1-1-2006

Identity, identification, and racialisation : immigrant youth in the Canadian context

Sara Shahsiah
Ryerson University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.ryerson.ca/dissertations

Part of the Race and Ethnicity Commons

Recommended Citation

IS 800 Major Research Paper

Identity, identification, and racialization:
Immigrant youth in the Canadian context

Sara Shahsiah

MRP Supervisor: June Y. Yee
MRP Second Reader: Vappu Tyyskä

The Major Research Paper is submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Master of Arts degree
in
Immigration and Settlement Studies

Ryerson University
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

© Sara Shahsiah, 2005

UMI Number: EC53779

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION FORM

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this major research paper.

I authorize Ryerson University to lend this paper to other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

Signature

I further authorize Ryerson University to reproduce this paper by photocopying or by other means, in total or in part, at the request of other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

Signature

Identity, identification, and racialization: Immigrant youth in the Canadian context

A major research paper presented to Ryerson University in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Masters of Arts in Immigration and Settlement Studies.

By Sara Shahsiah

ABSTRACT

As the number of immigrant youth in Toronto increases in a time of federal budget cuts in social services, policy makers and service providers must focus on how identity and identification are integral to youths' integration process as newcomers to Canada (Desai & Subramanian, 2000; Kilbride, Anisef, Baichman-Anisef, & Khattar, 2000). Racialized immigrant youth face unique barriers and struggles as intersecting effects of 'race', class, age, and gender meditate their experiences (Desai & Subramanian, 2000; Kilbride et al., 2000; Rummens; 2003). Through focus groups and individual interviews with foreign-born, non-white youth, this study explores how youth are able to articulate, negotiate, and problematize their identity. Employing an anti-racist theoretical framework and a critical social research approach, the study asks in particular: how do racialized immigrant youth self-identify and perceive their 'racial', ethnic, and/or cultural identity? The study's findings confirm that identity is constructed in a relational and contextual manner that is dependent on experiences of being othered and racialized.

Keywords: Immigrants; racialization; identity; youth; othering.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Identity, identification, and racialization: Immigrant youth in the Canadian context

INTRODUCTION

This exploratory research study concerns itself with the articulation, negotiation, and problematization of identity and identification within the broader context of social processes of racialization and 'othering' in contemporary Canada. Canadian society is racialized and socially stratified in that certain populations are socially and discursively constructed as racial 'Others' (Desai & Subramanian, 2000). Those individuals and groups of people who are defined primarily in 'racial' terms and marked as 'Others' are subsequently denied full access to society's economic, cultural, social, and political institutions (Desai & Subramanian, 2000; Henry, Tator, Mattis & Rees, 2000; Mullaly, 1997). This form of social exclusion and resulting marginalization experienced by 'othered' members of society is navigated through social as well as discursive practices and processes.

The significance or problem, at the heart of this study, concerns the externally imposed classification, categorization, labelling, and essentially identification of those who are demarcated as racial 'Others' within Canada. In Canada, dominant public discourses on diversity and 'the immigrant' construct immigrants as primarily racialized but also gendered and classed 'Others' (Bannerji, 2000; Carty, 1999; Elabor-Idemudia, 1999). In the same vein, racialization and other processes of othering and social exclusion also construct certain individuals as 'Canadians' who enjoy insider status in society. Considering that the Canadian state and public, pride themselves on being diverse, the co-existence of the state-instituted multiculturalism policy and forms of racism suggests a paradox and rhetoric about inclusiveness (Henry et al., 2000). Similarly, the idea of a Canadian identity, of being Canadian, as well as the

notion of *becoming* Canadian, are widely contested and debated concepts in view of this sociopolitical context.

While new immigrants are one of Canada's most socio-economically marginalized groups (Gingerich, 2003; Galabuzi, 2001), the majority of Canadian social science research and published literature focuses mainly on the adult portion of this population (Anisef, Baichman-Anisef, & Siemiatycki, 2004; Anisef & Kilbride, 2000). Similarly, the literature on racialized youth and adolescents rarely distinguishes foreign-born individuals or immigrants from native-born youth (Anisef & Kilbride, 2000; Dinovitzer, Hagan, & Parker, 2003). In addition, racialized immigrant youth *per se* are rarely the subject of such research and literature; although the few reports that do exist indicate that these youth face unique struggles and barriers related to their integration. Barriers to integration arise primarily from multiple, intersecting effects of 'race', class, gender, and age (Anisef & Kilbride, 2000; Dinovitzer et al., 2003; Harvey, 1990). According to these studies and reports, youth repeatedly identify that issues related to identity formation, development, and maintenance are of great concern and importance to them particularly during their settlement and integration phase in Canada (Anisef & Kilbride, 2000; Desai & Subramanian, 2000; Dinovitzer et al., 2003). Apart from intergenerational conflict-related identity issues, few studies actually explore what these concerns are in terms of self-identification, nor do they study identity from the point of view of racialized immigrant youth themselves.

Given the potentially detrimental effects of racialization processes and practices, such as social exclusion and marginalization, it is imperative to explore identity and identification as integral elements to the integration process of newly arriving immigrants. Based on Henry and colleagues' (2000) conceptual definition, integration is a process that "allows groups and individuals to become full participants in the social, economic, cultural, and political life of a

society" (p.408). Integration is purposely distinguished from the process of assimilation in that integration allows for the retention of a group's or individual's cultural identity (Henry et al., 2000). While it is generally operationalized in terms of economic, social and cultural indicators, some argue that the full integration of a population, such as any group of immigrants, would manifest in the representation of that population in all of Canada's institutions, organizations, associations, and societies (Anisef & Kilbride, 2000). In this light, understanding the integration-related struggles of newcomer youth is important for identifying and addressing their needs (Anisef et al., 2004; Kilbride, Anisef, Baichman-Anisef, & Khattar, 2000; Tonks & Paranjpe, 1999).

With these concerns in mind, the following research enquiry asks, in particular, how do racialized immigrant youth self-identify and perceive of themselves in terms of their 'racial', ethnic, and/or cultural identity? What, if at all, are their experiences of social exclusion and marginality? How do these youth exercise agency, if at all, to navigate around or resist dominant discourses about immigrants? And finally, to what extent do they reject and resist imposed labels and categorizations?

The following literature review illuminates what is already known about identity and what areas pertaining to identity are debated in contemporary social science research literature. The review provides a context and serves as an important starting point in exploring self-identification and identities of racialized immigrant youth in Canada.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the social science literature, on the topic of identity and identification, indicates that the topic of identity is in itself quite a broad area of enquiry. The question of identity has been approached from diverse epistemological stances and interpreted from a variety

of divergent theoretical perspectives. Considering the large number and vast array of approaches to the study of identity, the following literature review provides an overview of how identity tends to be contested and conceptualized in relation to immigrants and ethno-culturally pluralistic societies. As such, the review is limited to literature that has been generated within the last decade, and that theorizes and explores identity particularly as a constructed, contested, problematized, and/or negotiated concept in the geopolitical context of North America.

While this study focuses on racialized individuals, it should be noted that the language of racialization is not generally employed as part of the public discourse in Canada. Rather, visible minority is a common term that has been created by the Canadian state to refer to groups and individuals who are other than white or Caucasoid, and also non-Aboriginal (Statistics Canada, 2001a). In its day-to-day usage, the term visible minority is used interchangeably with 'people of colour' and 'racial minorities'. From a critical perspective, this terminology is problematic because it reinforces an outsider-status and falsely implies, particularly in Toronto, that non-whites are less in number (Henry et al., 2000). In critiquing this terminology, this study uses the language of racialization to signify the externally imposed systems of classification and labelling, and, at the same time, explores the meaning of the language and terminology that is currently used in the literature (Carty, 1999; Elabor-Idemudia, 1999; Satzewich, 1998).

Similarly, the term youth as employed by the authors of the review literature may connote different age ranges. For the purpose of this study, the term youth has been adapted from the official Census definition of persons aged 15 to 24 (Statistics Canada, 2001), as the development of social policies and services affecting this population in Canada are based on this official definition.

Theorizing identity and markers of identity

Although no one agreed-upon conceptual definition of identity can be clearly traced,

some conceptual parallels can be drawn from the reviewed literature as to the nature of identity.

To be specific, identity is generally conceptualized as socially constructed, relational or

comparative, and contextual in nature (Anthias, 1999; Bottero & Irwin, 203; Dei, 2000; Desai &

& Subramanian, 2000; Dwyer, 1999; Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995; Lien, Conway, & Wong,

2003; Martin, 1995; Rummens, 2003; Yon, 2000). In this sense, identity cannot be defined in

isolation, but can only be known and understood when contrasted to or pitted against something

that is considered different (Anthias, 1999; Bottero & Irwin, 2003; Martin, 1995). As Martin

(1995) contends, the *sameness*, which is implied in the development of identity and act of

identification, requires some form of *elseness* in order for it to exist in the first place. The

introduction of the notion of difference is reflected in most of the literature that is concerned with

identity (Yon, 2000). It appears, as though a conscious recognition of differences and

similarities is an inherent feature of self-definition and identification processes (Rummens, 2003).

In fact, Anthias (1999) argues that notions of identity and identification are strategic elements in

the process of 'otherness' and sameness.

This idea of difference as integral to the concept of identity explains why markers of

identity tend to be treated nearly synonymously with markers of difference in much of the

discussion around identity, classification, and categorization (Bottero & Irwin, 2003; Martin,

1995; Rummens, 2003). Some of the signifiers of difference and identity in culturally pluralistic

societies include, for example, 'foreign' accents (Creese & Kambere, 2003; Grosfoguel, 2004)

and dress (Dyck & Mclaren, 2002; Dwyer, 1999; Ibrahim, 2003; Kelly, 1998). As Dwyer (1999)

observes in her study of young British Muslim women, wearing a headscarf marks these women

as specifically *Muslim* women. The common public response of ascribing a differentiated image

and identity onto those wearing a headscarf suggests just how significant visible identity markers are for the social construction of 'Others'.

Similarly, several authors point to the significance of skin colour or 'race' as ascriptive identity markers (Anthias, 1999; Desai & & Subramanian, 2000; Espiritu, 1994; Ibrahim, 2003; Rummens, 2003; Yon, 2000). Unlike, a foreign accent or headscarf, the person who is marked because of his or her embodied skin colour is not given much choice to escape such ascriptions placed upon one's identity and body. As Ibrahim (2003) put it, we live in a society that is overly race conscious and race obsessed. As a consequence, autonomous self-identification appears less attainable because societal processes and dominant public discourses deploy skin colour as the marker to justify differentiated identities onto unconsenting people. (Hogg et al., 1995; Ibrahim, 2003; Kelly, 1998).

Interestingly Ibrahim (2003) finds that while one cannot escape the 'black' body, context does matter when it comes to being marked as different. In other words, under certain situational circumstances, having a 'black' skin colour may not render the person as racially 'Other' or 'Black'. In their study of Dominicans in the United States, Itzigsohn and Dore-Cabral (2000), for example, point out that many racially mixed Dominicans would not consider themselves Black because the racial stratification system in the Dominican Republic differs from the dichotomous racial stratification system in the United States. Whereas the population is divided according to a binary, Black or White classification in the United States, people tend to be classified along a hierarchical racial continuum in Latin America and the Caribbean (Itzigsohn & Dore-Cabral, 2000). This continuum consists of categories that signify varying degrees of racialization (Itzigsohn & Dore-Cabral, 2000). Dominicans, who may therefore not consider themselves Black, are then faced with *becoming* Black upon entering the United States, because their racially mixed heritage denotes them as Black within the American context (Itzigsohn &

Dore-Cabral, 2000). Similarly, Ibrahim (2003) explains that as a Francophone non-white

African immigrant to Canada, the imposition of a black identity occurred only in Canada as

opposed to in Africa. Being socially defined as black and thereby marked and made visible in

Canada, then requires *becoming* black and *performing* that new identity (Ibrahim, 2003; Kelly,

1998; Walcott, 2001). As part of a "politics [...] of visibility" (Ibrahim, 2003, p.53) people's

identities and bodies become effectively markers of boundaries because of their phenotypic or

otherwise perceived embodied differences (Anthias, 1999; Dwyer, 1999; Dyck & Mclaren, 2002;

Khayatt, 1994).

