexuality, the willing participants recommended other individuals from the target group who would be comfortable and able to provide open responses.

Settlement service providers were also asked to contribute if possible to the recruitment of participants for this study. The service providers contacted were from a number of organizations such as: SERC (Sexuality Education Resource Centre), Women's Health Clinic, IWAM (Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba, Inc.), IWCS (Immigrant Women Counselling Services), the International Centre, Welcome Place, NEEDS (Newcomer Employment Education and Development), Mount Carmel Clinic, and YMCA. Informal contacts were made with service providers at these organizations. All of them were already adhering to pre-existing client confidentiality agreements. I believe the fact that I, the researcher, am also a visible minority, second-

generation immigrant woman enhanced my ability to remain sensitive to issues surrounding the topic of immigrant women's sexuality and confidentiality. Furthermore As the researcher, I was also part of the sample population during data analysis. I was able to use my own social networks and insider status to conduct informal recruitment as well as to gain the participants' trust and disclosure.

All semi-structured interviews were tape recorded with the consent of the participants. The participants were informed at the beginning of all semi-structured interviews that they could choose to stop audio recording at any time. Whenever this occurred the researcher then took detailed notes. These recordings were later transcribed by the researcher for the purpose of data analysis. To help protect the identity and confidentiality of these participants all transcriptions were done by the interviewer-researcher. Any information that could be used to identify a participant will be locked up in a cabinet for up to five years and then destroyed. After transcription and before data analysis, all identifiable information from the participants was removed or changed, such as names and other revealing personal, family information or the names of specific demographic information. As promised during the outreach process, each semi-structured interview was conducted at a location preferred by the research participant and at a time convenient for her. A private space at the University of Manitoba or University of Winnipeg (where interviews could take place) was offered by the interviewer and accessed if desired by the research participant. Transportation such as bus tickets was an option made available to participants in need. Childcare costs were also offered to those individuals with young children, if necessary.

At the beginning of each semi-structured interview the researcher stated that participants could leave at any time and were not obligated to answer questions if they did not wish to do so. Prior to each semi-structured interview, participants were given a take-away counselling and health services information sheet (see Appendix F). Some chose not to take this sheet. At the time of the interview, each participant was made aware that the thesis or research results would be available at the University of Manitoba. To prevent undue pressure the researcher ensured the participant understood she was under no obligation to participate. The research only progressed when the interviewer was satisfied that the participant understood her right not to proceed if she did not wish to do so and thereby avoid experiencing any negative implications.

Once the participant read and signed a written consent form (see Appendix C), a short questionnaire (see Appendix D) was completed by each participant who consented to the semi-structured interview. Moments before the actual semi-structured interview began, participants were provided a copy of the semi-structured interview tool (see Appendix E) to help them follow along the question process. This was used mainly as a guide to help put participants at ease. It was observed that participants rarely referred to the semi-structured interview tool for assistance. Since questions were open-ended the research participants directed the semi-structured interviews just as much as the researcher. All intended questions were covered in the semi-structured interview process.

Procedures

The number of semi-structured interviews conducted depended upon when the research topic became saturated. Due to saturation the research study ultimately consisted of 9 semi-structured (snowball sample) interviews with visible minority immigrant/refugee women residing in Winnipeg. Transcriptions were done by the interviewer or researcher of the semi-structured process, that is, the researcher, which allowed the researcher to remain very close to the data and familiar with the stories that the women told.

Theoretical Analysis

To explore my research questions, I used a qualitative methodology that employed a phenomenological approach to uncover information that had not been documented. Creswell (1998) describes a phenomenological study as one that examines “the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or a phenomenon. Phenomenologists explore the structures of consciousness in human experiences” (p. 51). Using a phenomenological approach allowed the collection of individual stories told by first and second-generation visible minority immigrant Canadian women, who specifically reported on their lived experiences of their sexuality.

Data analysis involved the collection of data that would be reviewed (by the researcher/interviewer) to identify key themes (open coding, axial coding and selective coding) and where the data would be continually categorized using the constant comparative method. The constant comparative method of data analysis can be depicted

in the following three phases, whereby many individuals' perspectives of one central issue can be contrasted or examined. According to Creswell (1998), in Phase I of data analysis, called open coding, "the researcher forms initial categories of information about the phenomenon being studied by segmenting information" (p. 57). Creswell (1998) goes on to explain that in Phase II of data analysis, called axial coding, the researcher identifies a central phenomenon, or the categories of the conditions that influence the phenomenon, and explains them using a logic diagram or coding paradigm. Finally, Creswell (1998) describes Phase III of data analysis, called selective coding, as a "story line which integrates the categories in the axial coding model. In this phase, conditional propositions (or hypotheses) are typically presented" (p. 57).

Data Analysis

Intersectionality Theory

The term "Intersectionality" was most popularly used by Kimberle Crenshaw in the late 1980's, even if McCall (2005, p. 1771) suggests there are many other authors and publications that have used this type of analysis (Davis 1981, Moraga 1983, Smith 1983, Hooks 1984, Moraga & Anzaldua 1984, Glenn 1985, Anzaldua 1987, 1990, King 1988, Mohanty 1988; Spelman 1988, Sandoval 1991). Intersectionality analysis was formulated by the aforementioned individuals because they expressed great dissatisfaction with the many existing "single axis frameworks" used for analysis. These single axis frameworks either focused solely on gender in feminism or race/ethnicity in anti-racist studies (Nash 2008, p.2). Fortunately or unfortunately, the two (i.e., gender and race/ethnicity) can

mutually coexist in an individual's life and, as a result, in a theory for analysis: Intersectionality Theory was thus born. This theory provides a framework to more adequately reflect the multidimensionality of people, especially those with complex identities. In its early development, Intersectionality Theory first sought to “demonstrate the racial variation(s) with gender and the gendered variation(s) within race” (Nash 2008, p. 2). Since then Intersectionality Theory has become a primary analytic tool used (predominantly by feminist and anti-racist scholars) as a general theory of identity that helps accurately describe the “experience of privilege along particular axes (whether class, sexuality, light-skinnedness, able-bodiedness, etc.) therefore “not undermining what can be any woman's claims to intersectional identities” (Nash 2008, p. 10).

The women in this study are individuals with complex identities. They are women living in Canada, of different ages and marital status, all from visible minority immigrant/refugee families of different classes and sexual orientations. Thus Intersectionality Theory will be helpful for articulating discriminatory barriers of immigration in the systemic Canadian context while promoting helpful cultural integration techniques/policies, along with identifying sexuality educational supports/recommendations for ethno-racial minority female immigrant/refugee youth and their families. For the purpose of this research study, Intersectionality Theory will be used as a helpful theory of analysis for determining identity development while uncovering hidden social policy inequalities. These women will tell us how they have come to see themselves in relation to the “others” during their lifespan.

Intersecting Social Categories: Culture and Sexuality

To understand the women's evolving lived definition of their sexuality we must understand the two mutually constrictive social categories: culture and sexuality. Intersectionality Theory is an identity theory that helps describe complex realities. It will be used to help tell the stories of this particular group of women in aggregate form while recognizing diversity within the group. Recognizing similarities along with diversities is important because every woman is different based on variations of social privilege and social location (Hulko, 2009, p. 45) yet the women in this study talked of common themes and of belonging to the same or similar intercategory identity groups (Denis, 2008, pp. 686-687). For the sake of comprehension (McCall, 2005, p. 1786) and the purpose of expanding our knowledge of their lived experiences, the intersectionality of culture and sexuality will be examined. The topic of sexuality is often not taken seriously and is seen as embarrassing or taboo by society. Due to numerous similar rationales stated by Schilt (2008) the general understanding, meaning and definition of sexuality remain massively under-theorized and undocumented.

The same notions around sexuality were also reflected in the literature review as well as by the participants in this study. As a result, a starting point definition was needed to research sexuality. For that reason the definition of sexuality was given to them before starting the interviews understood by the participants as the following: A broad topic which includes issues dealing with dating, having sex, conforming to community and family norms related to sex and sexual behaviour. On the other hand, the complexity of culture was much easier to find documented as well as in the discussions with the participants. The participants in the study easily referred back and forth, using the word

“culture” to describe, for example, the many groups in which they belong and the specific rules of “Canadian culture” and “The culture back home.” They spoke of the “women of our culture our ethnicity and our religion,” “our kind of culture and their rules,” and “someone from my own culture.” Each of the women in this study made references to culture that were consistent with the definition found in *The Social Work Dictionary* (Barker, 2003, p. 105): “The customs, habits, skills, technology, arts, values, ideology, science, and religious and political behavior of a group of people in a specific time period.” Nonetheless, because of their visible minority status, the participants also interlinked culture with ethnicity.

Within these self-representations, the intersection of two social categories (culture and sexuality) will be examined to explore the relationship between them and the impacts on the identity of ethno-racial immigrant/refugee females. As well, these women who belong to multiple social groups and therefore experience multiple social realities on a concurrent basis (Denis, 2008, p. 677) will help us understand how they manage, cope, and navigate complex social identities of culture and sexuality throughout their lifespan or life cycle. Denis (2008) recognizes that doing intersectional analysis can be challenging but describes and uses McCall’s three intersectional models to assist with the analysis (p. 685).

Anticategorical, Intercategorical and Intracategorical Analysis Models

The goal of using these models of analysis is to document natural life changes and evolving perspectives on social identity, specifically the intersectional relationship of culture and sexuality through these women's lives. McCall (2005, p. 1783) recommends applying Intersectionality Theory using three methodological approaches: anticategorical, intercategorical and intracategorical. An anticategorical approach would have reservations about the process of categorization. It simply works to deconstruct the process of social categorization. Denis (2008) states that those doing intersectionality analysis discard McCall's anticategorical approach, "since power relations are based on both discourse and structure" (p. 685). While both an intercategorical (or categorical) approach and an intracategorical approach would also entail a detailed look at categorization, they would additionally analyze how social categories or social locations are "produced, experienced, reproduced, and resisted in everyday" experiences (p. 1783). An intracategorical approach would try to find the diversity within groups. It thoroughly compares social locations at the intersection of single dimensions of multiple variables. An intercategorical approach focuses on associations of inequality among already constituted groups. "The concern is with the nature of relationships among social groups and, more importantly, how they are changing, rather than with the definition or representation of such groups per se" (McCall, 2005, p. 1785). An intercategorical approach seeks to determine the intersection of a division of categories that can have multiple variables or can be intercategorized or multigrouped.

Coding, Analysis and Intersectionality Theory

The following quotes will depict how Intersectionality Theory helped to uncover complexities or multiple levels within the subjects' (minority women's) experiences:

Oh yeah...at boys' houses...school dances...very sheltered, which made me more crazy...Like, you know, don't get me wrong. I did sneak out. I did go to these places, but it was...I wasn't relaxed. I wasn't comfortable...I was on guard; am I going to get caught? Should I go back home? So, so being oppressive to your children's sexuality is so dangerous, I find, so dangerous, 'cause I know what I was...Like, I just was so crazy...I wanted to be this big slut...I did...I really wanted to be like this...but I was scared...Like, it was just this big freak FREAK show.

This participant remembered how being oppressed by her parents made her more interested in exploring her forbidden sexuality, to the point of wanting to act out. She expressed her feeling that her parents' use of control over her pushed her towards dangerous behaviors, and if she had not been so afraid of them, she might have exposed herself to more unsafe situations. Another participant elaborates on her experiences about lying to her parents:

I just deceived my parents and that felt dirty already, didn't feel good. So, I think, in order to do that I sort of just, um, disassociated that piece, and I wasn't, I wasn't Chinese at the time. You know, I wasn't this. So maybe that's part of how I reconciled the two things.

The ecological model (micro, mezzo and macro or self, family and society) was particularly helpful when I started to determine larger, overarching themes. It helped to categorize small sticky notes of data from individual participants. As coding got more complex, Intersectionality Theory took on a greater role and was especially helpful when

explaining how participants defined the concept of decompartmentalization. As a starting point for analysis, from an anticategorical perspective or model, decompartmentalization is labeled or observed as lying. At first glimpse this could easily be rationalized from a monocultural frame of reference, but Intersectionality Theory explores or looks deeper into such concepts through the use of intercategorical and intracategorical models.

Through the use of these additional models we can learn more about how this group of women (belonging to non-monocultural realities) utilized decompartmentalization as a popular coping tool when defining their sexuality as it intersects with culture (Canadian culture versus culture of origin). The intercategorical perspective or model accepts decompartmentalization as an existing cultural navigation tool used by women who live non-monocultural lives. The intracategorical perspective or model goes even further to recognize these women by acknowledging the complexities or the finer details of how each woman as an individual (based on personalities and personal settlement experiences) decompartmentalized. For example, two women can both be second-generation Canadians but choose to decompartmentalize differently based on different personalities and personal settlement experiences. One participant described why she chose to decompartmentalize less, therefore aligning most of her decisions regarding sexuality with her parents' cultural perspectives:

I was the type of child that was *incognated* with their values and...I wanted to please them, right?...That's my temperament...Another child growing up in the same family dynamic could have been a rebel...could have been doing her own thing, could have not been so concerned about the approval, right? That was my personality. That's what I brought to it.

Within my findings the intracategorical differences (levels of decompartmentalization) within this group were labelled as: (1) Marriage (2) Suspended Dating and (3) Premarital Sex. Out of the total of nine women in this study, three women belonged to each of these three intracategorical differences. These three categories will be further described in the Findings section. The women quoted in this section are women who belonged to each of the three intracategorical labels.

Participant Profiles

The ethno-racial backgrounds of the nine women who participated in this study can be visibly identified generally within the following locations: East Africa, South America, Northern Asia, South East Asia, The Middle East and The Caribbean. The countries of origin will not be identified due to confidentiality. Information describing each participant was collected through a short questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. I have created participant profiles to help readers understand the background dynamics impacting each woman's stories. All the women currently reside in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. The majority of these women who chose to participate in this study have spent most if not all of their Canadian life in Manitoba.

The following are brief profiles of the women who participated in the study:

1. A 33 year old woman born in Canada. Her parents were born in a country other than Canada and immigrated before her birth. Her father completed university and worked a variety of different jobs in Canada. Her mother completed grade seven and worked as a homemaker all her life. This participant lived with her parents

and her older brother until she moved out and married a man from her parents' home country at 18 years old. She completed a university degree and is currently employed. This participant is single, divorced and lives on her own with her teenage son. She identifies as heterosexual.

2. A 29 year old woman born in a country other than Canada. She immigrated to Canada at the age of 12 with her parents and elder brother as refugees. Her father completed a university education and worked in Canada. Her mother completed grade 12 and is a house wife in Canada. This participant completed a university degree, is single, never married, lives on her own and is currently employed. She identifies as heterosexual.
3. A 30 year old woman born in Canada. Her parents immigrated to Canada before her birth. This participant identified her parents as business people. Her mother completed grade 12 and father completed grade 9. This participant lived with her parents and siblings until she entered an "arranged" marriage and sponsored a man from her parents' home country at the age of 18. At the time of this semi-structured interview she was divorced and single living on her own with her two sons. This participant completed a community college degree and is currently employed. She identifies as heterosexual.
4. A 30 year old woman born in a country other than Canada. She immigrated at the age of 12 with her younger sister and aunt. As a child she lived with her sister and her aunt who acted as their adopted mother. This participant has biological parents and a sibling who reside in her country of origin. Her parents are both business owners in her country of origin, where her father completed a college

degree and her mother completed some post-secondary education. Currently she is employed while pursuing a graduate degree. She lives with her sister. She is single and has never been married. She identifies as heterosexual.

5. A 40 year old woman who immigrated to Canada at the age of 11 with her parents and siblings as refugees. The father completed a university degree, lectured at the university level and worked as a church minister in Canada. Her mother completed a university level education and worked as a settlement worker in Canada. This participant completed university and is at present working. She identifies as bisexual.
6. A 36 year old who immigrated to Canada directly from her birth country at the age of 17 with her mother and her youngest sibling. She lived with her parents and siblings in her country of origin. Her mother is a hairdresser in Canada and father a machine operator who lives back in her birth country. After sponsoring and marrying a man from her country of origin she continued living with her mother here in Canada well into married life. Formerly married, she is now divorced, single and lives with her son and daughter. She has completed high school and is employed. She identifies as heterosexual.
7. A 42 year old woman born in Canada whose parents immigrated before her birth. Her father completed university and worked as a teacher/principal in Canada. Her mother did some post-secondary education and worked in the field of hospital administration in Canada. As a child she lived with both her parents and an older sister. She completed university and is working. She married interracially and interreligiously in her birth country of Canada after she completed her doctorate.

She is now divorced and lives with her son, daughter and mother. She identifies as being heterosexual.

