EXPLORING HOW YOUNG IRANIAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN NAVIGATE THEIR
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES OF HOME AND SCHOOL IN VANCOUVER

by

Sholeh Sharifi, BA, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 2017

A Major Research Paper
presented to Ryerson University

in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
in the Program of
Immigration and Settlement Studies

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2019

© Sholeh Sharifi 2019

Author's Declaration for Electronic Submission of a Major Research Paper

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this MRP. This is a true copy of the MRP, including any required final revisions.

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

I further authorize Ryerson University to reproduce this MRP 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.

I understand that my MRP may be made electronically available to the public.

EXPLORING HOW YOUNG IRANIAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN NAVIGATE THEIR
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES OF HOME AND SCHOOL IN VANCOUVER

Sholeh Sharifi

Master of Arts, 2019

Immigration and Settlement Studies

Ryerson University

Abstract

This research addresses the gap in the literature on how first-generation young Iranian immigrant women conciliate differences in their identity between home and school. It captures the narratives of 6 Iranian immigrant women living in Vancouver, British Columbia; the women are between the ages of 18 and 24. Based upon semi-structured interviews and using a qualitative approach and narrative inquiry, the study explores how these young women negotiate their own space despite different cultural demands from school and family. The main research question asks: How do young Iranian immigrant women navigate the differences between school culture and home culture? The data is approached and analysed by drawing on the transnational feminist theoretical framework. Focusing on the themes of education and school experience, family relations, and intimate relations, the research looks at the ways in which these women, especially those facing multiple oppressions of gender, class, sexuality, and race, mediate the different expectations of parents, school, and mainstream Canadian culture.

Key words: Iranian immigrants; young Iranian immigrant women; transnational feminism; identity; first-generation, racialized women

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank all the amazing women who willingly offered of their time to participate in my study. I was awed by their resilience and courage and learned so much from their stories and experiences. I hope that their sharing of their experiences through this study will have given them greater room for self-reflection and understanding of their immigration experience and their constant negotiation in creating their own space.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Amina Jamal, for her unconditional support and insight in helping me write this MRP; I could not have completed this MRP without her valuable guidance, patience, and constant inspiration. I am also thankful for my second reader, Dr. Mehrunnisa Ali, for her constructive feedback and comments. I would also like to thank Iris Albina for her great help in my writing process.

I would like to thank my parents and my brother Aryan for their unconditional love, motivation, support, and sacrifices for me to be able to follow my dreams and for believing in my dream with me.

Finally, I would like to thank my classmates in the 2018-2019 cohort in Ryerson who, each and every one, provided me every single day with inspiration and motivation. Specifically, I'd like to thank my Palestinian sister, Ghaida, for her friendship, for all we shared, and for the refuge we took in each other's in-betweeness and in our hyphenated identities.

Table of Contents

Author's Declaration.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgments.....	iv
Introduction.....	1
Literature Review and Theoretical Frameworks.....	3
Background.....	3
Cultural Clash Framework.....	6
Limitations of Cultural Clash Framework.....	10
Social Exclusion.....	15
Transnational Feminism.....	19
Research Question.....	22
Methodology.....	22
Research Design.....	22
Reflexivity.....	23
Scope.....	25
Setting and Sample.....	26
Findings.....	28

Education and School Experience.....	28
Family Relations.....	35
Intimate Relations.....	40
Discussion.....	43
Education and School Experience.....	43
Discrimination at School.....	45
Family Relations and Sexual Practices.....	46
Summary.....	50
Conclusion.....	53
Appendix A: Ryerson Ethics Board Approval Letter.....	56
Appendix B: Recruitment Poster.....	57
Appendix C: Interview Guide.....	58
References.....	60

Introduction

Statement of the Research Problem

Immigration to a new country can be a challenging experience for any young individual. For young Iranian women arriving in Canada, immigration means facing a path full of challenges in the new receiving society. They are confronted with a new language; they must adjust to a new environment, form new friendships, and more importantly attend high school—on its own a difficult experience for many adolescents. Add to this that as with any other youth during the adolescent period, young immigrants experience the type of emotional, social, and physical developments particular to their age. Intergenerational differences also begin to manifest themselves during adolescence, creating yet more issues for both the young immigrants and their parents who themselves are straining to cope with the challenges of settling in a new country. Though many of those intergenerational challenges are not specific to immigrant communities, they are generally seen as problematic within immigrant families in which parents are stereotypically portrayed as conservative and thus causing greater challenges for immigrant youth (Tyyska, 2010).

The immigration experience becomes more complicated, however, when the cultural practices at school prove to be different from the culture of the home, and when the young immigrants do not receive appropriate or adequate support from the school administration, their parents, or the community. The experience of immigration is furthermore gendered; sons and daughters play their separate roles, and parents in some immigrant families have different expectations from their sons than they do from their daughters whom they hold responsible for the preservation of ethnic culture and values. As such, young women's immigrant experience of integration and adaptation is not the same as that of young men's, placing young women under

greater pressure still (Berry et al., 2006). Finally, many racialized immigrant youths in Canada experience institutional racism at school, which adds yet more to the challenges they face (James, 1999). Thus, this research aims to answer the question: How do young Iranian immigrant women navigate cultural differences between school and home?

Justification for Research

Various reasons and motivations lie behind people's immigration, be it to build a better life or to flee internal conflict. Whatever the reason, once immigrants arrive in the receiving country, they face challenges. The same applies to young Iranian immigrants who form a part of Canada's minority population. Iran is one of the top 10 countries of birth of immigrants admitted to Canada, with Iranians making up 4% of the population of immigrants in 2016 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2016). According to the Canadian Council of Social Development, the young immigrant population is increasing in Canada, and Iran is one of the source countries that adds to this young population (Khanlou, Koh and Mill, 2008). More specific to British Columbia, Iranian immigrants in the 2016 National Household survey counted 37,160 of a 4,560,235 population (Census, 2016). Although this number is relatively small compared to that of other ethnic populations in Canada, immigration from Iran to Canada has increased over recent years, requiring significant attention and study as among those immigrants is a population of adolescents that has so far been overlooked in the existing literature. Although studies on the impact of immigration and acculturation on immigrants do exist, those exploring the experiences of young immigrants or are written from their perspective are scarce. In Canada, few studies concentrate on Iranian immigrants or on Iranian youth. Most of the research explores the experiences of second-generation immigrant youth, leaving out the first-generation immigrant youth whose contexts—given their need to learn a new language and to negotiate “social and

cultural adaptation” challenges upon arrival—differ considerably from those of the second-generation youth (Coleman-Minahan, Gutierrez and Bull, 2018, p.2). Furthermore, many of the studies problematize intergenerational conflicts between immigrant parents and their adolescents as static, assuming it to be arising from a traditional structure within immigrant families (Tyyska, 2010). Thus, it is my hope that this study as to how young Iranian immigrant women navigate cultural differences will fill the gap in this field.

Literature Review And Theoretical Framework

In the following literature review, I discuss some of the research carried out on the Iranian community in Canada; I then discuss studies concerning young immigrants’ experiences and challenges. The purpose of this literature review is to gather and analyse the current interpretations of the experience of young settlers. First, the two predominant frameworks of understanding the young migrants’ experiences, ‘cultural clash’ and ‘social exclusion,’ are outlined to help contextualize the research question. Next, I attempt to shed light on the possibilities and limitations of each of these frameworks and in turn argue that there needs to be an approach alternate to those two frameworks to help us understand racialized young immigrant women’s challenges, as neither of them alone explains the complexity of these women’s identity formation and adjustment. Finally, I introduce transnational feminism as an alternative framework in analysing my findings.

Background

In a study using the framework of anti-racist feminism, Zahra Hojati (2012) focuses on the experiences of Iranian women in Canadian graduate schools, to tackle the duality of stereotyping that these women confront. Hojati interviewed 11 first-generation Iranian immigrant women attending graduate school at the master's and doctoral levels in Ontario. She finds that

beyond being homogenized as backward, inferior, oriental, and ‘Other’ Middle Eastern subjects, they are further marginalized and discriminated against in the wake of 9/11 and the resulting Islamophobia. A study by Parisa Yazdi (2013) focuses on identity formation among a group of Iranian youth gang members in Vancouver. She uses ethnographic and qualitative methods to capture the narratives of young first-generation Iranian males who resided in North Vancouver and had immigrated to Canada during their teen years. The research questions in this study address how the process of migration influenced the identity of these young Iranian Canadian males and how they navigate this identity. Throughout the study, Yazdi attempts to elucidate what it means for the participants to have a hyphenated identity and how much and in what ways their current identity was shaped by their personal choices, their family, or the society they live in. The study foregrounds the relationship between those young individuals’ exclusion and marginalization from society and their choice of joining a gang group as a partial response to creating an identity for themselves. Vappu Tyyska (2003) explores the relationship between Iranian Canadian parents and their adolescent children in Toronto. She conducted her interviews with 16 Iranian mixed- gender teenagers living in Toronto. She finds that despite intergenerational conflicts between Iranian parents and their youth, particularly in the areas of education and peer relations, those conflicts are not necessarily more severe than they are in the Canadian society overall. Tyyska’s (2003) research shows that, in contrast to the common view, Iranian-Canadian parent-youth relationship is not static and that understanding and changes do come about through negotiation between the youth and their parents. Afsaneh Behjati-Sabet (1990, p.99) goes further to state that most Iranian families in Canada can be categorized as ‘modern,’ given their less parental authority over children. Tyyska (2003; 2010), however, adopts a cautious tone, suggesting that among more ‘traditional’ structured Iranian immigrant

families, signs of a patriarchal relationship can be perceived, with fathers being strict with their daughters, allowing them less agency for self-expression within the family. It remains, nevertheless, that most of the adolescent participants in Tyyska's (2010) study express parental flexibility and behavioural change through negotiation.

In turn, Shiva Sadeghi (2008) conducted 6 interviews with first-generation Iranian immigrant women who moved to Canada in their adulthood. She sought to capture these women's narratives of attending institutions of higher education and the role this experience plays culturally and socially in their life. Sadeghi's findings show that receiving higher education was important for the participants in her study as it gave them significance and value in their traditional Iranian culture and increased their chances of finding a voice. Learning and education improved their status both in their host society and in their family life. Carrying out in-depth interviews and qualitative analysis, Parnian Pajouhandeh (2004) captured the identity negotiation and acculturation experience of 8 young Iranian immigrant women who had moved to Canada in their teenage years. Some of the themes disclosed in the participants' narratives were those of sexual silencing and the feeling of becoming marginalized within both Iranian and Canadian cultures. In her study, Pajouhandeh explains how the sexuality of young Iranian immigrant women was suppressed and regulated by their families in Canada, regardless of how 'conservative' or 'liberal' the family was about other issues. She further supports her findings with studies that show how women's sexuality can become instrumentalized by the immigrant community as a means of holding on to their ethnic culture and roots, specifically used as a defence mechanism in the face of racism.

Summary

As mentioned above, the Iranian population in Canada is smaller than that of other ethnicities; as such, there is a shortage of studies on Iranian immigrants in Canada. Furthermore, the migration history of Iranians to Canada began increasing only after the 1980s, and thus does not go back far enough for ample studies to have been made. While studies regarding Iranian women are more available in European countries where the Iranian population is larger than it is in Canada and has a longer history of presence, the above literature focused mostly on studies that have been conducted in the Canadian context. It is firstly this Canadian context that makes the above studies relevant to my study, followed by the fact that their target population was mostly first-generation young immigrants. Those studies are also helpful in my research in that some of them are concerned only with women's perspectives.

Frameworks

Cultural Clash Framework

In the below studies, the struggles of young racialized immigrant women are discussed mainly through the framework of 'cultural clash,' focusing on cultural conflicts.

A number of studies depict racialized young immigrant women complaining of being torn between their community's cultural expectations on the one hand and the exigencies of fitting into the mainstream Canadian society on the other. Telzer (2011, p.315) states that acculturation, which is part of the immigrant experience and defined as a "process of cultural change that occurs when two or more cultural groups come into contact," is different for immigrant parents and immigrant youth. Szapocznik et al., (1984) adds that the variation in the pace and the extent of parent and youth migrants' acculturation comes from such factors as the youths' greater exposure to the host society's values through formal educational systems, interaction with peers, and faster language acquisition, as opposed to the parents' already shaped sets of values and their

different socialization in the host society (as cited in Telzer, 2011). Telzer (2011, p. 315) concludes, that such differences in acculturation lead to a gap that drives parents and adolescents to live in “two separate cultural worlds.” In a study of South Asian youth by Desai and Subramanian (2000), for example, the youth expressed encountering conflicts with their parents as their parents do not understand the challenges their children face trying to fit in at school. The youth expressed that their parents do not comprehend the Canadian context and cannot follow their youth’s behavioural changes. Rasmi, Daly, and Chuang (2014) suggest that the stress and conflict caused by the acculturation gap between immigrant youth and their parents, partially due to the parents’ and youths’ different socialization environments, could result from a weak familial relationship rendered even weaker by the intergenerational conflict, which though not specific to immigrant families can exacerbate the situation.