While the social significance of skin colour or 'race' in the formation of identity is rarely

disputed or denied, there are some gaps in the literature with respect to the relationship between

such markers and identity, perhaps due to arbitrary and contested concepts such as 'race' (James,

1999). Whereas some identity theorists conceptualize 'race' as a structurally-based social

attribute that is ascribed to individuals and groups (Hogg et al., 1995), Rummens (2003) treats

'race' and 'colour' as a type of identity in itself, and distinguishes these from *specific* identities.

In asserting that individuals actively select from a range of identity criteria, Rummens (2003)

explains that a type of identity, such as race, results in a specific racial identity, such as Black,

White, or Asian.

Like Rummens (2003), Martin (1995) conceptualizes identification as a matter or

personal choice and selection, thereby failing to account for how racism may limit choice for

those with marked and 'othered' bodies (Ibrahim, 2003; Yon, 2000). James (1999) on the other

hand employs 'race' to convey the constructed "classification of human beings based on the

historical and geographic context of individual experience" (p.41). From an anti-racist

theoretical framework, James (1999) contends that certain individuals are pressured to identify

themselves in racial terms, whereas individuals from the dominant culture and location of

Whiteness do not self-identify in racial terms. In their study of self-identification and the identity choices of Dominicans in the United States, Itzigsohn and Dore-Cabral (2000) acknowledge that ethnic self-identification is severely restricted to immigrants of colour because of society's "imposition of racial and ethnic labels" (p.227). Lien and colleagues (2003) also assert that apart from individual characteristics and preferences, self-identification in ethnic terms depends on the political and social construction of 'race' and ethnicity. In their survey-based study, Lien and colleagues (2003) hypothesize that having experienced racial discrimination may encourage a sense of alienation from the host society and subsequently discourage self- identification in nationality-based terms in non-white immigrants. Theorizing a similar connection between an individual's identity, social hierarchy, and structural forces, Anthias (2002) proposes to abandon the concept of identity as an analytical tool altogether. Anthias (2002) argues that identity is limited and as such should be discarded in favour for narratives of location and positionality to account for structural realities.

Complex identities

Contemporary debates surrounding identity in the context of culturally plural or multicultural societies increasingly tend to incorporate notions of complexity, multiplicity, hybridity, hyphenation, and layering into their discussions (Anisef et al., 2004; Espiritu, 1994; Fantino & Colak, 2001; Ibrahim, 2003; James, 1999; Mahtani, 2001; Mahtani, 2002a; Mitchell, 1997; Moreiras, 1999; Spencer, 2004; Waters, 1994). Complexity in terms of identity can be understood in several ways. Those studying the integration of new immigrants, children of immigrants or second generation immigrants often refer to the difficulty of forming new or maintaining their already-established cultural, 'racial', or ethnic identities while seeking to adapt and even assimilate into the new society (Espiritu, 1994; Fantino & Colak, 2001; Ibrahim, 2003;

Tonks & Paranjpe, 1999; Waters, 1994). In this context, identity tends to be problematized, suggesting a struggle between two or more oppositional types of identities. Ibrahim (2003), Kilbride and colleagues (2000), and Waters (1994), for example, point to a kind of in-between-ness, where immigrant or second generation youth find themselves caught between the cultural world of their families and that of the receiving society. According to Waters (1994), children of Caribbean immigrants in the United States must choose to either identify as black American or with the ethnic identity of their parents.

Others, however, disagree with such binary conceptualizations of identity struggles, and point out that the issue is not simply about having to choose, but rather about how to reconcile multiple identities (Dyck & Mclaren, 2002; Martin, 1995; Rummens, 2003; Yon, 2000). Based on his findings with racialized high school students in an urban Toronto school, Yon (2000) points out that society's practices of labelling and categorization fail to fully acknowledge the complexity of the youth's identities because only part of their identity is recognized. Martin (1995) argues that multiplications of identification narratives, as opposed to a singular identification, are in fact the norm. Based on a study of children of Filipino immigrants in the United States, Espiritu (1994) confirms that second generation immigrant youth who are already socially racialized tend to construct their ethnic identities in an overlapping and multiple fashion. Such a multiplicity of racialized individuals' identities is often expressed through the hyphenation of ethno-racial names in Canada (James, 1999; Mahtani, 2002a). Encouraged by Canada's official multiculturalism policy, hyphenated names, such as Somalian-Canadian or Chinese-Canadian, seem to signify that the co-existence of ethnic identity and national identity is indeed possible (Mahtani, 2002a). They express, in other words, that they "are neither more nor less one or the other" (James, 1999, p.52). On the surface, then, hyphenation enables expressing the complexity of a multifaceted identity (Mahtani, 2002a; Moreiras, 1999). Mahtani (2002a;

2002b) cautions, however, that such identifications are more political than practical considering only racialized persons and rarely white Canadians are actually hyphenated.

The problem with the practice of hyphenation, according to Mahtani (2002a), is that although it emphasizes the ethnic identity as an add-on onto the shared national identity (Canadian), it "produce[s] spaces of distance" (p.78) where ethnicity becomes situated outside of the notion of Canadian-ness. According to her study's findings, hyphenation poses a particular problem for 'mixed race' women who see themselves as multi-ethnic and yet Canadian. For these women the logic of hyphenation, which would dictate labels such as 'African-Persian-Cherokee-European-Canadian', is just too impractical and tedious (Mahtani, 2002a). Whereas Mahtani (2002a) points to the difficulty 'mixed race' persons experience in naming themselves according to mainstream identification practices in the Canadian context, Spencer (2004) discusses how multiracial youth in the United States are relegated to low social status positions by denying them any claim to a white identity. Within his critique of multiracial identity theory, the author explains that due to a social process, termed loosely the 'one-drop-rule' or the application of hypodescent, multiracial individuals are constructed as 'black' because of their "one drop of African blood" (Spencer, 2004, p.362). Writing about the British experience, Ifekwunigwe (2002), similarly contends that the practice of "compulsory Blackness" (p.335) assumes and indeed expects multiracial persons to self-identify as 'black'. Thus, individuals are constructed simultaneously as 'mixed race' and Black (Ifekwunigwe, 2002).

Some of the literature asserts that the space of in-betweenness is in itself a space that can be occupied (Mahtani, 2001; Mitchell, 1997; Moreiras, 1999). Referring to this space as 'third space' or 'double consciousness', Mitchell (1997) and Moreiras (1999) explore the notion of hybrid identity. Emerging primarily from postmodernist schools of thought and the writings of Homi Bhaba, hybridity is a concept that has gained extensive popularity in recent literature

(Anthias, 1999; Mahtani, 2001; Moreiras, 1999). Introduced initially as a tool for countering rigid, essentializing and monolithic conceptions of ethno-racial identities, the notion of hybrid identities is invoked mainly in discussions pertaining to diasporas and post-colonialism (Anthias, 1999; Mitchell, 1997). Despite its popularity, Anthias (1999) and Mitchell (1997) are sceptical and critical of the supposed empowering and subversive potential of hybridity. While neither proposes specifically any new concepts, Anthias (1999) and Mitchell (1997) caution that the centrality of culture within the construct of hybrid identities fails to address social exclusion that is based on 'race', racism and other structural forces and realities. Anthias (1999) further argues for an approach to identity that is specific in its analysis with regards to structural inequities and social outcomes.

Identity as 'the Other'

Elaborating on the earlier notion that visibility and embodiment can constitute markers of identity and difference, a significant portion of the literature – mainly sociological - discusses the various ways in which discursive practices, including identification, classification, labelling, and categorization, come to construct such difference and 'other' those deemed different (Bedard, 2000; Bottero & Irwin, 2003; Elabor-Idemudia, 1999; James, 1999; James, 2004; Kelly, 1998; Tator & Henry, 2000). Since 'race' or colour has been identified as a powerful and primary marker of difference, it is not surprising that racialization is conceptualized as one major social process that intervenes in the process of identity formation to 'other' non-whites (Creese & Kambere, 2003; Kelly, 1998; Elabor-Idemudia, 1999; Tator & Henry, 2000). Adopted originally from George Dei, Elabor-Idemudia's (1999) definition of racialization - as the practice where some receive power, status and prestige and others are denied these on the basis of how they are 'raced'- closely resembles conceptualizations among the reviewed literature.

Given the historically racist immigration policy and practice legacy of Canada, as well as other immigrant receiving countries such as the United States, Britain and Australia, much of the literature recognizes that the notion of immigration and immigrants themselves are discursively racialized and constructed as *the Other* in contrast to *the Canadian* (read white) (Creese & Kambere, 2003; Dhruvarajan, 2000; Elabor-Idemudia, 1999; James, 1999; Kelly, 1998). In other words, racialization accounts for the 'othering' of new immigrants whose embodied differences do not adhere to the construct of *Canadian-ness*. Indeed, there is a dominant public discourse of the immigrant in Canada that "marks immigrants as visible" (Yon, 2000, p.149; Dyck & Mclaren, 2002; Khayatt, 1994). Immigrants' lived experiences as racial 'Others' are, therefore, not necessarily any different than that of Canadian-born non-whites, as they are also constructed as racialized subjects (Creese & Kambere, 2003; Elabor-Idemudia, 1999; Khayatt, 1994). According to Dyck and Mclaren (2002) and Khayatt (1994), the term 'immigrant woman' tends to be subsequently used interchangeably with 'woman of colour' as well as 'Third World woman'.

For example, because of the imagery attached to their headscarves, Dwyer (1999) observes that young British Muslim women are perceived as passive, traditional, and repressed immigrant women who do not speak English. Similarly, Ibrahim (2003) notes that African youth who immigrate to Canada are already constructed as 'black' and treated accordingly prior and upon their arrival to the Canadian social space. Further, Creese and Kambere (2003) explain that, in Canada, certain accents are considered 'foreign' and constructed as markers of the immigrant identity and by implication of outsider status. Ironically, British-English and Australian-English accents are not racialized nor constructed as 'foreign' (Creese & Kambere, 2003).

In the American context, Grosfoguel (2004) reports that accent remains a marker of 'otherness' even for second-generation youth. Specifically, children of immigrants from the

West Indies who, for whatever reason, do not have their parents' British-English accents are more 'othered' than their parents (Grosfoguel, 2004). Ironically, their parents were less 'othered' and arguably less racialized precisely because of their prestigious British-English accent, while their children who had been "African Americanized" (Grosfoguel, 2004, p.331) experienced more overt racial discrimination and stereotypes. Stereotyping and racial profiling are another aspect of racialization (James, 2004). According to anti-racist scholar James (2004), stereotypes not only categorize and organize but also essentialize the complex identities of racialized youth. Stemming from hegemonic discourses of racism, James (2004) identifies that stereotypes affect predominately immigrant youth as well as racial and ethnic minority youth.

While racialization may manifest in various ways and affect racialized subjects to varying degrees, overall, there seems to be a consensus in the literature that these processes of racialization and 'othering' may deny access to resources, entitlements to the labour market, and eventually hinder full participation in society (Creese & Kambere, 2003; Dyck & Mclaren, 2002; Elabor-Idemudia, 1999; Grosfoguel, 2004; Walcott, 2001). Walcott (2001) adds that the kind of 'not-quite citizenship' status extended to racialized minorities, such as black Canadians, impedes feelings of belonging even for those who are not first generation immigrants themselves.

Negotiating identity in 'othered' bodies

While Tator (2000) claims that subverting racialization and 'othering' discourses are too difficult, some authors argue that racialized individuals and new immigrants are not passive recipients of social forces and discursive practices that name, categorize, exclude, and position them as the Other (Espiritu, 1994; James, 1999; Walcott, 2001; Yon, 2000). 'Othered' individuals who have internalized the racist hegemonic images may be quite complicit to oppressive practices, but many other 'othered' individuals and groups demonstrate their

resistance (Espiritu, 1994; James, 1999; Walcott, 2001; Yon, 2000). As Espiritu (1994), Ifewunigwe (2002), James (1999), Mahtani (2001; 2002a), Moreiras (1999), Waters (1994), and Yon (2000) illustrate, individuals use their agency and consciously and actively navigate through hegemonic forces in an attempt to negotiate and establish their own identities.