8. A 35 year old woman born in Canada. Her parents immigrated to Canada with a few of her older siblings. Her father completed university and worked as a microbiologist in Canada. Her mother has had no form of formal education, worked as a homemaker but later in life volunteered in a daycare. Throughout her life she lived with her parents and siblings until she completed a university degree and then married interreligious and interracial. She is presently employed and lives with her husband and two children. She identifies with being heterosexual.
9. A 38 year old woman who was born in Canada. Her parents immigrated to Canada from another country prior to her birth. Her father completed grade six and worked as a cook in a restaurant here in Canada. Her mother completed grade ten and worked as a server in Canada. Eventually her parents became owners of their own restaurant. She lived with her parents and two older brothers until she became engaged to a Canadian-born man of her own race and religion. This participant completed university and works in her chosen profession. She lives with her husband along with her son and daughter. She identifies as heterosexual.

Over-All Summary

Phenomenology is a qualitative interpretive analysis methodology most suited to this type of research. It utilizes questionnaires and semi-structured interviews and offers conclusions based on the recorded data and analysis that employs a qualitative interpretive methodology (phenomenology). Additionally, Intersectionality Theory will

assist with analysis as these women will tell us how they have come to see themselves, in relation to the “others” within their many ecological systems over a lifespan. Within these self-representations, the intersection of two social categories (culture and sexuality) will be examined to explore the relationship between them and the impacts on the identity of ethno-racial immigrant/refugee females.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

As the women told their life stories the main recurring theme that emerged was dating. All the women agreed that dating was an acceptable social norm within mainstream Canadian culture. However, within their minority cultures, acceptable dating looked very different or did not exist at all. Dating itself was often a foreign concept that was undefined in their cultural frame of reference and language of origin. As a result all the participants stated that dating was a tough subject to navigate, not only because of conflicting cultural norms but also due to their minority status of race and sometimes religion in Canada. Therefore, the topics of intercultural peer dating, same-culture relationships within peer groups, how women learned to define their sexuality, and the notion of decompartmentalization the women utilized as they matured through Phase One of their lifespan will be discussed. The reporting of these findings will focus on the first phase of their lifespan (0 to 20 years of age) since the purpose of this research is to determine community programming and support services for female immigrant and refugee youth.

Dating

Dating itself was often a foreign concept that was undefined in their minority cultural frame of reference and country or language of origin. Women constantly drew on these comparisons when they reflected on time spent outside of their homes and with

peers. Dating for the sake of socialization and not always necessarily for the purpose of marriage was very much a Western phenomenon or Canadian experience. Therefore dating required a lot of learning by their parents as well as by the women themselves. One participant who immigrated to Canada at the age of seventeen recollected her initial surprise about dating norms in Canada:

Dating...it was a shock...Yep! Because back home you cannot do that. Even if me thinking of liking a boy...No, it would not have happened, but then I see people here dating at sixteen, seventeen years old... Yes, it was a big shock for me...[laughter]

For other participants whose families had adopted a more “Canadian” understanding of dating, it was either the age of eighteen or the completion of post-secondary education that was the “magic” age of relative leeway for dating. One participant’s rationale for that was, “cause if you dated when you were younger then you’re a slut! But...when you turn eighteen it seems to be OK to do that...It’s not completely OK, but...premarital sex is definitely not.”

Some families chose to adapt to a more Canadian style of dating before marriage due to cultural integration efforts. This circumstance provided a more Canadian degree of autonomy from cultural and familial expectations as the family unit had to assimilate to Canadian culture and redefine the socialization process for dating. From an early age, both first and second-generation Canadian participants were able to draw contrasts between Canadian cultural attitudes towards family and the attitudes from their family’s country of origin. The extended family as a unit tended to take on more of a parenting

role. One participant described how her extended family was a source of support that came at the cost of her independence. She compared the freedom of the North American family system, where “autonomy...is a norm...Eighteen is deemed the age of authority. Eighteen is deemed the age that you can make decisions autonomously and eighteen is deemed the age that you can emancipate from your home.”

One participant described how, when her family moved to Canada, there was the need for cultural integration regarding dating because her parents came from an arranged marriage system and entered into the dating context in Canada. She explained that when her parents “immigrated to Canada, of course, they never had expectations of picking my partner and they never socialized us with that expectation.” With the typically larger, more extended ethnic family unit the “family is often a big support network and everybody is involved in taking care of the kids.” Obligations and family ties had a stronger significance in the minority context, which impacted dating styles and choices. One participant described how her family and her boyfriend’s family intermixed much sooner and on a much deeper level than the families of her Canadian peers. She explained that the families of Canadian friends did not usually connect deeply until the dating couple reached the engagement or marriage phase. However, even while dating, she explained:

I had to make a much larger commitment, not just to him, now, but I was committed to the family or his family and my family...and if I am going to be a part of the family I have to contribute to that larger, you know, thing, that family. So I am going to help.

This ideology conflicted with that of her Canadian counterpart who always reasoned that they were just dating and questioned why she felt the need to fulfill what were, from a Canadian perspective, unreasonable expectations.

Mainstream Peers, Dating and Sexuality

All the participants attested that their peers played a pivotal role in helping them determine how or if to date. For all the women, mainstream peers were often the most accessible and qualified to educate women on dating. Since dating is largely a North American mainstream, culturally determined concept, the school system played a role in reinforcing this type of socialization by organizing school dances at lunch hour as well as after hours. Furthermore, each participant experienced some form of sexual education within the Canadian school-based system. This was quite the contrast to what existed at home, where messages around sexuality were indirect or authoritarian. For these women, there was usually no dialogue about sex and if it did exist it was done on their wedding day. All the women's experiences differed when it came to curriculum-based sexual education. Some women had difficulty recollecting consistent sexuality education in school. Within the different school divisions, some teachers took more initiative than others.

As a result often their mainstream peers followed different norms of dating than their minority peers. For example many mainstream peers had more freedom regarding with whom, when and how they could date. Mainstream peers dated earlier and more openly, although within much more predetermined boundaries set by parents. These

boundaries more often matched boundaries set by mainstream Canadian society. With regards to mainstream peers, many women described how they could not help but compare themselves to individuals their own age in order to assess their own restrictions, limitations, and freedoms. One woman described how seeing the level of sexual freedom enjoyed by her mainstream peers made her more aware of the cultural restrictions placed on her: “The Caucasians, they can date. They can have relationships. It’s very free. Their limits are very, it’s kind of set by themselves, whereas ours, our limits are already put down. We don’t have that option.”

When they approached peers regarding sexual development, cultural differences sometimes led to misunderstandings between individuals from the minority groups and their mainstream peers. One participant described how her mainstream peers had no comprehension of how cultural restrictions could control sexual freedom. She explained how she tried to reach out to them for peer support, but found little understanding:

I just talked to my friends...It’s kind of like talking to...somebody who doesn’t understand your language. Like, they look at you. Like, “I can see your expressions, but I don’t understand your words.”...It’s like, to them, it’s like, “Well, we are allowed to date. We are allowed to do all this stuff. Well, why aren’t you?” That makes no sense, you know. That’s like somebody saying, “Well, we could eat. Why don’t you just eat?”...Well, we are not allowed to do certain things. There are restrictions. There are boundaries on us set by our parents and we’re just not allowed to cross them.

All the participants highlighted that, in general, mainstream peers started to explore their sexuality at a much earlier age than they and their fellow minority peers did. This sometimes led to misunderstandings between friends:

So, we're not allowed to date. I'd just say [it] plain out 'cause there is no way going around...Kinda like they were...kinda they didn't understand, kinda like they said, "OK"...They were polite about it but it's kinda like, "YA LIVE IN CANADA."...You know, it's kinda like...okay in a way, where, how do you say, "We will take your answer." But it's kinda like, "You're weird," type of thing, you know, 'cause, you know...

This was observed during early adolescence, concurrent with puberty. Opposing views and behaviours surrounding sexuality were a source of division for some peer groups because the messages they learned at home regarding sexuality were inherently different from those of mainstream peers. One participant described feeling awkward about showing her naked body around her mainstream peers:

We decided that we were going to go shopping at the mall. Being 14 year old girls, that love to go shopping for bras, and they were changing in the changing room. Um, we all sort of went into a big changing room, and I realized that I was extremely uncomfortable, and that I had known that already. And I think that is probably cultural in hindsight...They all were Caucasian. They were Canadians and they were much more comfortable changing in front of me than I was...

She further recalled being labelled by her mainstream peers due to modesty about her sexuality, based on her choices in clothing:

So proper and prim. She is such a princess and...a prude...I just wasn't comfortable...I mean I wasn't comfortable looking at my own body...my own breasts...my own stomach...my own growing breasts, puberty, all those things. Not that we were dressed as, in long pants but, for example, I didn't do short skirts. Um, I often wasn't comfortable in little tank tops or bikinis. I never did that either.

She attributed her modesty and shame to messages from her parents regarding sexuality and culture. She described how her sexual identity was linked with her mother's approval, and this resulted in her not attending to her own sexual identity and enjoyment

of her sexuality. She illustrated this dynamic by describing her experience shopping for lingerie:

That's just inherent, right, in what your parents teach you... You don't be shameful and you don't show your body in that way to other people. You want to be respectful to yourself and your grandparents and your ancestors 10 times over. [laughter] Like me wearing a bra would influence that! But I never picked one even growing up with them. I never picked bras that were fun or what my friends perceived as sexy and cute just to make themselves feel good... themselves, you know, picking out things that they would enjoy. I didn't really know what I would enjoy, so I would pick things that my mother would have had... She picked my bras for me. They were simple like hers. They were [laughs] simple bras. They were beige or white and that was it, basic bras.

The participant recollected how shopping for bras was interconnected with her country of origin and reflected the general shame and modesty of her culture:

In fact, I remember when we went bra shopping, she bought them from China. I was actually a teenager and we went to China and the local stores there. And she went [to] a couple of the lingerie. They weren't really lingerie. They were more [laughter] bras and panties, but they were very simple. The whole store was all about cotton and beige and white. [laughter]

All the women had mainstream peers since they largely made up the majority of society but whether and where they felt they belonged was complicated. As a result of conflicting cultural expectations regarding dating many women often questioned their dating desirability not just by comparing themselves with their mainstream peers but also with their minority peers. One participant described how, in her country, it was common for her to elicit sexual attention from men, however, after moving to Canada, she experienced the opposite because she did not embody the North American standards of beauty. She said this was "because growing up in small-town...they had like zero interest." This had a negative effect on her self-esteem, and "not even until I was 19 or 20 did I start to heal from that and to think I am, yeah, I'm not a troll and, yeah...I can have romantic relationships."

Women received the most basic messages of their social status from the Canadian mass media, which appealed to and centered largely on Caucasian subjects and audiences, thus dictating the mainstream standard of beauty. One participant described her desire to “just to blend... You want to become just like them.” She made efforts to straighten her hair and use makeup to try to conform to predominant notions about what was beautiful.

Another participant recounted how minorities were invisible in the media, especially with regards to sexuality. She never “really felt anything on TV that would really portray... visible minorities, period... Growing up I didn’t see a lot of that on TV and certainly didn’t see a lot of them with [a] well-rounded sort of sexuality.” She indicated that the lack of representation of visible minorities in the media was an extension of the social stereotypes of Chinese people as quiet, intelligent, and studious, with “the smart ones, intelligent, not interested, sort of asexual... not really overly sexual in any way.” The very fact of being a minority amongst the masses, and in this case a visible minority, can be enough to take a toll on one’s self-identity. A second-generation Canadian woman reflected on not feeling attractive in a “white society” and how “growing up in an all-white society, so, it just made my tan skin feel more darker... made my dark hair look more darker, you know, made me just feel more prominent and different in society.” She wished she “could have the thin nose like that white girl or the straight blonde hair like that other girl.” She remembered watching people’s reactions to thin, blonde, white women and constantly measuring her attractiveness relative to what she perceived as desirable in Canadian society. She recalled a strong desire to be

accepted and admired as much as her Canadian counterparts. She described modifying what she could to fit into that standard by straightening her hair,

to make yourself, self-esteem, go higher...try to make your hair like that or you try to do this like that...to try to get that kind of acceptance...She looks good and because...you have your hair done like that...You know, I look a little bit like you...a little bit of that star.

More than one woman indicated that they often wished at this stage in their life that they were white or not of colour. One participant stated that there was always a very clear, ingrained message that “the lighter the better.” One woman felt that because she did not have the same accepted racial features, “someone else from another race” would never be attracted to her because she didn’t “have the features that they’re looking for.” Another woman felt impacted by the reality that her race was totally ignored in magazines and on TV; it made her put less value in herself. As a result, she said, “There are times when I wished that, maybe there were times when I wished I wasn’t Indian...Then I wouldn’t have a big nose and I wouldn’t have...that type of thing...the characteristics.” She also exhibited low self-esteem and perhaps internalized racism. As she stated, “Well...I am a fat, hairy Indian woman and everyone else isn’t!”

Another participant described how the media contributed to the stereotype of Filipino women as nurturing and subservient: “Hence, you are weak because you are using more your feelings than your head...Howard Stern...said Filipina as a definition for the word ‘nanny’.”

At this age, one participant explained that she did not even understand the nature of the racial taunts from mainstream peers:

So, when you say minority, honey, you were absolutely the minority...So, we were so infrequently represented in our community that people didn't even get the racial slurs, right?...Like, as I got older they would call me "Paki", which again didn't represent who I am but a little bit closer this time...So I grew up and kids would call me derogatory words related to black people...because they couldn't even encapsulate the category I belonged to, right? Brown skin meant that I was different...and that is how they categorize [you] as different and I fell into that category.

The women in this study who did not marry during this phase of life often had more education and greater economic freedom. Furthermore these women who married later in life were more likely to date or marry interculturally or interreligiously. Women who chose to date people from mainstream society often did so for numerous reasons but most commonly it was due to access. Many women simply did not go to schools where peers from their minority community existed in large numbers if at all. As a result their experiences with minority peers were minimal, which often impacted where women felt like they belonged. More significantly the dating experiences of older siblings, in particular same-gender siblings, impacted the choices of younger siblings on if, how and who they decided to date. Older siblings often set precedents and expectations for younger ones. One woman spoke of how her older sibling's successful interracial marriage allowed her to date and marry more freely without having to worry that her family would not accept her relationship. All the women were aware of gender roles and sexism impacting their lives. During this phase of their lives, they felt more empowered and in control of choices impacting their sexuality. Often their concern was with achieving and maintaining equality in their marriages and relationships. However, challenges or trials persisted when they tried to accomplish these goals or objectives while still maintaining important tenets of their culture.

One participant was fully aware that she negatively stereotyped men from her minority group, but felt it was a sure system to eliminate all possibilities of finding herself in a bad marriage, compounded by extreme gender inequality. She spoke of how she reached this conclusion based on witnessing the traditional gender roles of her parents, as well as siblings' abusive same-race and same-religion marital relationships. When asked if racism and discrimination had impacted her sexuality and who she had dated, her response was the following:

Yes. I will never, ever marry an Indian man ever. I would never, ever...marry an Indian man. I would never date an Indian man ever. Never, just because of the bad relationship that my sisters have been in with Indian men, and the very traditional roles that they have...And, yes, they are quite a bit older than I am, and that's fine...And my dad WAS a very harsh, authoritarian type of person, and I just, I don't know! I'm just very biased against it. I don't want that traditional rule. [I] might even see some people today that still have those traditional rules because that is what they had experienced with their families, right? ...Anyway I just have no interest in being with an Indian man...I mean, obviously I am married now. Before, I had even said to my friends, "I will never marry an Indian person."

She remembered feeling this way from the age of 16. She also felt that her feelings were made more real when realizing that a similar attitude was also shared by an older sister. Participants described being impacted by older siblings' choices in partners or by learning from their experiences. One participant, whose marriage had failed after a lengthy sponsorship process, strongly discouraged a younger sibling, who also wanted to sponsor a man in a similar situation: "My sister had a boyfriend back home when she came here, and I said to her, You are not sending for this guy" [laughter]...because my ex and that guy are from the same city."

In all cases the women could appreciate the idea that "familiarity builds connection" with others, but those that choose to date mainstream peers desired to see

beyond minority “insider cultural idiosyncrasies”. These particular women saw having similar values around gender roles and expectations as more important in a relationship than a shared minority culture. These women also spent the least amount of time in their family’s country of origin and affiliated minimally with their minority language or religion.

Minority Peers, Dating and Sexuality

While mainstream peers were considered to be peers who were white or of Anglo-Saxon ancestry and whose family had lived in Canada for several generations, in contrast, minority peers were racialized first or second-generation Canadians who were often from the same ethno-cultural minority community. As the women reflected on their stories, different dynamics existed between the women and their minority peers. All the women who married during this phase of life specifically stated that out of the two groups they had “much more to offer” in terms of dating attractiveness to their minority partners of the same ethno-cultural background. The things that these women had to offer were language, similar demographic knowledge, certain cultural events, food, humour, song, music and history.