In her discussion of the acculturation gap, Tyyska (2010) acknowledges that given their faster adjustment to the new society, immigrant youths face different challenges than do their parents. Specifically, the youth learn the new language faster than their parents do as they are more exposed to it at school—a situation that comes to imply such intergenerational conflicts as communication between youth and their parents (as cited in Tyyska, 2010). Moreover, when the youth given their higher language skills act as translators for their parents, parental authority weakens, creating further conflict (as cited in Tyyska, 2010). Creese et al. (1999) state that in the settlement process, roles change within immigrant families especially when parental authority is less prominent and the youth seek more autonomy; tension and conflict arise in the youth-parent relationships, complicating the intergenerational gap (as cited in Tyyska, 2010).

It is worth noting that although the acculturation gap between immigrant parents and youth has received much attention, there remain various types of acculturation gaps that do not

involve the parents' slower adaption to the receiving environment, for as Telzer (2011) puts forth, the acculturation process is very complex and cannot be reduced to only one model. Costigan and Dokis (2006) also acknowledge that a large acculturation gap is inevitable in some cases and deserves to be explored (as cited in Telzer, 2011).

The identity crisis that is part of the developmental stage of adolescents adds to the stress caused in the immigrant family relationship by the combination of the acculturation gap with the intergenerational gap (Anisef and Kilbride, 2003; Telzer, 2011). The adolescent stage ties in with the time that the youth begin negotiating their identity, and while the development of self-identification in youth can create "psychological well-being," a crisis can also arise at this age if the youth find their environment out of sync with their development (as cited in Kwak, 2003, p.119). This can explain why for immigrant youth, identity development does not necessarily lead to "psychological well-being" and why it can be a more challenging experience for them than for non-immigrant adolescents as in addition to experiencing " intergenerational disagreement and difficulties at home" (Kwak, 2003, p.119), they must also work out their position in the new environment. Developmental changes in adolescents involve their interest in their autonomy and their need to negotiate their identity and value systems, creating intergenerational gaps between parents and their children (Rasmi et al., 2014). Specifically, research shows that immigrant adolescents seek autonomy earlier than when their parents expect, which can cause conflict (Rasmi et al., 2014). Again, according to research, different social experiences that adolescents and their parents encounter lead to the creation of different social knowledge around "moral, social conventional and personal" issues (Rasmi et al., 2014). Furthermore, other possible conflicts can arise from youth making their own decisions about marriage, dating, career, education, amongst other (Rasmi et al., 2014).

In their study, Tong et al., (2006) find that immigrant youth, specifically those from countries where English is not the first language, undergo much stress as they learn English and become exposed to new values that in many cases can be different from the values they learn at home. In other words, immigrant youth experience acculturative stress that arises from the need to learn the new society's language and culture and the effort necessary to integrate and become familiar with the new life environment—experiences that can create mental disorders (Tong et al., 2006). It is also challenging for immigrant youth to understand the extent to which they must compromise the cultural values of their home and dominant society (Tong et al., 2006). According to Anisef and Kilbride (2003), migration has an impact on the family role and relations, which can further contribute to the conflict between youth and their parents since, for example, some of the roles can change with parents losing their full authority over their children, as in the new society more autonomy is perceived to be assigned to youth. Accordingly, these unique challenges do not always receive enough attention from either academia or from settlement service agencies (Anisef and Kilbride, 2003).

High school plays a significant role in the experience of immigrant youth as schools are generally representative of the dominant culture of the host society (Berry et al., 2006). Shahsiah (2006, p.22) explores how immigrant youth encounter cultural differences at school; there, they become exposed to their peers' culture and begin identifying themselves with other immigrant students as “us” against “them”—the rest of the school population.

While the above studies point to the youths facing the burden of needing on the one hand to fit into their peer and school culture and wanting on the other hand to meet their parents' expectations, Desai and Subramanian (2000) and Tyyska (2010) explore how gendered roles place young women under even greater pressure. They acknowledge that the experience of

immigration is gendered, and in that context, women are held responsible for the preservation of ethnic culture and values. As such, young female immigrants also encounter parental expectations that place greater pressure on them. Desai and Subramanian (2000) and Handa (2003) cite immigrant parents placing greater limits upon girls within the family—limits such as controlling their dating behaviour or regulating their sexuality. In fact, since women are generally perceived as guardians of the cultural values, greater discipline and regulations are imposed upon them by their families than are imposed on the male counterparts in that same family. This same study by Desai and Subramanian suggests that some of this parental pressure over females can be seen as a reaction to the dominance of ‘western’ values affiliated with “drinking, smoking, drugs, sex, and rock’n roll” (p. 248). This said, however, many authors, including Handa herself, problematize the way that ethno-racial women, South Asian women for instance, are portrayed by the dominant society as oppressed and victimized by their own community, their stories and agencies overlooked (Desai and Subramanian, 2000; Handa, 2003). Desai and Subramanian (2000) foreground the argument that most of the existing research leads us to believe that gender inequality links back to the traditional culture and suggests that female youths’ way out of this inequality has been to assimilate into the ‘western’ culture. Other scholars also problematize this framing, specifically in the case of South Asian women, not only as simplistic but also as dismissive of the historical and contextual factors, including colonization, that gave rise to gender inequality (Desai and Subramanian, 2000).

Limitations of Cultural Clash Framework

In the above studies, the struggles of young racialized immigrant women are discussed in the framework of ‘cultural clash.’ This approach, however, carries serious implications that have been raised by such scholars as Handa (2003) and Bannerji (2000). According to Imam (1999)

and Handa (1997), an initial problem is that this ‘cultural clash’ model advances the assumption that Western culture is dynamic, emancipatory, and gender-equal while minority cultures are static, monolithic, and oppressive (as cited in Jiwani, 2006). Handa (2003, p.7) further argues that this analysis is informed by ‘cultural clash’ theories built on the idea that “tension between the white mainstream population and non-white immigrant communities situates the conflict as being between cultures.” As such, racialized young women immigrants are treated in the discourse as being conflicted, caught between ‘traditional’ ethnic culture and ‘modern’ (Canadian) culture (Handa, 2010, p.7). The theory implies that minority cultures are fixed and static—a notion that is untrue for any culture since there is always change and evolution within cultures and communities. For example, Tyyska’s (2003) study of Iranian Canadian parents and their young children in Toronto indicates that, in contrast to the common view, Iranian-Canadian parent-youth relationship is not static and that understanding and change do come about through negotiation between the youth and their parents. Consequently, Handa (1997) problematizes this framework that reduces minority cultures from “dynamic and fluid entities to pre-modern monolithic and homogenous entities” and depicts Western culture as being “progressive” and forward moving (as cited in Jiwani, 2006, p. 73).

Handa (2003) also notes that within this approach the measuring stick of immigrant ‘success’ is the extent to which immigrants become assimilated and adapted to the dominant Canadian culture that is based on “white Anglo” norms. In practice, assimilation is not constructed to be a voluntary process but a “coercive” one, essential for immigrants to be able to access social and political opportunities (Handa, 2003, p.8). She further states that the result of such a means of measuring immigrant success limits the source of challenges that young immigrant women face to cultural differences alone, leaving out such other issues as racism and

structural barriers. As such, this 'cultural clash' framework tends to create a binary in which the notions of freedom and agency of women are affiliated with the Canadian culture while oppression of women is linked to minorities (Handa, 2003). Such a framework not only transmits a simplistic and stereotypical image of both cultures but also homogenizes the experience of both white and immigrant youth (Handa, 2003); it furthermore reduces the issues of female agency and freedom to only those areas of dating and attire, rendering a caricaturist image of women's freedom and equality (Handa, 2003).

What is being overlooked within the culture-clash assimilation and acculturation framework is the power dynamic that exists between the dominant culture and minority cultures in Canada (Handa, 2003). Jiwani (2006) problematizes the assumption behind the acculturation and assimilation theories that consider the dominant culture and minority culture to be as equal and powerful as each other. On this equal ground, Jiwani (2006) puts forth, one culture can be assimilated into the other culture. Inequality does exist, however, and the minority culture is considered as inferior and backward. Handa (2003) furthermore holds that in overlooking the presence of a dominant culture and the unequal power relations of culture, we ignore the role of race and racism in the way the struggles of young racialized immigrant women are constructed and formed.

As we discuss the limitations of the 'cultural clash' framework, it is important to also include critiques by such postcolonial scholars as Sherene Razack and Eve Haque who argue that the power dynamic and power relations between different cultures cannot be disregarded when talking about acculturation gap between immigrant parents and their children. Accordingly, Razack (2000) explains how the culture of dominant western and colonizer groups are seen as progressive and how the culture of racialized people and Muslim communities, in particular, are

seen as inherently inferior and oppressive towards women. Thus, the discussion of acculturation gap can be problematic when the power dynamic between different cultures is ignored and when we assume that we are comparing cultures on the same level, when in reality the western culture is being represented as progressive and the 'Othered' as inferior. Razack (2000) writes:

Without history and social context, each encounter between unequal groups becomes a fresh one, where the participants start from zero, . . . each innocent of the subordination of others. (p.8)

Thus, when talking about cultural acculturation it should not be assumed that culture is apolitical and without history, for in such a context, 'Western' culture is put forth to young people as being attractive and emancipatory and the concepts of women's freedom and agency as being affiliated with 'Western' culture. In her study *Feminist Theory, Agency, and the Liberatory Subject: Some Reflections on the Islamic Revival in Egypt*, Saba Mahmood (2006) unpacks the concept of agency in women's lives and questions agency that is defined in the liberal framework of 'Western' assessment of women's agency, particularly that of Muslim women's agency.

Mahmood describes how Muslim women's manifestations of freedom and agency are seen within the liberal democracy only as acts of resistance and how the different forms of agency that these women practice are in fact dismissed. In this fashion, the connotation of agency is translated within the Western context only, whereas in truth women around the world practice agency every day in forms that might not necessarily resemble those in the Western context. In her book *Looking White People in the Eye: Gender, Race, and Culture in Courtrooms and Classrooms*, Razack goes further to explain how the notion of subordination among minority cultures is being internalized by colonized subjects as well. Thus, it is problematic when those

discussing the acculturation gap within the ‘cultural clash’ framework fail to question the different weights and values that the various cultures carry and observe.

The subject of Honour killings as a form of violence against women within minority communities and the ways it has so far been framed by western cultures, can also shed light on the problems with culturalizing and the ‘cultural clash’ frameworks. Shahrzad Mojab and Amir Hassanpour (2003) problematize the culturalist approach, arguing that the association of honour killings with culture not only feeds racist discourses and stigmatizes minorities, in turn leading to those minorities' marginalization, but that this essentialistic framework moreover homogenizes a given minority's culture and overlooks both the existing varieties within its communities and its constantly evolving dynamic nature. In other words, Mojab and Hassanpour acknowledge that patriarchy and its manifestations, which can include gender-based violence in the form of honour killings, though it can be part of the culture of minorities and immigrants, is also part of every other culture. They note that the issue arises when the whole culture is reduced by Western countries to only one of its components—that of patriarchy. They further add that the cultural framework overlooks the history of feminist movements within these communities—a history deeply rooted in the legacy of many brave women and men who have fought and are still fighting to end violence against women. Similarly, Abu-Lughod (2011) argues that the way honour killings are framed in the dominant Western discourses overlooks Muslim women's agency.

In turn, Haque (2010) argues that the politics behind the framing of honour killings is that of ‘Othering’; it serves to show that violence is an essentialist part of minorities and ‘Other’ individuals and that those minorities cannot integrate into Western culture as their values are

inherently different from and in clash with Western values. This racist rhetoric behind the cultured labelling of honour killings then will be used against immigrants.