While the young adults in Espiritu's (1994) study had distanced themselves from their ethno-racial backgrounds in their early youth, they explained that eventually they were able to "return to their ethnicity" (p.261) by adopting multiple identities although they felt society's pressure to assimilate. Similarly Mahtani (2001; 2002b) found that instead of specifying what their ethnic or racial identity was, multiracial women in her study claimed and celebrated the label 'mixed race'. According to Mahtani (2002b), the 'mixed race' women thereby subverted the meaning of such a term in order to resist racist categorizations. Ifekwunigwe (2002) and Waters (1994) found that 'mixed race' individuals were rather strategic in their self-identification practices. Their strategy consisted of claiming various identities in different circumstances, depending on the particularities of a given context (Ifekwunigwe, 2002; Waters, 1994). Rather than being forced to abide by the boundaries of an imposed identity category, these individuals emphasized their agency and the fluid nature of their identities.

The reviewed literature illustrates that the study of identity and identification can be approached from many different angles. Issues of 'race', racism, and racialization take center-stage in studies that attempt to explore the complex identities of racially 'othered' individuals and groups, including new immigrants within contemporary multicultural or pluralistic societies such as Canada. Much of the literature on the effects of racialization on identities and lived experiences, however, focuses on the experiences of 'mixed race' or Black youth, particularly in the United States. There is little research that discusses the specific struggles of racialized immigrant youth in contemporary Canada. Similarly, discussions about subversive strategies

and resistance generally neglect to focus on first generation immigrant youth and their agency, creating the impression and reinforcing the image that immigrants are truly passive victims as the dominant public discourse on immigrants would evoke (Bannerji, 2000; Carty, 1999; Elabor-Idemudia, 1999).

To investigate these contentions and debates about problematized identity further, it is imperative to identify the theoretical framework and methodology guiding such an investigation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK & UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS

This study is approached from a critical social theory paradigm, and, as such, comes from an epistemological perspective that is invested in social justice and equity, and seeks to answer the questions of enquiry through dialogue and subjective accounts. More specifically, the study's working definitions and underlying assumptions are derived from an anti-racist theoretical perspective as articulated by scholars such as George S. Dei (2000), Frances Henry (2000), and Himani Bannerji (2000), while the interpretative framework borrows elements from a critical social research methodology as set out by Lee Harvey (1990).

Methodology is the "interface between methodic practice, substantive theory and epistemological underpinnings" (p.1) and as such embodies an approach to interpretation, whereas method refers strictly to the way data is collected in a given research endeavour (Harvey, 1990). While critical social research methodology is not tied to any specific data collection method or theory, its proposed approach to the social world fits well with critical and anti-racist thought. Central to a methodology based on critical social research is the task of digging beneath the surface of appearances and social phenomena in an attempt to reveal underlying social processes and practices (Harvey, 1990). Derived from early Marxist theories,

the underlying assertion is that the dominant world view in a given society is hegemonic and that the real nature of oppressive structures is therefore well hidden from the public (Crossley, 2005; Harvey, 1990). For everyone, the true nature of relations is concealed through a range of social practices and processes that in turn distort the perceptions of individuals thereby creating a kind of false consciousness and compliance among members of society (Harvey, 1990). Reality, then, is constructed and naturalized in such a manner that individuals do not question the reality that is presented to them (Cameron, 2001; Crossley, 2005). 'The way things are' and 'common sense' are not readily conceptualized as outcomes of social forces (Cameron, 2001). Correspondingly, critical social research methodology does not ask 'why' but 'how come' to expose social processes while ensuring that nothing is taken for granted in the process of enquiry (Harvey, 1990). Critical social research methodology therefore engages consciously in a deconstructive-reconstructive process during data analysis, whereby the researcher constantly moves back and forth between abstract concepts that have emerged during interpretation and the concrete, empirical data that has been collected in an effort to transcend what hegemony conceals (Harvey, 1990). Specifically, it is the reconstructed concept that has the potential to uncover the structural relationships behind a formerly empty concept such as racialization (Harvey, 1990). In so doing, Harvey (1990) stresses that facts and study findings are analyzed in their theoretical context, rather than in isolation.

The integrated anti-racist framework as developed and outlined by Dei (2000) is particularly well suited for exploring the identities and self-identification practices of racialized youth who encounter social exclusion and are deemed 'Other' in Canada. Emerging from critical post-colonial theory, the notion of 'the Other' is closely tied to historical social processes whereby certain groups are socially construed as different and assigned outsider status (Carty, 1999; Bannerji, 2000). This process of othering perpetually delegates some individuals and

groups to subordinate positions in society and essentially bars them from accessing the same socio-economic opportunities as those who are not othered. Othering is distinguished from the process of racialization, in that 'the Other' is not necessarily or exclusively tied to 'race', but to a perceived difference and lack of commonality with the dominant majority (Carty, 1999; Bannerji, 2000).

From an anti-racism perspective, racialization is a process that discursively and socially 'races' certain individuals or groups of people, by marking and defining them primarily in racial terms. Generally, racialization accomplishes this by using and fixing upon certain phenotypic markers such as skin colour, hair texture, and facial features as signifiers of a 'race' or a 'racial' identity. Like 'othering', racialization is a process specific to historical and social contexts, and has been responsible for constructing certain European groups as Whites and groups from Africa as the Black race throughout colonialism (Carty, 1999; Satzewich, 1998). A 'racialized' individual or group may, therefore, refer to different persons depending on the broader context in which racialization is occurring. Similarly, white individuals may also be 'raced' or racialized through this process. The significance of using this terminology lies with the implied recognition that people are 'raced' externally, rather than belonging inherently to a given 'race'. In Canada, individuals or groups who are not white tend to be variously 'racialized' either through self-identification or external imposition (Satzewich, 1998). Those who are racialized also tend to be othered and are therefore often referred to as 'the racial Other'.

An advantage of conceptualizing identity and self-identification of racialized immigrant youth through the analytical lens of anti-racism and critical social research methodology is that the very concepts of racism and racialization are key components of these approaches (Bedard, 2000; Dei, 2000; Harvey, 1990; Henry et al., 2000). While the application of the term 'race' is problematic and misleading in that it has been used to justify the subordination of certain

populations based on a set of supposed biological attributes and ancestry, the usage of 'race' from a critical perspective recognizes that it is a socially constructed concept that has been assigned meaning through historically specific social processes (Desai & Subramanian, 2000; Harvey, 1990; Henry et al., 2000). Both anti-racism theory and critical social research methodology argue for the social construction of 'race' (Harvey, 1990; Henry et al., 2000). In this sense, the inverted commas in this report denote that 'race' is not biologically based but yet continues to be socially, politically, and economically significant and consequential.

Another central tenet of critical and anti-racism theory concerns the intersectionality of oppressions based on gender, class, sexual orientation, dis/ability, and so on with 'race' (Bannerji, 2000; Dei, 2000). In other words, the lives of individuals are affected by a combination of systems of oppression such as 'race', gender, class, and so on. As Dei (2000) asserts, the individual "does not possess a one-dimensional identity" but is "socialized into identities that correspond to the categories of race, gender, and class" (Dei, 2000, 31). However, although it may not be possible to explore the effects of 'race' in isolation, the lives and identities of non-white individuals are affected firstly by issues of 'race' (Harvey, 1990). In other words, while participants may experience being othered for a variety of reasons, the scope of this study is limited to how being non-white and racialized in the context of Canada affects the identities and perceptions of the participating youth.

The following section details the data collection methods, sampling, and procedures employed in this study. It also describes limitations and potential biases that may have influenced the study as a whole.

METHODS

The study has been approached from a qualitative social research orientation, because qualitative methods allow for the depth and breadth necessary for critical exploration of how people assign meaning to certain constructs such as identity, 'race', or 'racial' identity. As such, the analysis of empirical, qualitative data concerns itself with meaningful talk and action (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Exploration, discovery, context, depth, and interpretation are the main strengths of qualitative approaches (Morgan, 1998), which therefore lends itself well to enquiries about identity and self-identification as these cannot be properly quantified or explored through quantitative approaches. Further, the use of qualitative narrative inquiry as the central research strategy for this proposed study enables the views, experiences, and thoughts of participants to be voiced as well as heard and interpreted. Such a study has considerable potential for empowerment and consciousness-raising in study participants, although these benefits depend on a series of factors and could not be guaranteed. A qualitative research approach allows, furthermore, for a non-linear research path which is deemed "highly effective for creating a feeling for the whole" and "for grasping subtle shades of meaning" among other things (Neuman, 2003, p.83). As has been mentioned before, the social context was of particular importance to this study as the meanings and subsequent effects of 'race', racism, racialization, change in different social and historical contexts (Carty, 1999; Harvey, 1990; Neuman, 2003).

In qualitative enquiries, the researcher is the research instrument and, therefore, must be considered in the process of data collection and indeed throughout the entire study (Patton, 2002). As a foreign-born, twice emigrated, young woman who fits the Census' definition of a 'visible minority' person, I am personally invested in this study because, like the participants, my life too has been shaped by social processes, practices, and policies that 'raced' and 'othered' me, and

subsequently influenced how I perceive myself and continue to see myself. My experiences with the major institutions of the Canadian society served as a catalyst for inquiring about the processes of social exclusion, racism, and resistance in relation to identity. These background characteristics may have influenced how I was received by study participants and shaped the interaction between participants and myself (Patton, 2002). As it is unlikely for an individual to separate himself or herself completely from aspects of his or her own identity such as past experiences, upbringing, or education, it is important to make these as transparent as possible to account for any potential predispositions, perceptions, or biases that may have influenced the collection, analysis, and/or interpretation of data (Patton, 2002). While my university education in social work enabled me to name and make analytical linkages between my personal experiences and theoretical frameworks, my current education in Immigration and Settlement Studies builds on and refines my analysis of such societal issues and likely influenced my leaning towards anti-racism theory and critical social research.

However, while the perspective that I have developed through my experiences and education likely affected the design of this study, some of the findings of this study have also refuted some of my theoretical explanations, and required me to re-examine some of my personal beliefs and perspective. Qualitative inquiry necessitates modification of interpretations as part of the process of the inquiry itself. My social location likely shaped how participants constructed me and the study itself, that is, they may have observed that I am non-white and drawn a set of conclusions about my intentions and motivations that may or may not be actually true. On the other hand, participants may have situated me in a higher social class or in a position of power and authority because I am a graduate student who is conducting a research study on them. According to Glesne (1999), such status discrepancies are to be expected and may need to be addressed through self-disclosure in any research that is interactional. Similarly, I was aware of

how I constructed research participants based on our shared commonalities which may in fact have been more divergent than I had assumed.

In an attempt to control for potential researcher biases and influences, I was careful about the type and amount of personal information that I shared with participants. At the beginning of each focus group and individual interview session, I shared with participants when I immigrated to Canada and what school grade I was in upon arrival in Canada. As part of an introduction about the study and myself as the researcher, I described where I was born and that I immigrated to Germany before coming to Canada. Participants seemed less hesitant to share their immigration experiences once I had initiated the conversation with personal information about myself. It is worth noting that in qualitative research, a mutual influence between the researcher and those studied is anticipated and appreciated (Tutty, Rothery, & Grinnell, 1996). In fact, according to Tutty and colleagues (1996), the development of a close relationship during the study is anticipated.

Similarly, I remained self-reflective about my assumptions throughout the study. However, I also recognize that being truly objective is unreasonable and arguably undesirable in qualitative social research endeavours, and that I cannot be completely objective in my interpretations of qualitative data (Glesne, 1999; Patton, 2002; Tutty et al., 1996).