Since all the women stated that due to their minority cultural status, they could not always fit within the mainstream definition of dating. For those women who opted to date they needed to find their own self-determined way to “date”. Often this was not readily understood by mainstream peers but even less so by minority peers. Due to the tensions of dating some women did not even entertain the idea of dating outside of their

minority peer group, even though the selection dating pool was small. Another participant explained that because her boyfriend came from the same minority cultural context, there was little pressure to move very quickly beyond the dating and sweetheart stage.

However, there was tension between the expectations of her mainstream peers and the reality of her dating situation:

Just holding hands. That probably took months for him to hold my hand, and I remember my heart pounding, and that felt really good and, you know, I told my girlfriends that and they were, like, "So, what happened? Did you do it?" "No, what are you crazy?" I was just going to say we held hands.

Sharing a cultural background with her boyfriend provided a safe excuse for the relationship to develop at a comfortable pace, which the participant indicated was a wise and beneficial attribute of their culture.

The only solution or way to cope with the minority cultural stressors of dating was to date within their race and religion. For example, one stated:

Yes, I think it did [matter] and I probably think through my eyes I filtered it, like I filtered it through that cultural piece...I mean, I didn't know it at the time...Like I said, I can count, when I was 18, on my fingers who I thought was attractive, who I thought was cute or who I had a crush on. They were all Chinese...They were my best friend's brothers, for two or three brothers. At some point I always thought they were, you know, because they were the only male people I was interacting with.

In the case of women who chose to date during this phase of life, they often displayed a greater amount of lying and hiding. Those mainstream partners who could tolerate such personalized and inventive ways of dating resulted in more successful intercultural dating relationships. These relationships were successful because mainstream partners were able to show empathy and understanding to their minority partners. This built trust, greater communication and a stronger bond. One woman who married her mainstream boyfriend later in life said that I mean if I have to choose between my husband and my family I would choose my husband. And if you are not going to make that decision and then you are not with the right person”. During this phase of life most participants stressed the importance of feeling a kinship with minority peers to help buffer feelings of isolation that minority youth experience in Canada. Those women who did not have access to minority peer support often felt increased isolation and experienced greater internalized racism. As well, some women avoided their minority peers altogether due to their fear of community gossip and the shaming of their families.

The women who chose to avoid their minority peers did so because they felt they did not meet revered standards of integration into Canadian society. Other participants, however, indicated that they suffered from internalizing many early messages that they had received about the preferred standards of beauty and sexuality within their ethno-cultural family and community. For example, one participant said she felt inadequate because of her skin colour when compared to the beauty standard that set the more “white” or “Caucasian” women’s skin and features as more desirable.

She explained that, “If you look at who is considered beautiful in Filipino norm, most of them are light-skinned...*Misteso*...*Mistesa*...white...light...prominent nose...a Spanish nose...um...as long as you’re white and you have a good nose.”

Another participant attributed her feelings of isolation from her own culture to her body weight. She explained, “When you look at other Indian people, they are all thin. There are few that are overweight, and I just know that I am not like one of them.”

These standards related to topics of not just beauty but also education and how they chose to carry on their minority culture through language and religion as well as practices of dating and sexuality. Women felt increased pressure to not just represent themselves but also family and minority community within the larger Canadian society. Some women felt rejected by their minority community when they could not fulfill these sometimes narrow idealized standards. In some instances the women’s dating choices were impacted by the amount they were exposed to their minority culture, including the amount of time spent in their or their parents’ country of origin. For example, in retrospect, one participant felt incredibly grateful to be able to spend summers and one year of school in her parents’ country of origin. To her this was a positive experience compared to how she felt back in her birth country of Canada, where she felt ashamed of being a minority. This woman stated that she was predominantly attracted to individuals from her culture of origin.

On the other hand, a participant who experienced war in her country of origin made the choice not to date men of her own ethnicity due to their representation of

violence during civil conflict. This participant described how violence played a large part in how she came to perceive her own race:

There's the part, like my nightmares of having black men...trying to kill our family, because that shouldn't impact how I feel, because that was very particular. That has nothing to do with someone that I meet now...the extent...infiltrated my psyche. [It] has impacted the way I think about my fellow black men...That is highly problematic and that is something I need to work on because that is wrong...That is generalizing from a very specific circumstance to a whole group of people.

Parents, Minority Community Dating and Sexuality

From the women's perspective, their parents frequently lacked empathy, knowledge, experience and socialization within the context of dating in Canadian society. In all cases their parents had not gone through adolescence in North America. This lack of experience left a cultural gap and lack of understanding regarding dating. Due to these reasons and particularly during this phase of life dating was unfamiliar, frowned upon, or not permitted by parents. One participant pointed out: "There is no such thing as dating in our religion, in our culture. It's straight down to arranged marriage...Dating is only somewhat allowable if you were engaged."

Parents often communicated passively aggressively when it came to dating. More than one participant described having these feelings of oppression within the family, which was exhibited through these power dynamics of communication:

You suppress your feelings; you'll hide what you're really thinking. You can't ignore what you're really feeling. It's not going to take away what you're thinking. It's just going to suppress it and keep you away from your family even more, to want to share. So, it doesn't solve anything. The communication will limit, be limited. So, really, in essence, you are just suppressing what the problem is.

Within the Canadian context, when it came to discussing the topic of dating, minority parents were seen as more strict in comparison to mainstream parents.

Since all the women came from mainly collective cultures, the loss they or their parents felt from leaving their support networks in their home countries was immense. Parents were accustomed to parenting within a community of extended support networks in communities with similar values to their own; in Canada this did not exist. Consequently, all the women reported that the minority community took on a particular role in substituting for the loss of support systems from back home. Parents utilized their local minority community to parent their children collectively. One participant described the consequences of dating and community gossip:

I never even took that risk 'cause I had a big family and family, of course, my brother and siblings, have friends and so and so. Being in Winnipeg, word travels and, so and so would say, "I saw your sister or your daughter somewhere." And then you get busted and then you're in shit. In BIG SHIT, you know? So I would never even take that risk 'cause even just the anxiety. I'm thinking it's not worth it, you know? So I would just discourage myself and say, "Forget it!" Even if I

did get asked out, which I did get asked out growing up...I'd say, "Hell, no! If my father found out, I'll be, like, shhhhuwit" [cut/slitting of the neck sound].

This helped ensure that women did not date or dated only in an acceptable way that met minority community standards. Often, religion and minority culture were interlinked by community events that centred on religion. Immigrant or newcomer families tended to group around their religious communities, and sometimes more so now that they were in Canada. Some women reported that this made their families more religious. Women reported having to sift through complex religious identities at a very young age, which contributed to feelings of internalized racism and isolation and increased the intergenerational cultural gap between herself and her parents:

You know...I'm not Muslim. I don't want to be different...You have to understand, when your religion and when your culture isn't being acknowledged or celebrated or even accepted...I'm not going to be, like, I'm Muslim...And having my mom and dad support me wasn't enough. Like, that is not enough!

Religion played a major part in determining ideals and values around sexuality. More than one participant recalled that their earliest articulated messages of sexuality came from religion. In all instances, the women stated that premarital sex was not allowed and attributed this understanding to their minority culture and religion. Women reported that although there was not much dialogue around these expectations the message was that "premarital sex is wrong."

Values around homosexuality were also attributed to religious values, and the message was that homosexuality was wrong. More than one woman stated that she would

not even consider being in a same-sex relationship because it is “against our religion” or they would be “thrown out of the house” and it would “rip apart our family.” Other than this, awareness of homosexuality (both of the self and others) was not prevalent, and most participants indicated that their knowledge on same-sex relationships was so sparse that it was not really internally processed at all. All the participants expressed that any other messages that they received implied that it was wrong.

The families of each participant subscribed to a specific religion. Some followed the more dominant religion of Christianity, while others followed minority religions such as Hinduism and Islam. In addition, traditions were also observed, such as filial piety in which dutiful respect or regard is expressed for ancestors, parents and the homeland. Although these standards were the same for both sons and daughters, the expectations were often very different. Women were first taught these gender roles at home through direct and indirect messages. They learned these gender roles by watching their parents or extended family relationships. From their earliest memories, all the participants stated that gender roles were apparent at home. One participant described how her parents’ relationship was a reflection of the gender inequality in their country of origin, where women are expected to stay home and raise children while the men worked and met their sexual needs. For some, this resulted in them entrenching cultural stereotypes about their own group. She reiterated,

Men are sexual beings and...they’re going to get needs fulfilled their sexual needs anyway; they can, whether or not they get that from their spouse or partner. Um, it’s just, I don’t know, you know, for some reason I just think then they’re very macho and they think that a man needs to work, and a woman belongs in the

kitchen, and a woman takes care of the kids. When I think of Latin men, I think of pigs, and I think of players, and I think they are cheaters...

One participant regarded seeking more extensive cultural integration for herself as a way to neutralize to some extent the predominant cultural views surrounding gender in her own community:

I grew up with that [traditional gender-based division of labour] in my family, with my dad; with my mom...I'm very sensitive to that. I personally don't see myself dating a Latin man because, unless maybe they grew up here most of their life, but if somebody has lived there most of their life...

The participants recollected gender inequalities in the expectations of how they were to act within the larger community and in the home. Gender roles or expectations were also communicated in the way parents treated sons and daughters. One participant described the double standard that her father had regarding dating for her and her brother:

My dad was very extreme, VERY extreme, like, "YOU WILL NOT! GIRLS GO TO HELL FOR THAT!" That's just, like, UNACCEPTABLE! Um, my brother got the same message, yes...but our lives were different, right?...He was allowed to go out. He was allowed to go to dances...and he was allowed to do all that stuff, but it was the same message, though he would not do it...But all I could see was girls had to, like, be virgins but guys could have sex with everything that walked.

Another participant alluded to the fact that because the woman is always the chosen one and the man is the chooser, there is a higher standard expected of women:

“Well, it’s more, I guess they think that men, you know, they can do whatever they want...but, you know, in the end man has choice for who they select and marriage and stuff.” In regards to dating, the women learned about gender inequality from their parents’ distinct attitudes and behaviours towards their male and female children. They observed differences in how male children were treated in comparison to themselves. Overall males were allowed much more freedoms to date. These gender roles were later reinforced within the minority community via gossip. If girls were seen by other minority community members spending one-on-one time with a male or socializing in a club, gossip would operate as regulator to their behaviour. Gossip would often be relayed back to parents. The outcome would be shame brought not just to the individual but to all members of the family unit. As a result siblings, particularly brothers, would become responsible for their sister’s sexuality or dating practices. The study subjects showed that pre-immigration, gender-specific experiences and stereotypes were often internalized and attributed to minority culture and then carried forward with the minority community members into the cultural integration process. For example, one participant immigrated with pre-existing stereotypes of men and violence. She explained that, “The experiences that impacted me were actually experiences in Africa...which were incredibly...like the community we were in back in Africa was extremely patriarchal...So, there was a lot violence perpetrated by men against women.” Another participant demonstrated also how pre-immigration experiences of violence were ingrained in her parents’ relationship and travelled with them into the Canadian integration process.

Having male siblings made it easier to demonstrate the cultural double standards surrounding gender roles when it came to dating, freedom and sexuality. Whereas

daughters were largely restricted and protected, sons were allowed to experiment with dating and sex with girls that they had no intention of marrying. One participant described how brothers were

held up to a different ruler than I was, for sure...My brothers got to stay out later than I did. They got to have more freedom, period. They were allowed to go out...I had to call in to her during certain time frames. I had to be home by 10, you know. I had much more restraints than my brother did. So my brothers got to do a lot more, a lot more things than I did. My brother...dated more than one girl.

Stereotypes regarding gender, race and sexuality were also played out in media in the participants' countries of origin, which suggests that the media can be a vehicle for transferring values from the country of origin to Canada. One participant explained how TV shaped views of women's sexuality:

Guys kind of just expect my body to be a certain type or be shaped in a particular way. Um, sexuality in the Latin culture, I mean a big part of our culture, I guess, is what they call "telenovelas", which are soap operas and...my parents watch it, and it's not just my mom but it's my dad, too...All I know is "Latin Lover".

[Laughter] No, but you see the storylines and there's just the idea that it's [sexuality is] OK in a way or it's expected.

Within the minority community, gossip was often employed in order to police gender role dynamics. Many women described the restrictions they faced while being under the microscope of their ethnic communities, especially the parents of their potential

husbands. Suitability for marriage was judged based on a girl's conformity to the community's standards and norms for appropriate sexual behaviour. Women's sexuality was linked to their worth in the community and women were made to feel like purchasable objects. Being involved in culturally unacceptable behaviour meant, "The piece gets less shiny. You know, it's more tarnished and so, like, you know, less purchasable." Gaining a negative reputation basically ruined a girl's chances of being an acceptable mate and, as the same participant also explained:

They are not going to allow [it] even if their son says, "Oh, I like that girl." No, if the parents find out, "Oh, she does this," then it's like, "NOPE!" And they will say to their son, "No," and son will...most likely will say, "OK"... 'cause they will most likely not want to also upset their parents.

One participant described how being implicated with going to bars or clubbing was tantamount to being "a wild girl":

If someone wants to approach someone's daughter about marriage and then they hear all this stuff, "Oh she goes out clubbing, she does this," they are going to look at her as, she doesn't have values, who doesn't have, you know, self-respect. So, if a suitor came to see a prospect for marriage for your daughter and they hear that, "Oh, she goes to bars and stuff," then they would be like, "Oh well, I don't want to have anything to do with it."

Avoidance of shame from community disapproval was a motivator in the way the women's sexuality was handled. One participant explained that her parents "were more worried about pregnancy because it would totally bring shame... They never talked about

sexually transmitted infections or things like that...It's more about, you know, you're not a virgin anymore and that's shameful, and that's shameful for your husband." Parents often bowed to the pressure of the community and expedited the marriage process so that, as one participant described, they "won't look like a very lax parent, you know, that they are responsible and that they worry and that they have taken care of this serious problem."

For the most part, participants noted that their parents were particularly aware of how their family was viewed within their minority community, sometimes even to the point of preferring that their children date outside of it. For example, one participant explained that "dating someone who is Filipino was kind of like 'be careful' because you don't know what's going to bite you in the ass, because people's families talk." Her aunt "preferred even more if I dated someone out of my race," in order to avoid the gossip dynamic. In some cases interracial relationships were described as more ideal: "I think for them and their experiences with their friends, the ones within an interracial relationship have a better relationship than the ones in the Filipino relationship."

Dating and Marriage

Collective cultural experience impacted the way that some women approached cultural integration. The participants described contrasting and comparing their lives with those of their family members when deciding what choices were right and wrong for them, based on the results of decisions made by their siblings or extended family. One

participant described how the mistakes of certain women led others to be sceptical about marrying someone from their home country:

Some have sponsored their husbands to come here and the husbands left them. So I think for them, they were more cautious in that way. I think it's just there are a lot of women that came to the city at a very young age working in garment [industry], working in factories. And traditionally you're kind of like, when you're here, the men from the Philippines either have one goal - one goal is to come to Canada - or two, just the reality of settling to Canada.

She also described how a lack of dating experience for first-generation Canadian women left them at a disadvantage when choosing a mate in their home countries:

You don't be in a relationship. You don't know how to have all those checkpoints, um, being in a relationship, because you're just out of practice. Filipino women really aren't allowed to date, right? So, when you go home you find a nice charming man, you fall in love and you bring them here...and you just don't know how.

As well, the pressure of an instant serious commitment due to arranged marriage created more tension once couples were faced with the reality of cohabitation and marriage, as described by one participant:

So, when that happens, you don't know how to act. You have someone who has never been in a relationship. So, how can that person act? And then, when you are together, it's in a serious commitment. It's marriage! Maybe that's another strain

to it, too...It's nice and happy because you're far away from each other, but when you're together, then that's a completely different story.

Siblings could also be a great source of support while families integrated into Canadian culture. One participant recollected her brother being one of the only individuals who could empathize and help her navigate cultural or religious expectations around sexuality. On the other hand, another participant stated feeling fearful that if she rebelled against cultural or religious rules around sexuality not only would she risk being beaten up by her father but also by her brothers:

With our culture women and their body and sexuality is finely protected, very protected. It is something that you don't play around with. It's something that you don't flaunt. It's very protected, where the fathers and the brothers are like, you know, "Until she's married we don't let this!"

She described the combination of protection and suppression offered by her male family members, where it is necessary to maintain a women's good name and prevent her from losing her reputation and being treated like an object. At the same time, there is no clear line about how far they can go to do that:

Some people lie. They say, like, they slept with you...and that is something that the men of our culture know...So that is why they are very, very overly protective, and sometimes when they do that they forget that, "Oh, you're suppressing, you know, holding me, too." You know, they forget where the lines are. Just because those people are looking bad....and, "You're protecting me, but

what about a little bit of freedom for me? You know, give me that chance to go out there!”