Another implication of the culturalist approaches as discussed by scholars is this approach's obliviousness to the socio-economic situation of immigrants and Muslims. Haque's (2010) article on the presentation of Aqsa Parvez' murder in the media, for example, shows that while the dominant discourse blamed the source of the problem on the culture and on Islam, no mention was ever made of the economic marginalization of this immigrant family by the Canadian society. Razack takes the issue further, arguing that to move away from the simplistic and reductionist culturalist approaches, immigrants' social and economic exclusion, particularly those of Muslim immigrants, and the role they play in the incidence of gender-based violence within immigrant families need to be fully discussed and acknowledged (as cited in Haque, 2010). In other words, while problematizing the culturalist perspectives in the discussion of violence against women, Razack and Haque suggest that the 'social exclusion' framework is more appropriate than the culturalist approach, as in contrast to the common understanding, many of the structural barriers for Muslim immigrants' social and economic integration do not end with first-generation migrants but carries on to generations thereafter. Similarly, Lila Abu-Lughod (2011) notes that while in Western discourses Muslim women are represented as victims of their own culture, this discourse fails to see how these same women become victims of the structural inequalities in Canadian society.

Social Exclusion

Handa (2003) introduces the 'social exclusion' framework in which the struggles of young racialized immigrant women are discussed in the context of racial discourses, racism in Canada, and the way these women are racially excluded from and 'Othered' by the dominant

society. Handa's (2003, p.30) study of young South Asian second-generation immigrant women in Toronto shows "a disturbing increase of depression, eating disorders, alcoholism and suicide attempts." She points out that instead of reducing the issue of immigrant difficulties to the cultural conflicts among 'backward' and 'traditional' parents and victimized youth, we need to discuss these young women's narratives with a focus on how displays of race and racialization have negatively influenced their identity creation. Dumbrill (2005) explains that after Canada adopted the multiculturalism policy, the manifestation of racism changed from being overt, institutional, and visible to being hidden, appearing in other forms and in other places such as educational and mental health systems (as cited in Handa, 2003). For example, interviews with many racialized young immigrant women, South Asian and Iranian amongst others, reveal how these women were exposed to different forms of racism at high school in particular, with their names being made fun of, and how this racism, in turn, prevents them from engaging in various opportunities (Desai and Subramanian, 2000; Handa, 2003; Jiwani, 2006; Hojati, 2012).

This covert imposition of racism upon minority communities in today's Canadian society manifests itself as the 'social exclusion' and 'Othering' of immigrant women and is impacted with racial discourse. Such a manifestation of racism leads to the creation of diasporic identities by the receiving dominant society. Ghosh (2013) holds that power relations always contribute to social constructions of diasporic identities. Ghosh's study on the construction of 'South Asian' category also exemplifies how categorization of minority populations based on their race and further tying back "race" to "culture" and "place" is racist in its generalizing and homogenizing the histories, languages, and politics of diverse groups (Ghosh, 2013, p.48). Aside the racial politics behind the construction of these diasporic identities, Ghosh (2013) adds that these identities are being imposed on minority communities. An example of the way 'Othering' is

informed by racism can be drawn from Arat-Koc who demonstrates how racialized women are infantilized, shown as victims of their own ‘backwards’ culture, needing to be rescued by the Western culture (as cited in Jiwani, 2006). Similarly, Handa (2003, p.32) points out how “the moral superiority of white Canadians is restored by a narrative that portrays the ‘Other’ cultures as backwards.” The above observations put together make it clear that the ‘Othering’ of women of colour based on their race not only leads to their stigmatization but also ignores such structural issues as poverty, immigrant de-skilling, and racism—all indeed manifestations of violence imposed on these young women by the Western culture (as cited in Jiwani, 2006).

Also essential to this discussion are the power relations that exist both historically and presently between races and cultures. Sheeren Razack and Leila Abu Lughod both argue that racialized women are constantly being represented as oppressed, victims of their own culture, needing to be saved by ‘Western’ people and ‘Western’ culture. In her book *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* Abu-Lughod deconstructs the image of Muslim women that has long objectified them as a de-humanized monolithic group of people, victim of their religion.

Bannerji notes that the aftermath of racialization and stigmatization of minority communities is also destructive, especially where violence against women within the community is present; fear of deportation and criminalization of family members leave women with no choice but to tolerate the violence and remain silent (as cited in Jiwani, 2006). In fact, racism and ‘Othering’ not only overlook the evolution and negotiations that take place within minority cultures as they do within any other culture, but racism and ‘Othering’ also impede discussion, negotiations, and possible changes from taking place in response to actual oppressive practices from within the minority community. In other words, when the dominant discourse has been shaped by ‘Othering’ the minority, the space for discussion within the minority community is

taken away, for in that situation as Handa (2003, p.11) notes, the community takes a “protectionist” approach to saving itself from being further targeted by racism. To use a cliché, the minority community is left between a rock and a hard place. Another impact of racism against young immigrant women comes in the community’s response to racism and in its exclusion from the dominant society; many minority communities react by regulating their women’s sexuality and restricting women’s sexual expression—women’s bodies having historically been one of the first battlegrounds to be conquered.

In summary, the above studies by such scholars as Handa (2003) and Jiwani (2006) along with critiques by Razack, Haque, Abu-Lughod, Mojab, and Hassanpour problematize the simplistic ‘cultural clash’ framework applied to the struggles of young racialized immigrant women. Handa and Jiwani approach those struggles from the perspective of the role played by the construction of race and racism.

Many problems within the ‘cultural clash’ framework have been rightly identified as simplistic, yet the ‘social exclusion’ approach put forth is not without its limitations. While it is important to discuss the struggles of young immigrant women in the context of race and the way their identity is constructed in that sense, such a context cannot be the only point of entry into the discussions. Many of those studies, Handa’s study for instance, acknowledge that patriarchy and violence against women is a universal phenomenon; therefore, its manifestation can also arise in minority communities, in the form of regulating women’s sexuality for example. Thus, for those young immigrant women seeking to create and negotiate a space of their own, or for women who do not necessarily follow their family’s culture or that of the Canadian mainstream, there needs to be an approach beyond those two frameworks to fully tackle their struggles and their unique, creative negotiation mechanisms and narratives. Drawing on transnational feminism can be a

useful framework as it enables us to acknowledge immigrant women's challenges by listening to them and by providing them with the space to discuss their experiences. On the one hand, transnational feminism works against reading immigrant women's experiences through the lenses of culturalism and homogeneity, rendering them victimized and oppressed; on the other hand, it neither overlooks nor dismisses their struggles and complexities in the fear that bringing those discussions forward will reinforce racist agendas.

Transnational Feminism

This study is approached from a transnational feminist framework. It draws upon the work of such prominent scholars as Chandra Mohanty (1991) and Grewal & Kaplan (1994) who have contributed to the concept of transnational feminist theory. According to those scholars, transnational feminism is a framework that not only acknowledges the difference in women's experiences around the world and the significance of their locations but also attempts to create solidarity and connections based on those women's shared experiences and similarities (Mohanty, 1991; Grewal & Kaplan, 1994).

The introduction of transnational feminism into feminist studies came in response to the hegemony of white global feminism. In the 1980s, following the UN-sponsored conferences focusing on women issues, 'Third World' feminists problematized the limitations of 'Western feminism' in its comprehension—or lack thereof—of the experience of racialized women and the lived experiences of women from the global south (Conway, 2017). In response to 'Western feminism's global sisterhood that homogenizes and expands the experience of white Western middle-class women to all women's experiences, 'Third World' women promoted a framework of transnationalism in which feminist solidarity occurs on the grounds of sensitivity to the positionality and location of women while the oppression and inequalities that women

experience around the world are addressed (Conway, 2017). Particularly, Mohanty (1991, p.56), in her essay 'Under Western Eyes,' problematizes liberal Western feminism's construction of 'Third World women' as an oppressed "poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, and victimized" group that requires white feminism as a saviour. Her article was one of the first among non-western feminists' attempts to criticize the colonial and imperialist gaze of white liberal Western feminism over women and to discuss the marginalization of racialized women in feminist discourses.

Later, the work of Grewal and Kaplan (1994), one of the core pillars of transnational feminist theory rooting in post-modernity, sought to unpack the discussion of women's oppression and struggles. To Grewal and Kaplan, women's oppression does not rest with the essentialist and separate units of nation-states; their belief is that notions of race, culture, ethnicity, gender, sexualities, and most significantly feminism are constantly being constructed, modified, and influenced by movements crossing borders and by the different histories and legacies of colonialism and liberalism. Further, Grewal argues that instead of seeing women as one-dimensional objects of culture, class, migration issues and patriarchy, we need to see hegemony and power as 'scattered' and dispersed across different structures such as class and patriarchy.

Thus, in contrast to the global feminism that overgeneralizes women's experiences and seeks a master analytical framework to discuss gender, transnational feminism as proposed by Grewal and Kaplan seeks to avoid a one-size-fit-all theory by acknowledging the contextual differences and calling us to "map these scattered hegemonies and link diverse local practices to formulate a transnational set of solidarities" (Grewal and Kaplan, 1994, p.17).

The strand of transnational feminism that informs this study draws upon the analytical writings of such scholars as Bannerji and Grewal and Kaplan who bring to bear anti-colonial, anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, and anti-racist frameworks while at the same time stand critical of the concepts of nation and nationalism. This type of transnational feminism is not another manifestation of global feminism that inaccurately analyses issues through the lens of globalization, assuming border fluidity and undermining the role of the state. This said, it is important for us to keep in mind while reading transnational feminist theories the drawbacks for which they have been criticized.

Situating Transnational Feminism

Transnational feminist theory is not simply a framework for the cross-border analysis of women; it is also an anti-colonial critical approach which, while concerned with the specific location, history, and context of women's challenges around the world, does not homogenize those challenges. In other words, for it not to be a superficial alternative to global feminism, it must be sensitive to the location of women while remaining unrestricted by it. Furthermore, transnational feminism arising from post-structuralist roots must avoid falling into the trap of cultural relativism. On this, Bannerji questions the failure of post-structuralist and post-modernist theories to see the role of patriarchy in both nationalist and colonizer discourses and queries the emancipatory power of feminist theories that are situated in nationalistic discourses. In other words, Bannerji signals us to avoid the binary of nationalist and imperial theories when situating feminist theory as in reality there are feminists and activists combating oppression and patriarchy rooted in both discourses. Consequently, it is important to avoid homogenizing feminist and nationalist movements. At the same time, it is important to draw on Amina Jamal's

(2005) work, as it is essential for transnational feminism not to locate itself in the binary of global feminism and imperial feminism.

Research Questions

Based on the review of the literature and drawing on transnational feminism as discussed above, this study asks how young Iranian immigrant women navigate cultural differences between school and home?

Methodology

Research Design

Inasmuch as my research question aims to capture the marginalized voice of young Iranian immigrant women, the qualitative method given its exploratory nature enables me to understand these young women's opinions and experiences. Furthermore, my theoretical framework of transnational feminism, which entails acquiring knowledge regarding the lives of women and 'Othered' population, complements the qualitative method, requiring a deep understanding of social issues through the subjects' opinions and stories. Specifically, I use narrative inquiry by conducting semi-structured interviews with young Iranian immigrant women. I use this methodology as it allows me to collect data from my participants through direct questions. This method, as opposed to other methods that aim to generate objective knowledge, also gives me the flexibility to inductively interpret the data I collect to tackle broader social issues by interpreting and analysing my participants' issues and by acknowledging their experiences as individuals. I draw upon Creswell's (2013) definition of qualitative research that defines this method as one that acknowledges the significance of the individual's experiences and places them at the centre of the research. Further, as stated by Denzin et al., (2006), the qualitative research method is committed to critical and interpretive rhetoric; it

allows me to explore and interpret my participants' experiences by centring my study around those experiences to mitigate their marginalization. This methodology's reliance on using different approaches, including the narratives of individuals, also enables me to break down the hierarchical power between researcher and participant, thus creating a better and closer relationship, so that participants feel comfortable sharing.

A narrative inquiry is used for the purpose of this study. It draws upon Bryman (2011) whose overview of narrative inquiry states that such a strategy can lead to building a non-hierarchical relationship between researcher and participants. According to Bryman (2011), narrative inquiry allows the researcher to hear the story of the participants while at the same time giving participants power over their stories by allowing them to express themselves in a detailed and descriptive way. Using narrative inquiry in my research allows me to capture Iranian youth's voices and narratives; it helps me understand the challenges and negotiation mechanisms of Iranian female youth in Canada as those youth relate their experiences from their own perspectives during the interviews. In other words, by providing Iranian female immigrant youth with a space within which to air their experiences, I may be able to project their voices—voices that have so far been silent in the existing literature. At the same time, this strategy of narrative inquiry might also prove beneficial to my participants as it will grant them agency in choosing which of their experiences to share with me and how; it might even allow them the chance to reflect upon their immigration experiences and perhaps gain from the interview an enhanced understanding of those experiences as they relate to cultural differences between home and school.