Sample

Overall twenty-two youth participated in this study. Given the focus of this study, the sample consists exclusively of immigrant youth who either self-identify as non-White or were identified as such by service providing organizations that helped in the recruitment of participants. The term immigrant is used throughout this study to refer to an individual who was not born in but who now lives in Canada, as opposed to that person's legal citizenship status or

length of time in Canada. As such, the sample is inclusive of refugee claimants, refugees and/or individuals with less than full legal status in Canada. The term immigrant is consciously used in this way to contrast the problematic discourse on 'immigrant' which tends to construct all immigrants as 'visible minorities' and all Canadian-born 'visible minorities' as immigrants (Desai & Subramanian, 2000; Elabor-Idemudia, 1999). All but one participant were born outside of Canada and are thus considered immigrants in a generic sense for the purpose of this study. One participant identifies with being an immigrant despite being born in Canada, because his family immigrated shortly after his birth to another country and only returned to live in Canada less than a year ago. The sample was not equally balanced in terms of representation of genders. Fifteen of the participants were female and seven were male. While the age of participants ranged anywhere from fourteen to twenty-four years of age, the average age was nineteen years. Fifty percent of the sample were attending or enrolled in high school, while the other half was attending post-secondary education, awaiting acceptance into post-secondary education program, seeking employment, or employed on a full-time or part-time basis at the time of the study.

The following chart illustrates in more detail the demographic profile of participants.

Code Name	Gender	Age	Year of immigration to Canada	Languages spoken
D5	Male	24	1993	English
D3	Female	20	1999	English, Nepali, Hindi
D6	Female	24	1997	English, Cantonese, Mandarin
D4	Female	24	1981	English, Punjabi
D1	Male	18	2004	English, Portuguese
D2	Male	19	2004	English, Portuguese
C1	Female	18	2005	English, Cantonese, Mandarin
C3	Female	24	1993	English, Tamil, Sinhala
C2	Female	18	2005	English, Chinese
A1	Female	20	1996	English, Farsi, German
B1	Male	21	1990	English, Farsi
B2	Female	24	1990	English, Farsi

E1	Male	24	1989	English, Spanish
F2	Male	15	2001	English, Gujarati, Swahili
F5	Male	16	2000	English, Urdu
F1	Female	21	1987	English, Urdu, Hindi, Gujarati
F6	Female	16	1995	English, Urdu, Hindi
F3	Female	16	2000	English, Urdu, Hindi, French
F7	Female	16	2002	English, Urdu, Hindi, Gujarati, Kiswahili
F8	Female	15	2005	English, Gujarati
F9	Female	15	2001	English, Urdu, Hindi
F4	Female	14	n/a	English, Urdu

While the sample was ethno-culturally diverse, participants were not asked about their ethnicity on the demographic face sheet. Rather, the question of ethnicity was addressed in focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews as part of the central research question of how participants self-identify.

The geographical boundaries were initially restricted to the City of Toronto for practical reasons relating to resource limitations, but also due to theoretical considerations. With 49.4% of its total population born outside of Canada and 42.8% constituting visible minorities according to 2001 Census data, Toronto has become the most diverse metropolitan city in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2001b). What makes this city even more suitable for studying racialized immigrant youth is that about 16 % of its 15 to 24 year old residents are 'visible minority' youth (Anisef & Kilbride, 2000).

Youth residing or using services in the City of Mississauga were eventually also recruited because recruitment efforts in Toronto resulted in a smaller number of participants than initially anticipated. With 46.8% of its population foreign-born and 40.3% constituting visible minorities (Statistics Canada, 2001c), Mississauga is quickly following in the footsteps of Toronto in terms of the demographic profile of its growing population. In fact, taken together, the immigrant population of Mississauga and Toronto account for 5% of all of Canada's immigrants (Statistics

Canada, 2001b; Statistics Canada, 2001c). Similarly, the number of visible minorities in Mississauga and Toronto combined account for 4.4% of all of Canada's population (Statistics Canada, 2001b; Statistics Canada, 2001c). The sample and geographic location of recruitments is closely tied to the study's findings because qualitative data are "by their nature [...] highly context and case dependent" (Patton, 2002, 563).

Recruitment of participants was carried out in two ways. First, a form of purposive sampling was initially employed to gain access to individuals that fit the participant criteria. In other words, the recruitment and selection of participants is purposive in that sampling is based on a set of criteria determined by the research study's purpose (Tuckett, 2004). To this end, organizations that provide services to the target population of this study were initially identified through the 211.ca website. Various settlement and ethno-specific community agencies that offer services or programs geared specifically to racialized immigrant youth in the City of Toronto and Mississauga were then contacted to discuss the possibility of accessing their clientele. Service providers would then inform potential participants about this study, who in turn contacted me directly if they were interested in participating. Because immigrant youth are generally under-served (Anisef & Kilbride, 2000; Desai & Subramanian, 2000) and not all youth who are using services may want to or are able to participate in this research study, a snowball sampling technique was also used to gain access to a larger number of potential participants. Youth that were already recruited were asked to inform and invite some of their friends or family members if they too were foreign-born, within the age range and interested in participating. Ten participants found out about the study through an organization, agency or programs, while nine participants were referred from a friend and three from a family member.

These sampling techniques introduce some limitations for the analysis of the obtained data. For example, youth who may meet the recruitment criteria but were not using services or

participating in a particular program at the time of recruitment were inadvertently excluded from participation in the study. At the same time, those who knew somebody who was already recruited had a greater chance at participating in this study. Another limitation relating to access concerns English language proficiency and the lack of interpreter services available for this study. In spite of the recruitment methods described previously, the proportion of recent immigrant youth was much less than initially expected. It is imperative that interpretative services be built into research studies in order to allow for individuals with less than proficient English language abilities to participate in such studies. Failure to provide such services clearly presents barriers to access and participation and, in doing so, may further silence and marginalize such individuals. As a result, nineteen of the twenty-two participants spoke English fluently. By contrast, three participants had difficulty expressing themselves in English and were participating to a lesser degree in the focus group discussions. While English was the first language of a few participants, the majority of participants had immigrated to Canada at a much younger age. In fact, seventeen participants immigrated to Canada prior to 2000. The findings obtained through this study are therefore not only context-specific but also specific to this sample and are not generalizable to any other time, context, or group of individuals.

Data Collection

Combining different methods of data collection adds weight to the credibility of a study's findings (Patton, 2002; Tutty et al., 1996). In other words, the triangulation of data collection methods helps establish trustworthiness, that is, the extend to which the findings derived in the study can be trusted (Patton, 2002). According to Patton (2002), the logic of triangulation lies with the notion that no single method is capable of dealing with competing explanations. Multiple data collection methods, therefore, allow for testing the consistency of findings because

each method reveals a different aspect about the topic of enquiry (Patton, 2002). In this study two different methods of obtaining qualitative data and one quantitative method to obtain demographic data were employed to increase consistency and trustworthiness of findings across data sources and methods.

Quantitative data was collected at the onset of each focus group and one-on-one interview. Participants were asked to complete a demographic face sheet (see Appendix A) which was used to obtain some demographic data about participants in order to determine the overall demographic profile of this study's sample.

Qualitative data was collected through three semi-structured focus group discussions and four one-on-one interviews. These data collection methods generate discussions and exchange of views which in turn permit the researcher to elicit rich qualitative data that is significant to exploring and understanding the complexity and depth of what is being studied (Glesne, 1999; Morgan, 1998). While focus group interviews provide the researcher with personal accounts and information, focus groups are also often chosen by researchers because of the empowering effect it can have on participants (Neuman, 2003). Focus group participants may particularly benefit from the sharing and comparing of experiences that are disclosed during the discussions as they may have detected similarities in their experiences like, for example, not being part of the dominant group in the Canadian society. All focus group and individual interviews followed a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix B).

Eighteen individuals participated in the focus group discussions. Each focus group consisted of four to nine participants and lasted anywhere from one hour to an hour and a half. According to Krueger (1998a), focus groups of that size allow for a better comparison among focus groups during the analysis stage of study, particularly when there are a limited number of participants to begin with. One focus group consisted of individuals who were already a pre-

existing youth group, whereas the other two focus groups consisted of individuals who did not necessarily know each other prior to the study.

Procedures

All focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. As part of the analytical process, interview transcripts were coded not only to initially organize the data but also to link various data segments to each other and to generated concepts. Coding was conducted on three levels. First-level coding consisted of dividing and designating large data segments to broad topics. In effect, the codes attached to these large data segments reflected the questions that were used to generate and lead the focus group discussions and individual interviews. At this level, data were reduced to generic categories which further served to organize the obtained data. According to Coffey and Atkinson (1996), while this form of coding may not add particular insight to the analysis of the data per se, it does have practical value in that data of qualitative nature is rarely ever neatly organized in verbal communication.

First-level coding was followed by second-level coding, whereby smaller data segments within and across the larger data categories were assigned codes. These codes were a mixture of words that participants had used to refer to what they were articulating as well as words that summarized what participants were discussing. Second-level coding involved a comparison across transcripts whereby frequency, extensiveness, and intensity of comments made by participants were noted in order to uncover themes and patterns in a systematic manner (Krueger, 1998). Based on Krueger's (1998) recommendation, particular attention was also paid to specific personal accounts that were articulated in the first person rather than in the abstract or hypothetical third person, as these tend to contain more significance.
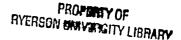
Second-level codes became sub-categories to the first-level codes which signified umbrella categories. Mindful of the influence and effects of group dynamics in focus group discussions and conversely the absence of these in one-on-one interviews, identified themes and patterns across all transcripts were approached as relational and context-specific rather than static absolutes. At this point, emerging codes, categories, and themes were compared and contrasted across focus group and individual interviews to check for consistency among findings.

Third-level coding was more directly reflective of imposed concepts and interpretations. Emerging sub-categories at this level were more detailed and specific in that they were indicative of analytical concepts and issues. At this point, all transcripts were reviewed several times to allow for potential changes in coding and expansion or contraction in categories and sub-categories. This activity allowed for the saturation of categories which occurs when no new categories or sub-categories emerge because all data fit into the developed scheme of categorization (Tutty et al., 1996). According to Tutty and colleagues (1996), achieving category saturation signals the end of coding.

Coded data and categories were then closely examined within the context of transcripts to look for patterns, irregularities, themes, and contradictions. This rather abstract step in analysis further refined the analysis process as recommended by Tutty and colleagues (1996). While conceptual ideas and linkages had already become increasingly apparent during the coding process, the next step in data analysis comprised more specifically the theorizing of relationships between and among codes, categories and emerging concepts. Such conceptualizing and theorizing in turn involved the interpretation of codes and categories to arrive at meaning. This exercise of going back and forth between developed abstract and the original, concrete data segments constitutes a kind of deconstructive-reconstructive process that is so central to critical social research (Harvey, 1990). In other words, the interpretative phase of data analysis involved

an exploration of how analytical concepts that emerged from the data relate back to the data in terms of their usage and linkage to the question of enquiry (Harvey, 1990). Given the critical social research oriented methodology of this study, interpretation of the study findings further included linking the categories, patterns, and linkages back to broader social structures and issues. The resulting interpretations then served as the basis for the conclusions drawn in the discussion section of this report.

To assess the trustworthiness of the data analysis results, member checking was conducted with participants of this study. Member checking or participant verification before the completion of a study assists also in achieving higher levels of authenticity and rigour (Krueger, 1998; Morgan, 1998; Tutty et al., 1996). According to Patton (2002), such an exercise of raising questions about the credibility of study findings is a form of analytical triangulation that increases the rigorousness of the study's conclusions. The themes along with interpretations and preliminary conclusions were provided in an accessible language to all 22 participants in writing. Participants were then asked to confirm or reject all or some of the aspects of the interpretations provided. Thirteen participants responded to member checking efforts. All twelve respondents verified and confirmed the findings and interpretations. Two participants were not able to respond, nor confirm or disconfirm the findings and interpretations due to language barriers. As mentioned previously, lack of interpretative services significantly impeded the extent of their participation and contribution to this study. Their valuable insights may or may not have affected the findings of this study as they were also the most recently arrived immigrants in the study sample.