One participant recalled how her brothers helped chaperone her relationship. She spoke in an appreciative way about her brothers watching over her:

I think my brothers were pretty protective of me, and brothers are good that way sometimes. [laughter] They knew him before ‘cause my mom knew him. So, it’s not like he was a complete stranger. But they were protective, too. They would check out what we were doing in the living room.

As well, brothers could often be used as a mechanism of defence against bullying and racism. One participant shared a positive memory about how her brothers stuck up for her against a bully at school:

There was this boy...that was bugging me all the time and he would tease me, call me names and pretend he was Chinese, you know, slant his eyes and those types of things. One day he started making fun of me and my brothers were behind me, and they were like, “Do you have a problem, asshole?” And they started pushing him around and I was like, “YEAH!”...Having older brothers was good and I used them once.

Self-definition

Based on their personality attributes and settlement experiences, all the women made personal choices on how or if they would date based on their unique circumstances. Therefore all the women had to be very inventive and pioneer their own self-determined definition of dating. For all the women, dating in the Canadian context was a source of anxiety and tension. In order for the women to cope with such opposing perspectives, they felt like they had no choice but to decompartmentalize their identities.

Decompartmentalizing was a coping mechanism the women used to separate their identities due to the incredible guilt brought on by defying their culture. Each individual had a minority self and a mainstream self because during identity development it was impossible to be both since they strictly opposed one another. On the one hand, they expressed a desire to explore their sexuality, but this was always at odds with their cultural or familial expectations. As a result some women chose to marry, others decided to put off dating while concentrating on schooling, and a third group chose to “decompartmentalize” their identities. Decompartmentalizing was seen as necessary in order for women to deal with the stress of lying about dating and having sex behind their parents’ back. Often the participants expressed that they could not talk to their parents. Instead they spoke with service providers:

We learned about in school a lot and I went on birth control, right?...Yes, I went to my doctor...don’t know how I did that. I don’t know how! My parents were obviously uninvolved. They never did find out. Well, my mom actually did when I was like 18 or 19, found a purse that had an empty pill container in it and all she said to me as she gave me my purse...she said, “Whose purse is this?” I said,

“That it is mine.” And she said, “If your father ever finds this he is going to kill you.” And that is all she ever said. So, she knew. She is not stupid. My mom knew and her concern was keeping it from my dad.

All the women had unique circumstances which impacted if and how they chose to date. Some women had more freedom of choice than others and they differed in personality but the way in which the choices they made manifested could be organized into three categories. The choices that these women made during the ages of 15-20 regarding dating ultimately laid the ground work for the rest of their lives. Overall the women saw that they had three options: Marriage, suspended dating and pre-marital sex. Out of the nine women interviewed for this qualitative study three women fell into each category.

Marriage

The women in this category married at 18-19 years of age. To these participants marriage equalled sexual freedom, but also economic freedom from parents or guardians. One participant explained that she chose to marry at the age of 19 so that she would no longer feel oppressed by her parents and could finally take the step towards becoming a wife, mother and therefore a free woman:

I think that I wanted that so I could leave my home and have freedom...the baby and me. Being married was freedom...I could be free and do whatever I wanted

and I wouldn't have to listen to my dad or my mom...and I pushed. I wanted to get married.

Since dating was forbidden, if the women wanted to explore their sexuality they were expected to do so within a marriage. Marriage was seen as a form of protection to prevent women from having sex or children out of matrimony. For another participant her parents were adamant that if she were given the freedom to attend university and interact with peers from different cultures and the opposite sex, it would result in the destruction of her virtue. She explained that her parents' logic was that when you go to university, you have more chances to meet people, "and more chances you can go 'avara'. 'Avara' means in our language 'astray'." As well, due to the family's economic dynamic, there was no room for flexibility in that all three daughters were expected to be married within one trip back to their home country so that her parents could "get their 'faroahs' [responsibilities] dealt with and off...kind of like a three-in-one shot; get it done with. Let's move on to the next. At least we can say we've done our responsibility."

She described her frustration and resentment at being denied the opportunity to experiment by interacting with peers, making friends, and "going astray" or being able to achieve a post-secondary degree and become more adjusted to Canadian society on her own terms. She recounted the loss of these opportunities that were within her reach as being depressing. Another participant described how her parents were eager to arrange her marriage in Canada:

Because they find that it's their duty as a parent to have their daughter married off as soon as possible. So, this way, she cannot get involved and have any

problems...Because it looks good that, um, their duties have been fulfilled and that they are not being so flexible. When it comes down to, you know, that she won't be into trouble by, like, dating and whatever because she is married now, you know, so that's taken care of.

She explained her parents' justifications further:

They are very limited with their resources as well...They have their own pressures and what not and it was the end of the school year...and here I am just, like, you know, I want to go to university...and I want to...you know...even show me scholarships because, you know, and this and that...No one helped me with anything...and my mom was just, like, "Oh, we need to save up for the wedding..."I didn't even want to get married...and it was all like something that was forced upon.

This participant looked to her school counsellor, seeking advice as to how to mediate between herself and her parents, who wanted her to have an arranged marriage. She described wishing for someone to help change the course of her life, and how the school counsellor was ineffective:

You know what I would want to hear more than anything?... "We'll make a difference... We will help you get to your goals." I wanted to go to university. I really wanted to become a pharmacist but my parents won't let me... I wish there was someone saying to me, you know, "I know there is someone that can help you, who can convince your family to allow you to go."... I would have been so

happy...I would have been sooo HAPPY...I even went to the school counsellor, I did...and, um, I didn't get anything really out of it.

All the women who chose to get married did so with men from their parents' country of origin. The women in this category, or their parents, could not find culturally suitable partners in Canada. As a result, they travelled back home in search of a partner or incidentally met one while visiting there. Each one of these marriages failed due to conflicting views on gender roles and appropriate cultural integration, lying about one's qualifications/economic affairs, or emotional abuse and domestic violence. All the women had children.

Suspended Dating

All the women in this category chose to suspend dating in order to focus on graduate and doctorate studies. Since dating was such a taboo topic, latent with conflicting messages and values, some women chose to avoid dating altogether. To these women and their parents, education took priority over dating. Overall these women felt like they were expected to ignore or neglect dating and the development of their sexuality. As a result, the women for the most part suspended dating, and concentrated on their education to find economic independence. Only once this was obtained did they feel comfortable exploring that aspect of themselves. Although marriage rarely took a backseat to education, for one woman, education was emphasized so much that it became her parents' sole expectation, and therefore she felt no real pressure to marry. She

explained, “My dad is still devastated but I don’t have my PhD. But I don’t think he’s particularly concerned because he hasn’t mentioned that I’m not married.”

One second-generation Canadian illustrated that her parents encouraged education but not dating: “They always enforced education, so education was always the priority...so dating would always have to be secondary.”

For one participant, education was articulated as a “crutch” or a “ticket” to overcome many of the systemic injustices within society. Her mother, who had been deprived of an education due to strict gender roles in her culture of origin, was adamant that her daughters take advantage of their freedom in Canada and therefore pushed them to become educated. The participant described how the encompassing process of her devotion to education acted like a buffer between herself and the pitfalls of growing up as a female from a minority background in Canada. She illustrated, “I could do anything I want, so I don’t think I necessarily identified with the ethnic component of that because I was given another crutch and socialized with that idea that education...would fix it all!” Some resented this but saw this as a compromise between their wants and their parents’ expectations. To them the next step after education was then to date or marry. Dating was also avoided due to the stress of community gossip. These women were also concerned about finding partners with high intercultural aptitudes, possessing the ability to be respectful of their families and culture. One participant who is in her early 30’s and is unmarried explained:

I like someone now...He can be a [topic of minority community] gossip so I have to...either bite the bullet or forget this person...[laughter] I have to know if this

person is worth it...It's time consuming, yeah...but in order for me to explore it I have to jump in it to know that it's good, right?

Some women reported that in university they could find a more diverse dating pool. They could find dating partners with higher aptitudes for intercultural learning as well as less sexual orientation discrimination. Overall, homosexuality became less of an issue for women who felt more comfortable embracing a more individualistic milieu. Either way, all the participants recognized that in any cultural context there would be negative consequences to homosexuality. All of these women continued on to a Masters or doctorate level of education. At the time this research took place, two women in this category had never married. One woman was divorced with children.

Premarital Sex

The women in this category were the most rebellious based on minority cultural standards. Even though premarital sex was not allowed, each of these women experimented and accessed birth control from mainstream health care workers (i.e., doctors) and mainstream school counsellors. One woman retrospectively recommended:

It's a great opportunity to have another adult other than your parent offer that support, so, maybe, from health professionals and educational [professionals]. And maybe offering, having a poster up there saying, you know, talk about your sexuality, um, whatever, after school between 3 and 6 o'clock. It's a closed group, you know. We will only have 10 people come. If you're interested in coming, then come. It might have been good...I didn't want to get pregnant. I knew

that...So it was actually my guidance counsellor who actually helped me figure out how to get free birth control, what they do for you, what the side effects are, those kinds of things. 'Cause I didn't have a parent...If you don't have a parent that is willing to teach that, then you need somebody else. In that case it is the guidance counsellor, the health professionals, the sex ed. teacher, those kinds of things. Maybe having the opportunity for that would be good, and I think for certain groups you are going to have to start at a much more basic level.

The women in this category stated that their parents were the least involved and had sibling support to help navigate dating. All these women were in monogamous relationships with males whose parents were acquainted with their parents. These women expressed the tremendous guilt for having had premarital sex, particularly due to their use of decompartmentalization. During their discovery of self, for example, they felt they could only be the "Canadian me" or the "Chinese me" at a given moment. In order to gain acceptance, belonging and maturity or to have experience in both lifestyles, the women felt they had no choice but to take on one person or the other to discover which cultural schema best fit them and their self-definition. This was not an easy process and the women reported "not liking" themselves very much, especially during early identity development.

As one participant recollected, pressures from both her parents and her culture forced her to hide and lie, which resulted in feelings of shame and dirtiness surrounding her sexual relationship with her future husband. She explained that decompartmentalizing was the only way that she could cope with the duality:

When I lied to my parents...I kind of decompartmentalized. So, when my husband [boyfriend at the time] and I had sex, I didn't think at all about that. I just cut off myself from that cultural piece and that, maybe, kind of, in some ways, disassociation in linking those two things because I did feel uncomfortable. I did feel like, "Oh, my parents would be so upset" or I didn't like lying. You know, I would just lie to them and tell them, you know, "I'm going to a movie," and we don't. We'd go to a hotel room. Very, very, very, it's very difficult to be open and have a good time, like, to feel complete pleasure in that and be in the moment. You're kind of like, "Oh, I just deceived my parents," and that felt dirty, already didn't feel good. So I think in order to do that, I sort of just, um, disassociated that piece and I wasn't, I WASN'T Chinese at the time, you know?...So, maybe that's part of how I reconciled the two things.

These women all completed or are in the process of completing graduate studies and doctorate degrees. At the time this research took place, most of the women were married with children. One woman remains single and continues to date. The women in the third category were the only participants who successfully accessed doctors and school counsellors when growing up.

The Future

In this section, Phase Two of the women's lifespan (20 to 45 years of age) will be examined. All but one woman accessed counsellors to help them deal with their cultural integration process as adults and mothers. Each woman reported that they benefitted from

the experience although they wished that they could have had access to counsellors from their own ethnic background. All the participants recommended that service providers be ethnically diverse and that there be further research into this area. Their counsellors operated from a strength-based approach and helped the women articulate negative self dialogues of internalized racism. Counselling helped women navigate complex issues involving conflict between systems and cultures. Therefore these mainstream counsellors were particularly helpful when helping the women deal with their divorces and educated them in child-raising techniques and tools conducive to Canadian laws. In comparison to the way in which they grew up, all the women talked more openly about sexuality and relationships with their own children. One woman, as a second-generation Canadian, illustrated a perspective on parenting different from her parents' view:

I recognize that, you know what? My kids are not me. My kids are separate beings, and my rule is not to enforce upon them what I think is the right person for them to marry...I have my preferences, for sure. What's more important than the ethnicity and religion of who they marry is having somebody that respects them, marrying somebody who loves them unconditionally, marrying somebody who supports him unconditionally, marrying somebody who is hard-working, and helps provide for them, marrying somebody who helps them to resort towards work and getting their dreams, marrying somebody who partners with them, marrying somebody [who] has committed.

Those women who didn't have children also vowed that they would talk more openly, starting at an earlier age, with their children about sexuality. All the women stated this under the expectation that their child would date and have pre-marital sex

when growing up in Canada. All the women stressed that they would advocate or lie to extended family about their children's sexuality so that their children wouldn't have to decompartmentalize as they had. All the women were open their children dating interculturally and saw this experience as a positive developmental practice. The women were more concerned about their children being in relationships that were non-abusive and demonstrated gender equality.

All the women recognized that one of the most effective ways to combat internalized racism as well as isolation due to culture was to assist in finding well-adjusted peers of the same ethnic background for their children. One woman suggested that support and information be placed on the Internet. Other women chose to send her children to a religious school whereas another woman chose to move back to her parents' country of origin. This was all done with the specific purpose of giving their children a sense of belonging, where they can parent as single mothers in a collective environment and, most importantly, "not lose" their children in Canadian society. All the women said they continually struggled with working through their internalized racism and at times saw it reflected back to them in discussions with their children. All the interviewees attested to the insufficient resources available for young women struggling with the cultural conflicts of sexuality. Thus some women have now taken it upon themselves to help young women whose lives are at risk when their self-definition of sexuality does not meet with family or minority community standards. The women had taken on this responsibility informally because they felt the Canadian system was unaware of how to empathize or empower minority women who are dealing with the type of violence that may occur if their family is shamed due to the woman's self-definition of sexuality. In

various cases, relocation and identity protection have been necessary to protect women from honour-related violence and killings. It was recognized that often in Canada there are little support services for women experiencing non-intimate family violence within a minority cultural context in Canada. One participant described a typical reaction or intervention from a Canadian service provider if a woman was being “forced” by her family to marry:

She doesn't know what to do. What should she do? “Well, she should bring her family in and we'll have counselling”...”Are you for real?!?!? Did you hear anything I just told you?” What the hell? “Well, is she over the age of 18?” “Yeah, of course, she is over the age of 18!” “Then she has nothing!” So, over the age of 18 there's no supports, right? This is the system we live in...”Sorry, I can't help you.”...These support aren't readily available... We are not set up... We are bringing in, bringing in, bringing in people, but we are not helping them.

All women's stories were uniquely powerful and exemplified inventive methods for cultural adaption. All women had a dominant internal dialogue which at times made them feel very alone in their struggles. The purpose of this thesis was to explore the concept of a community programming or support for female immigrant/refugee youth. What was clear throughout research findings is that these women had many recommendations on how they intend to merge cultural values around sexuality in the multi-cultural context of Canada. Furthermore women listed the values and their impact on sexuality which they did and did not want to pass along to the next generation such as their own children and newcomer youth. Their stories can be helpful for enriching programming to assist immigrants/refugees during the long and complicated process of settlement in Canada. As a result, for many of these women it was not easy to articulate experiences around sexuality, culture and most specifically racism. We can continue to

learn from their struggles with cultural adaptation as they take on the complex roles of partner and parent. At the very least these women's stories can be helpful information or mentorship to newcomer youth, their parents, racialized minority communities and of course service providers.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the literature review in conjunction with the information acquired from the data. A more in-depth assessment concerning the limitations of the data collected will follow. The examination of the limitations will focus on the main drawbacks of the research related to the data collection process, such as the method used, time constraints, and the complexities of this particular topic. A final examination and discussion of the literature and data will precede the concluding chapter, which will propose recommendations and assess implications for policy and practice.

Limitations and Strengths

As with any study there were a variety of limitations to the research. The following first limitation of this project mainly resulted from the topic of study. Many of the women stated that sexuality was a very sensitive or “taboo” topic, and that they had never spoken about it very openly before; so for some this was an unfamiliar event. As the literature review indicated, the uniqueness of this study makes it difficult to compare the results with previous or similar studies. The sample size (retrospective life stories of 9 women) is fairly small, so care had to be taken not to make undue generalizations. As a result of the recruitment process and the sensitivity of the topic, it was impossible to represent women in all types of social circumstances. Although anonymity was assured to

get participant co-operation, many women who agreed to speak about their sexuality did so because they were service providers themselves, had a prior relationship with the researcher or interviewer, or agreed to participate after hearing about the experiences of other participants.

Furthermore, the researcher cannot be separated from the interview or data analysis process. The researcher's appearance, marital status, parental status, personality, values, philosophies, goals and interview style can all be influencing factors that can create potential bias of the participants towards the researcher. Although in this instance the researcher was a woman of similar age, colour and immigration status, stereotypes, judgments or assumptions may still have existed.