Reflexivity

My own narrative of navigating differences between two cultures is necessarily interwoven with this research since I recognize myself as an Iranian female who attended high school in Canada. As such, I acknowledge that this research is informed by my prior beliefs, emotional ties to my Iranian community in Canada and personal experiences. As a result, my personal experience of having immigrated to Canada as a youth inevitably contributes to the formation of this research. I tried to truthfully transmit the participants' narratives and stories—even to their exact words—in my discussion of their feelings and emotions.

Concomitantly, my social background and shared culture with my research's population, act as an asset in this research, placing me in a position of insider partially familiar with many of the cultural norms and trying to deepen existing knowledge by contributing to its gaps rather than discovering the 'Other' Subjects. Furthermore, as an insider who has a lived experience of migration to Canada and has experienced the challenges of trying to fit into both Iranian and Canadian communities, I am able to capture and discuss those young Iranian women's narratives. As such, my entry point to this discussion draws upon transnational feminism, and my research question by no means assumes culturalized or essentialist notions about beliefs and practices.

I am also aware of the current political climate of the world encountering and struggling with the real danger of right-wing political parties rising to power, be it in Europe or in North America. The political agendas of those populist parties are filled with racist, white supremacist, xenophobic, Islamophobic, and anti-immigrant rhetoric. In these existing circumstances of immigrants and Muslims being under attack, it is difficult to engage in debates around the struggles of women within minority groups, for the subject of violence against women risks being reduced to religious and cultural motivations and becoming in the hands of colonial

feminists, racists, and Islamophobes an instrument for further marginalizing ethnic and religious minorities and migrants living in Western countries. Yet exactly because of this political climate we live in and the existing space for us to voice issues, debates do need to take place. They must be appropriately framed, so as not to be staged for the wrong population, and feminists all while avoiding being caught in a situation of fighting for either racism or sexism, do need to continue creating a safe space to tackle particular forms of gender violence, honour killings being but one.

When I arrived in Vancouver from Iran, I was a grade 10 adolescent. I identify myself as an Iranian Canadian who considers both countries as home. Despite my English being satisfactory upon my arrival to Vancouver, and despite my family background being affiliated more with the liberal side of the ideological spectrum, I still faced disagreements between the norms within my family and those of my school. I was ever seeking ways of negotiating a middle ground between the two cultures and feeling frustrated at being homogenized as a Middle Eastern woman by the school administration. My immigration experience has unquestionably impacted my identity formation, and even today, ten years later, I still find myself conciliating a path into the hearts of both cultures. Sometimes I fail; sometimes I succeed.

Scope

For the purpose of this study, I considered only young Iranian immigrant women between the ages of 18 and 24 who reside in the lower mainland of British Columbia. I chose this age range because people between 18 and 24 are still considered to be youth and according to the studies, this is the population that has challenges between meeting parents' expectations and fitting into the receiving society after immigration (Tyyska, 2010). Further, this age range is overlooked in the studies that have been conducted within the Iranian immigrant community in Canada. My rationale to conduct my study in the lower mainland of British Columbia is that, as

already mentioned above, a large population of Iranian immigrants live in British Columbia, more specifically in the two districts of West Vancouver and North Vancouver that are home to 7% and 6% respectively of the Iranian population, thus making it easier for me to recruit my participants among this diverse group of Iranian families. Immigration, in my study refers to those with refugee, permanent resident, and citizen status.

Observing time limitations for my study, I considered neither international student nor Iranian male youth perspectives. Nor did I broaden the scope of my research to include other provinces in Canada, as Vancouver provides me with easier access to participants given my familiarity with the local Iranian community and my personal experience of having resided in Vancouver for years. This study was conducted within three months.

Setting and Sample

Given the substantial size of the Iranian community living in the districts of West Vancouver and North Vancouver, I conducted my study in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. Having lived in the Lower Mainland for years, I am familiar with the Iranian community there; as such, I was better able to recruit participants. The in-person interviews were conducted in private reserved library rooms, which I chose to create a safe and private space for the interviews and to ensure participants' confidentiality, or in community buildings selected by participants according to accessibility for them and convenience.

I recruited 6 participants to include in the study. Prospective participants were young Iranian immigrants who identify as women and who: a) are aged between 18-24, b) immigrated to Canada and currently reside in Metro Vancouver area, British Columbia, c) completed at least part of their secondary school in Canada, and d) are fluent in English. Given my interest in the experience of young people, the study was restricted to the above age range. Participants were

only women since I am specifically interested in the experiences of young female immigrants and since furthermore time limitations prevent broadening the scope of this research to include male experiences as well. Participants also needed to have completed at least part of their secondary school in Canada since I am looking to capture the potential cultural conflicts and differences that arise for those immigrant youths between their home and their school. Given the existing time limitations, I conducted the interview in English as interviews in Farsi would have entailed translation; thus, it was important that participants be fluent in English. Each interview lasted between 60-90 minutes and with the prior consent of participants the interview was audio recorded to facilitate its transcription that happened after each interview. Interviews contained open ended and semi structured questions over three themes that came out of my research question and were known to be the potential source of disagreements between young immigrants and their parents according to the existing literature and studies. Participants' responses were presented verbatim, thus including the exact phrasing, grammar, and choice of words. Direct quotes were used to highlight key informants' ideas, and comments in brackets indicate insertions I have made to render the responses clearer where necessary. To maintain anonymity, pseudonyms were used in place of the actual names of participants and identifying information such as names of participants and names of schools attended have been removed. Upon transcription of each interview, it was emailed to the participants for their review and feedback to ensure both its accuracy and confidentiality. After transcription of interviews, the data was coded and organized around the three thematic categories that guided the interview questions.

I used snowball sampling by asking participants for recommendations of acquaintances who might be eligible for this study (Robinson, 2014). There was no study-specific social media

page to recruit potential participants, but I posted a study-specific flyer on my Facebook account.

Findings

The following section includes participants' responses to the proposed questions. Findings are divided into three sections: education and school experience, family relations, and intimate relations. Interviews were conducted in English; the responses transcribed below relate to the research questions in this paper. Three of the six participants in this study had entered elementary school upon their arrival in Vancouver before moving on to high school; the remaining three entered high school directly.

Education And School Experience

This section outlines participants' first experiences of entering an elementary or high school upon their arrival in Canada. Reading the literature discussed above, it became evident that school, if not the first, is at least one of the places where young immigrants are exposed to Canadian culture upon their arrival, where they meet new peers, come upon different behaviors and expectations, and in the process encounter cultural differences. School is an essential part of young people's lives in general, and perhaps even more so for young immigrants trying to fit into their new society. Thus, the school life of young immigrants proves integral in my question as to how young immigrants navigate cultural differences. They were asked how they felt they fit into their Canadian school as compared to other students, including other ethnic groups at the school, their experience of being female Iranian immigrants in that setting, their motivations for continuing post-secondary education, and the family's role and influence in this decision. When asked how they felt they fit into their Vancouver school in relation to others, five of the six participants expressed difficulty fitting in. Many of them saw the language barrier as a major

barrier to their ability to integrate with other students. Rojan who came to Vancouver when she was in grade 12 recounted:

My English was lacking, and I could not connect with people easily. I don't know if it was because of me or because it happened that people in my class in that specific school year were not friendly, but I could not connect with non-Persian students.¹ I even tried, but it did not happen. It was not a good time for me.

Parnia who also began school in Vancouver in grade 12 described how other students had already formed their friendships in high school:

I did not feel I'm fitting in, and I did not have the expectation from the beginning when I came here {Vancouver} because I came for grade 12 and everyone had already their friends.

Mitra, on the other hand, who came to Vancouver when she was in grade 8, did not find fitting in a problem as there was a large Iranian population at her school.

I was more involved with ESL class in general because I did not have that much English background [...]. In my classes, I was usually sitting with my Persian friends and friends from ESL classes.

Mitra pointed out that though she never had issues fitting in, she thought that one of her friends who wore the hijab might have felt more isolated:

I never had that limits of "don't talk to guys or don't sit next to them" {so I did not feel I don't belong} But for example, I had a friend wearing hijab and she complained about being marginalized, but for me that wasn't an issue.

Parnia too had formed her friendships among the Iranian students at school:

¹ Iranian and Persian are often used interchangeably to refer to the country we know today as Iran. The name 'Persia' comes from the ancient Persians who lived in the Persian Empire of which the current geographically bounded country we call Iran was the centre. Although many, including Iranians themselves, use these two terms interchangeably, the term Persian can be politicized and exclusionary, referring to those who can speak Persian (Farsi) and excluding other Iranian ethnic groups such as Kurds, Lurs, Arabs, Turks. In recent years, given the marginalization of Iran as a country in the international world, many Iranians consciously use the term Persian in place of Iranian to relate themselves to the ancient Persian Empire rather than to today's political entity, to avoid the Iranophobia created by the western media that represents Iran as a hostile country.

When you come from Iran, you have already all of your friends in Iran's high school and we all knew each other, but coming here, you have to learn a new culture, and I was a little shy in the beginning. My English was good, but I was too shy to start a conversation. But luckily my sibling's friends were also in the same school, which helped me a lot {to find friends}, and also the school's counselor connected me with some Iranian people in school; that again helped me a lot. But I was mostly hanging out with Iranian in high school and did not have any non-Iranian friends to be honest. [...] {In high school here} I did not have the feeling that we are all part of the community as everyone was very individualistic ...in University most of my friends are non-Iranian, but my close friends are still either immigrants or coming from immigrant families. I think I like to get connected more to them.

When asked if it was her preference to spend most of her time with her Iranian friends, she responded:

I did not really feel like it to find non-Iranian friends anyways because we moved at the same time from Iran to Canada with a group of people from the same school in Iran so technically here I got connected with people who I already knew them from Iran. So I already had connections and did not realize the need to go look for new friends.

Like Parnia, many of the participants remembered how most of their time at school was spent interacting with other Iranian students or with newcomers attending ESL classes. Fereshteh commented:

[...] And I liked the ESL class because that was where I got to meet some new people and I found my friends from that class. [...] They were mostly immigrants with the same level of speaking English, so it was easier to connect with them.

Sheida talked about her experience of making friends in both elementary and high school:

I was left out in elementary school. In high school it was better because I had a lot of Persian friends and there were many Persian kids in that school. The majority of time all of my close friends were Persian up to grade 10, but after, it was a mixture, but the mixture was also other kids from immigrant families.

Mahtab who entered school in Vancouver in grade 7, recalled:

In elementary school, I did not know English, so I didn't communicate with anyone. I only had this other girl that also did not speak English very well. But then I was okay, I was giving candies to other kids to make connections, so they were nice. I bribed them to connect with them. High school was different as it is a stage that everybody tries to find themselves, and I was the one always smiling because of my lack of English [...] Smile and having headscarf {hijab} made people to be nice and reluctant to me {in school}.

Mahtab was the only participant in the set of interviews who wore a hijab while attending school;

she recounted her experience as follows:

[...] I actually think having hijab was a positive thing in a way that it made people in school to think that I'm a 'good' girl (teachers and students). So teachers would think I'm not gonna cheat or not gonna smoke. Automatically, I would be in a different place {because of my hijab} and receive this automatic respect from Iranian guys as well. I remember my guy friends would never swear in front of me or would apologize for doing that. So, this headscarf would give them a different image of me automatically; as I said, I was standing out in my school because of always smiling and having hijab. So i guess they {students} liked me [...].

When the participants were asked if they felt that Iranian girls' experiences of integrating at school and finding friends differed from that of boys', some of them did not necessarily notice any difference. Rojan commented:

I think there is no difference between Iranian girls' and boys' fitting-in experience to school. It depends on how social you are and how flexible you are, but I don't think it is gendered.

Parnia was not as certain:

I was not paying attention to this at the time, but now that I'm reflecting back, I think that it is always the case for guys to fit in easier. So, for example if there are two newcomers and both of them have limited English, it feels like it is easier for the guy to get accepted by others and fit in. But I was not paying attention to this at all at that time.