Limitations of the Study

Several potential concerns or limitations of this study's research design need to be identified and addressed. The following limitations are often considered biases in qualitative social research. According to Drisko (1997), bias in qualitative social research refers to any influences that may compromise proper sampling, and the collection, interpretation, and reporting of data. One such limitation pertains to common concerns about sampling technique and sample size in qualitative studies. A frequent critique of qualitative sampling methods surrounds the issue of generalizability and subsequent usefulness of study results (Higginbottom, 2004; Tuckett, 2004). The concern is that by employing nonprobability sampling methods, such as purposive and snowball sampling procedures, generated data and findings cannot be applied to the greater population because the sample is not representative of that population (Higginbottom, 2004). While this may be true, it should be noted that the goal of qualitative social research is not generalizability. In contrast to positivist and quantitative research studies, sampling methods in qualitative research tend to be nonprobable in that findings apply specifically to the studied population (Higginbottom, 2004). This is not to say, however, that the findings of this study, or any other qualitative study, are meaningless or not useful beyond the scope of the particular study. In the data analysis process, emerging patterns and themes were explored in view of the reviewed literature, in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of the insight and meaning derived from the accounts provided by participants.

As described previously, participants for this study were initially recruited through a form of purposive sampling as well as a snowball sampling technique. While the effects of these sampling techniques on the demographic make-up of the sample of this study have been discussed previously, the potential influence of purposive sampling itself must also be considered. According to Tuckett (2004), because purposive sampling is inherently connected to

the purpose of the research study, purposive sampling introduces a 'sampling frame bias' by imposing restrictions onto the sample. Given how potential participants were initially accessed, the focus on racialized immigrant youth who are connected to service providing organizations (SPOs), or individuals who are connected to SPOs, effectively restricted sampling of other racialized immigrant youth who have no current ties to SPOs. Combined with the time restrictions and other practicalities, the final sample included only those racialized immigrant youth who were, at the time of recruitment, involved with an SPO or knew a youth who was involved with that particular SPO. In this sense, the sample was homogenous, thereby further restricting the potential applicability of study findings (Tuckett, 2004).

While focus groups have the potential to generate a large pool of data rich with insights, there are also a few limitations inherent in this type of data collection. One of the limitations concerns the nature of focus group research in terms of privacy. While it is rarely possible to truly achieve anonymity (Morgan, 1998), it is possible to protect participants' confidentiality considerably in terms of restricting access to any identifying information that has been collected about them. In contrast, it is difficult and indeed impossible to guarantee that each individual participant will truly honour their responsibility for maintaining the privacy of others after the focus group sessions. A related disadvantage to focus group research is the polarization (Neuman, 2003) or 'strangers on the train' effect (Morgan, 1998) whereby participants who do not have any pre-existing relations with other participants tend to self-disclose information that they would not normally disclose to friends or family. According to Morgan (1998), there is a similar danger of over-disclosure that arises simply from the group-dynamics and the momentum the discussion might gain. Such disclosure may negatively affect already-established social relations between focus group participants who may regret their self-disclosure at a later time.

On the other hand, focus group participants who do not already know each other may not feel comfortable to disclose personal information throughout the interview session.

Considering some of the potential limitations of focus group interviews, in terms of the influence of group dynamics and social hierarchies that may play out (Krueger, 1998; Neuman, 2003) individual interviews as a secondary data collection method served as a complimentary source of qualitative data. Apart from the different format of one-on-one interviews in comparison to focus group interviews, the type and sequence of questions asked differed slightly from those asked during focus group interviews. Nevertheless, one-on-one interview questions referred back to the discussions that took place during the focus groups and generally encouraged similar conversations and elicited similar type of data.

Finally, there may be concerns with respect to, what Drisko (1997) and Patton (2002) call, 'researcher bias'. Two strategies have been employed in this study to counter any potential influences introduced by the researcher. The first measure taken to reduce and limit such influence, or 'bias', pertains to reflexivity in terms of self-awareness and self-reflection. Because perception and interpretation are important in qualitative social research studies researchers must be reflexive in their practice (Drisko, 1997; Patton, 2002). To this end, I have previously reported on my personal background and experiences to seek out any potential biases that may be influential in the outcome of this study. I have also identified the theoretical framework and assumptions guiding the study. In this respect, I have attempted to be transparent about myself and my approach to the study in an effort to minimize researcher bias. Secondly, I have quoted participants extensively in verbatim in the findings section before presenting my interpretations. According to Drisko (1997), reporting raw data extensively permits readers to determine the extent to which researcher's interpretations and summaries are accurate.

A similar concern pertains to the imposition of theoretical frameworks on the generated data prior to interpretation efforts (Neuman, 2003). Continual self-reflection and reflexivity throughout the collection, interpretation, and analysis of data served as a kind of check and balances mechanism with respect to presumptions or preconceived ideas that may have been derived from anti-racism theory or critical social research methodology. That is, as with keeping personal biases, or 'researcher bias', in check, I was aware of biases that may be introduced due to the nature of the theoretical framework of this study. While this is not to say that theoretical concepts were dismissed in favour of 'neutrality', the discussion section of this report indicates that alternative explanations and theories have been considered in the interpretation of study findings.

FINDINGS

Overall, study participants displayed a keen interest and thoughtful approach in articulating their perspectives and opinions on the topic of discussion during focus groups as well as one-on-one interviews. While the findings below represent key patterns and themes that emerged across all interviews, it should be noted that these overlap and intersect in a manner that lends support to the contention that the notion of identity, and in particular identities of those who are racialized or otherwise othered, is a thoroughly complex and multi-layered experience. Across all themes, participants emphasized the relational and contextual aspects of identity, and rejected any kind of definitive conceptualizations about identity, becoming and being Canadian, being an immigrant, and home and belonging. Rather, respondents stressed that the act of self-definition and identification as more closely tied to time, geographical location, the relationship

to other individuals present, the respondent's mood, the situation at hand, and the respondent's appraisal of the pros and cons in identifying a certain way at a certain point in time.

The Other: self-identification and impositions

> B1: *When I was a kid, I didn't know there was more than one type of label. I thought there was only black and white. And the Indian people were considered black and everybody else was considered white. So somebody told me 'Oh you're not white'. Then I asked What can I be? I'm not white, then what am I? Am I black? I'm not black, so then am I white? I don't know...*

> C3: *I think for me back then, the colour was a big thing. You stand out. Yeah that was a big thing. I also had a very strong British accent when I came... and that was something people would laugh at.*

> D3: *Well, I get a lot of things. Chinese, Filipino, South American, everything. I get everything basically. Nothing from Nepal. But... it's not a big deal to me. I know that I'm different and I accept it... so... at first it was hard, but eventually... I think I'm more comfortable with who I am.*

For many participants who immigrated to Canada when they were school-aged, it was in the school setting and in their interactions with school peers that they first and foremost experienced being 'different'. According to these participants, these encounters gave way to a kind of self-consciousness and acknowledgment that who they are may be in contrast to how others perceive of them because of their external appearances. Perhaps because these experiences were recounted as events of the past, participants did not stress their need to fit-in as much as they stressed the positive effects of these experiences on themselves, such as heightened self-awareness and greater appreciation for who they are at the present time. Interestingly, in spite of any empowerment effects such past experiences may have had on these participants, participants across all interviews and focus groups seem to still hold a kind of differentiated sense of self.

This differentiated sense of self or self-consciousness was particularly evident in the choice of words participants used when relating certain opinions or experiences. All participants adopted a kind of 'us' and 'we' versus 'they' and 'them' terminology, whereby it was not always clear who 'us' and who 'they' signified. Further, participants' usage of these words was inconsistent among and across interviews and respondents, whereby 'we' meant all Canadians and at other times signified only immigrants. Other than that, however, participants were quite clear in their conceptualizations, such as the distinction drawn between the act of self-identifying and the imposition of an identity.

F3: *People don't believe that I'm brown. They ask are you Portuguese, are you from Europe, are you from this place, are you from that place? And I'm like 'no, no, no, no'. And then I tell them that I'm from South Asia and they're like 'yah right!' I get that but not all the time.[...] And then they ask questions like 'why do you look so white?'.*

F2: *Yeah you get those questions like 'Where are you from?' And I'd be like 'From Africa' right. And they're like 'What?' They think that there's only black people. And they're like 'Yeah, you're from India aren't you?'*

F4: *Not so much now, but I used to get a lot of like 'Are you Mexican?' And I'd be like 'no'. 'But you look so Mexican!' and I'd be like 'No'. 'What are you then?' I'm like 'I'm Pakistani' and they're like 'No way, you look nothing like a Pakistani'. And I'd be like 'O...k'.*

To the participants, the external impositions of who they are or should be occurred most frequently when someone asked them where they are from. Focus group participants were most passionate and insightful when sharing their experiences and thoughts about being asked 'Where are you from?' with each other. While the majority did not perceive asking 'Where are you from?' as an intentionally offensive act by others, only two respondents articulated no frustrations in relation to this question. During their conversations and in individual interviews, participants made clear linkages between their experiences and stereotyping, and connected this

back to their perceptions of themselves as 'different'. According to those respondents who expressed their frustrations with such questions, being asked to self-identify by strangers in effect was a question of self-categorization and being forced into a 'box' – something they refused to do.

> F7: *There's a lot of stereotypes. Like say I told them I'm actually from East Africa, they're like 'Oh. Then why are you brown?' You know, just because I'm brown ...because I'm born in Africa doesn't mean I have to be black, you know. Or they ask questions like, 'oh you guys have like lions in school?' [...] And it's just like I don't even know what to say to that. I'm like 'no, it's a city'. Yeah, but it's funny, I kind of play along with it.*

> D6: *It gets so frustrating when people say 'Oh you're Korean, you're Vietnamese' and you're like, ugh, just get it right' you know. But then as I'm learning more about myself and other races, and now I ask questions too. And now I just think you get three chances and when you don't get it that's it. You might as well have fun, right. When I finally tell people Singaporean, they go 'Oh, that's Chinese though right?' It's... they constantly have to put you in a box. You cannot be, no, you can't just be one person. You have to be fitting into a box.*

> F6: *Well with me it's like... mostly people here think that if you're brown, like dàrker skin, you're automatically Indian. So nobody ever thinks I'm Pakistani, they always think I'm from India. 'Oh you're from India' and I'm like 'Nooo'.*

> C3: *Accent was something. People were like, 'Wow, where're you from? You're from Britain.' And I'd say 'no, I'm from Sri Lanka'. 'You don't talk like a Sri Lakan'. [..] Yeah, I think they didn't expect I speak English. That was something people were really surprised.*

In addition to being categorized, almost all respondent experienced some form of being othered or racialized through name calling, labeling, racial slurs, and encounters with individual-level prejudices. These experiences were in turn often closely tied to stereotypes about immigrants.

> D6: *What I do get a lot, I guess because I'm Chinese and their experience - I mean generally speaking - with Chinese people [is that] their English is not that good. 'Oh you're Chinese but your English is so good!' And I tell them 'Yes, the main language of Singapore is English'. 'Oh, so you grew up speaking English.' 'Yes, I did.' It's like, they*

look at me as if I shouldn't be able to speak English. So it's almost like a bad thing that I speak English fluently.

D5: *Yeah, I actually get that all the time. When I go out, 'Oh you speak English well'. I say 'Yeah, I'm from Toronto'. And they say 'Yeah, I can see that. Your English is very good'. 'Yeah I grew up here!'*

F9: *Mostly people are like so surprised that I speak perfect English. And people are like 'How can you speak it?' And I'm like 'Uuuhm because I spoke it my whole life'. And then, they were so surprised. I don't know I guess since I was an immigrant I was supposed to be stupid, I had to get ESL or something. And I didn't need to at all but I guess that's the misconception.*

When asked whether participants considered themselves Canadians all but three respondents affirmed that they did in fact consider themselves Canadian. Interestingly, about half of these respondents explained that while they may define themselves as Canadians, they would not necessarily overtly call themselves Canadians. The reasons for this assertion were varied. Three respondents explained that they would only identify themselves as Canadians if it was advantageous to them and the situation at hand, such as for a job application. Four respondents explained they only actually call themselves Canadians when traveling abroad, while two participants clarified that they would use a hyphenated identity when abroad. Considering the review of literature, fewer participants than expected confirmed that they would hyphenate their names or identities. Specifically, only four out of the twenty-two participants actually employ a hyphenated name to communicate their ethnic background and Canadian nationality. Many of those who did not hyphenate, explained that being Canadian is a given to them and therefore does not necessitate being emphasized when self-identifying.