The participants' individual frames of references could have caused them to feel confused, to express avoidance, and possibly even elicited different answers from them. As much as there were similarities among the group of women, there was also diversity. Language was an issue of concern at times since many women referenced other languages to describe their cultures and family of origins' philosophies on sexuality (i.e., "ghorie", "faroahs", "basharam", or "celarhis"). For further illustration, one participant explains the hierarchy of sexual orientation in her culture of origin:

"Lesbians in the Filipino norm or culture, it's kind of the lowest of the acceptability in sexuality... heterosexual. First, gay men pairing is OK and then the last is women to women and probably the very last would be bi-sexuality or 'Celarhis' and that usually has a really bad connotation"

In these instances, even if I thought I knew the translation, I thought it was useful to use their term in an example to confirm whether I understood it correctly. For example, when in discussion with one woman, I reiterated the term “basharam”:

“So, growing up with the mentality of “basharam” where you are not allowed to talk back or don’t question your parents...how has that influenced the way you raise your kids?”

The main purpose of this was to clarify how and why this participant chose to use this word to describe her personal experiences. Although the women had no problem translating their understanding of specific terms that impacted their sexuality, translation was informal and strictly based on their interpretation.

One of the strengths of the interview process was that it allowed the questions to remain consistently open-ended. Open-ended questions and probes were posed to the participants, who tackled a multitude of scenarios and topics to provide breadth to the range of experiences of first and second-generation Canadian ethno-racial minority women regarding their sexuality. Yet within the spectrum of the questions, issues around sexuality, immigration, racism and sexism emerged. Follow-up questions helped further achieve the objective of examining how their culture(s) continually impacted their sexuality. It also became apparent that such culture(s) could provide potential supports to new immigrants as well as parenting recommendations to the third generation of ethno-racial Canadians as they integrate into Canadian society.

Some interviews were longer than others due to participant feedback, while others were shorter due to time constraints based on what schedules allowed. The interview

questions often required women to think retrospectively and at times some women had to use effort to access their past due to issues with long-term memory and/or trauma. For example, one woman paused to reflect, stating out loud, “umm...let me remember,” “ummm...that was so long ago. I don’t remember but I do remember this,” or “so they tell me...I tend to block things out.” Although all the women could recall past events, some had more difficulty than others. Therefore it took them longer to recall or describe their experiences. Interviews ranged from 2 to 4.8 hours. Those individuals who had difficulty recalling past events or who tended to contradict themselves had longer, more time-consuming interviews. Contradicting oneself often further emphasized the coping tool of decompartmentalization because it took time to shift between cultural lenses. For example, one woman referred interchangeably to Canada and her parents’ birth country as “home”. As well, participants’ perceptions may have been altered by the passage of time and selective recall. For example, when talking about sensitive issues the women at times tended to also reframe experiences in a more resilient fashion. For example, one woman noted feeling conflicted as she told her stories of racism:

“I feel like a paradox because at some point I’m telling you, the things I connected to were the bigger epistemological things like gender and discrimination, right? I certainly connected to racism. I did connect to racism. Of course, I connected. I’d be stupid to say that I didn’t connect to racism.”

Since this was a qualitative research study, information was rich but had to be generalized into categorical form. This was a challenge because while each participant’s narrative was unique and specific, it had to be aggregately described or reported. Furthermore, the use of narrative analysis itself was a limitation since interpretation was

based on the researcher's context and ability to balance between generalizations while playing close attention to very specific narrative cues.

Personal Impact

As a racialized second-generation Canadian woman, I am also invested in exploring my own experiences and interest in feminist ideas. I have tried to observe how my own social location affects my understanding of how the endless evolution of one's sexuality is continually impacted by common variables such as race, age, gender and intersecting cultural norms and values. As any diligent social work student would, I have made it my duty to observe my own social location in order to understand how sexuality evolves throughout the lifespan of a racialized immigrant woman.

The women in my research often expressed an unspoken understanding by stating, "You know what I mean" or "I'm sure you've experienced the same." Although it was easy for me to empathize with them and recognize the affirmation they seemed to seek, I resisted the temptation and kept probing for the uniqueness of their experience. On the other hand, many of the participants had agreed to contribute their stories to the research because we were previously acquainted and trust had already been built. I believe this made the women more forthcoming when speaking in detail about their experiences. This was helpful when analyzing the data because I knew the women and their stories well. Yet, it added to the dynamics, which were already challenging, because it made the data extensive. As a result, I made an effort to look at these women's experiences through an

academic lens, relating their experiences to previous academic research and doing my best to remain productively unbiased by keeping questions open-ended. All in all, when approaching this research it was most helpful for me to be consistently aware of values and philosophies that undoubtedly affected “what I saw” and how I responded to it. Although my awareness caused me to struggle in this way, it also allowed me to be mindful of the women’s experiences while separating them from my own. My own second-generation status allowed me to have a privileged perspective to reflect from, since it provided a viewpoint that enabled me to be very cognizant of the cultural integration process those generations of individuals and families have undergone across their life spans.

Literature Review

To help understand the findings of this study, I will compare and contrast the results with the previously mentioned literature review. The literature reiterates that all adolescents, including both first and second-generation Canadians adolescents, which are of particular interest in this case, develop their identities within Micro Systems, Mezzo Systems and Macro Systems. The Macro System refers to the larger mainstream global community. The Mezzo System entails immediate and local communities. The Micro System involves personal connections with influential people in our everyday lives. The Self System refers to one’s power over and relationship with oneself. This type of ecosystem, described by Desai and Subramanian (2003), is illustrated by the role of

ethnicity in identity formation: “socially constructed with a complex of psychological processes, identity development must be understood in relation to its social and historical context” (p. 130). In more than one instance, the women in my study (at some point in their lives) all felt like cultural outcasts due to their specific experiences of circumstances that have developed over centuries of colonization and cultural migration. Further, in accordance with these concepts, self-identity (negative or positive) is developed through interaction with others. As this study and the participants in my research confirm, mainstream culture still greatly impacts social standards within all ecosystems. According to their descriptions, dominant social standards influenced these racialized women’s choices and actions around sexuality well into adulthood and parenthood. From an academic or analytical viewpoint, many women suffered at some point in their life from racism and, in particular, internalized racism. Lopes (2011) presents an explanation of how “internalized racism demonstrates the power, pervasiveness and persuasiveness of institutional, social and individual racism. Internalized racism is an impact of racism on First Nations, Metis, Inuit and racialized people. In a society in which racism is part of the fabric of society, and embedded in every institution, all of us (White, First Nations, Metis, Inuit and racialized people) learn to accept as accurate or true, the social and institutional norms that devalue racialized and Aboriginal peoples, and position White people and ‘whiteness’ as superior. It requires great effort to question, challenge and reject racism” (to be published.)

It also be recognized is that the women’s choices around sexuality were also impacted not just by their settlement experiences or the relative receptiveness of mainstream Canadian society, but also factors related to their countries of origin. Although some more than

others many women still remained connected to their countries or cultures of origin through media, family and language. For example the women, including second-generation immigrants, often felt more represented in the media of their family's country of origin rather than in Canadian media. One participant born and raised in Canada, explains why she gravitated more to media that reflected her minority cultural norms, such as Bollywood movies and musical entertainment, that she felt were unlike the Canadian media:

“Yeah, I did...to look for...something that you are familiar, like, you...relate to 'cause you know what our cultural lifestyle [is] and then you see it on and you don't see that on normal TV, right? So...Yeah [gravitated more towards Bollywood]... 'cause you know what is acceptable in your family and that is something you can have in your household. So you want to do things also that's acceptable and something that interests you. So that was a bit of both.”

However, in some cases, the women felt that they were not well reflected in either country's media, which they indicated made them feel severely isolated. Dasai and Subramanian (2003) also reported that their participants recognized skin colour, education and media as identifying markers of cultural supremacy and language superiority in the dominant mainstream culture from which they were excluded, but they buffered these negative impacts by embracing bi-culturality, that is, two value systems and related expectations (pp. 153-154). Within my research, many women also reported using bi-culturality as a way to cope, yet upon reflection later saw it as an unhealthy mechanism, which one participant labelled as “decompartmentalization”.

Macro System: The Larger Mainstream Global Community

As also shown in the literature, the participants referred to the media in their stories as a major source of information regarding mainstream culture and social norms through its use of images and language. For example, one participant agreed by giving the following example:

“Trying to find ways to...become like what the Caucasian people look like...you know, try to get my hair straight but, you know, back then there were no straighteners. You know, I have curly, curly hair...and then, you know, like...you try to find foundation that make your skin look lighter because you want to look fair like them. You are trying to, you know, what’s the word? Like, I mean, just to blend... You want to become just like them, but now that there is more acceptance, especially in media, you know, of coloured woman, of colour, it’s like it just allows us to grow more and to say, ‘I am also a woman of colour,’ and you know, you know it just makes you stand up and say, ‘OK! I am happy with the way I look. I am happy with my curly hair, the way God made me,’ you know? Yeah. So, that’s about it”

Desai and Subramanian (2003) support the view that the media helps establish the dominant individualistic mainstream Canadian culture through the portrayal of cultural stereotypes that reinforce mainstream “language superiority and cultural supremacy” (pp. 141-142).

One participant talked in depth about how the lack of positive representation of black women in the media affected her self-esteem while growing up. Later in life, she found the predominance of images of Europeanized black women in the media to be unsettling:

Well, I think there is a lack of women of colour being considered to be beautiful...[It] especially had an impact when I was growing up, and I think that definitely had a negative impact on the self-esteem...So, there’s that piece and there is this other sort of really negative piece that I think has been internalized, unfortunately, in our community, where, like, even the black models, like, if you look at them, most of them are lighter skin. Like, they are not specifically African dark. And they also tend to have European features. So, they won’t have, like, the flat nose. They will tend to have, like, higher cheekbones. So, they won’t have

sort of typically African features. They will have sort of more Europeanized features. So, that is disturbing...and they all have straight hair [laughter], not very curly, kinky hair...Yes, so, I think that, for me, I find that really disturbing.

And she further explained how beauty-related racism was perpetuated by the black community to the point of women disfiguring themselves in order to feel like they fit into the preferred model of the white standard of beauty:

Even more so, [what] I find disturbing is the extent to which it has been internalized within the community...So, those standards of beauty are being applied and sort of rigorously policed to some the degree within the community...Like, my younger sister stopped going to black hairdressers for the reason that they keep trying to get her to straighten her hair. Like, they put an enormous amount of pressure to put all of these chemical products. Like, there are a bunch of women walking around with bald spots because it takes a huge amount of chemicals to straighten their hair and keep it that way...And so they lost their hair. And there are women running around in Africa with white patches on their face because they put mercury on their face so they can lighten themselves.

She also spoke about the negative stereotype in the media that depict black women as being oversexed and undeserving of respect. She also pointed out how black artists especially promote these images:

It's ridiculous, right? So, I find that really disturbing and difficult. And then there is the whole kind of Madonna whore thing and that. So, where black women...get placed in that context of rap music and all that kind of stuff, so, where they are seen as being sort of overly sexualized beings, and on one level they are considered to be incredibly attractive, but on a another level there is no respect associated with that. So, they are considered to be *hoes*, skanky, like all that kind of stuff. So, that is problematic. And it is also difficult that those trails are being put out by black rap artists, right in, in addition, like, with the support of an infrastructure that's interest in that.

Despite years of internalizing negative images from the media, she also described a process of de-internalizing them by rejecting messages that supported the beauty standards prevalent in the media:

Initially, growing up, it took a long time for me to see myself as an attractive, as beautiful, and I think now with more of a critical analysis of it, and then understanding of what is going on in my community, I think I've been able to reclaim that and feel that, yeah...I've been able to sort of de-internalize those standards. And that's good because there was a time when I would look in the mirror and say that I hate my nose and tried to make it look more white and all that kind of stuff [laughter]...You kind of realize that it's [a] sort of perception. It has nothing to do with our objective reality...Right? Right...It's all about how people have been socialized and what experiences they have had in regards to who is considered attractive and who is not. And part of what I just need to do is be accepting of who I am and the way I look, and to celebrate it, and screw the rest of the world type of thing.

Despite the fact that participants indicated that these messages were still evident in the media, it appears that the women felt they were in a much better state to cope later in life.

Mezzo System: The Immediate and Many Local Communities

The participants in my study similarly reported their challenges in navigating the values of mainstream society, which were often predominately reflected by the Mezzo social structure. These conflicting cultural value systems are recognized in the literature in the theories of embeddedness/contextualism, which distinguish between individualistic and collectivistic systems. The participants in my study addressed these ideas by sharing stories of how they negotiated their autonomy as young adults within their families, community connections, larger social groupings, and the overall national culture and world context. Participants were very happy to pass along the values of their collectivistic cultures of origin when offering advice to the next generation and when

raising their children. For example, all the participants stated that they would continue to parent using cultural nuances that stress elements of shame in connection with others, emphasize sacrifice for the community and accentuate greater respect for elders. One participant explained that this is not just a parenting style but a whole perspective learned from her parents, which she would also like to pass along to the next generation:

Something I took from my parents, that probably was good, was respect. You know, “respect” is a big word. It covers everything. It covers from, we walk into a room, my kids have to address their elders before they go off and play, and take off their shoes and run off. And that’s a nice thing, I think. It’s acknowledging your grandparents, acknowledging your aunts and uncles, and then you go play. You know, it’s acknowledging.

This participant made a conscious decision to teach children respect for others in a collectivistic community context:

I think it’s a nice little piece. It’s sort of acknowledging that the adults are in there, and it’s acknowledging a respectfulness. It also means, for me, incorporating that in my kids when they go to school. You know, respecting other people’s things. You know, “You just don’t. You wouldn’t touch anybody else’s things. You wouldn’t take anybody else’s things.” I think they know that inherently because part of that respect is there. And I took that from my parents. No doubt, I did also take some of that shame stuff, come around, kind of hand-in-hand, a little bit, but it also means...a check for them. You know, it would be disappointing for me.

She illustrated how this perspective becomes ingrained in everyday behaviour, where the consequences of larger family sanctions are ever present. What should be realized is the depth these consequences symbolize. These consequences determine the overall and often unquestionable worth of one’s own nature or personality. Since this participant was born and raised in Canada, she compared individualistic forms of parenting with the collectivistic ways of her country of origin, and realized the necessity

of inventing new ways of bicultural parenting to buffer or be more forgiving in her judgments of children when they behaved badly. She demonstrated her approach:

If I heard you took so and so's scarf because you thought it was pretty, it would be disappointing for me, but probably for them. My kids might know that it would really be, like, it would be disappointing, because I would think [of] it as a flaw in their character. But I try not to be overly harsh. But I think it would disappoint grandparents, too. It would disappoint a lot of people, and that's that sort of, that larger family sanctions. I think that's a good thing and, um, kind of like childrearing. If one child is misbehaving and they are in a group there, it's surprising even in our family. Many of us are born in Canada. There is, like, a group sanction of someone's behaviour, whether that is harsh on a child or not, but it makes that behaviour unacceptable. So, I didn't actually discipline, right?

Another participant described her personal approach to dialogue, as she reflected on her parents' way of thinking. She, too, used a collectivistic parenting approach. She began her illustration by noting that she had developed beyond her parents' perspective, and went into detail, describing how their underlying values conflicted with her current values:

You know what? I think that I've evolved to the point where I recognize that I think my parents come from a generation where they see their children as an extension of them, and hence that need to parent, and help make decisions, and control, that you need to do the right thing. You need [to] because it's all a reflection of me. It comes from that type of enmeshed type of relationship, where I don't see you as a separate individual. I see you as an extension of me. So, what is right for me is right for you, and that is their journey. As a parent, I think being a product of that is recognizing really how hard that is, to really develop a sense of you, right? And to feel a sense of entitlement, to think differently, right?

It should be recognized that all the participants' experiences and views were distinct, but when it came to sexuality, they all stated that within the Canadian context they would give their children more freedom, talk more openly and use more direct communication and appropriate education than they had experienced, enabling the youth to negotiate their own autonomy around sexuality. One woman reflects on the past (her

youth) and present (as a parent) when dealing with issues, values and education around sexuality:

I have evolved to that stage where I can separate me from my child to recognize and try to boundary that desire to control, which my parents, I think, had a harder time doing because I don't think that's in their best interest. For me, it's about their...their...their wellness and their safety and ensuring their wellness but I can't make those decisions for them. So, I might not like their choices. I might not like it if they choose to experiment with certain sexual relationship but, you know what? At the end of the day, I need to make sure that they're safe, that they're responsible, they're making responsible decisions... not hurting themselves. To me those are the bigger issues...So, I kinda suck up what I don't like, right, 'cause at the end of the day they're not me...and I can expect them to be me. I don't think that's a good way to parent.