Mahtab, while acknowledging the existence of a difference between boys' and girls' experience of fitting in at school, does not attribute it to the Iranian community specifically:

I don't think at all that it is harder for Iranian girls to fit in than Iranian boys. If there was a difference, it was not because of being Iranian but because of how girls and guys interact. So if you were a guy, you'll probably end up playing basketball, talking about sports which automatically make you connect with more people whereas if you were a girl you talk about gossip, fashion, and dissing each other instead of supporting, but it did not have anything to do with being Iranian, but it's a gender difference. If you are trusted in sports it makes it easier for you to have friends.

Fereshteh, saw her experience as an Iranian girl trying to fit in at school as related to self-image:

Iranian girls get exposed to a new environment {in Canada} that is different from what they were used to; there are so many things they have to go through. Being able to go through that and also dealing with growing up and hormonal problems make it difficult. Like for me, the thing that I had trouble with {in Canada} was that I did not like my self-

image in high school and the way I was dressing up. Going to high school in Iran, we did not have to choose our outfits as we were required to wear uniforms, so you did not even think about it. For me, maybe because I was self-conscious, {in Canada} it was extra energy that I had to put choosing what I want to wear and the picture I want to show off myself, and it was extra pressure.

Sheida who came to Canada when she was in elementary school attributed the difference in girls' and boys' experience of fitting in to reasons of home:

In high school, it was definitely much easier for boys to fit in. The reason is that Iranian boys had a lot more freedom whereas the girls, the family tends to restrict the girls towards a lot of different activities. For example, if I wanted to go out with my own friends personally, I felt like my family would not let me do it whereas with my brother, they were very open towards that.

Participants also provided information on their parents' influence as to their future choice of post-secondary education and the resulting disagreements in the family on the subject. When asked about the disagreements, Fereshteh talked about the challenges she faced with her parents trying to influence her decision-making regarding her future career:

Absolutely I had a lot of problems. You know how Persian culture works, everyone wants to become a doctor. So, my mum wanted me to be a doctor, but I told her I have no absolute interest in becoming a doctor, and then she said that how about becoming an engineer and make me proud in that way. I always wanted to go to art school. I did not have the freedom to choose what I wanted to study but if it were up to me I would have gone to Art school. They said it is a disgrace if I go to college or art school and I cried a lot. I had so many arguments with my mother, but I was not strong enough back then to do what I want. You know immigration does that to you, you still do not have a strong foundation in the beginning years {in the new country} as we only had each other, so we had to say yes to each other and support each other. So I had no choice but to follow whatever she says. I had a lot of trouble and discussions with my family about what I'm going to study and where I'm going to pursue that.

Fereshteh discussed how she changed her program and how she felt about it:

I was not happy with the program I was studying, and it was too intensive, so I was either crying or working. I did not feel safe to discuss this with my parents. I went through all of this alone. So, I changed my major without telling them, and up to now, they do not know about that. My family was shaming me for not knowing what I want to do with my life and did not know how depressed I was. I decided not to talk about it with them as they were giving me shame and guilt.

Mitra, did not experience as many disagreements at home regarding her future:

We did not have any disagreements in what I'm choosing to study {in university} but they {the parents} were obviously similar to traditional Persian parents, sensitive about the grades and marks I was getting. The only restriction from my parents was that they did not mind me applying to colleges, but they wanted me to either go to major universities in town. That was the only disagreement we had, but I ended up getting accepted into those universities.

Sheida did not have any disagreements with her family either, but she acknowledged that things could have been different had her interests been different:

I mean, my parents were very open towards me going to university and picking between science and engineering; that was sort of what they had in their mind. For me personally, I feel like if I had a different interest, that might have been in conflict with this, but my passion was sort of in science, so that's why we kind of aligned in this, but my parents would not have necessarily been open to changing if I was, for example, interested in arts or business.

For Mahtab, it seemed that her educational and career aspirations were not influenced so much by her parents:

Coming from Persian background, we think life has to go in a specific way, you have to finish this and that. So, I didn't even question it. It was a step of life, and I never met anyone who did not go to university ...so in mind, I was very narrow minded. I thought what else would I be doing if I don't go to university? [...] I would not even say family, I would say culture had influence. My family was not even thinking something else is possible {other than attending university}. We are coming from a family that my grandfather and uncles were all very educated, so we did not know any other options.

Parnia's experience seemed to rest more on her future being secured:

My mom was always welcoming to whatever I choose to study, and my dad probably wanted me to follow his career, but he never pushed me to study anything or put any pressure on me...they were pretty flexible. [...] Everyone goes to university, so just because of that, I decided to go. I don't necessarily like university's setting, and I think there are much better learning experiences out there in the world, but I finished my post secondary education simply to be qualified for having a career. [...] My family would probably get concerned if I decided not to go to university in a way that what would happen to your future and how would you be able to provide for yourself?

When asked if they had experienced discrimination in school, only a few of the participants

expressed having been subjected to direct discrimination. Sheida recounted:

{I experienced discrimination} More so in elementary school. At the time I came to elementary school, that was not a big Persian community here, so it was only me and a couple of more people. There were a lot of racist remarks towards me, towards people of Persian descent. Other kids were calling me terrorists. I came in after 9/11, and political climate was very negative at the time. The teacher knew about this, I told the teachers, and they kind of saw it, and my parents got involved, but they did not really do much. One of my memories is that one time, when the principal called me in, she was saying why do you keep telling this to your parents, and she was kind of punishing me. High School was a lot better, especially because there were a lot of Persians around [...].

Fereshteh recollected:

We had to do a lot of presentations, and as you can hear, I still have accent today, and many people could not understand what I'm saying. My accent was much thicker back then, and in one of the presentations, in a social studies class, a guy started laughing at me, and the teacher tried to control the class, smiled at me, and recommended me to ignore the guy. But it affected me {negatively}.

Other participants, however, either could not remember any discrimination or could not directly name what happened to them as discrimination. Parnia expressed:

In high school, I was so new to everything and the environment that I probably did not even realize if it happened or not, but in university also, I never felt it. But in work sometimes, I feel it in a way that, if there is a customer and there are two of us serving, with my colleague having blond hair, the older customers sometimes are more comfortable to approach my colleague. In the very beginning, although we both had the same position, it was clear that sometimes the customer tried to avoid me. And now, reflecting back on my university, I don't know; it is very hard to call it discrimination, or maybe it should be easy to pinpoint it? I'm not sure. But what was happening was that mostly different ethnic groups were hanging out with each other; for example, white people had their own groups, us, Iranian, have our own circle, same with Chinese students. I don't think you can call this discrimination. And I think you can also see that in the way the city has been arranged. There are different ethnic neighborhoods, and it also reflects itself in university and elsewhere. But If there is one thing that bothers me is that although my English is very fluent, and I have a Canadian accent, if there is a white girl, no one questions her where she is from, but because I have dark hair people always ask me where I am from. Or if they are nice, they would ask what my ethnicity. This is not something you can realize it from my English, but they still ask it. I mean if I had a thick accent, I would not be surprised that they ask me this question, but now I still

receive this question.

As seen above, one source of disagreement and conflict between young immigrants and their parents can indeed arise from young immigrants' encounter at school with a culture of expectations and behaviors different from those required of them to follow at home. For my study, however, it was significant to note that these young immigrants faced disagreement with their parents over their future career choices. This disagreement did not necessarily arise only from the immigrant parents' different culture and their need to control their children, as culturalized discussions would have it, but it seemed to be rather a function of the insecurity that immigrant parents experience upon their arrival to Canada and their inherent desire to secure their children's future. Though it is important to pin down the exact causes of this disagreement and the conditions that contribute to it, the parents' expectations as expressed in some narratives placed great pressure on some of the young women in the interviews. Also of note is how these young immigrants in their reflections upon their arrival at school, accepted their not fitting in and not feeling welcome as a result of their being from a different culture; they had internalized their social exclusion and were not vocal about it. Also, it is worth noting that most of the participants in this study did not talk about themselves as being Muslim or racialized, however, from the narratives of some of the participants it was clear that they were being objectified and categorized as Muslim and racialized in school regardless of how they identified themselves.

Family Relations

Part of the objective of this study was to reveal how participants described their relationship with their parents and the means they chose to resolve the potential disagreements with their family. Asked about their relationship with their parents, most of the participants expressed not being distant from their parents yet avoiding sharing selective issues with them,

not discussing all aspects of their lives and identities with their parents. They discussed the major rules and regulations that were set at home and were expected to be followed.

Speaking of her relationship with her parents, Fereshteh put forth:

My relationship with my dad is good and much better than my mom. He cares so much and is supportive. [...]. With my mom, we always have tension with her because she was not accepting my unique nature and how I'm different from her. She always gave me guilt for being the way I am. Even now, I don't think she listens to me. My dad does not get himself involved in many situations and he plays the role of mediator in many instances. I decided not to talk about some of my decisions with them as they were giving me shame and guilt.

Rojan expressed that most of her everyday interactions and communications were with her mother:

The most communication I have is with my mom. She has the most responsibility of me to go out and come home. My dad is a chill person, and he doesn't say {her words} it in front of your face. He just gives me advice like "Rojan do you think it is a good time to come home?" that way, but my mom is very direct just saying, "this is not a good time to come home." So, I have more interactions with my mom than my dad.

Sheida spoke of how she felt about her relationship with her parents when she was at high school:

It was difficult, especially in high school, because you start to want more freedoms as other kids have more freedom and your parents don't really let you. Even small things like hanging out with your friends after school, not partying, and things like that. [...] My mom was a little more lenient, but my dad was very restricted. [...] I was very jealous of my brother because he always had more freedom than me (laughing).

Later, she talked about some of the rules that were set in her home and were expected to be followed:

I don't know who made the rules, but it was kind of a joint decision between my parents. [...] The rules were mostly centered around studying, like how much time you actually spent studying and how much time you get to go on the internet [...] I felt sad because I did not have a lot of freedom. I never was a rule breaker and risk taker, so I tried to convince them to let me go.

Sheida's disagreements with her family revolved around the way she was dressing:

Early high school, I did of course want to wear more revealing clothes. Back then, they {the parents} were more restricted, and I was more open. They were vocal about it that you should dress this way, but I was doing my own thing. At that time, we also kind of just moved from Iran, and their kind of views were like you have to wear like this and that. And they kind of changed, and I kind of changed too, so we met in the middle.

Rojan expressed how immigration led to her having most of her interactions with her mom:

My dad comes back and forth between Iran and Canada, so he does not stay that much. So my mom had the most responsibility for me. In the beginning of the immigration, we did not get along that well. We sometimes had fights, so what I did was mostly sacrifice. She is more traditional, so she was scared of all the things outside in Canada such as alcohol, drugs, etc. She was scared of me becoming more Canadian than Persian and to forget my own culture, so we had fights. So what I ended up doing was not going out and staying home. So, my friends were inviting me to parties, and I was like I prefer to stay home. I was doing that not to give her that much stress because immigration has a lot of stress on her, being alone and dealing with me is a huge stress. So I tried to sacrifice to not give her that much stress, so I basically did not go out and stayed home. But after going to college {Rojan's going to college}, she becomes more okay and relaxed. So now, we are getting along better. We still have some strict rules, but certainly nowadays we get along better.

Mahtab attributed her interaction being mostly with her mother to other reasons:

[...] My dad was never a direct person, so if it was anything, he would tell my mom to tell me. The communication was always through my mom and she was very chill and understanding.

Immigration, also impacted Mahtab's relationship with her parents:

My relationship with my parents is very good, and a lot of it is because of the distance {as they currently live in Iran}. At the same time, I would say I grew up here mostly, so my values are more Canadian, and I value communication a lot. Also, I think there is a thing with many Iranian families; once you move to Canada, you don't have much of an understanding of Canadian and western culture so we noticed a lot of negative ones, negative ones in Iranian point of view, which are alcohol, cigarettes, parties, so the family becomes more traditional and more conservative. Like, we used to never go to the mosque in Iran, maybe once or twice, and then we came here, and we went to the mosque every Friday, Saturday. They {Mahtab's parents} were seeing it as keeping us closer to

our own culture and away from the western culture.