Negotiating othered identities through agency and resistance

A common thread in respondents' disclosures of personal experiences, in the cases where respondents were called names, stereotyped, labelled, and otherwise categorized and made to

feel different or 'Other,' is that no single respondent internalized the source of the problem. In other words, they did not problematize their own identities when reflecting back onto their experiences. In fact, the majority of participants appeared quite confident about themselves and who they are. However, this is not to say that respondents were completely unaffected by these experiences. Such experiences seem to contribute to their sense of self, self-esteem, as well as critical view of the social world.

> E1: *Even now they call me, you know, for example, the 'Mexican' itself. It's like 'Yo! what's up Mexican!' But I don't take it personal[ly] anymore. They know who you are; they know what you're about. And I'm not ashamed of who I am either, so I don't take it like that, you know what I mean.*

> C3: *It used to happen, people calling you Paki. And I'd get very irritated, 'I'm not a Paki, I'm Sri Lankan!' But, once in a while in a particular area there are some people who come out and call you Paki, but I just don't turn around anymore.*

In any case, when relating their encounters, the majority of respondents either employed humour or dismissal and a kind of ambivalence. In other words, some participants respond to name-calling, stereotyping, and prejudice by dismissing the seriousness and thereby the effect of such acts by imitating such behaviour in a refusal to be victimized. It should be noted that these actions or reactions are conscious efforts considering some participants explained that they used to let 'it' get to them when they were younger. Their responses could be viewed as a defence and even coping mechanisms, however, they could also be seen as forms of resistance. Such an interpretation would be in keeping with to Allahar's (1998) contention that resistance can be psychosocial and verbal and not just overtly physical.

> D5: *I don't refer to that [back home] as India, I refer to that as my grandparents' place. And then people say 'Oh you're going back? So then I ask you, so then are you going back to England or something like that? That's that line of reasoning you know. I find you can always throw anything back. If someone was white and tries and throws something like that at you, you can use the exact same reasoning back. The exact same*

flawed logic can be thrown back at them. And that's when they realize oh they have no logical reasoning, you know. And then that can break that mind set. That's what I find.

F9: *Sometimes they ask 'Where are you from?' and I'm like 'Earth'.*

B2: *Well, I mean I'm not black and I'm not white, so ...yeah. I just consider myself brown. It's just that I'm not white. Usually it's an issue of being white and I'm not white [...] Yeah, they don't have any other names for us - And terrorist is not something I like to go by.*

Complex identities: beyond cultural hybridity

Although respondents did not generally describe their identities exclusively in ethnic terms, they were also not comfortable with terms such as visible minorities and people of colour. When explaining why, four respondents explained that while they acknowledge that they might be considered visible minorities or persons of colour, they would not use that terminology to describe themselves other than on a job application. Those who generally disliked these terms felt that the words evoked inferiorized and helpless images of them. They also explained that they do not feel few in numbers, whether in Mississauga or the Toronto context.

The complexity of self-identifying and conceptualizing their own identities, however, did not involve any discussions or responses about being stuck in-between two sets of cultures or ways of life. That is, the youth did not really problematize the complexity and multiplicity of their identities. Their responses were not suggestive of any kind of integration-related struggle that would embody a neither-nor existence in two or more cultural worlds as Fantino and Colak (2001), Ibrahim (2003), Waters (1994) and others have argued. Similarly, participating youth did not situate culture as a core concept in their hybrid identities. In fact, culture and cultural identity were rarely mentioned across all interviews. Rather, participants articulated self-identification as an activity that is primarily motivated for the purpose of negotiating social and discursive spaces in which they are seen as 'Other'. In other words, while participants seemed to

acknowledge the multiplicity and complexity portrayed in their identities, their concerns about identity did not explicitly relate to a kind of being stuck or to the question of how to reconcile their identities. Youth were more concerned about the contrast that, according to them, exists between how they chose to self-identify and how society pressures them to identify with certain identities, categories, and labels that are essentially imposed. The notion of hybridity or hybrid identity, as emerging from participants' accounts, is more indicative of social or power relations than merely negotiations of culture.

Occasional inconsistencies and contradictions within individuals' responses further emphasize the relational nature of identity and the complexity of the issues discussed, rather than a kind of ambivalence, ambiguity, or confusion arising from hybridity.

> D4: *I would say I find [it] hard. I don't know if I would put my religion first or my culture or the fact that I'm Indian. So I don't know how to... it's hard for me. There are so many layers. I think it's just so complex, that I can't say. You know when somebody asks me where I'm from I don't even know how to answer. I'm trying to figure out what they really want to know. Yeah they just want to know everything, right. When they say 'where you from?', and I say 'England' then they'll say 'Ok, well where are your parents from then?' Cause that's what they really want to know. Because they're thinking 'Oh you don't have a British accent. Or, you're not white, so you're not English, right'.*

> A1: *I'm still trying to find my own identity, because people ask. If they weren't... if people weren't so concerned about it [...] Yeah. It's the first thing they ask me and it bothers me, because it's not a question that I ask myself. I don't think I need to have an answer I feel comfortable here and I am what I am, but people ask me and I always get frustrated to find an answer for them. And I don't want to put myself in that box 'I'm this' or I'm 'that'.*

Deconstructing 'immigrant'

> A1: *Well... like sometimes if it comes up I say yeah I'm an immigrant. In its purest form. Yeah, I immigrated here from another country. And it's just funny that it gets used as a swear word here, sometimes.*

While one participant disliked the term immigrant as a self-description, none of the participants denied being an immigrant. This is particularly significant given the range of years of immigration among participants. Such findings suggest that qualifying as an immigrant is independent of the length of time in Canada. Respondents typically defined 'immigrant' in relatively basic terms, as someone who has at some point in their life immigrated to Canada. While this conceptualization of an immigrant was fairly literal, respondents were in disagreement with regards to whether or not someone who has immigrated to Canada would ever cease to be an immigrant. In their discussions on this issue, focus group participants started to talk about the notion of 'being an immigrant' from an outsider's point of view, namely from the dominant or mainstream perspective.

> A1: *I don't think people ever really talk about that anyway, right? Because people are scared about talking about immigrants and refugees so I don't think ... maybe behind my back they have called me an immigrant cause they think it's a slur of some kind. Like a lot of people associate something negative with that. And when I say I'm an immigrant they kind of look at me as if I dissed myself.*

> C3: *Yeah I'd use it [the term 'immigrant']. Depends what kind of setting, ... but I don't think I'd hide the fact that I immigrated here. But depends on who I'm talking to, right. That's mostly something I'd look for. Sometimes, the way immigrants have been stereotyped, you know, immigrants are not educated even though lots of, most of immigrants who come here are more educated than Canadians, people who are born here. So it depends. But of course I'm an immigrant, and I'll never forget that.*

In their explorations of whether participants consider themselves immigrants and would use that term to describe themselves, participants' responses illustrated that in its daily usage 'immigrant' is a delicate and yet loaded term.

> B1 - *Well, the modern definition of immigrant is FOB. Fresh-Off-The-Boat [...] That's what people consider immigrants now. But that's not the true meaning of immigrant [...] If somebody recently moved here from England, they're not considered an immigrant. Why not, you know? [...] 'I'm from England'. But do other people call them immigrants? No.*

F3: I think society ... they look at like the colour of your skin and if you're white even if you're from Europe and you are an immigrant, they think you're white unless you tell them that you're not from here and are an immigrant. But otherwise they wouldn't consider you an immigrant. But if your colour is not white and is darker or whatever then you're an immigrant.

In other words, respondents demonstrated awareness about the difference between their own perceptions about what being an immigrant means as compared to how the term immigrant tends to be employed in the public discourse. The excerpt of an interview between two respondents illustrate how some respondents made clear linkages between the dominant public discourse about immigrants and the racialization contained in this discourse.

B1: No, if they're not from the Middle East, from Asia, the word 'immigrant' is a racist word. Like, it's being used –
B2: In a race-way.
B1: Yeah.
B2: That's what I think. People who come from Scotland and stuff like that they don't consider themselves immigrants. Even if they don't [even] have their papers.

On becoming and being Canadian

F4: Well yeah definitely. We are Canadian, but I don't think we feel Canadian. We feel like... ok like I'm from Pakistan, so I feel Pakistani. But I don't know why we don't feel Canadian. Because I know I'm Canadian. I'm just not Canadian-Canadian.
Interviewer: *What do you mean by Canadian-Canadian?*
F4: Canadians from like... originally Canadian.
Interviewer: *Aboriginals?*
F4: (laughs) Yeah! Aboriginals...

When asked whether participants considered themselves Canadians, some respondents expressed that while they thought they are Canadian, they were not entirely convinced whether they could or even should call themselves Canadian. This uncertainty prevailed particularly among those who conceptualized being Canadian as a kind of privilege, that was only granted to those who are born and raised in Canada. Others, however, were confident in identifying as

Canadian and explained that they choose to use the term Canadian to describe themselves when traveling abroad. In any case, discussions surrounding being Canadian almost immediately led to discussions about the essence of Canadian-ness.

> E1: *To me, Canadian is... when you say, like, straight up born Canadian, you know.*
> Interviewer: *So you have to be born here?*
> E1: *I really don't think there is, there is [a definition]. I think Canadian has always been a mix to begin with. From the Indians, to the French, to the Irish, to the... so, do you know what I mean, it has never really developed like that as a culture or something like that... as a 'Canadian'. I think to me, a Canadian is a guy in the woods, is a lumber jack. You know if you want to stereotype it like that, that's a Canadian.*

> A1: *I don't know what makes somebody Canadian. I think if somebody is comfortable living here. And they're not necessarily proud of being here... but sort of come to accept this as being home... ... that's what makes a Canadian.*

Participants were asked in particular what becoming Canadian means to them. In articulating their responses, the majority of participants described being Canadian in inclusive ways, detached from notions of loyalty, legality, citizenship status, ancestry, ethnicity, or place of birth.

> A1: *I don't tend to say 'I'm Canadian' because that's almost a given. I think everybody who lives in Canada is Canadian.*

> F1: *I think it's more than just the citizenship, more than just the passport. Like accepting the way of life here. [...] I think Canadian.... you really feel you become Canadian when you start accepting the country, you start accepting the culture. You don't keep badgering it, you get used to it. I'm not trying to insinuate that you forget about your background or your origins but you accept this country also and its traditions and values and everything.*

> C3: *I think it depends on how you define yourself. There's some people I know who were born some place outside of Canada who don't even have Canadian citizenship and they still consider themselves Canadian. Yeah I think it all depends on your preference and the way you define yourself and are able to situate yourself. It's the way you feel, right.*

That is, according to the majority of respondents, becoming and being Canadian entails living in Canada. Their descriptions also suggested that being Canadian is subjective in nature and can be open to interpretation. Interestingly, five respondents contended that one had to be born in Canada to be Canadian, although the same respondents had previously affirmed that they consider themselves Canadians. Although the majority of respondents distinguished between becoming and being Canadian, they placed the onus with the individual. That is, the individual is or becomes Canadian when he or she is accepting of and accepted by the dominant culture and society.

> D1: *I think we pay taxes, we stay in school, we work. Why not? Why [are] we not Canadian, you know? Actually it's like Brazilian-Canadian or Canadian-Brazilian. I can't decide. But I live in this society, so why not?*

> D3: *I think it's like publicized in TVs and medias and everything how, like, Canadian is being multicultural, and how we accept all the cultures, everything right. And in reality, being Canadian is kind of confusing. Because... they say they're accepting you and you belong but at the same time, you don't really fit in. So, I think it's a real big question mark right now.*

A significant observation here is that in spite of defining Canadian-ness in predominantly inclusive terms, all respondents employed an\us-versus-them language, presumably distinguishing themselves as immigrants from 'they' or 'them', the Canadians. For example, about half of respondents acknowledged that their definitions are not necessarily reflective of how '*they*' define 'Canadian'. The contrast between respondents' own, rather inclusive, definitions of 'Canadian' and the perceived, official or dominant definition of 'Canadian' as born in Canada and/or white is suggested in the excerpts below.