Service providers helped the women fill in gaps in their mainstream cultural knowledge. At the same time parents and the minority community, especially peers, provided the most powerful tools for coping with the internalized racism that was pervasive under the power structures of Canadian society. One woman highlighted the community itself as a source of support that should not be discounted because of some of the negative aspects: "Growing up in a community is really important...I think having community, whether...people say, 'Oh, community is bad.'...But, you know what? There is bad and there's good in every community, and you take what you need from that."

She illustrated the importance of community and belonging, explaining how she had no outlet for communication because of a lack of peers:

It would have been nice to look at somebody and say, "They're like me. There's a Muslim girl like me." I could talk to her. We could have had our own secrets. But I carried everything on my own...I carried all the secrets. I carried all the manipulation. I carried all the lies. That's hard. That's a lot to carry for a kid.

She also emphasized the importance of family support and unconditional love and acceptance:

I really believe that family support, it's important to be accepted by your family. It's important just to know that they will support you and they believe in you, and that they love you no matter what. They will always love you...I never had that. I never had any of that where you can be anything you wanted to be...No, no, oh God, no. I had to lie. I had to sneak. I had to hide. I had to do everything, too. So, it's not healthy, right?

Many women in my study, particularly later in life, looked to service providers (counsellors) for support and education as they tried to cope with the gaps in their cultural knowledge and community support and the lack of appropriate tools for cultural navigation. Many women found it frustrating that service providers were often members of mainstream society who reflected their own individualistic culture, and therefore were unable to fully grasp the depth of their experiences. Nonetheless, they were usually helpful guides during times of stress or cultural ambivalence. One participant described her experience of seeing a counsellor in order to deal with her issues of inadequacy and fears of rejection based on her ethnicity. She spoke about how her counsellor was able to build her self-esteem and make her realize her personal strengths:

Participant - I was scared that he was going to dump me for someone who is white. And I was all ready, and I wasn't ready to deal with that...I couldn't bear the thought that I was going to get dumped by someone because I wasn't white...I could not picture him...because this was before. I didn't have the right tools to make assessments as to how I would gauge the situation at that time. I could have checked into what his thoughts are. I just made the assumption that in the past...

Interviewer - Um...OK...so you don't know how you coped, in retrospect, or how do you cope now, then?

Participant - I felt really bad about myself at that time because I never felt like I was good enough. How did I cope? I saw a counsellor. That's how I coped.

Interviewer - And what kind of helpful things did that counsellor do?

Participant - Just thought about my strengths as a person more than anything.

Interviewer-That is how she helped you...Is there anything in particular you would tell counsellors who are helping women of colour and culture...that are helpful?...Maybe some tips?

Participant - I think, like, believing in yourself, finding good qualities about yourself and using that as a reminder that they are good enough, that they are not losers.

Another woman described how her counsellor supported her by providing validation that she could not find anywhere else in her community:

Well, see, as of right now...I do have counselling and, you know, with my problems. Whatever I go through right now, having children, with my ex, with my parents, I will discuss with her. It's like...she will give me her opinion. She will validate my feelings, not making me feel like I'm just seeing things or I'm thinking things. She will validate them, making me feel like I am not going insane...She might give her ideas and maybe try to find, um, some type of alternatives or release where we can go, and it can relieve me of whatever stresses and stuff like that...Not only does she listen, but to get something out of it.

She mentioned that mainstream counsellors can be extremely helpful for navigating the culture of the Canadian system and for suggesting alternative ways to deal with situations and culture. Furthermore, by accessing services, she learned her isolation was only perceived and that there were many others who were suffering with the same issues:

Just, um, well, I would say of those things...the fact that she gives you that comfort. You know what? There are a lot of people out there. You know that you aren't the only one, not to make you feel like, "Oh, don't cry. Don't be such a suck or something." You know, to show you that this happens a lot, that you're not, like, this only person in the world. 'Cause...when I was going through with my marriage, I thought that I was the only one having the worst husband ever. I

thought I'm the only one suffering and that everyone lived all happy. Like, why me? But then when I came to Klinik, when I left my husband, and I went for counselling, I found that there are a lot of people suffering, and some of them are still suffering in their marriage, right? But it's like it just makes you feel like I am not alone, you know.

She expressed the view that it would be positive to have a counsellor who shared a common language, culture and traditions because she would be able to identify better with her and would also feel like she could be more open. Furthermore, a counsellor who understood the culture might not make unreasonable assumptions within the context of the minority community or interracial relationships:

You know, it would really be nice if there were counsellors of our kind, you know, somebody who says..."I know what you're going through," not somebody who's like, "I can try to understand." 'Cause, like, you know, there is a big world of difference when you have somebody who understands your religion and the boundaries. And then you can be more open with them 'cause then you can be, like, "You know how it's like." And they'll be, like, "Yeah, I know how it's like." And you feel the understanding, like that connection is there... Kind of like, that connections [are] there. When you have somebody from a different, you know, I'm not saying it's a bad thing, 'cause I have a counsellor who is a, you know, "ghorie" – you know, Caucasian. But, I mean, she's very helpful, and she's very compassion, always good. But I would say, for somebody who is going through a really difficult [situation], it would make it a lot easier if somebody just knew the religion...and they don't want to run to the other end of the field. They just want to do something to make things a little bit easier on themselves, less stressful, relieve themselves, and yet not be the social outcast. You know, 'cause they still want to be a part of the society. They don't want to be like, you know, kicked out of society. They still want to be accepted.

For one participant, seeing a therapist was a small part of a long recovery, but was absolutely vital after she left an abusive marriage:

I said to myself, "I just came [out] of shit. I have no self-esteem. I have nothing left of me, nothing. Like, I need years of therapy just to build myself back up

again. I don't really give a shit if no one believes me. I believe me," right? And that's what kept me going...Like, it took, like, 6 years of therapy to just barely touch the surface...It was a long journey and it's still a journey...It still becomes hard at times...Not as hard as it used to be, but sometimes it gets hard...I still see a therapist once in a blue moon...You have to. So, it's forever. It's a life-long journey. You're never just cured and you're fine. But it's important to talk about it, and it's important to talk about it with everyone, to women, you know, women and men and children...When you hold negativity, you hold anger. You hold all of this. It just makes you sick, and then you get, like, cancer...and it's not even worth it, and he wasn't worth it. So, I forgave him 'cause you have to. You have to move on. So, he wanted to meet his dad, and fine. And it was hard. I was, like, seeing a therapist, like, everyday.

The women in the study who had been displaced as refugees or had not been exposed to their minority culture's language had some difficulty dealing with their fragmented sense of belonging. Participants considered the biggest strength of Canadian society its notion of "equality", in particular where feminism or women's rights are discussed more openly. Simultaneously, many recognized that they would "not wish" the hardships of the cultural integration process on others.

Micro System: Personal Connections with Influential People in our Everyday Lives

The participants clearly expressed their feelings about how intergenerational cultural conflict is ever present, even well into adulthood. All participants confirmed what Dion, K., & Dion, K. (2004) describes as "Role and Gender Role in Identity Formation". If specific alternative gender roles were not presented to them, in particular in their extended family or minority community, for the most part parents reflected their minority community's cultural norms and values. As Karen and Kenneth Dion (2004)

reported, parents often were the first source to enforce cultural gender discrimination and sexism, particularly through their expression of certain distinct gender expectations of males and females. Although some did more than others, all women experienced what Dion and Dion (2004, p.350) described as “ethnic achievement” (i.e., seeking to learn about and understand one’s ethnicity) and “behavioural commitment” (i.e., to maintain one’s cultural practices). This often was linked to parental expectations and their own settlement experiences. Mainstream cultures can dictate many things around what is more or less socially acceptable regarding culture, religion, standards of beauty, and communication. Being able to move fluently between two cultures was often referred to as a necessary skill. One woman emphasized the importance of always keeping in touch with her ethnic side or “ethnic achievement,” despite being able to fit into mainstream society:

For people to know that you have to encourage women to be able to move between two cultures ‘cause if they don’t then they are going to be, um, they’re going to be disabled. They won’t be successful. Successful as a person in general...’Cause you could be. I always think that even though you are in Canada, it’s a mainstream society. Yes, you do need to practice those things and, yes, you do need to learn about the culture, but you are still brown. You are still of a different race. You are still of a different type and different facial structure physically. And your physical being impacts your living in Canada and you need to acknowledge the difference and acknowledge that other part of your culture because if you don’t acknowledge that then at one point in your life you are going to find out that you are brown, that you are not white, that you need to be comfortable that you are brown. And when you do that then you are successful...So, you need to be able to straddle at both, two different sections, at two different at the same time or be able to flip back and forth between the two...Am I successful? I think so, because I can flip the script depending who I am with.

It has to be acknowledged that all the women differed in both categories based on exposure, experiences, stage of life and personality or individual choice/relationship with self. As parents set down rules and values around sexuality, all of the women were

affected by at least one of the five categories described by Anisef, Murphy and Khattar (2003), which are intergenerational tensions and conflicts based on factors such as curfew, fashion, lengthy separation, gender discrimination and sexism, and loss of mother's power. Although they shared many common experiences, the women were affected by and manifested similar experiences differently. However, they all seemed to experience a turning point in which many decisions around ethnic achievement and behavioural commitment regarding sexuality came to fruition. At the age of 18, the parents either encouraged their daughters to develop their sexuality (i.e., through marriage) or to pursue post-secondary education. They were not openly free to date and pursue both options. Often the women chose one or the other and either delayed their sexuality or married someone from their own background. Many women saw schooling as a way to take advantage of economic opportunity in Canada, for which their parents made great sacrifices to offer it to their children. Those who did not marry at the age of 18 went on to complete post-secondary education.

As the Canadian Council of Social Development (2000, p. 4) states, youth are able to adapt faster than their parents. What should also be noted is that, due to the relationship with oneself, the women in my research all adapted differently. This was particularly obvious later on in life. However, the tug and pull between self and others was described as painful for many of the women since culture is not only related to one's identity, but also to attachment, connection and the approval of others. As the participants reiterated, many compared the expectations put on them around sexuality with those of their mainstream peers who belonged to individualistic communities. Participants in the study often spoke of how their mainstream peers saw their sexuality from what Trumbull,

Rothstein-Fisch and Greenfield (2000) describe as an individualistic outlook that focuses on choices which impact on self. Immigrant youth had to dis sever or sort through the added dimensional lens provided by their minority culture, where the impacts of their sexuality were not only individual, but also collectivistic.

As mentioned previously, women stated that they would pass down a parenting model that encouraged what Seat (2003) labelled as “interdependence, mutual understanding, co-operation, sharing, and reciprocity” (p.183). Another woman stated that she would encourage the values of sharing material wealth, for example, giving rides to those friends or acquaintances who do not own cars. Lastly, all the women stated that they observed a difference in how mainstream Canadians were more individualistic with respect to elders. All the mothers wished to pass down the respect for elders to their children. These would be the positive aspects of collectivistic parenting. As mentioned earlier, one woman in particular elaborated on this model of collectivistic parenting, emphasizing the utilization of “shame” when parenting. What the participants would not pass down were the double standards around sexuality. Another participant emphasized that shame is a common method of control and also a consequence of young women’s sexuality:

My culture, where shame is brought to the family, that is a very kind of ethnic sensibility. “You represent me and you are a reflection of my job, of my capacity as parent, and you are a reflection of my values. And so, if you go out and get yourself pregnant, oh my God, what are people going to think about me?” So, I think that the big community very much endorses that kind of shame...very much endorses, you know, “Good girls only have sex when they are married...And if you’re having sex when you’re not married, we don’t talk about it and nobody knows because that’s a shame to me and my family.” I think that’s the biggest cultural mandate.

Self System: One's Own Power and Relationship with Oneself

What Kalsi (2003) described as “multicultural” or “hybrid identities”, one participant labelled “decompartmentalizing”. As she reflected, she made it clear that this process was not very easy. She noted feeling that she did not like herself very much well into adulthood due to the stressors of the decompartmentalization process. Shik and Curyk (1999) indicate “that disjunctures between home and school values may jeopardize self-esteem” (p. 3).

Other participants were not so articulate or self-aware to label this act of coping, though some many did. Because values and cultural norms in Canada are so different, many had no other choice but to decompartmentalize and take on two completely separate ethnic or cultural identities, i.e. one at home and one in mainstream society. Many participants took ownership of their multicultural or hybrid identities, but called them internal struggles. They felt more empathy and were better equipped to help their children dissever their multicultural or hybrid identities. The women revealed that they would lie to extended family members for the sake of their children. As well, in retrospect the women felt that although it was important to have friends from different ethnicities, including the mainstream, it was also very important to gain peer support from people of their own background. Furthermore, the women who had a good connection with a minority peer group felt slightly more akin to their minority culture. The women who spoke their minority language also felt more accepted. Most importantly, all of the women who were economically independent adjusted to life in Canada more easily and felt better about themselves and their lives.

The Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education and educational curricular guidelines (2003) state that the Canadian school-based and public health program approach is to “balance the encouragement of postponing first sexual intercourse, encourage abstinence and give consistent information on contraceptive and safer sexual behaviour” (p.34). Although Canadian schools strive to accomplish specific educational goals, all the participants stated that they had received inconsistent sexual education at school. Those participants who did have premarital sex sought out information first from peers and then from community service providers or school counsellors.

**CHAPTER SIX: IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK POLICY AND
PRACTICE**

The 2005 Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) Code of Ethics states:

Value 6: Competence in Professional Practice

...Social workers have the responsibility to maintain professional proficiency, to continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills, and to apply new knowledge in practice commensurate with their level of professional education, skill and competency, seeking consultation and supervision as appropriate. (p. 8)

In social work, the education and knowledge essential to serve this population of new Canadians is not necessarily present in the curriculum of social work at the University of Manitoba. Social work students may or may not receive training or information about this population because it is not deemed to be required learning. Developing the curriculum in this way would adhere to the CASW. Continual development of the curriculum would set the precedent for continual and ongoing expansion of the profession and is supported by values presented in the CASW) Code of Ethics. For example:

Value 1: Respect for the Inherent Dignity and Worth of Persons

...Social workers recognize and respect the diversity of Canadian society, taking into account breadth of differences that exist among individuals, families, groups and communities. Social workers uphold the human rights of individuals and groups as expressed in The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982) and the United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948). (p. 4)

Participants in this study recommended that New Canadians be given key settlement information on a continual basis throughout the complex process of cultural integration. Based on the Value 1 of the CASW it is a best practice for social workers to educate their newcomer clients about their rights in Canada, since often they have arrived from places where the rights of women have been undervalued. In addition, they can be advocates for this group by building awareness within the profession of the need to provide accurate and culturally appropriate information. In accordance with this value in particular, social work needs to take more of an initiative in helping New Canadian children and youth. For example, in schools social workers need to take on a greater role servicing this population because teachers and school career counsellors are not required to discuss settlement information.

The main purpose of this thesis was to explore the concept of community programming to support female immigrant/refugee youth, specifically in the area of sexuality. When researching this topic, it was important to learn from the very women who have tried to access or actually have accessed available programming during their process of settlement in Canada. What was apparent throughout my research was that these women had many recommendations to offer on how to merge cultural values around sexuality in the multi-cultural context of Canada. This research is relevant not only for the further development of programming, but it has the potential to provide educational insights to service providers. This research will give service providers a window into the experiences of immigrant/refugee women's sexuality development over a significant part of their lifespan, so that they can provide such women with more appropriate and effective services. It is my hope that this research will not only add to

the body of knowledge that currently exists regarding this segment of the population, but will also enable service providers to act in ways that are more immigrant/refugee-friendly, so that individuals do not have to expend energy challenging dominant discourses in their quest for services.

The women in my study identified specific cultural values that impacted on their sexuality. They further elaborated on which values they either did or did not want to pass along to the next generation, including their own children and other newcomer youth. Service providers can help share these recommendations as options for conflict resolution. The women also highlighted the complexities, tensions, and challenges they faced in struggling for change and in uncovering and breaking the silence of internalized racism. At the very least, these women's stories can be helpful in fostering guidance and mentorship to newcomer youth, their parents, ethno-racial minority communities and service providers. Furthermore, gaps in the system can be identified based on the research, allowing for program or policy change. The implications for policy and practice reflect insights derived from these women's stories and their personal recommendations.

I deeply admire all nine participants who found the personal strength, courage and resilience to talk about such experiences, which some had never articulated to anyone before. The words of the participants have been imperative in exploring sexuality, a rarely researched area, not often spoken about, and which Canadian service providers still continue to struggle with for many practical and ideological reasons.

In my research, there were six major findings that warranted further consideration for their implications for practice and future research directions. The findings indicated that: (1) Immigrants need to be given culturally specific as well as gender-specific information about life in Canada before and after they immigrate. (2) Schools need a more culturally inclusive curriculum and racialized staff. (3) There is a need for intercultural and anti-oppressive training for teachers and other service providers (i.e., counsellors and social workers). (4) Empowerment workshops would help immigrant women as well as men. (5) Consistent age-specific, anti-racist sexuality education and resources should be part of school curricula. (6) Government policy should allocate funding to help support immigrant families that are in need, to access cultural support from their minority community. The following suggestions for practice and policy change will be separated into three specialized areas: Immigration, Multiculturalism, and Education.