Talking about her life with her parents in Vancouver, Mahtab recounted:

There was a time that I felt there was a lot of distance between me and my parents. For example, there was a time in high school that I was part of the yearbook club, I would look at the yearbooks of thirty, forty years ago and looking at how people celebrate Halloween and dress up, I was always thinking if my parents grew up here, they would have done what I was doing, but because they grew up in a very different society, I could not share much with them. So, at that time, it was a bit unfortunate and a lack of communication. I realized for me, when I was in elementary and high school, school life was like I was living in two different worlds and I could not connect them at all. So, elementary school was fully in English, and every time I was going to school, it was like I'm entering a new different world. So, when I was in first year of University, I just put the effort to realize what my own values are, then I realized my relationship with my family is also part of my own values, and I started having more communication with them.

Mahtab also discussed her relationship with her older sister and how she managed it:

I don't get along with my older sister, and I feel like there is not much respect for my values. She doesn't know how to communicate. When I felt like I'm not being respected for who I am and what I value, I decided to step back and give each other space. At the beginning, I noticed that there is a conflict between us, and I kept getting sad, unhappier, but at some point, I decided to take a Canadian approach. You cannot ignore the problem, you have to solve it, so I talked with her and when not getting any response back [...], I tried to avoid her and I lost my feelings towards her comments. Basically, I learned to pull myself out of the situation. Before, I tried to defend, but now It seems like I just watch, and I pulled myself out of it. It is okay, I don't think just because we are siblings we have to get along.

Parnia's relationship with her parents is a close one as she stated:

I am very close to my parents; they are not like typical Iranian parents. They are more like friends to me. [...] There were no expectations or rules at all in my family that I can remember. From when I was 16, I could take my boyfriends home in Iran, and my family was okay with that. They were very chill.

Mitra expressed a similar closeness to her family:

I'm closer to my mom, but I'm close to all of them {family} in different ways {sharing different things with them}. My mom knows everything about me because she knows all of it, but with my dad, I sometimes avoid talking about for example boys. I'm just not comfortable, and if there is anything, I share with my mom, and she tells my dad.

Asked if some of the mentioned rules and expectations were different for their brothers, Sheida reflected:

My parents did have the same similar rules surrounding studying for both of us {my brother and I}. There was definitely differences in types of freedom he had in hanging out with friends; and when it was the time we could hang out with friends. For example he had more freedom to hang out with his friends anytime he wanted but not me.

Rojan recounted:

My brother always does stuff low key, and he travels a lot and study abroad, and no one ever questions him. The rules of when are you going to be home and who are you travelling with, they never ask him that type of questions. I've never seen these rules being applied to him (laughing).

The above narratives make it clear that most of the participants considered their relationship with their families and the way this relationship manifested itself an essential part of their life. Where they felt the relationship awkward, participants sought to improve it by creating more direct communication with the family, by trying to understand the family better, or in some cases, by altogether avoiding discussion of certain subjects that would bring disharmony into the family. Also significant is that the immigration experience and the challenges the family was enduring brought the participants closer to their families as the young women took interest in whether the parents felt comfortable, worried, uneasy, or other. Some, witnessing the burden immigration imposed on the family, became cautious, hesitant to express themselves or their needs; instead, they chose the path of supporting the family. The gendered role of the mothers, raising the children, rendered the mothers more involved in the everyday life of the participants than it did the fathers. Within this gendered role issue, the participant's male siblings seemed to

enjoy more freedom of movement, not seeming to entertain the same moral or emotional obligation to support the family that the women participants did. Mahtab, for example, expressed how at times she sacrificed her own needs to avoid disagreements and tension in the family.

Intimate Relations

In the last section of the interviews, participants were asked how much of their sexual relationships and sexual practices they shared and discussed with their parents and whether they could freely speak about those issues at home. They were additionally asked if their views of those issues conflicted with those of their parents. Most of the participants expressed that even if there were no disagreements on the issues between them and their parents, there still was no discussion of them.

Parnia said:

Like many other Iranian families, I don't directly talk about my sex life, but I feel like they know obviously that I have dated people, but we do not discuss it. They are okay with having sexual relationships before marriage, and they never put any pressure on me for getting married. My mom might not be comfortable hearing these; there will be no consequences, but it's simply not a pleasant conversation to have with your mother. After all, she also grew up with having these conversations as taboo. Even I don't discuss this with my older sister; we are very close to each other, but we still do not discuss it. It is just not a pleasant discussion. I am not comfortable having these discussions with many of my Iranian friends as well because us Iranians have many psychological burdens and are not comfortable with discussing these discussions. I want to make sure they are open minded and have a deep understanding; otherwise, they would judge you or spread the word with other people. [...] My parents have had the experience of living abroad, so maybe their mentality was a little different than other Iranian parents. We did not have any opposing views with each other about this.

Sheida also did not feel comfortable discussing her relationships with her parents:

I felt uncomfortable sharing with my parents about my guy friends although they never told me directly not to have guy friends. My mom was okay, so I kind of told her about my dating when I started dating. When I did start dating, my mom was telling me try not to spend too much time with him, and try to spend more time on studying. [...] I felt

awkward with my parents kind of knowing I date even though my mom knew I'm dating, but my worries was that they judge me that I'm not studying and wasting time with boys. That was kind of my worries. But also, my other worries was more with Persian community around me. You would be judged a lot and seeing someone who is dating casually, and it is not going anywhere. For me, in university, only a few of my Iranian friends were dating. People around me were not dating that much.

Sheida added:

I feel like Persian community is very different. A lot of them are more restrict, and a lot of them are more open. So there were times that I was hanging out that {the Persians} were more judgmental about how serious your relationship is, but it changed {depending on people I was hanging out with} and I was seeing people that was normal for them to date. {My own views} kind of changed over time and {dating} felt more normal, depending on the group I was hanging out with them. For a couple of years when I was hanging out with more conservative people, it was a taboo, so it was a big no-no, but hanging out with more liberal people, it changed. A lot of people {Iranians} who came a long time ago {to Canada}, their thoughts and ways of thinking stayed the same, as people used to think in Iran years ago [...].

Sheida further explained about how much discussion she had with her mother:

We never talked about having sex before marriage directly, but we always had discussions like, if you are with a guy, don't give him everything; that was the kind of conversation we never had a discussion with my dad.

Fereshteh, on the other hand, expressed that she shared much with her mother about her relationships:

My mother was really open and encouraged me to have relationships. My mom told me that this is how you grow and how you know yourself better. My dad was not there for this stuff, and he did not want to get involved. He doesn't want to know, and always tells me to discuss these things with my mother.

For Rojan, there were rules on the subject, however fluid:

[...] The other rules are not bringing boys home alone (laughing); there should be always a third person {when I hang out with a boy}. Also, no sex before marriage, no alcohol at home, no cigarettes, no drinks, not wearing bikinis {laughing}. I don't follow all the rules and my family probably does not know that I'm breaking some of these rules. Or my mom prefers to believe that I'm not breaking any of them. For some of these rules, my

mom knows I'm breaking them, but some of them she truly believes I respect, and I'm not gonna tell her otherwise and break her heart. At the end, they are a supportive family even if I break the rules. Even my dad tries to tell me a couple of times that if anything happens, just come and share it with us and we will be supportive. He told that a few times, so I think the consequences gonna pass, and they'll be supportive.

About discussing sexual practices with the family, Sheida ventured:

With my dad, definitely not. In high school they had parent sessions how to talk with kids, and I remember when my mom went to one of these sessions, she came back talking about STDs with me, so she was more open, but it was very awkward. I had similar views with my parents about dating, but then, as I grew up, it changed, but I was not trying to challenge them or bringing these discussions up. I never talked about this with my dad, but with my mom I told her, and she was very vocal about it, and she wanted to meet my dates, and to me, I think it was her way of protecting me.

Intimate relations and sexual practices were both themes that surfaced in the participants' narratives as a prickly issue to raise with the family. Those same themes are also reported to be problematic in some of the literature reviewed, such as that of Parnia Pajouhandeh. Only in two cases were the families of my participants open to discussing their daughter's decisions about sexual practice. In the four other cases, the findings were consistent with those in existing studies, with participants adhering to silence about their sexual practices. As such, in my study, the young women's sexual practices did not prove to be a source of contention in the family as the young women kept the subject of their actual practice to themselves; as far as the family understood, the daughter was adhering to family expectations in this matter—that is, no sexual practice. Keeping mum about their sexual practices seemed to be a conscious decision that most of the participants had taken; the narratives, however, do not indicate that this decision was taken out of fear or dread of the consequences should the family know. This finding runs contrary to the 'culture clash' theory that views the youth as either rebelling or silently adhering to their parents' directives, feeling they have no other recourse but to obey. Many of the participants expressed that though they felt they had a good relationship with their family, they did not think

it necessary as independent adults to share everything with their families. Furthermore, though the families may not necessarily be opposed to their daughters being sexually involved, they still did not provide space for a discussion on sexual practices as for many Iranian families, an open discussion of sexual practices is taboo.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore how young Iranian immigrant women negotiate their own space despite different cultural demands from school and family. In the following section, I will shed light on some of the narratives provided by participants.

Education And School Experience

From the narratives of participants, education and career aspirations proved to be one source of disagreement between the young Iranian immigrant women and their parents. Some of the participants felt pressure from both their families and the Iranian community to attend prestigious post-secondary institutions. Others felt their professional choices to be limited to becoming doctors or engineers, in accordance with the family's and community's values. Others yet saw their decision to complete post-secondary education as one driven by the norms and expectations within the Iranian community rather than one nascent of a personal desire to attend university. The pressure felt by some of the participants caused them discomfort or led to depression and anxiety, especially among those whose career interests lay elsewhere, in the arts or social sciences.

While it is true, as many participants rightly stated in their narratives, that there is a cultural component in Iranian families to propel their young into medicine or engineering as it brings honor to the family, existing literature supports the idea that part of this tendency is driven

by the financial insecurity that racialized immigrant parents experience in Canada (Creese et al. 1999, Beiser et al. 2000, Tyyska 2005 and 2006). The participant's narratives confirm the literature that addresses the pressure many immigrant parents place on their children regarding educational achievements and career aspirations; "appropriate" choices in those areas are the means to avoiding poverty. This outlook seems especially prevalent among those racialized immigrant parents who experienced institutional barriers to having their educational degrees qualified in Canada, and consequently lived through unemployment, underemployment, and deskilling—a process endured by many Iranian immigrant parents upon their migration to Canada (Creese et al. 1999, Beiser et al. 2000, Tyyska 2005 and 2006).

Further, in many of the participants' narratives, some of the conflicts were rooted in immigrant parents' lack of familiarity with the new environment in Canada and the worry as to what their children might have to endure in the future should they not follow the trodden path. As such, in many cases, immigrant parents' means of guaranteeing their children's future was for their children to follow what they, the parents, were familiar with. Particularly, in the areas of career choices and aspirations, many of the conflicts between parents and their youth arose from the immigrant parents' fears of how their children would support themselves financially if they did not attend major universities or if they did not follow careers in engineering or medicine—careers traditionally affiliated with financial security. Thus, disagreement among Iranian young immigrants and their parents over education and professional choices was a real and challenging experience for some of the participants. Influenced by various causes, the subject of this disagreement begs discussion not only in light of culturalized analysis but also in light of the reality of the immigrant parent families, their financial challenges, and their lack of familiarity with educational and career options in Canada—elements that drive those parents towards

conservatism and hesitance for their children to pursue careers in the arts or social sciences, or explore options outside the typical and normalized choices. It would be commendable for school counselors and university outreach workers to provide orientation sessions for immigrant parents regarding other possible positive career options for their children.

Discrimination At School

Some of the participants experienced indirect discrimination based on their accent, but they expressed that they either did not have the luxury of reflecting on what it was they were dealing with, given the challenges of immigration and discovering a new country, or that they were not sure they could call it discrimination. In other words, internalized racism within participants plays a considerable role here as many of the narratives reflect that there was no expectation on the part of the participants to be accepted upon their arrival to Vancouver, all the more that they lacked familiarity with the dominant culture and were different from it. Many of the participants noted racial segregation in the way students groups were formed, but to most of them, it was normal; if and when they did feel left out, they explained it as a factor of language barrier or of being new, which could rightly have been the case. The factor of race was generally absent in the participants' discussion of this issue. Only one participant, in her discussion of discrimination, mentioned that she was bullied by having been left out as the class was racially segregated, and there was no large Iranian community at her school. In other words, unconsciously some of the participants had the perception that for them to be accepted and integrated, they had to learn the new culture and the fashion trends to follow at school.