> B1: *Well, right now Italians are not even considered true Canadians even though they helped build this country, so then what are we, you know? True Canadians? They're not even considering Aboriginal people true Canadians. It's the people that came from Scotland, England, and I don't know who else. I think anybody who loves their country and lives here and is a citizen I guess or wants to be [is Canadian].*

B2: *I think the only people that really consider themselves Canadian, are the ones that were born here and their parents were born here – at least. Or their grandparents were born here. Then they wouldn't go back that far and be like 'well, my ancestors...' - but they would just consider themselves Canadian. But otherwise, anybody here is. The only real Canadian people would be Aboriginal.*

D4: *I don't know. I think it's hard, it's confusing now because there's so many definitions of what a Canadian is. Maybe it's just on paper. Like [she] says, you know, for the sake of an application or getting into school you're a Canadian citizen. So maybe it's just [about] getting accepted by the majority.*

Emotional ties: feelings of belonging and feeling at home

In talking about being Canadian as someone who was not born in Canada, many respondents brought up the notions of belonging and home as part of their subjective sense of being Canadian. When respondents were specifically asked whether they consider Canada their home and feel a sense of belonging in Canada, twenty respondents explained that they feel like Canada is their home although not all necessarily felt like they belonged in Canada. Overall, participants expressed mixed feelings about the relationship between 'feeling like I belong' and 'feeling at home' somewhere.

E1: *I can feel like I belong here, because [Canada] is so open to everything. So it does give you that sense of peace. But I don't feel at home, because... there's certain things you can't take away. Things you miss, that you culturally miss - Like, the livelihood of people like in Mexico, you know what I mean? [...] But would I say I feel at home in Mexico? No I wouldn't.*

F7: *Yeah actually I do see this as my home now. Because I know if I go back to Tanzania I wouldn't be able to live there, after living in Canada.*

When further exploring the notion of belonging and the idea of feeling at home somewhere, the focus group discussions and individual interview responses revealed that these two ideas are not interchangeable nor are they necessarily mutually exclusive. At the same time, all but two respondents affirmed that they employ the term 'back home'. When asked why and

what the term means to them, the majority clarified that the usage of 'back home' refers to the last geographical place the person lived in and more specifically where they were born.

> B1: *I consider Canada more a home to me than Iran. But I would say 'back home' because I'm not referring to Canada. If I was referring to Canada, I'd say 'home'. I think of 'back' as my last home. And I think of my last home as where I was before here, so that was 'back' home. So, my background, that's what I meant.*

> D3: *You're always changing. When I was in Nepal, Nepal was my home. But when I'm here, right now it's my home. And when I say, like, I wanna go back home, then Nepal becomes the home. It's kind of like a mix of everything. Like you've lived there, but you've lived in these two different places. And you kind of call these things home. Like whenever I'm in Nepal I call going back to Canada home, you know. So, it's like... I don't know. It keeps changing where you are.*

Respondents' treatment of the notion of 'back home' did not seem to suggest a feeling of nostalgia. Some respondents, however, explained that their parents' use of this term may be motivated by other reasons, such as missing their country of origin and feeling like they do not belong in Canada.

DISCUSSION

The patterns and themes that have emerged from the responses of participating youth across all interviews demonstrate substantial insight as well as variation in terms of how non-white or racialized immigrant youth self-identify. Apart from the patterns that were collectively supported and confirmed by the participants, there were also some unanticipated points of disagreement and even ambivalence among participants. These have added to the richness of the data and the complexity of topic under study.

Interestingly, participants generally disliked the terms 'visible minority' and 'person of colour'. In fact, they strongly opposed the usage of these terms to refer to themselves. Whereas the reasons behind their rejection of the terminology varied, all but two participants still identified as non-white. While this could be interpreted as an inconsistency or even false consciousness (Harvey, 1990), a rejection of dominant or commonly accepted terminology could also be interpreted as a form of resistance to subjugation (Allahar, 1998; Mahtani, 2002b). Similarly, three participants self-identified as Caucasian while clearly distinguishing that concept from the notion of being white and adopting a language of 'us' versus 'them' during the interviews. Curiously, all three participants related their experiences of being othered and excluded on the basis of their darker skin colour.

And yet, it seems too premature to merely dismiss these accounts as inconsistencies or contradictions. In the context of this study, a reluctance to self-identify in terms of identity markers based on darker skin colour could be perceived as a matter relating to the degree of visibility (Ibrahim, 2003; Itzigsohn & Dore-Cabral, 2000), just as a reluctance to self-identify in ethnic terms may be perhaps due to weak or absent ties to a particular ethno-cultural community, or non-citizenship status (Ajrouch, 2000; Lien et al., 2003). A more focused study on ethnicity or ethnic identification may, however, be better suited to explore these possibilities further.

Yet a theory of resistance (Allahar, 1998) seems likely viable, particularly when taking into account that individuals consciously self-identify and actively construct their identities in the face of experiencing racialization, othering, and other forms of social exclusion. Awareness about the self and agency play a crucial role in self-identifying in a way that is in contrast to the identities imposed via discursive and social processes and practices that attempt to other non-white immigrant youth. In other words, the interviewed youth demonstrated that there is an element of conscious decision-making and choice involved in self-definition. The youth in this

study took ownership of the terms that were discussed. They defined 'immigrant' as well as 'Canadian' in inclusive ways, while simultaneously expressing that this is not exactly how the concepts tend to be employed or understood in the public arena. Specifically, the youth demonstrated awareness about themselves in relation to discursively and socially constructed concepts that may apply to them. Their attempts at subverting the meaning of taken-for-granted concepts were apparent in their explanations, choice of words, and experiences. In other words, participants more or less actively defied the passive, powerless images associated with being immigrants.

Although it is imperative to keep study findings in their context and subsequently avoid extrapolating and generalizing to other time periods, groups of people, or situations (Patton, 2002), it is equally important to dig beneath surface appearances to expose what tends to be generally normalized and concealed in an effort to analyze data and assign meaning to the findings (Harvey, 1990). In terms of geographical scope, Toronto and Mississauga served as the context for this study. As mentioned previously, both Toronto and Mississauga are substantially diverse cities in terms of their demographic make-up. With about half of their population constituting immigrants according to the 2001 Census study, Toronto and Mississauga represent unique contexts for any study of minoritized populations. A similar study with a similar sample but a different geographical scope would have likely elicited different responses. As the Census results demonstrate, Toronto and Mississauga are more culturally, ethnically, 'racially' diverse than many surrounding cities in the region (Statistics Canada, 2001b; 2001c), which inevitably affects the lives and experiences of its residents.

The responses and articulations of study participants lend support to the contemporary literature that contextualizes the exploration of identity and self-identification in the face of racialization and othering. As illustrated in the self-defined identities of participating youth,

'race' continues to play a considerably significant role in the construction of identities in spite of being denounced as a concept with a biological essence as its core. A public or dominant discourse regarding immigrants seems to exist, that still relies heavily on the usage of 'race' in its construction of immigrants in Canada. According to study participants, the word 'immigrant' evokes certain images such as weak, repressed, passive, lack of English language skills, accent, exotic appearance, and also 'terrorist' and illegal. Although critically aware of these associations and dominant perceptions, all participating immigrant youth incidentally perceive of themselves as racial 'Others' whether due to internalized images that were externally imposed through name-calling, labelling or categorizations, or a certain differentiated sense of self derived from supposed and essentialized phenotypic differences such as skin colour, hair texture, facial features, and clothing. As mentioned above, however, participants also resisted certain forms of imposed identities.

Identity is highly relational and context-specific as participants' responses confirmed. The question, however, is whether this conceptualization of identity would also apply to native-born non-white youth as well as immigrants who do not tend to be socially or discursively othered in Canada. Perhaps the relational and contextual aspects of identity are in effect manifestations of how othered individuals navigate their identities in order to negotiate their relation with the society that others them in the first place. Study participants revealed a critical self-awareness and consciousness about the self in context, which seems to suggest that self-awareness is a precursor to navigating the self in discursive and social spaces. So, are context-specific complex identities a matter of necessity for those who are denied insider-status? Are those who tend to be socially included able to maintain concrete identities independent of context and circumstance? Certainly, the notion of intersectional systems of oppressions stresses that identities are anything but one-dimensional; emphasizing that non-racialized individuals may

experience social exclusion and othering based on dimensions other than 'race'. In this respect, the prevailing discourse about immigrants not only races but also genders and classes immigrants to Canada (Elabor-Idemudia, 1999). In other words, the notion of 'an immigrant' is not merely associated with the idea a person of colour, but with a poor woman of colour from a so-called Third-World country in the public imagination (Elabor-Idemudia, 1999). 'The immigrant' is thereby constructed as a classed, gendered, and 'coloured' individual seeking refuge in Canada.

It should be noted that gender differences may influence the form of resistance and self-identification but did not surface given the limited scope and sample size of this study. The proportion of female participants significantly outweighed the proportion of male participants in this study. Although one participant raised the issue of differentiated experiences with racialization and othering due to gender in one focus group interview, the discussion around gender differences was relatively short-lived. Participants in other focus groups and individual interviews did not raise the issue of gender, instead focusing their responses on skin colour, accent, and other identity markers. However, this is not to say or conclude that gender does not make a difference in terms of self-identification and identity in the face of racialization and othering. In fact, some of the reviewed literature (Bottero & Irwin, 2003; Carty, 1999; Elabor-Idemudia, 1999) argues that men and women are differentially raced and subsequently constructed as raced as well as gendered individuals. As the concept of hegemony suggests, these constructed differences are likely concealed in that they are normalized through every-day social processes or discursive practices and may therefore not have come up in the focus group discussions and individual interviews.

Although study participants did not identify any particular needs relating specifically to settlement and integration, it should be noted that the majority of respondents immigrated to Canada five years or longer, immigrated at a young age, speak English fluently, and consider

themselves fully integrated at this point in their lives. Nevertheless, study participants drew linkages between needing to fit-in in the early years following immigration and their continued experiences with being externally categorized and othered. In spite of their generally positive attitudes and appraisals towards Canada and Canadians, strong feelings of belonging and feeling part of the Canadian society as a whole were largely absent from participants' accounts. While this finding may be due to stronger affiliations to minority communities (Ajrouch, 2000; Thompson, 2001), the findings could also be interpreted as results of experiences of racial discrimination, social exclusion, or being constructed as racial 'Others' (Lien et al., 2003; Walcott, 2001).

Generally speaking, however, the findings of this study illustrate a need for incorporating an understanding of how racialization processes in Canada come to impact the integration efforts including identity struggles faced by non-white immigrant youth who come to view themselves as racial 'Others' within the Canadian social sphere. The immigrant youth in this study suggested that the issue at hand here is not so much an issue about not fitting as it is about being routinely categorized and forced into 'boxes', which in turn minimize and essentialize who they are and constrain who they can be. In other words, of concern to these youth are the processes and practices that discursively and socially other them. What is called for is a focus beyond intergenerational conflict and the sense of being stuck in-between two or more cultural identities (Anthias, 1999; Ibrahim, 2003; Kilbride et al., 2000; Mitchell, 1997; Waters, 1994) to allow other identity related issues and struggles to come to the foreground.

REFERENCES

Ajrouch, K. J. (2000). Place, age, and culture: Community living and ethnic identity among Lebanese American adolescents. *Small Group Research, 31*(4), 447-470.

Allahar, A. (1998). Race and racism: Strategies of resistance. In V. Satzewich (Ed.), *Racism and social inequality in Canada: Concepts, controversies and strategies of resistance,* (pp.335-353). Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing.