Immigration (Settlement and Integration Policy)

1. More than one woman stated that immigrants who arrive in Canada are ill-equipped, with the pre-arrival and post-arrival information they have only sometimes received regarding issues of settlement and integration. Immigrants are not given adequate information about what to expect or how to deal with the challenges of adapting to Canadian society. Two women in particular spoke of living in small Canadian towns and experiencing greater isolation and racism there. Both of these women recommended that the only solution for others who find themselves in such situations would be to get out and move to a community in Canada with greater cultural supports. Immigrants need adequate community supports with culturally knowledgeable counsellors. Settlement

services should be continually collecting relevant data and offering numerous options to immigrant women while using a client-centered approach for healthy coping. Immigrants also need to be made continually aware of North American philosophies of empowerment, which involve speaking up and self-advocacy. Such settlement supports need to be made available to immigrants on a long-term basis throughout the continual process of integration.

Education

2. One woman openly reflected upon the lack of racialized teachers in the Winnipeg school system, not only during her high school Canadian experience, but for her own kids during elementary and junior high school. Staffing schools with appropriate ratios of racialized teachers needs to be considered. The presence of racialized teacher can help build leadership capacities within communities of colour and increase the representation of visible minorities in the education system. This participant also identified instances of racism and stereotyping placed on her children by teachers. This highlights a need for the development and creation of safer schools through diversity, intercultural and anti-racism training. Training should encourage service providers to gain humility by reflecting on their own interpretations of cultural norms. They should be encouraged to expand their own awareness of cultural nuances. Service providers need to be given incentives to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to appreciating differences when working with clients. Most importantly service providers need to have the tools to not categorize people from the same race since needs can be different depending on the individual.

3. Almost all women accessed help from a counsellor at one point in time. The women conceded that their experiences in accessing services were, for the most part, successful. The application of certain principles, such as when service providers took the time to create trust among them by remaining non-judgmental and consistently valuing diversity, helped make their experiences worthwhile. They also suggested that services could improve. Participants mentioned that when they did access service providers, such as counsellors, they were always individuals who represented mainstream society. Participants wished that they had been able to seek out racialized service providers or someone from their own background in order to feel more comfortable and free to express themselves with someone who shared a common experience and understanding. An increase in equity policy legislation throughout educational institutions and social service organizations could help ensure that immigrant/refugee women have more options. Mandatory courses for social workers should include not only anti-oppressive theory, but also anti-racism.

Multiculturalism (Anti Racism and Feminist Policy)

4. One woman declared that “all women want is choice.” One way to help women recognize their personal preference is through empowerment workshops where choices around cultural navigation are explored. However, to maximize the effectiveness of education, a similar workshop geared towards men would need to also be administered simultaneously. In order for women to put into practice their choices around cultural navigation, their partners and children should be involved. From the viewpoint of immigrant women, education has to be all-inclusive, especially for the cultural minority family within Canada.

5. All the women recognized that standard sexuality education and antiracism education, ideally implemented with the support of the Government of Canada, was lacking.

Although one woman recognized the challenges facing the Canadian school system, some of the participants, who were mothers themselves, took it upon themselves to voluntarily create and administer lessons on cultural awareness in their children's classrooms.

Although there are many pros and cons to having women who are parents take on the initiative of providing intercultural education in their children's classrooms, the reality is that many immigrant/refugee women are not able to do this. Based on these women's reflections, it would be beneficial for schools to make more inclusive media, such as posters, magazines, and TV shows like "How to Be Indie," available to all students.

Another woman stated her view that minority cultures in Winnipeg "stick to their own" and this perpetuates segregation amongst the various minority communities in Winnipeg. She wished that there were more education programs available that would expose students to other minority cultures.

Hiring individuals with the ability to create and implement effective and appropriate intercultural education should be made a higher priority in the school curricula. Since there is an underrepresentation of racialized staff in the school system, scholarships and funding for pre-certified immigrant should be provided to such prospective education students. An appropriate policy recommendation would resemble affirmative action policy and provide work co-op practicum opportunities for minority education students. Hiring qualified minority teachers will contribute to creating safe schools free of racial harassment and promoting positive racial minority markers that could permeate unconscious invisibility issues and help address students' internalized

racism from an early age. Another way to help achieve this type of education is by creating opportunities to share experiences using the clients' own voices and capturing their perspective, for example, through open forums or panel discussions. This type of sharing can be painful, so clients or participants should be screened and supported before they enter classrooms.

6. As one participant pointed out, changes need to start with government policy.

Government policy should allocate resources that allow service providers to be accountable by continually reviewing specific interactions and cultural communication. Once broad macro-government policies are put into place, organizations can re-work programs and service structures to better reflect cultural minorities through the allocation of funding, affirmative action, cultural training, and the creation of community liaison positions. Although macro-policy change has to happen, Mezzo Systems can also advocate and influence policy change through the development of new social work/community development positions. Law enforcement institutions could be much more successful in building community relationships with minority communities by training and creating more liaison positions. Lastly, more recognition must be given to the informal work that minority volunteers are providing to help immigrant women. Such volunteers should be approached and offered the opportunity to share their experiences and insights to guide the development of new policies and programs.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter undertakes a reflective examination of the research process. The proceeding pages will speak to the limitations that are adherent to the research process. A brief synopsis with regards to the impact on the data found based on the lived experiences of the participants. Recommendations for further studies within this topic and within the context of the larger culture are explained to those from mainstream society, who impact minority women's development during adolescence years. Finally, I will propose a number of suggestions on how this research can be expanded.

Limitations to the Research Methods

As with all research, quality project findings or outcomes are ultimately the main goal. It is also helpful to explore further particular questions that arise from the research findings. One way to identify these questions is to look at the project limitations. The main obstacles that emerged from this research were related to the method, the data gathering tools, the limited pool of candidates, and time constraints. It is my hope that through this reflection process, others may gain a greater understanding of the research process as well as the possibilities for future research.

Participants and Data Collection

The availability of minority women to talk about a topic as personal as sexuality was very limited. For some they simply did not want to look back at their past. In doing

so, this process revealed painful memories of racism and discrimination from their adolescence. Compounded with in cultural family stigma about women's sexuality and unresolved issues of identity or cultural integration reminded a number of of the women of some very difficult times. Often the women had never articulated out loud some of these experiences before. Therefore, as was the first time they had done so, it was especially important to ensure them of being in a safe environment where trust with the researcher was already established.

This research undertaking was not funded by any grants, research funding, or outside interests. Perhaps if it had been funded, the long term value of the project would have been more evident to women where by enticing others to have participated. As well it is an assumption that more women would have participated if it had been valued monetarily by outside organizations or if they had been economically rewarded for their participation.

As in adolescence and adulthood, sorting through two different value systems numerous times on an everyday basis takes extra time and significant energy. All the women experienced personal "inner" conflicts as well as revelations as they told their stories. This could be attributed to what Sawicki (1991) describes in her multimedia resource kit, as the "slowing down" or "freezing" of their life stage development, which a bi-cultural individual can experience because they must understand and navigate not only one culture but two cultures at a time. Thus women had to filter between two opposing value sets during cultural integration. Due to numerous individual circumstances some women will not self-reflect adequately or will not make critical decisions based on useful data or settlement recommendations. Thus it would be useful to do a follow-up study

with these women, perhaps during the third phase of their life cycle. This would occur under the assumption that later in life they would have enough time to reflect further on these experiences.

Focus Groups

Outlined earlier in their adolescence phase, many participants continued into adulthood to decompartmentalize or struggle with choices between two opposing cultural value sets on their own through internal dialogue and with the use of their peers' support. During this stage of life the struggle mostly involved how to raise children. For some of the women, they had more the support of their spouses. Although a significant amount of the women wished for more peer support to deal with the issues of culture and child rearing. In these cases, racialized adult peer focus groups would have been beneficial for dealing with cultural issues as well as for triggering memories and ideas through group thought. Women who did consent to talk about these issues did so because a relationship built on trust had already been pre-established before the research study or these women had been referred by an individual whom they trusted. The information that could have been generated within a focus group built on trust would have been fascinating. Perhaps some more information on decompartmentalization could have been generated in a focus group situation. Perhaps in a focus group situation the women would have shared their experiences, empowered one another and talked about the use of decompartmentalization in the future.

A focus group of women with their spouses/partners on the topics of inter-racial childrearing and for minority culture strategies for childrearing with the mainstream may also prove to be beneficial for policy development within school systems and for service school based providers. Those women at this stage who had very young children were most concerned or consumed with issues of marriage and childrearing. As well, the women at this stage had very young children. Perhaps if their children had been older, the women would have been less in the pondering stage and more in the doing or recommending reflective stage on how to raise intercultural children. Of those who were interviewed during this stage of their life that were consumed with issues related to marriage and childrearing, particularly those raising children in intercultural relationships, had much to offer on the topic of intercultural relationships and childrearing.

The women particularly struggled with passing along issues of internalized racism to the next generation and with successfully helping their children through their own experiences of racism. Passing down internalized racism to the next generation was a real concern for the women. Often this was due to never having the opportunity to consciously deal with issues of internalized racism. Those that had an opportunity did so in phase two of their life, usually with the help of a counsellor. Interestingly, those in counselling were more aware and were able to articulate fears but were still working through such issues. Some women felt overwhelmed coping with macro-systemic racism. They did use strategies such as identifying their self strengths to empower themselves, but they still struggled with finding practical ways to empower their children. For example, one woman's five year old daughter said to her, "I don't like anyone with dark

skin.” This woman coped with her child’s comment with humour and attributed it to her largely Canadian experience and little global experience. Another woman knew not to internalize this message, but did not know how to speak with her child about the typically confused reactions of the mainstream community, including school teachers, to children who have a different skin colour from that of their biological mother.

One single mother tried to avoid these issues altogether by taking her child and moving back to her parents’ country of origin. This very same participant talked of her fear that her 13 year old son would be more vulnerable in Canadian society and might choose to cope negatively like many of his minority peers. So, she opted to take him back to her parents’ home country to live. She decided to do so because she believed there would be more positive religious and cultural support for her son in her parents’ country of origin than in Canada, especially because she is a divorced mother. She made this decision based not only on her own experiences as a second-generation Canadian, but through her volunteer work. She had witnessed the troubles that newcomer youth experienced when integrating into Canadian society. All the women with children admittedly felt challenged by this. However, each felt that they would be more sensitive, empathetic and helpful than their own parents. Although all the women decompartmentalized, they chose to not recommend this to their children as a viable coping tool. Instead of allowing their children to grow up decompartmentalizing their identities women wanted children to have the social experiences they never did. As a result women vowed to willingly lie to extended family around issues of sexual orientation and dating on behalf of their children.

It is also beneficial to keep research current. Taking into account that these women grew up in a less social media lifestyle they are now raising children who are growing up in a much more globalized society in which international social networking is easier and more accessible. Email, Facebook, Skype, video or instant messaging, online chatting and texting to name a few of the social networking tools today is changing their children social networking and dating experiences drastically. For this particular minority group, the new social networking options can be particularly vital for maintaining minority cultural identity, establishing and maintaining long distance relationships, and for making regular communication more readily available. Understanding the impacts of how these social networking tools are used by mainly adolescence can be useful not just for the focus groups preferred by service providers and researchers but also for collecting information to be shared with parents whose children are dating on the internet. This perhaps could minimize possible intergenerational gaps.

Follow-Up

Some women who were single during phase two of their life cycle reported utilizing these networking tools for finding potential marital partners, including partners from their own culture of origin, who previously would not have been easily accessible due to their distant geographical locations. A longitudinal study may also be beneficial to revise how these women's self determined choices impacted long term for example, phase three of their life cycle.

Third-Generation Racialized Canadians

I suspect that some insights could be gained by interviewing third-generation racialized Canadians on the topic of cultural identity and sexuality. Although the experiences of third-generation Canadians can be very different, there are some commonalities that could be useful for guiding other racialized populations, such as how they cope with stereotyping, racism and discrimination, and maintaining or not a connection to a minority community.

Mainstream Comparison

It would be worthwhile to compare the experiences of visible minority women at different life stages with their mainstream counterpart. This recommendation is important because it may show that culture is a factor in determining one's sexuality and the ability to freely express it within the context of choice.

Minority Youth Comparison

Interviewing a minority group of female adolescents between the ages of 15-18 about dating would make a good comparison to stories of minority youth and dating today in the Canadian context. A focus group of male minority adolescence between the ages of 15-18 could also prove worthwhile to see how they view their sexuality particularly around gender roles.

Parent, Teachers and School Counsellor Education

Further exploration needs to be done to understand the perspective of teachers in mainstream schools who are teaching mainstream curricula to bi-cultural children. The women who accessed the services of a school counsellor particularly identified school counsellors as individuals they felt were the first point of access or most accessible when seeking information about sexuality. By interviewing school teachers and counsellors, as well as a wider range of immigrant/refugee minority parents, we could gain a broader understanding of the viewpoints of minority parents who are trying to hold on to their minority culture for numerous reasons. Such interviews could possibly give suggestions for Canadian curricula improvements as well as help identify what type of training and supports are needed. Learning more about these dynamics and how the school system could work better might go a long way for the minority student to negotiate mainstream school systems minimizing conflict and thus the stress of individual decompartmentalization.

Summary

Utilizing a qualitative research approach allows the participants to volunteer their stories and helps further needs to be identified. For the most part the women in this study were all healthy, well adjusted and safe. They were a segment of this minority population able to make themselves vulnerable to participate in such research due to adequate supports present in their lives. These women identified some consequences of decompartmentalization, links to internalized racism within the

Canadian context, and identified many gaps in the system. Since immigration is essential to the Canadian economy, it would be beneficial if the system continued to develop recognition of the diverse needs of immigrant and newcomer females and respond appropriately to them. More research in this area could be beneficial to the more multicultural future of Canada, where there will likely be many more intercultural marriages and the need to make related decisions on childrearing approaches.

References

- Amit-Talai, V. (1995). Conclusion: The 'multi' cultural of youth. In V. Amit-Talai & H. Wulff (Eds.), *Youth cultures: A cross-cultural perspective* (pp. 193-206). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Anisef, P., & Kilbride, K. M. (2003). *Managing two worlds: The experiences & concerns of immigrant youth in Ontario*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars Press Inc.
- Anisef, P., Murphy, K., & Khattar, R. (2003). The needs of newcomer youth and emerging 'best practices' to meet those needs. In P. Anisef & K.M. Kilbride (Eds.), *Managing two worlds: The experiences & concerns of immigrant youth in Ontario* (pp. 196-234). Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars Press Inc.
- Barker, R. (2003). *The social work dictionary* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: NASW PRESS
- Beiser, M., Hou, F., Hyman, I., & Tousignant, M. (1998). *Growing up Canadian – A study of new immigrant children*. Canada: Human Resources Development Canada.
- Beiser, M., Shik, A., & Curyk, M. (1999). *New Canadian children and youth study literature review*. Canada: Health Canada.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). *Ecological models of human development*. In *International Encyclopedia of Education*, Vol. 3 (2nd ed.). Oxford: Elsevier. Reprinted in: Gauvain, M. & Cole, M. (Eds.), *Readings on the development of children*, 2nd Ed. (1993, pp. 37-43). New York, NY: Freeman.
- Boeije, H. (2002). A purposeful approach to the content comparative method in the analysis of qualitative interviews. *Quality & Quantity*, 36, 391-409.
- Canadian Council on Social Development. (2000). *Immigrant youth in Canada*. Retrieved on February 23, 2006, from http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/multi/youth/summary_e.cfm?nav=2
- Canadian Association of Social Workers. (2005). *Code of ethics 2005*. Retrieved on July 21, 2011, from http://www.casw-acts.ca/practice/codeofethics_e.pdf
- Caputo, V. (1995). Anthropology's silent 'others' – A consideration of some conceptual and methodological issues for the study of youth and children's culture. In V. Amit-Talai & H. Wulff (Eds.), *Youth cultures: A cross-cultural perspective* (pp.18-41). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Centre for Canadian Studies. (n.d.). *About Canada: Multiculturalism in Canada*. Sackville, NB: Mount Allison University. Retrieved on February 23, 2006, from http://www.mta.ca/faculty/arts/canadian_studies/english/about/multi/
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2004). *Facts and Figures 2004 - Immigration Overview: Permanent and Temporary Residents*. Ottawa, ON: CIC. Retrieved in April 2006, from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pub/facts2004/index.html>

- Creswell, W. J. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Denis, A. (2008) Intersectional analysis: A contribution of feminism to sociology. *International Sociology*, 23(5), 677-694.
- Desai, S., & Subramanian, S. (2003). Colour, culture, and dual consciousness: Issues identified by South Asian immigrant youth in the Greater Toronto area. In P. Anisef & K. M. Kilbride (Eds.), *Managing two worlds: The experiences & concerns of immigrant youth in Ontario* (pp. 118-161). Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars Press Inc.
- Dion, K., & Dion, K. (2004). Gender, immigrant generation, and ethnocultural identity. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, 50(5/6), 347-355.
- Harrison, F. (1995). The persistent power of “race” in the cultural and political economy of racism. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24, 47-74.
- Helms, J., & Talleyrand, R. (1997). Race is not ethnicity. *American Psychologist*, 52(11), 1246-1247.
- Hulko, W. (2009). The time- and context-contingent nature of intersectionality and interlocking oppressions. *Journal of Women and Social Work*, 24(1), 44-55.
- Jantzen, L. (2008). Who is the second generation? A description of their ethnic origins and visible minority composition by age. *Canadian Diversity* 6(2), 7-12.
Retrieved on July 27, 2011, from http://canada.metropolis.net/publications/Diversity/can_diversity_vol_62_spring08_e.pdf
- Kalsi, P. S. (2003). *The best of both worlds: Bicultural identity formation of Punjabi women living in Canada*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education – Online Proceedings, Ottawa, ON.
- Kendall, D., Murray, J., & Linden, R. (2004). *Sociology in our times* (3rd ed.). Scarborough, ON: Ehomson Nelson.
- Kwong-Lai Poon, M., & Trung-Thu Ho, P. (2003). A qualitative analysis of cultural and social vulnerabilities to HIV infection among gay, lesbian, and bisexual Asian youth. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, 14(3), 43-79.
- Lezubski, D. W. (2004). *Visible minority children in poverty*. Unpublished report. Winnipeg, MB: Social Planning Council of Winnipeg.
- Lopes, T. (2011). *The twisted hooks of internalized racism and sexism*. To be published.
- Maggs-Rapport, F. (2000). Combining methodological approaches in research: ethnography and interpretive phenomenology. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 31(1), 219-225.