Many values such as agency, the freedom to explore, being more lenient about sexual practices were automatically affiliated with western and Canadian culture in the participants' narratives. Those participants who expressed having more agency and authority in their decisions

somehow expressed that they did not have conflicts with their parents because their parents were not typical Iranian parents, being more relaxed regarding those issues. In their narratives, most of the participants expressed acceptance of western cultural values without question. Though some did express that they were not quite comfortable with the dominant culture of alcohol consumption and partying patterns at university and high school, having other preferences, others were more vocally critical of women's limited freedom in dating affiliated with Iranian parents' culture. Regardless of which and how many of those values have their roots in 'western' culture, it remains that western culture is being normalized without being questioned. It is worth noting that while most of the participants have not necessarily accepted or allowed themselves to be influenced by the dominant culture in high school regarding dating and partying, they have not questioned or reflected on what it is to be Canadian either.

Family Relations And Sexual Practices

In their narratives, most of the participants concluded having reached a level of comfort in their relationship with their parents, whether through confrontation or through concealment. Most of the participants had created a space within which to live the culture and identity they had acquired, which can be a hybrid identity, not necessarily fitting into either a 'Canadian' culture or an 'Iranian' one specifically. More to the point, in opposition to the cultural clash theories that assume immigrant parent's identities and values to be static, unchanging, participants clearly expressed how within their immigrant families, identities are evolving and changing, albeit at different speeds, but reaching middle ground, nevertheless. As Sheida rightly stated, she and her family "met each other in the middle."

While some participants chose to be fully open with their families, others took the path of being selective, avoiding discussion of certain topics, maintaining silence as to their social life or

sexual practice. This, despite it being clear from most of their narratives that the door to communication regarding different issues remains open with the family, and despite their affirmation that even in the case of severe disagreement with the parents, severe consequences would not follow. Studies such as that of Sedghi (2007) shed light on this lack of openness, explaining that women's body and sexuality can be a taboo subject among Iranian people. This is clearly seen in the narratives of participants in which even when family values are not opposed to sexual practices, the participants themselves did not feel at ease discussing the subject with either family or friends. Other literature, a study by Arjmand and Ziari (2018) puts forth that concealment and confrontation are both methods practiced by Iranian women as a form of resistance to dominant and imposed social values, especially regarding their sexuality. This study by Arjmand and Ziari further problematizes the idea set forth by certain authors that a causal relationship exists between women's concealment practices and their lack of agency. The authors argue that in their study over 30 Iranian women showed that concealment was a more effective means for women to create their own space, one in which to put into effect their own values, without having to pay the social or psychological price for their decisions.

Concealment, however, can cause difficulties for young Iranian immigrant women who do not have a strong social support system, yet face ample immigration challenges, discrimination being the least. The study by Arjmand and Ziari (2018), for example, correctly points to the limitations that concealment can bring women in their relationships with their partners or in their psychological wellbeing. There is also the possibility that not sharing all aspects of their experiences and choices with their parents while not having any other support system can place extra pressure on some young female immigrants. Certain participant narratives provided show how it was the easier and safer option for them not to discuss every decision they

were making with their parents. In their case, the decision ran in their favor, but the situation can certainly not be the best option in other cases, proving problematic. Thus, concealment and staying silent can be decisions aligned with an individual's agency and best interest, but there is no one correct way. While Iranian women's concealment of their social and sexual practices has generally been seen through the limiting lens of their lack of agency, a sign of their oppression, concealment as seen above can be seen as a form of agency. Agency comes in different forms, however. To create social change, for example, or to bring awareness to a given topic, agency can lie in the decision to openly discuss the issues at hand, as avoiding them might not always be the best strategy for the individual.

Participants' narratives also indicate more disagreements and challenges in the relationship with the mother rather than with the father. On the surface, participants portrayed their mothers as being strict. Asked, however, how much of the responsibility of raising children and taking care of schooling and education fell to the mother in their family, they stated that their fathers were not necessarily as involved in this obligation as was the mother. None of the participants referred to their fathers as a figure of authority; for most of them, it was not very clear whether it was their mother or their father who defined the rules, but it seemed that for most, mother and father were in agreement. This said, the gender-based structure affiliated with each parent's responsibility is clearly present in those families as the mothers were generally responsible for raising the children. Additionally, though the fathers played a lesser role and exercised less influence in their daughters' decision making, such as their future career or dating issues, the participants added that mother in a way acted as mediator between them and father. In other words, mothers also take the extra responsibility of relating what is happening to the fathers. Yet not many of the participants could see how the greater tension existing between them

and their mothers rooted back to the greater responsibility the mothers took on through their gendered roles; instead, most of them interpreted the situation as one of tense mothers but more easygoing, relaxed fathers.

Unwritten rules and regulations also existed in the households of many of the participants. Most of the interviewees had a difficult time remembering the exact rules as many were not discussed; they were simply part of their growing-up experience. Among such rules were those regarding dating and relations with male friends; they were not actively enforced or reminded of by the parents, but the participants had internalized them to such an extent that they just knew they should not get involved in some practices. But for a few of the participants who were conscious of their choices and self-reflective, the participants obeyed those unwritten rules, self-enforcing them. They did not reflect on why they abided by them, nor did they ask whether they themselves had chosen the rules or whether they were family norms they followed without question.

As to the question of whether more freedom and authority was given to the male children in the family, the theme was not a recurring one in the narratives. Participants did however express there being more control and regulation over women's sexual practices, friendship, and travel. Most of the families were not explicitly vocal regarding the different regulation measures placed upon daughters and sons; clearly, however, the boys in many cases had more freedom than did the girls. According to the narratives, whereas the male siblings were more likely to break the rules and regulations set by the parents, the participants themselves were more concerned about keeping the family together after immigration, caring about how their parents felt, seeking to minimize their parent's challenges of migration, and so on. In other words, it seemed there was a component of gender difference sufficiently at play for the participants to

acknowledge their own rights and be vocal about it with their families.

Reflecting upon the literature on cultural clash and the acculturation gap between immigrant parents and their youth, the narratives provided by the participants in this study did not necessarily fall into this framework. While most of the participants expressed having experienced some level of challenge with their families over education, career aspirations, and sexual practices, they attributed disagreements with their parents as part of the intergenerational differences. Not many of the participants' narratives indicated fundamental cultural differences between their culture at home, what they were expected to follow, and what they were exposed to at school.

Summary

The aim of this study was to raise the voice of young Iranian immigrant women on how they created their own space despite cultural differences between home and school. Participants' narratives confirmed the shortcomings of both 'cultural clash' and 'social exclusion' theories as discussed in the literature review and highlighted the significance and usefulness of transnational feminism as an alternative that opens space for immigrant women to talk about their challenges.

To begin, the participants' narratives proved the limitations of the cultural clash framework. Most of the narratives revealed that there is no large or seemingly unbridgeable gap between 'Western' culture and 'Other' culture and that there is not a binary of Western culture versus 'Other' cultures that necessarily creates conflicts. Not one of the participants' stories was the same as that of another, and it was clear that Iranian families entertained varied thoughts as to the discussed themes and issues. A case in point is the source of disagreements between participants and their parents that could not yield to thorough analysis through the cultural lens. While some of the disagreements were rooted in cultural differences, others arose from the

parents' upbringing and class values, and others yet from such structural issues as the parent's insecurities regarding their children's future. Thus, to analyze the source of disagreement between the participants and their families, the culturalized lens was insufficient and reductionist. The narratives also proved how, contrary to the 'cultural clash' framework's assumption of a fixed, homogenized identity for immigrants, the relationship between immigrant parents and their children is not static, but changes over time and through negotiation, bringing better understanding between the generations. Additionally, the cultural clash framework did not address the discrimination and pressure participants sometimes experienced in their attempt to fit into the school culture and community and avoid social isolation. Furthermore, the narratives also indicate that these women did not feel victims of the culture or community as the cultural clash framework might project. Each participant chose a different way of creating her own space within her family culture. One took the option of open communication; another chose the path of compromise; another still avoided discussion altogether.

In comparison to the cultural clash framework, the 'social exclusion' framework brought to light in this study the role that power relations play between the different races and cultures. It shed light on how one culture is deemed more acceptable and attractive than another and how participants sometimes internalized the inferiority of their own culture and looked to 'Western' culture as the bearer of freedom and agency. Parnia, for example, describing the authority and freedom she is granted to talk about her sexual practices within the family, attributes the fact to her parents' experience of living abroad that must have made them amenable to listen to their daughter talking about her boyfriends. Yet as an entry point framework for the discussion of participants' narratives, like the cultural clash framework, social exclusion also proved insufficient in addressing participants' challenges. For example, while the social exclusion

approach can be useful in analysing and addressing the reasons contributing to disagreements between participant and parent over educational choices and sexual practices, and while it acknowledges that such conflict is not necessarily born of cultural differences but can also be structural, this framework in its makeup does not create space for racialized women to verbalize those disagreements. For example, the findings in this study regarding women's sexual practices were consistent with those in studies by such scholars as Oliva Espin (1999) and Haideh Moghisi (1999), particularly on the subject of Iranian immigrants in Canada. Those studies, however, view the Iranian's community's regulation of its women in general and its women's sexuality in particular as a means of preserving cultural roots and combating racism and marginalization experienced in the receiving society. In other words, those studies hold that it is a possibility for immigrants to become reluctant to change after immigration, for families to maintain authority over their women and daughters, viewing them as the conservation blocks of culture and tradition. As with the 'cultural clash' framework, the 'social exclusion' approach can deem relationships among family members static, and as with the cultural clash framework again, the social exclusion framework tells; it does not listen; it analyses from the outside, not from the inside. Clearly, issues such as women's regulation after immigration need to be discussed from within the community, but the social exclusion framework, as it stands, is not able to analyse these issues.

This is exactly where and why transnational feminism must be incorporated to create the space for racialized immigrant women to discuss their issues. It is important to acknowledge that as powerful strategies as they can be, concealment and avoidance of discussion can be quite harmful to young immigrants. It is not the aim of this study to prescribe or analyse which of compromise, concealment, or confrontation is the best path for a young woman to follow; the

concern here is that these issues need to be acknowledged, and there needs to be a space for discussion rather than simply stating how power relations between races are creating an illusion of conflict for racialized women. Transnational feminism is useful in that it moves away from essentialistic and culturalist lenses; it avoids white liberal feminism's one-fit-for-all models and acknowledges the challenges young racialized women endure, providing the room for these women to be heard. The pressure that young Iranian immigrant women experience in not being able to fully or at all decide their future careers, in not being able to openly talk about their sexual practices, in having to observe regulations placed on their freedoms and authority—regulations not placed on their male siblings—needs to be well noted and discussed. This is precisely where transnational feminism can jump into the picture.

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to explore how young Iranian immigrant women negotiate the different cultural expectations between home and school and how they create a space within which to express who they are. As discussed above, within the framework of 'cultural clash,' the predominant understanding of the relationship between racialized immigrant parents and their children is not only limited but is also largely problematic, particularly in its view of the rapport between immigrant parent and child as static and in its undermining of the power relations existing between cultures and races. As to the 'social exclusion' framework, while it rightly revolves around power relations, it cannot serve as the only lens for an insider to explore racialized women's lives.

As scholars such as Razack, Mojab, and Haque argue, culturalizing the differences within minority groups and analysing women's struggles through racialized and culturalized frameworks are problematic entry points when discussing women's issues within minority

groups. It is misleading to attribute the root cause of women's oppression and issues to certain cultures and project oppression as an inherent characteristic of those cultures. This said, transnational feminism can be a right approach to address the hopes, challenges, and struggles of women in minority groups, for though we need to acknowledge the danger of culturalizing and essentializing immigrant women's challenges to their culture, religion, and traditions, we also need to continue creating a space wherein racialized women can discuss their challenges.

Razack rightly states that racialized immigrant women are caught between a rock and a hard place in situating their feminism and their activism for women's rights and equality. In the current political climate, while racist discourses can well take over any criticism or discussion of women's issues arising from within minority groups, maintaining silence in the face of such discourses and not creating a space for racialized women to express themselves can reinforce racism, silence these women's voices and concerns, and lead to their further marginalization. I maintain that at no time should we stop condemning violence against women for fear that racist discourses might take over our discussion. For the sake of those who daily fight, those who have suffered, those who will suffer, or those who have lost their lives fighting, we need to continue making space for women to speak of the different forms of gender violence against them. If feminists and racialized women activists and scholars were to remain silent and hesitant to reclaim the safe space within which to discuss honour killings, for example, they will have confirmed the racist agenda of pushing back women of minorities and will have committed them to silence.

The findings in this study support the need for racialized women to speak. Whether academia chooses to picture racialized women as oppressed, victims of their own culture and religion, or whether it chooses to remain silent and ignorant in face of their issues, these young

immigrant women will continue evolving, creating, resisting, and negotiating their own space through their own means, challenging oppression from within and from without.

As for the limitations of this study, the sample of participants is small, specific to a middle-class financial section of the Iranian community residing in North and West Vancouver, British Columbia. The sample neither includes the minority religions of the Iranian community in Canada nor the different Iranian ethnic groups such as Turks and Arabs who can bring a very different perspective to this study. A similar research in a less affluent Iranian community might well yield findings wherein the cultural conflicts are less or more marked or manifest themselves differently. As such, the findings and discussion of this study need to be read in light of the small sample; they are not generalizable to the whole of the Iranian community, neither in British Columbia, nor indeed to Vancouver itself.

Appendix A: Ryerson Ethics Board Approval Letter

To: Sholeh Sharifi

Re: REB 2019-160: Exploring How Young Iranian Immigrant Women Navigate Their Cultural Differences of Home and School

Date: May 29, 2019

Dear Sholeh Sharifi,

The review of your protocol REB File REB 2019-160 is now complete. The project has been approved for a one year period. Please note that before proceeding with your project, compliance with other required University approvals/certifications, institutional requirements, or governmental authorizations may be required.

This approval may be extended after one year upon request. Please be advised that if the project is not renewed, approval will expire and no more research involving humans may take place. If this is a funded project, access to research funds may also be affected.

Please note that REB approval policies require that you adhere strictly to the protocol as last reviewed by the REB and that any modifications must be approved by the Board before they can be implemented. Adverse or unexpected events must be reported to the REB as soon as possible with an indication from the Principal Investigator as to how, in the view of the Principal Investigator, these events affect the continuation of the protocol.

Finally, if research subjects are in the care of a health facility, at a school, or other institution or community organization, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the ethical guidelines and approvals of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of any research.

Please quote your REB file number (REB 2019-160) on future correspondence.

Congratulations and best of luck in conducting your research.

Dr. Patrizia Albanese, PhD

Chair, Ryerson University Research Ethics Board

Appendix B: Recruitment Poster

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

Exploring How Young Iranian Immigrant Women Navigate Their Cultural Differences of Home and School

Do you self identify as an Iranian immigrant woman aged between 18-24?

Did you immigrate to Canada at the age of 10 or older?

And have you completed any part of your secondary education in Canada?

Do you currently live in Metro Vancouver?

Do you speak English fluently?

If you answered yes to all of the above questions, then you may want to be part of this research. This study will explore how young Iranian immigrant women navigate their cultural differences of home and school.

Your commitment will involve one individual interview for about 60-90 minutes. You will be asked to schedule a meeting to discuss and answer a series of questions about your immigration experience (i.e. How easy was making new friends in Canada) that will be audio-recorded with your permission. We can discuss the details of your commitment when we meet, in order to assist you with making a decision to participate.

This study is being conducted as partial fulfilment for my Master's degree in Immigration and Settlement Studies and your participation is completely voluntary.

If you are interested in participating or would like to learn more, please contact:

Sholeh Sharifi: sholeh.sharifi@ryerson.ca

Thank you for considering being a part of this study and contributing to academic knowledge about young Iranian immigrant women. I hope to hear from you and look forward to meeting you!

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the Ryerson University Research Ethics Board

REB Protocol (2019-160)

Appendix C: Interview Guide

Demographics

1. Name and email address
2. How old are you?
3. How long have you lived in Canada?
4. Do you live with family?

Education and School

5. What grade were you in when you started school in Canada?
6. What was it like being a student in the Canadian high school?
7. How did you feel you fit in at school in relation to others?
8. How did you feel of being an Iranian girl in your school?
 - Do you think it's harder for Iranian girls than for boys to "fit in"? It what respects?
9. Did you have disagreements with your parents about your education and future career choice?
 - How did it make you feel?
10. What motivated you to complete school? Why did you go on to college or university? What was your family's influence in your decision?
11. Did you ever feel discriminated against based on your skin colour, religion, culture, or ethnicity at school?

Family Relations

12. How is your relationship with your parents? How is your relationship with your siblings?
13. What are the main rules and expectations in your household? Who makes these rules? Do they differ if you are a boy or a girl? What happens if these rules are broken?

Peer Relationships and Friends

14. How was your relationship with your classmates?
15. How easy was making new friends?
16. Were your friends mostly Iranian or from other ethnicities?
17. Did your family set any conditions for your peer relationship?
18. Probe: For instance, tell me when you were expected to be home, what are some of the restrictions you have in having male friends or friends from different nationalities?

Intimate Relationships

19. How and what was meant by dating in your high school?
20. Did you feel pressured to be in a relationship? Why?

21. How do you feel about dating now? Have your views changed since then?
22. What were your parents' views and your views regarding premarital sex, dating and marriage?
23. Did you have discussions about dating and sexual relationship with your parents? Could you speak freely with your parents regarding these issues?
24. Did you have opposing views with your parents regarding intimate relationships? What did you argue about?
25. How did you resolve these disagreements and conflicts?

Dress code

26. -Did you dress differently at home and schools? Why?
27. -Was there any peer pressure for following any fashion trend?

Alcohol consumption/ dating

28. Did you feel a certain culture of dating/ alcohol/partying in your school? How did you feel about it? What were your parents' views on that?

References

- Abu-Lughod, L. (2013). *Do Muslim women need saving?* Harvard University Press.
- Anisef, P., & Kilbride, K. M. (Eds.). (2003). *Managing two worlds: The experiences and concerns of immigrant youth in Ontario*. Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Arjmand, R., & Ziari, M. (2018). Sexuality and concealment among Iranian young women. *Sexualities*.
- Bannerji, H., Mojab, S., & Whitehead, J. (2010). Of property and propriety: The role of gender and class in imperialism and nationalism: A decade later. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 30(2), 262-271.
- Berry, J. W., Phinney, J. S., Sam, D. L., & Vedder, P. (2006). Immigrant youth: Acculturation, identity, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology an International Review*, 55(3), 303-332.
- Bryman, A. (2011). *The SAGE handbook of leadership*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Coleman-Minahan, K., Gutierrez, Y., & Bull, S. (2018). Adult and community influence on sexual experience among first-, second-, and third-generation immigrant youth. *Youth & Society*, 44118.
- Conway, J. M. (2017). Troubling transnational feminism(s): Theorising activist praxis. *Feminist Theory*, 18(2), 205-227. doi:10.1177/1464700117700536
- Creswell, J. W., (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage publications.
- Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y. S., & Giardina, M. D. (2006). Disciplining qualitative research. *International journal of qualitative studies in education*, 19(6), 769-782.

- Desai, S., & Subramanian, S. (2000). *Colour, culture and dual consciousness: Issues identified by South Asian immigrant youth in the Greater Toronto Area*. Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA) and The South Asian Women's Centre (SAWC).
- Espin, O. (1999). *Women crossing boundaries: A psychology of immigration and transformations of sexuality*. Routledge.
- Ghosh, S. (2013). 'Am I a South Asian, really?' Constructing 'South Asians' in Canada and being South Asian in Toronto. *South Asian Diaspora*, 5(1), 35-55.
- Graneheim, U. H., Lundman, B., Medicinska fakulteten, Umeå universitet, & Institutionen för omvårdnad. (2004). Qualitative content analysis in nursing research: Concepts, procedures and measures to achieve trustworthiness. *Nurse Education Today*, 24(2), 105-112.
- Grewal, I., & Kaplan, C. (1994). *Scattered hegemonies: Postmodernity and transnational feminist practices*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Haque, E. (2010). Homegrown, Muslim and other: Tolerance, secularism and the limits of multiculturalism. *Social Identities*, 16(1), 79-101.
- Handa, A., & Canadian Publishers Collection. (2003). *Of silk saris and mini-skirts: South asian girls walk the tightrope of culture*. Toronto, Ont: Women's Press.
- Hanvey, L., & Kunz, J. L. (2000). *Immigrant Youth in Canada: A Research Report*. Canadian Council on Social Development.
- Hojati, Z. (2012). Marginalization and Leadership: Iranian Immigrant Women's Challenges in Canadian Academia and Society. *Journal of Global Citizenship & Equity Education*, 2(2), 41-61.

- Jamal, A. (2005). Transnational feminism as critical practice: A reading of feminist discourses in Pakistan. *Meridians*, 5(2), 57-82.
- Jiwani, Y. (2006). Racialized violence and girls and young women of colour. In Y. Jiwani, C. Khanlou, N., Koh, J. G., & Mill, C. (2008). Cultural identity and experiences of prejudice and discrimination of Afghan and Iranian immigrant youth. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 6(4), 494-513.
- Kwak, K. (2003). Adolescents and their parents: A review of intergenerational family relations for immigrant and non-immigrant families. *Human development*, 46(2-3), 115-136.
- Mahmood, S. (2006). Feminist theory, agency, and the liberatory subject: Some reflections on the Islamic revival in Egypt. *Temenos-Nordic Journal of Comparative Religion*, 42(1).
- Mohanty, C. T., Russo, A., Torres, L., & ACLS Humanities E-Book. (1991). Third world women and the politics of feminism. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Moghissi, H. (1999). Away from home: Iranian women, displacement cultural resistance and change. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 30(2), 207-217.
- Mojab, S., & Hassanpour, A. (2003). The Politics and Culture of "Honour Killing": The Murder of Fadime Şahindal. *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice*, 56-70.
- Pajouhandeh, P. (2004). *Living between two cultures: The acculturation experiences of young Iranian immigrant women in Canada*
- Rasmi, S., Daly, T. M., & Chuang, S. S. (2014). Intergenerational conflict management in immigrant Arab Canadian families. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 45(7), 1124-1144.

- Razack, S. (2000). *Looking white people in the eye: Gender, race, and culture in courtrooms and classrooms*. University of Toronto Press.
- Robinson, O. C. (2014). Sampling in interview-based qualitative research: A theoretical and practical guide. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 11(1), 25-41.
- Sadeghi, S. (2008). Gender, culture and learning: Iranian immigrant women in Canadian higher education. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 27(2), 217;234;-234.
- Sepehri, S. (2014). *Self-conscious emotions activated in the bicultural identity formation of Iranian immigrants* (Doctoral dissertation, The Wright Institute).
- Shahsiah, S. (2006). *Identity, identification, and racialisation: Immigrant youth in the Canadian context*. CERIS-The Ontario Metropolis Centre.
- Statistics Canada. 2017. Vancouver [Census metropolitan area], British Columbia and British Columbia [Province] (table). Census Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017.
- <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>
- Steenbergen, & C. Mitchell (Eds.), *Girlhood: Redefining the limits*. Montreal: Black Rose Books.
- Szapocznik, J., Santisteban, D., Kurtines, W., Perez-Vidal, A., & Hervis, O. (1984). Bicultural effectiveness training: A treatment intervention for enhancing intercultural adjustment in Cuban American families. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 6(4), 317-344.
- Telzer, E. H. (2010). Expanding the acculturation gap-distress model: An integrative review of research. *Human Development*, 53(6), 313-340.
- Tong, V. M., Huang, C. W., & McIntyre, T. (2006). Promoting a positive cross-cultural identity: Reaching immigrant students. *Reclaiming children and youth*, 14(4), 203.

- Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight "big-tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10), 837.
- Tyyska, V. (2003). "Solidarity and Conflict: Teen-Parent Relationships in Iranian Immigrant Families in Toronto." In *Voices. Essays on Canadian families* (2nd edition). Edited by M. Lynn. Toronto: Nelson Canada
- Tyyska, V. (2010). Parents and teens in immigrant families: Cultural influences and material pressures. *Canadian journal of public health. Revue canadienne de santé publique*, 102(3), 215-9.
- Rasmi, S., Daly, T. M., & Chuang, S. S. (2014). Intergenerational conflict management in immigrant Arab Canadian families. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 45(7), 1124-1144.
- Shahsiah, S. (2006). Identity, identification, and racialisation: Immigrant youth in the Canadian context. CERIS-The Ontario Metropolis Centre.
- Yazdi, P. L. (2013). *Citizenship, Belonging, Meaning and Identity: a case study of first-generation Iranian immigrants in Vancouver* (Doctoral dissertation, Arts & Social Sciences: Department of Sociology and Anthropology).