Anisef, P., Baichman-Anisef, E., & Siemiatycki, M. (2004). *Multiple identities & marginal ties: The experience of Russian Jewish immigrant youth in Toronto.* Toronto: CERIS.

Anisef, P., & Kilbride, K. M. (2000). *The needs of newcomer youth and emerging "Best Practices" to meet those needs.* Toronto: CERIS.

Anthias, F. (1999). Beyond unities of identity in high modernity. *Identities, 6*(1), 121-145.

Anthias, F. (2004). Where do I belong?: Narrating collective identity and translocational positionality. *Ethnicities, 2*(4), 491-514.

Bannerji, H. (2000). *The dark side of the nation: Essays on multiculturalism, nationalism and gender.* Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc.

Bedard, G. (2000). Deconstructing whiteness: Pedagogical implications for anti-racism education. In G. J. S. Dei & A. Calliste (Eds.), *Power, knowledge and anti-racism education* (pp.41-49). Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.

Bottero, W., & Irwin, S. (2003). Locating difference: Class, 'race' and gender, and the shaping of social inequalities. *Sociological Review, 51*(4), 463-483.

Cameron, D. (2001). *Working with spoken discourse.* London; Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Carty, L. (1999). The discourse of the empire and the social construction of gender. In E. Dua & A. Robertson (Eds.), *Scratching the surface: Canadian anti-racist feminist thought,* (pp. 35-47). Toronto: Women's Press.

Coffey, A., & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making sense of qualitative data: Complimentary research strategies.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Creese, G., & Kambere, E. N. (2003). "What colour is your English?" *Canadian Review of Sociology & Anthropology, 40*(5), 565-573.

Crossley, N. (2005). *Key concepts in critical social theory.* London; Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Dei, G J.S. (2000). Towards an anti-racism discursive framework. In G. J. S. Dei & A. Calliste (Eds.), *Power, knowledge and anti-racism education* (pp.23-39). Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.

Desai, S., & Subramanian, S. (2000). *Colour, culture and dual consciousness: Issues identified by South Asian immigrant youth in the Greater Toronto Area.* Toronto: Council of Agencies Serving South Asians & The South Asian Women's Centre.

Dhruvarajan, V. (2000). People of colour and national identity in Canada. *Journal of Canadian Studies, 35*(2), 166-175.

Drisko, J. (1997). Strengthening qualitative studies and reports: Standards to promote academic integrity. *Journal of Social Work Education, 33*(1), 185-197.

Dwyer, C. (1999). Veiled meanings: Young British Muslim women and the negotiation of differences. *Gender, Place and culture, 6*(1), 5-26.

Dyck, I., & McLaren, A. T. (2002). *Becoming Canadian? Girls, home and school and renegotiating feminine identity* (Working Paper Series No. 02-08).

Elabor-Idemudia, P. (1999). The racialization of gender in the social construction of immigrant women in Canada: A case study of African women in a prairie province. *Canadian Woman Studies, 19*(3), 38.

Espiritu, Y. L. (1994). The intersection of race, ethnicity, and class: The multiple identities of second-generation Filipinos. *Identities, 1*(2/3), 249-273.

Fantino, A. M., & Colak, A. (2001). Refugee children in Canada: Searching for identity. *Child Welfare, 80*(5), 587-597.

Galabuzi, G.-E. (2001). *Canada's creeping economic apartheid: The economic segregation and social marginalisation of racialized groups.* Toronto: CSJ Foundation for Research and Education.

Gingerich, L. G. (2003). Theorizing social exclusion: Determinants, mechanisms, dimensions, forms and acts of resistance. In W. Shera, *Emerging perspectives on anti-oppressive practice* (pp.3-23). Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc.

Glesne, C. (1999). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction.* New York: Longman.

Grosfoguel, R. (2004). Race and ethnicity or racialized ethnicities?: Identities within global coloniality. *Ethnicities, 4*(3), 315-336.

Harvey, L. (1990). *Critical social research.* Boston: Unwin Hyman.

Harris, D. R., & Sim, J. J. (2002). Who is multiracial? Assessing the complexity of lived race. *American Sociological Review, 67*(4), 614-627.

Henry, F., Tator, C., Mattis, W., & Rees, T. (2000). *The colour of democracy: Racism in Canadian society.* Toronto: Harcourt Brace.

Higginbottom, G. M. A. (2004). Sampling issues in qualitative research. *Nurse Researcher, 12*(1), 7-19.

Hogg, M. A., Terry, D. J., & White, K. M. (1995). A tale of two theories: A critical comparison of identity theory with social identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 58*(4), 255-269.

Ibrahim, A. (2003). Marking the unmarked: Hip-hop, the gaze & the African body in North America. *Critical Arts Journal, 17*(1/2), 52-71.

Ifekwunigwe, J. O. (2002). (An)other English city: Multiethnicities, (post)modern moments and strategic identifications. *Ethnicities, 2*(3), 321-348.

Itzigsohn, J., & Dore-Cabral, C. (2000). Competing identities? Race, ethnicity and panethnicity among Dominicans in the United States. *Sociological Forum, 15*(2), 225-247.

James, C. (1999). *Seeing ourselves: Exploring race, ethnicity and culture.* Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing Inc.

James, C. (2004). *Stereotyping and its consequence for racial minority youth.* Toronto: OHRC.

Kelly, J. (1998). *Under the gaze: Learning to be black in white society.* Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.

Khayatt, D. (1994). The boundaries of identity at the intersection of race, class and gender. *Canadian Women's Studies, 14*(2), 6-12.

Kilbride, K. M., Anisef, P., Baichman-Anisef, E., & Khattar, R. (2000). *Between two worlds: The experiences and concerns of immigrant youth in Ontario.* Toronto: Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement.

Krueger, R.A. (1998). *Analyzing & reporting focus group results.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Li, P.S. (2003). The place of immigrants: The politics of difference in territorial and social space. *Canadian Ethnic Studies, 35*(2), 1-14.

Lien, P., Conway, M. M., & Wong, J. (2003). The contours and sources of ethnic identity choices among Asian Americans. *Social Science Quarterly, 84*(2), 461-481.

Mahtani, M. (2001). Racial ReMappings: The potential of paradoxical space. *Gender Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography, 8*(3), 299-305.

Mahtani, M. (2002a). Interrogating the hyphen-nation: Canadian multicultural policy and 'mixed race' identities. *Social identities, 8*(1), 67-90.

Mahtani, M. (2002b). What's in a name?: Exploring the employment of 'mixed race' as an identification. *Ethnicities, 2*(4), 469-490.

Martin, D. (1995). The choices of identity. *Social Identities, 1*(1), 5-21.

Mitchell, K. (1997). Different diasporas and the hype of hybridity. *Environment & Planning D: Society & Space, 15*(5), 533-21.

Moreiras, A. (1999). Hybridity and double consciousness. *Cultural Studies, 13*(3), 373-407.

Morgan, D.L. (1998). *The focus group guidebook.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Mullaly, B. (1997). *Structural social work: Ideology, theory, and practice.* Don Mills: Oxford University Press.

Neuman, W.L. (2003). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Rubin, H.J., & Rubin, I.S. (2005). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Rummens, J. A. (2003). Conceptualising identity and diversity: Overlaps, intersections, and processes. *Canadian Ethnic Studies, 35*(3), 10-25.

Satzewich, V. (1998). Race, racism, and racialization: Contested concepts. In V. Satzewich (Ed.), *Racism and social inequality in Canada: Concepts, controversies and strategies of resistance,* (pp.25-45). Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing.

Spencer, R. (2004). Assessing multiracial identity theory and politics: The challenge of hypodescent. *Ethnicities, 4*(3), 357-379.

Statistics Canada. (2001a). *Visible minority population, by census metropolitan areas (2001 Census): Definitions.* Retrieved March 31, 2005, from http://www.statcan.ca/english/ Pgdb/ defdemo53a.htm.

Statistics Canada. (2001b). *Census 2001: Toronto, Ontario.* Retrieved March 31, 2005, from http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/Products/standard/themes/DataProducts.cfm.

Statistics Canada. (2001c). *Census 2001: Mississauga, Ontario.* Retrieved July 5, 2005, from http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/Products/standard/themes/DataProducts.cfm.

Tator, C., & Henry, F. (2000). The role and practice of racialized discourse in culture and cultural production. *Journal of Canadian Studies, 35*(3), 120-137.

Thompson, V. L. S. (2001). The complexity of African American racial identification. *Journal of Black Studies, 32*(2), 155-166.

Tonks, R. G., & Paranjpe, A. (1999). *Am I a Canadian, an ethnic, or an ethnic-Canadian?: Dilemmas of second-generation immigrant youth.*. Vancouver: Research in immigration and Integration in the Metropolis.

Tuckett, A. (2004). Qualitative research sampling: The very real complexities. *Nurse Researcher, 12*(1), 47-61.

Tutty, L. M., Rothery, M. A., & Grinnell, R. M. Jr. (1996). *Qualitative research for social workers.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Wagman, I. (2002). Wheat, barley, hops, citizenship: Molson's 'I am [Canadian]' campaign and the defense of Canadian national identity through advertising. *Velvet Light Trap,* (50), 77-89.

Walcott, R. (2001). Caribbean pop culture in Canada; or, the impossibility of belonging to the nation. *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism, 5*(1), 123-140.

Waters, M. C. (1994). Ethnic and racial identities of second-generation black immigrants in New York City. *The International Migration Review, 28*(4), 795.

Yon, D. A. (2000). Urban portraits of identity: On the problem of knowing culture and identity in intercultural studies. *Journal of Intercultural Studies, 21*(2), 143-157.

APPENDIX A

Demographic Profile Face Sheet

The purpose of collecting this information is to enable the researcher (Sara Shahsiah) to get a sense of the backgrounds of all study participants.

Please circle which answers apply to you below and fill in the blanks:

Date: _____

1. I am
    a. male
    b. female

2. I am ____ years old.

3. I speak _____ (Please list languages).

4. From all the languages I have listed, I speak mostly _____ at home or with my family.

5. If you are currently in school (not post-secondary), please indicate what grade you are in: _____.

6. I immigrated to Canada in _____ (please list year).

7. When I immigrated to Canada I was placed in
    a. Elementary school: Kindergarten – Grade 8
    b. Secondary School: Grade 9 -12 (High School)
    c. Other: _____(Please specify)
    d. Not placed, because _____(Please specify)

8. I found out about this study through
    a. A community organization, agency, program
    b. A friend
    c. Other: _____ (Please specify)

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide

Own identity...
  I. .:. what words do you use to describe the different groups/people here?
     Probes: Would you use race, nationality, ethnicity, or something else? Do you think of yourself as part of any of these groups?
 II. How would you describe/consider yourself? What do you call yourself?
     Probes: Do you see yourself as "a person of colour"? What about "a visible minority"? What do these words make you think of? What do you think about being called "White"? What about "Black"?
     What else have you heard, or have you been called?
III. If you were to guess or predict how others see you, how – in your opinion or experience – would their perceptions of you be similar/different than how you describe and see yourself?
     Probes: What do other people tend to call you? How others see you based on what you hear/think? Does that match how you think of yourself?
 IV. Do you consider yourself an immigrant? Why or why not? What does being an immigrant mean to you? What is the definition of an immigrant?
  V. Do you consider yourself a 'Canadian'?

Canadian identity...
 VI. What makes someone a "Canadian"?
     Probes: If you were traveling around the world and had to explain to people who don't know about Canada or don't know what a "Canadian" is, what would you say?
VII. Are immigrants "Canadians"? How so, or, why not?
VIII. In your opinion, is there a time when an "immigrant" becomes "Canadian"? If so, when?
     Probes: What about people who never get their Canadian citizenship, but they have been here since they were little? So, what *does* "immigrant" mean?
 IX. Do you consider yourself an "immigrant"? Do you tell people that? Why or why not? Do others call you an "immigrant"? What do you think about that?

Home & Belonging
  X. Do you think there is a difference between feeling like you belong somewhere and feeling at home somewhere? Could you elaborate?
 XI. What do you consider your home?
XII. What does 'back home' mean? Why do you think people say that when they live in Canada?