- Manitoba Labour and Immigration. (2005). *Manitoba immigration facts: 2004 statistical report*. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Labour and Immigration. Retrieved on February 23, 2006, from <http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/immigrate/index.html>
- Matas, F., & Valentine, J. (1999). *Selected ethnic profiles of Canada's young age cohorts*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Heritage. Retrieved on February 23, 2006, from http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/multi/assets/pdfs/youth-pub1_e.pdf
- Maticka-Tyndale, E., McKay, A., & Barret, M. (2001). *Teenage sexual reproductive behaviour in developed countries – country report for Canada* (Occasional Report No.4). New York, NY: The Alan Guttmacher Institute.
- McCall, L. (2005). The complexity of intersectionality. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 30(3), 1771-1800.
- Monette, R. D., Sullivan, J. T., & DeJong R.C. (2002). *Applied social research: tool for the human services*. Toronto, ON: Harcourt College Publishers.
- Nash, J. (2008). Re-thinking intersectionality. *Feminist Review*, 89, 1-15.
- Robbins, S., Chatterjee, P., & Canda, E. (2006). *Contemporary Human Behavior Theory – A Critical Perspective for Social Work* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Sawicki, W. (1991). *Juggling cultures multimedia resource kit*. London, Ontario, Canada: London Intercommunity Health Clinic.
- Schilt, K. (2008). The unfinished business of sexuality: Comment on Andersen. *Gender & Society*, 22(1), 109-114.
- Seat, R. (2003). Factors affecting the settlement and adaptation process of Canadian adolescent newcomers sixteen to nineteen years of age. In P. Anisef & K. M. Kilbride (Eds.), *Managing two worlds: The experiences & concerns of immigrant youth in Ontario* (pp. 162-195). Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars Press Inc.
- Simmons, A., Ramos, D., & Beilmeier, G. (2000). *Latin American youth in Toronto: Identity and integration issues*. Toronto, ON: CERIS.
- Statistics Canada. (2001a). *Canada's ethnocultural portrait: The changing mosaic*. Retrieved on February 23, 2006, from <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/analytic/companion/etoimm/canada.cfm>
- Statistics Canada. (2001b). *Census of Population: Immigration, birthplace and birthplace of parents, citizenship, ethnic origin, visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples*. Retrieved on February 23, 2006, from <http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/030121/d030121a.htm>

- Szapocznik, J., & Kurtines, W. M. (1993). Family psychology and cultural diversity – opportunities for theory, research and application. *American Psychologist*, 48(4), 400-407.
- Trumbull, E., Rothstein-Fisch, C., & Greenfield, P.M. (2000). *Bridging cultures in our schools: New approaches that work*. Retrieved on June 24, 2007, from http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/bridging/welcome.shtml
- Tyyska, V. (2005). *Parent-teen relations in the Toronto Tamil community: A research report*. Toronto, ON: Ryerson University, Department of Sociology.
- Wadhvani, Z. (1999). To be or not to be: Suicidal ideation in South Asian youth. Master's thesis. Montreal: McGill University. In P. Anisef & K. M. Kilbride (Eds.), *Managing two worlds: The experiences & concerns of immigrant youth in Ontario* (pp. 120-123). Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars Press Inc.
- Wulff, H. (1995a). Inter-racial friendship – Consuming youth styles, ethnicity and teenage femininity in South London. In V. Amit-Talai & H. Wulff (Eds.), *Youth cultures: A cross-cultural perspective* (pp. 63-79). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Wulff, H. (1995b). Introducing youth culture in its own right – The state of the art and new possibilities. In V. Amit-Talai & H. Wulff (Eds.), *Youth cultures: A cross-cultural perspective* (pp.1-16). New York, NY: Routledge.

Appendix A:

Dear Research Participant:

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the concept of a community programming or support for female immigrant/refugee female youth.

Participants will benefit from taking part in this particular interview process because it provides an opportunity for them to help future younger visible minority females.

As a MSW student I intend to individually (one to one) interview 15 to 20 ethno-racial minority adult women who have grown-up (a significant part of adolescence) in Canada currently residing in Winnipeg.

The interview process will include a written anonymous survey/questionnaire (15 short personal demographic questions) as well as an oral/verbal 9 question interview about how you (the research participant) grew up.

Each interview will be one to two hours in length. Each interview will be conducted at a location and time convenient to the research participant.

Interviews will be audio taped with research participant's permission. Research participants will be given alias names when tapes are transcribed maintaining anonymity and confidentiality.

If you are interested in participating in such a study please contact me Priya Sharma through email: umshar19@cc.umantioba.ca and we will set up a mutually convenient time and place for an interview.

Due to the sensitivity of the issue and topic it is hoped that willing participants would recommend other adult immigrant/refugee women who would be comfortable participating in this research project and provide open and honest responses.

Sincerely,

Priya Sharma

Email: umshar19@cc.umantioba.ca

Appendix B:

Hello

My name is Priya Sharma and I am a graduate student in the faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba. I also am a visible minority second generation immigrant woman.

I am currently writing my thesis to explore community programming or support for female immigrant/refugee female youth.

As a participant you will benefit from taking part in this particular interview process because it provides an opportunity to help future younger visible minority females.

As a MSW student I intend to individually (one to one) interview 7 to 10 ethno-racial minority adult women who have grown-up (a significant part of adolescence) in Canada currently residing in Winnipeg.

The interview process will include a written anonymous survey/questionnaire (15 short personal demographic questions) as well as an oral/verbal 10 question interview about how you (the research participant) grew up. Due to the sensitivity of the issue and topic all information given in the interview will remain confidential.

Each interview will be one to two hours in length. Each interview will be conducted at a location and time convenient to the research participant.

Interviews will be audio taped with research participant's permission. Participants can choose to stop audio recording or the interview at any time. Research participants will be given alias names when tapes are transcribed maintaining anonymity and confidentiality. The research participant will also be given the choice of whether her interview be transcribed by the interviewer or by an outside individual.

With your permission may I send you written information regarding this thesis project?

It is hoped that willing participants will also recommend other adult immigrant/refugee women who would be comfortable participating in this research project and provide open and honest responses.

Appendix C:

Research Project Title: **Female Visible Minority Sexuality in the Peg**

(18 year and older)

Researcher: Priya Sharma

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH: The purpose of this thesis is to explore the concept of a community programming or support for female immigrant/refugee female youth.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES: Each interview will be one to two hours in length. Each interview will be conducted at a location and time convenient to the research participant.

POTENTIAL RISKS OF PARTICIPATING IN THIS RESEARCH: You as a participant will also benefit from taking part in this particular interview process because it provides an opportunity for them to help future younger visible minority females. You should not be at any risk for physical harm as result of participating in this study. If after your participation in this interview you need to consult with a health professional to discuss any personal issue, please feel free to get in touch with any services listed on the Counseling and Health Services information sheet included with this form.

RECORDING DEVICES: Interviews will be audio taped with you, the research participant's permission. If you do not feel like having all or any specific parts of the interview audio recorded at any time during the interview please inform the researcher of your wishes. I (the researcher) will immediately abide by with your request. Your rights as a research participant will not be affected if you opt not to have your interview recorded. Research participants will be given alias names when tapes are transcribed maintaining anonymity and confidentiality.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Interview data will be kept by the researcher (in a locked cabinet) for up to five years and then will be destroyed. To make sure that your identity remains confidential your name will not be used at anytime during any reporting research procedures (i.e., when tapes are transcribed research participants will be given alias names).

FEEDBACK AND FINDINGS: At the end of the interview each participant will be offered a copy of the thesis project. At this time each participant will also be made aware that the thesis or research results will also be available at the University of Manitoba.

CREDIT OR RENUMERATION: There will be no monetary reward for participation in the project although interviews will be conducted and done at the research participants' convenience.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Principal Researcher: Priya Sharma

(Phone) 831-6051

(E-Mail) umshar19@cc.umanitoba.ca

Supervisor: Kathy Levine

(Phone) 474-7461

(E-Mail) levineka@ms.umanitoba.ca

This research has been approved by the [Psychology Sociology Research Ethics Board]. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher and/or Delegate's Signature

Date

A summary of the results of this study will be made available to participants in approximately 12 months. If you would like to receive a copy of summary of the results, please include your name and address and whether you would like a copy to be sent via surface mail or through email (please provide your email address).

Yes, I would like to receive a copy of the summary of the results of this study. This may be mailed to me at:

Or emailed to me at: _____

Or faxed to me at: _____

Appendix D:

Female Visible Minority Sexuality in the Peg

Questionnaire:

1. What is your age?
2. What is your ethnicity or what is the specific group that you think your family of origin identifies with/their home country?
3. Were you born in Canada? Yes No (If no, go to question 5)
4. Where were you born?
- 5a. At what age did you come to Canada?
- 5b. Did you come directly from your birth country? Yes No
If not, which country did you come from?
- 5c. When (year) did you arrive in Canada?
- 5d. Who did you arrive with to Canada?
 Parents & Siblings (brothers & sisters) Siblings Only Other family members
 Alone Other people
5. How long have you lived in Canada?
6. Who did you live with as a child or adolescent (i.e., parents, guardians, siblings, extended family, etc.)?

7. Who do you live with currently?

8. What is your marital status?

9. Do you have children? If yes what is their gender and ages?

10. Are you employed? Yes No

11. Are you currently in school? Yes No

12. What is your last grade or level of school or education that you have completed?

None 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 (circle one)

Some post-secondary education

College completed

University completed

13. What is the last grade or level of school or education of your partner or spouse?

<p>None 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 (circle one)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Some post-secondary education</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> College completed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> University completed</p>
--

14. What is the last grade or level of school or education that your parents/guardians have completed?

Mother/Female Guardian	Father/Male Guardian
<p>None 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 (circle one)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Some post-secondary education</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> College completed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> University completed</p>	<p>None 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 (circle one)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Some post-secondary education</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> College completed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> University completed</p>

15. What are/were your parents/guardians' occupations? (e.g., mechanic, teacher, unemployed, etc.)

Mother/Female Guardian:

Father/Male Guardian:

Appendix E:

Female Visible Minority Sexuality in the Peg**Interview Guide**

For the purpose of this study *sexuality* can be understood as a broad topic which includes issues dealing with dating, having sex, conforming to community and family norms.

1. What were your parents/guardians/family expectations regarding your sexuality (i.e., pre marital sex, when or who you date -dating - interracial dating, same sex relationships, marriage - how or when you or who you marry)?

2. How do you define your sexuality?

Probe: How were these messages (parental expectations on sexuality) communicated and enforced?

3. Were you parents/guardians expectations the same with your cultural communities' expectations regarding sexuality?

4. Was there a time when you realized that your expectations were different? If yes, how did you mediate/cope with this conflict? (probe: confiding or lying)

5. Did the expectations of females around sexuality differ from the expectations of males with in your family/culture?

6. Has the portrayal of women of color and culture in popular media influenced your sexuality throughout your lifetime (i.e., music, TV, movies, ads)? Probe: number of images or role models

7. In retrospect how do feel you're past experiences (i.e., encounters with peers, families, teachers or health care professional etc.) growing up in Canada impact your sexuality (i.e., current relationships)?

8. Which culturally learned attitudes would you teach to other young women of color and culture (i.e., to the next generation)? Probe: Benefits

9. Which culturally learned attitudes would you like to discard?
Probe: Disadvantages

10. How can others (mainstream, health professional, peers, educators, schools, service providers etc.) be allies in the struggles of young women of color and culture growing up in Canada?

Appendix F:



Resource Information Sheet!!!

******* Almost every resource, clinic, drop-in centre or agency on this sheet will answer questions for you over the phone so don't hesitate to give them a call to get more information *******

Counselling Services

Multicultural Wellness Program at Mount Carmel Clinic

886 Main Street

Phone: (204) 582-2311

Immigrant Women's Counselling Services (Women Staff & Clients)

200-323 Portage Avenue

Phone: (204) 953-4100

Women's Health Clinic (Women Staff & Clients)

3rd Floor 419 Graham Avenue

Phone: (204) 947-1517



Youville St. Vital

6-845 Dakota Street

Phone: (204) 255-4840

Nor West Co-op

103-61 Tyndall Avenue

Phone: (204) 940-2020

Turning Point Youth & Family Counselling Services

325 Talbot Avenue

Phone: (204) 669-4290

N.E.E.D.S (Newcomer Employment Education & Development)

251 Notre Dame Street

Phone: (204) 940-1260

Health Clinics For low-cost/free birth control, pregnancy testing, pregnancy counseling, STI/HIV testing and emergency contraception (morning after pill)...Always phone ahead!

Klinik 870 Portage Avenue -----784-4090

Women's Health Clinic 3rd Floor 419 Graham Ave. -----947-1517

Mount Carmel Clinic 886 Main Street -----582-2311

Youville St. Vital 6-845 Dakota Street----- 255-4840**Nor West Co-op** 103-61 Tyndall Avenue -----940-2020**Nine Circles** 705 Broadway Avenue – specializing in HIV/AIDS services (walk in) ---940-6000

-Provides appropriate support, referrals and information to individuals around the issues of sexual orientation, gender identity, homosexuality and bisexuality.

Health Links 1-88-315-9257 788-8200 (24 hours)

-For information and referral services on health related matters, staffed by registered nurses to assist health professionals and the public.

AIDS/STI Information Line 1-800-563-8336 783-1116 (24 hours)

-For information and/or free literature on HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections.

Resources on the Internet

www.sexualityandu.ca – sexual health information for all ages

www.sxetc.org – sexual health information for guys and girls of all ages

www.reachout.com.au – mental health, body image, coming out issues and information.

Appendix G:

Participant Profile Table

This participant table is a brief overview of the women involved in this research study.

Woman	Age	Origin	Sexual Orientation	Marital Status	Education	Children
1	33	The Middle East	Heterosexual	Divorced and Single	University	One child
2	29	Latin or Central America	Heterosexual	Never Married	University	No Children
3	30	South East Asia	Heterosexual	Divorced and Single	College Education	Two Children
4	30	South East Asia/ South Pacific	Heterosexual	Never Married	University	No Children
5	40	East Africa	Bisexual	Never Married	University	No Children
6	36	Afro-Caribbean	Heterosexual	Divorced	College	Two Children
7	42	Indo-Caribbean	Heterosexual	Divorced	University	Two Children
8	35	South East Asia	Heterosexual	Married	University	Two Children
9	38	Northern Asia	Heterosexual	Married	University	Two Children

Appendix H:



What was it like to grow up in
CANADA as a YOUNG WOMAN
of COLOUR and CULUTRE?

For more information please contact:

Priya Sharma (MSW Student)

E-mail: umshar19@cc.umanitoba.ca



This study has been reviewed and received clearance by the Psychology Sociology Research
Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba