“TOO WHITE”: MODEL MINORITY COUNTER-STORIES IN CANADIAN INSTITUTE(S)
OF HIGHER EDUCATION

by

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ABSTRACT

"Too White": Model Minority counter-stories in Canadian institute of higher education

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The Model Minority Myth (MMM) is a discursive trait of Asianness in the North American context. It defines East Asian identity as a hardworking and a resilient group despite experiencing discrimination. Marginality in a positive stereotype seems like an oxymoron, however when the MMM is the *only* representation of the Asian community, it robs individuality of Asians who are excluded from this representation. Historically, the monolithic representation of the Asian diaspora with the MMM was used as a hegemonic tool to oppress racialized groups, including other Asians to legitimize whiteness. In this MRP, narratives of three participants provided counter stories to erode monolithic stories of Asians. Furthermore, it provided the discursive space to have conversations about Asianness with the participants.

Keywords

model minority, Asianness, race, gender, narrative approach, counter-story

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to those who are in search of themselves and continuously searching.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The model minority myth (MMM) originated in America to describe the Japanese diaspora in the 60's (Petersen, 1966). Today the MMM has expanded as a dominant monolithic identity for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) in research, policy and practice (Poon, Squire, Kodama, Byrd, Chan, Manzano, Furr & Bishundat, 2016; Sakamoto, Takei & Woo, 2012). The MMM describes the Asian community, specifically East Asians, as a successful, hardworking and law-abiding ethnic minority despite experiencing discrimination and oppression (Chae, 2004; Chao, Chiu & Lee, 2010; Ho, 2014; Pon, 2000; Poon et al., 2016).

It is argued the MMM is used as a hegemonic tool that undercuts the claims of systemic racism made by other racialized populations, specifically as a way to invalidate historical oppression of Blacks in American Society (Pon, 2000; Poon et al., 2016). According to Pon (2000), the civil rights movement in the 1960s exposed that the notion of equality in the American context excluded anyone who was non-white. Coincidentally, the MMM surfaced during the time when there was tremendous social uprising as a means of managing the challenges in citizenship by civil rights activists (Pon, 2000) and white resistance to these civil rights changes (Ray, Randolph, Underhill & Luke, 2017). This was done by highlighting the direct relationship of achievement gap to inferior cultural values of African Americans which would justify further subordination of Blacks (Bell, 1995; Love, 2004; Pon, 2000; Poon et al., 2016).

The significance of this research is founded on the opportunities for individuals to have discursive control over their own stories and form new identities beyond the MMM. This research observes the MMM as a diasporic identity forced onto the East Asian community that is expressed through institutions. Today, the site of the expression of the MMM and discrimination

of East Asian Canadians can be observed empirically in institutes of higher education. Concurrently, it is also the site of counter-MMM (Chae 2004; Poon et al., 2016). Poon et al. (2002) argue that the MMM has been used in “racial wedge politics” (p. 469) in support of colorblind ideologies that lead to oppressive institutional outcomes for African Americans. One contemporary example of how the MMM is used as a racial wedge is the ongoing Harvard affirmative action lawsuit started in 2018. This lawsuit was filed by Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA) orchestrated by Edward Blum, an anti-affirmative action advocate (CBC Radio, 2018). He argued that Asian-Americans students are at a disadvantage in Harvard admissions because of their race, citing that Asians achieve higher test scores and grades than other racial minorities but are admitted at a lower rate in comparison (CBC Radio, 2018). Edward Blum and the lawsuit allege that Harvard violated the Civil Rights Act by discriminating against Asian Americans in admissions through the enforcing of affirmative action.

In the Canadian context, within the dominant discourse of diversity, essentialization of the Asian diaspora manifests in institutions and can be empirically observed in post-secondary education. Historically, America and Canada have had similar relationships with East Asians; there were exclusionary laws against the Chinese despite their critical role in completing the railroads that connected the fledgling nations, North American born Japanese were placed in internment camps during WWII, the perpetuation of the “Yellow Peril” discourse, hyper selectivity for highly educated populations in contemporary immigration (Coloma, 2013; Lee & Zhou, 2017) and the surveillance on Asians in institutions of higher learning (Pon, 2000). Currently, the anti-Asian premise continues to manifest in post-secondary education in monolithic ways (Coloma, 2013; Pon, 2000). The MMM was adopted in Canada and promulgated by Canadian journalists who drew on American content throughout the 1980s and

1990s (Pon, 2000). For example, the ongoing model minority premise existed in Canada for over three decades (Coloma, 2013; Pon, 2000; Wong & Guo, 2018).

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is the lens this research uses to examine the MMM. CRT originated from a body of work by legal scholars that were primarily Black and committed ideologically to struggle against institutional racism (Bell, 1995). CRT has been widely used by non-Black scholars to create their own body of literature relevant to their own diasporic community (Delgado, Stefancic & Harris, 2017). Subsequently, CRT can be used to examine educational institutions, organizational process within these institutions and outcomes that legitimize whiteness (Ray, Randolph, Underhill & Luke, 2017) affect the Asian diaspora.

The objective of the research is creating a discursive space and opportunities to reframe narratives in “transgressive ways” (McKenzie-Mohr & Lafranz, 2017) to chip away at the monolithic view of Asians in the dominant discourse. Counter-storytelling is a CRT methodology of storytelling grounded in real life experiences that come from the margins (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). It is also a tool to analyze and challenge stories that legitimize the dominant discourse (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). This research will use counter-storying methodology as it is consistent with CRT: Counter-storying highlights first person narratives, storytelling and “the unapologetic use of creativity” (Bell 1995, p. 899). For example, Love (2004) uses CRT methodology of counter-storying to examine, analyze and chip away at the deficit theorizing in achievement gap when it comes to academic differences between African American children and White children. Following this tradition, this research aims to use counter-stories grounded in real life experiences of Asian post-secondary students to create resistive stories against the monolithic view of Asians as model minorities. There are several points of entry where the discourse can be chipped away through counter-stories: 1) Asian racial

ontology that legitimize subordination of other racialized bodies, especially Blacks 2) emphasis of ‘negative action’ (Liu, 2008) 3) Redefining Asianness that is inclusive of the model minority identity but not being defined by it.

There is a recurring narrative in history where Asians play a role in legitimizing whiteness and are complicit in the subordination of the other. Contrary to popular belief that the MMM is a positive stereotype, some scholars believe it is a hegemonic tool of domination (Noh, 2018; Poon et al., 2016) as the very notion of the minority group that is labeled as a “model” implies comparison (Jiménez & Horowitz, 2015). The MMM essentializes the Asian diaspora, imposes monolithic identity on Asians that was not named by the community, then uses this identity in the dominant discourse as a hegemonic tool to legitimize subordination of other racialized groups. For example, Petersen’s New York Times article (1966) that introduced the concept of the model minority, started with a shift in discourse and the heralding of Japanese immigrants from enemy combatants from WWII to the model minority. This legitimization happened during the Civil Rights Movement and some scholars argue it was an attempt to politically erode the rights that were gained primarily by African Americans (Coloma, 2013; Pon, 2000; Poon et al., 2016). Today, figures like Edward Blum legitimizes the experiences of some Asian Americans in higher education while short changing the beneficiaries of affirmative action, this includes other Asians.

Secondly, Liu (2008) argues that “negative action” should be the focus for the exclusion of Asian experiences in higher education. Negative action is defined as “the unfavourable treatment of Asian Americans relative to Whites” (Liu, 2008, p. 397). For example, Edward Blum’s claim of preferential admission of racialized candidates due to affirmative action can be reframed to negative action explanation (Liu, 2008). Negative action in this example are legacy

admissions (in Harvard) who are mostly White candidates. This outcome contributes to the exclusionary reality that limits and that discriminate against Asians (Liu, 2008). There is clear evidence of legacy of preferential treatment in university admissions in America. For example, according to the admissions statistics from The Harvard Crimson, student run non-profit newspaper, legacy applicants are largely White and are five times more likely to be accepted than legacy students in their class of 2022 (Chaidez & Zwickel, n.d.). This reframing of the discourse shifts the conversation to the subordination of Asians in institutions of higher learning instead of being co-opted by a colour-blind anti-affirmative action pundit.

In the Canadian context, there seems to be deafening silence regarding whiteness that permeates school institutions but there is enormous preoccupation of Asians taking up class space. For example, Maclean's magazine asserted that there is an overrepresentation of Asians in universities with a congratulatory tone towards 'meritocratic' Canadian universities (Coloma, 2013) while implicitly accusing Asian students for not being part of the diversity discourse and participating in school activities beyond academics. The focal point is solely on the Asian students despite normalizing white mediocrity in academic setting and essentialization of White students as non-academic. Furthermore, there is missing context as "Too Asian" article came out in a period when the government was accepting historically high numbers of Asian economic immigrants that were used to boost the Canadian economy (Coloma, 2013). Maclean's magazine attempts to gaslight Asian academic success into socio-emotional failures through negative action (Liu, 2008). Furthermore, Liu (2008) argues that the negative action taken against Asians in institute of higher learning perpetuates what Coloma (2013) calls "illusion of meritocracy" that erases White preferential treatment throughout history in the Canadian context.

Thirdly, the MMM is primarily constructed as being buttressed by culture rooted in Confucianism. The current literature on model minority discourse is reflective of the cultural hegemony rooted in Western epistemological positions; Asian academics are often in emulation of these epistemologies and it draws theoretical positions incepted by Black scholars to position themselves in academic discourse in social sciences. There needs to be an expansion on the reductive definition of culture in research. While it can be argued that the emphasis on post-secondary education in the Asian diaspora is in part cultural, Pon (2000) argues the expression of Confucianism is oppressive if they are expressed in stereotypical ways like the MMM. For example, some Asian ethnic groups with Confucian underpinnings (Hmong, Laotian and Cambodians), which assumes high socio-economic outcomes, have one of the highest dropout rates in America (Lee & Zhou, 2017). This results in the lack of discursive space to have a conversation about supporting Asians in redistributive policies or in discussions in marginalization.

This Major Research Paper (MRP) attempts to create a discursive resistance against the MMM and how the Asian diaspora in Canada respond to this master narrative in the institution of higher education. It argues that the institution of higher learning externally maintains this monolithic view on Asians and explores how the MMM interacts with the intersection of the participant's social identities. It aims to reveal what the individuals identifying with the Asian diaspora have been doing to analyze, chip away, assert personal narratives that are subordinated by the dominant discourse of the MMM. Lastly, this work aims to expand on the definition of Asianness beyond the context of the MMM. For this MRP, acknowledging the diversity of the Asian diaspora, Asian and East Asian will be used interchangeably.

Positionality

The significance of this research comes from my own relationship to whiteness that imposes a monolithic identity to the Asian diaspora in the form of the MMM. Rowe and Malhortra (2017) argue that whiteness is not exclusive to White people. Moreover, with “appropriate investments in whiteness,” Tuck and Yang (2012, p. 17) assert that immigrants can be invited to be a settler or be relegated to being illegal. As an East Asian male who lived most of his life in Canada, I continue to be complicit in maintaining the white hegemony because I am working from a framework of social work built on whiteness. I am a part of a community that is complicit in maintaining this hegemony by internalizing anti-Asian racism and reproducing institutional racism towards other racialized peoples that are “lower” in the race hierarchy. However, we internalize the MMM and are held hostage by whiteness; we survive by legitimizing whiteness and one way we do this is by maintaining institutions of higher education.

My whiteness is in flux as I am aware that the judge and jury on my whiteness is determined by Whites; my inclusion is conditional. As an East Asian person, I live in a perpetual state of un/wanted (Coloma, 2013); I am in demand but resented, I approach whiteness but can not be White, I am complicit in oppression but oppressed and I call Canada my home, but I may not be seen as Canadian. This liminality is exemplified in the “Too Asian” controversy; the Maclean’s magazine embodied an anti-Asian sentiment in Canada in a time when the federal government was accepting historically high number of Asian economic immigrants to bolster the economy (Coloma, 2013). Coincidentally, that is where it inspired the name of this MRP.

Heron (2005) argues that the analysis of subjectivity and positionality is a starting place for resisting reproduction of oppression. However, Heron (2005) implicitly assumes the self is axiomatically the individual, where it is the starting point for a social worker to reveal and resist

the reproduction of oppression (or become complicit). In Confucian philosophy, the self is framed in terms of interconnectedness and identity is based on relations (Liu, 2017), the self is in the periphery of the person's identity. This research is important because the model minority myth is imposed on Asian self-identity individually and a new way is needed to look at Asian identity and its relations to each other; merely locating ourselves won't interrupt or "intervene in everyday understandings of race and racism" (Haig-Brown, 2009, p. 13). Furthermore, the purpose is not to say that the MMM does not represent the East Asian diaspora in North America, but it is not the *only* story that represents the East Asian community in Canada. The struggle here is the struggle of identity and meaning making when the people being defined do not have control over it.

Redefining Asianness through counter-stories that minimize the model minority identity is a place for narrative resistance. Challenging the dominant discourse of the MMM may not look like chipping this identity away but adding new identities or removing it altogether. This research aims to reveal subordinated stories as a form of resistance.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Overall, paradigmatic stances in the study of the MMM is dominated by positivist quantitative research focusing on aggregated outcomes of sample Asian subgroups and sometimes includes the Pacific Islanders (Alvarez, Juang & Liang, 2006; Boyd & Tian, 2016; Chen & Fouad, 2013; Henfield et al., 2014; Lorenzo et al., 2000; Sakamoto et al., 2012; Whaley & Noel, 2013; Xie & Goyette, 2003). Qualitative research on model minority myth coming from the lived experiences of the participants (Chae 2004; Muses, 2008; Noh, 2018; Strayhorn, 2014) remains scarce, and it is even rarer to have researchers position themselves in their research (Chae 2004; Henfield et al., 2014).

Current studies on the MMM highlight the success of the Asian diaspora in educational institutions (Alvarez, Juang & Liang, 2006; Boyd & Tian, 2016; Chen & Fouad, 2013; Coloma, 2013; Henfield et al., 2014; Lorenzo et al., 2000; Noh, 2018; Sakamoto et al., 2012; Whaley & Noel, 2013; Xie & Goyette, 2003; Pon, 2000; Poon et al., 2016). Some researchers imply Asian ‘privilege’ drawing direct relationship between race, culture and educational attainment (Boyd & Tian, 2016; Sakamoto et al., 2012), while the others critique racial progress of Asians as they are complicit and maintain the hegemonic order of whiteness (Coloma, 2013; Noh, 2018; Pon, 2000; Poon et al., 2016). Literature pertaining to the model minority myth has a major theme which is focused on educational achievement (over education). While other literature highlights the limitations of the MMM under the subheading: monolithic cultural identity and the buffer race.

Educational Achievement

Model minority discourse in the American context dominates literature on educational achievement of the Asian diaspora while there is scarcity in the Canadian context (Boyd & Tian, 2016; Ho, 2014; Pon, 2000). American research pivots on high educational achievement in the

Asian diaspora based on the overeducation view (Boyd & Tian, 2016; Sakamoto et al., 2012).

The term describes Asians must gain higher educational achievement than Whites to seek socioeconomic parity (Sakamoto et al., 2012). One empirical research example is Xie and Goyette (2003), who concluded that Asians Americans seek credential acquisition among occupations with highest pay to succeed as immigrants. In Canadian context, Boyd and Tian (2016) analyzes the 2011 Canadian National Household Survey (NHS) to explore educational, earnings and occupational attainment of East Asian immigrants in Canada. In their research, Boyd and Tian (2016) compared 1.5 (those who were raised in the Western context but born outside of Western countries) and second-generation East Asian Canadians with White third-plus generation and they found that, consistent to the American context, East Asians have higher educational attainment and equivalent labour market success in comparison to the third generation Whites.

There is a dearth of research on the student experiences of model minority myth (Chae 2004; Henfield, Woo, Lin & Rauch, 2014; Suyemoto, Kim, Tanabe, Tawa & Day, 2009). While it is largely assumed that the pressure to succeed academically comes predominantly from parents (Boyd & Tian, 2016; Lorenzo, Frost & Reinherz, 2000), there are external pressures that comes from classroom environment even in mostly White neighbourhoods (Museus, 2008; Noh 2018). For example, Museus (2008) describes a Korean American college student experience as she is held at extremely high standards in predominantly White classroom environments and within her own community. Moreover, the desire to transcend the model minority stereotype is experienced by participants in Chae's (2004) qualitative study; his interview participants (Korean Americans) experienced that they were unable to challenge the way their educators saw

them. Sometimes they would perpetuate ‘negative behaviours’ or self-segregation as resistance (Chae; 2004; Henfield, Woo, Lin & Rauch, 2014).

Educational achievement comes at a sacrifice to emotional and social well-being according to literature. Older youths (Ages 18-21; n = 102) in Lorenzo et al. (2000), did well academically but report higher depressive symptoms, anxiety, social isolation, self-segregation, exclusion, experience pressure to succeed, and have these experiences ignored or minimized by educators (Musesus, 2008). Furthermore, Henfield et al. (2014) showed in their qualitative study that high achieving Asian American students struggle to form positive relationships with other Asians as they saw their peers as competition.

Post-secondary experiences and educational achievements of the Asian diaspora in literature are mostly in comparison to Whites. Sakamoto et al. (2012) contends that direct comparison between native-born whites and foreign-born Asians does not take into consideration the net influence of immigration - language barriers, labour market opportunities and other forms of marginalization. Concurrently, in Boyd and Tian’s (2016) study on 1.5 and 2nd generation East Asian Canadians concluded that East Asians have higher educational and equivalent earning in comparison to White third-plus generation. Xie and Goyette (2003) explains for this focus on higher education as Asian Americans making conscious decisions to focus on pursuing high status occupations to make up for any disadvantages (in comparison to Whites) as newcomers by acquiring academic credentials.

Limitation of the MMM: Monolithic Cultural Identity

Literature on the MMM critiques the essentialization of orientalist notions of Asians into a monolithic group (Ho, 2014; Pon, 2000). Furthermore, the Asian diaspora continues to be misrepresented as a homogenized group in research and the outcomes for the populations can be

inferred but requires further study (Teranishi, Ceja, Antonio, Allen & McDonough, 2004). For example, Teranishi et al. (2004) concludes that debate over equitable access to post-secondary education do not include Asians and Pacific Islanders as they are homogenized in the Confucian culture and seen as successfully “outwhiting the Whites” (p. 527). This is without consideration that different subgroups or consideration for data - Hmong, Laotian and Cambodians, that have the same Confucian cultural foundation have different educational outcomes (Lee & Zhou, 2016). Furthermore, Boyd and Tian (2016) reflects on the diversity among children from East Asian background in their study due to the timing of parental migration and characteristics; there are differences in educational attainment, occupation and earning that are different within East Asian diaspora and between 1.5 generation and second-generation children. Furthermore, Sakamoto et al. (2012) critique the model minority myth literature in America as it is not representative of the second-generation Asian Americans due to the net influences of immigration on outcomes for occupation.

In the Canadian context, while some Asians do well, those who identify with the Asian community that struggle remain invisible (Ho, 2014) and their wide range of educational outcomes unconsidered. Like the American counterparts, Canadian Asians experience collective invisibility despite being constituted as the largest migrant group in Canada. In 2011, 45% of foreign-born population in Canada were from Asian countries and 32% of this group were from East Asia due to massive changes in geopolitics post-World War II (Boyd & Tian, 2016). Proportionately, there are three times more Asian people that live in Canada (15% of the total population) than in America (5.8%) (Ho, 2014). According to the 2016 Canadian census data shows that, Chinese, Korean and Japanese population in Toronto represent over 24% of visible minority population in Toronto (Statistics Canada, 2016). This overrepresentation has

contributed to the ongoing perception that there are too many Asians in the Canadian post-secondary education (Coloma, 2013; Ho, 2014; Wong & Guo, 2018) despite Canada's hyper selective immigration system that allowed highly educated people to enter the country (Coloma, 2013).

There are few studies that explore the intersection of model minority discourse with other social identities like gender and sexuality. Noh's (2018) article highlights the data that Asian Americans and Pacific Islander (AAPI) women have the second highest suicide rate (Ages 20-69) in America, yet there is little information and research. Noh's (2018) female participants noted that the pressures of the MMM, such as the emphasis on socioeconomic success, were contributing factors to their suicidal ideations. Strayhorn (2014), explores how Korean gay men experience the model minority myth. For gay Korean men in America, Strayhorn (2014) found that the college space was a place to accept their gay identity and be by themselves from lives of "quiet desperation" (p. 589). However, all participants reported experience of subtle and overt racism from the gay community, for example, gay white men making slanted eye gestures (Strayhorn, 2014). Furthermore, they experience homophobia from the Korean community on campus (Strayhorn, 2014).

Limitation of the MMM: The Buffer Race

Ho (2014) describe that the MMM has contradictory themes. First, is that Asians Americans managed, through determination and hard work, to transcend racism and oppression. Simultaneously, they are conformists and passive due to their respect for authority (Ho, 2014). Furthermore, some authors highlight the discussion of the paradoxical position of Asians as they occupy and maintain a racial hierarchy near whiteness while simultaneously seen as threats to whiteness (Coloma, 2013; Pon, 2000). For example, the anti-Asian sentiment in education

(Coloma, 2013; Ho, 2014; Pon, 2000; Poon et al., 2016; Wong & Guo, 2018) and the constant heralding of Asians as the model minority (Chae, 2004; Chao, Chiu & Lee, 2010; Ho, 2014; Pon, 2000; Poon et al., 2016; Sakamoto, Takei & Woo, 2012) occurs simultaneously. This liminal position as a group in our “multicultural” society is maintained by what Bhabha (1994) in Pon (2000) describes as a “double narrative movement” where the model minority discourse allows the state to denounce racism while simultaneously downplaying it; where the implicit message is individual work ethic is a greater predictor of success than on race and racism. According to Poon et al. (2016), in a review of model minority literature in higher education, argue that Asians were made into a racial wedge in politics. Noh (2018) argues that the model minority myth is used as an ideological and hegemonic device to shift attention away from racial inequality and simultaneously set standards of behaviour for minorities. Furthermore, monolithic claims of Asians as a successful racialized group in a discourse of meritocracy suppresses claims of systemic racism made by other racialized groups, especially for Blacks (Pon, 2000; Poon et al., 2016).

Scholarship on the model minority discourse originates from different epistemologies rooted in psychology, sociology, anthropology and social work mostly in the American context (Poon et al., 2016; Sakamoto et al., 2012). It is important to draw from diverse intellectual positions in construction of meaning prior to privileging the knowledge of participants to resist against a single “appropriate” epistemology (Hunter, 2002) however, majority of the scholarship privileges positivist epistemology (Alvarez, Juang & Liang, 2006; Chen & Fouad, 2013; Henfield et al., 2014; Lorenzo et al., 2000; Sakamoto et al., 2012; Whaley & Noel, 2013; Xie & Goyette, 2003). Furthermore, current overview of race epistemologies stated in Hunter (2002) are not inclusive of the experiences of the Asian population in the American/Canadian context.

For example, current epistemologies of race do not account for the liminality of the Asian diaspora and their status of being un/wanted (Coloma, 2013). Furthermore, this highlights the binary oppositions in discourse that is deeply rooted in Western epistemologies; the discussion of the current research on the MMM occurs outside the Black-white dichotomy (Chao, Chiu & Lee, 2010; Hunter, 2002).

Lastly, the scholarship is limited in a way that the focus on anti-Asian sentiments in the dominant discourse has been recurring since the inception of the MMM. For example, Maclean's magazine published an article named "Too Asian" that was renamed "Too Asian?" then to "The enrollment controversy" (Coloma, 2013; Findlay & Köhler, 2010) that discusses the overrepresentation of Asian students on Canadian universities and perpetuates the belief that Asians are taking over education. According to Wong and Guo (2018) this ongoing anti-Asian premise existed in Canada since 1979 when CTV's W5 program entitled "Campus Giveaway" spoke of the Asian overrepresentation in education. Coloma (2013) explains that this "us vs. them" binary is an attempt to normalize whiteness and maintain the racial hierarchy.

This study aims to fill the existing gaps in knowledge by demonstrating that the MMM is imposed externally by the dominant discourse through stereotyped characterizations of success. That, the given context positions Asians in a racial hierarchy that legitimizes whiteness and through stories individuals can have an opportunity to chip away at the monolithic view of Asians. Two guiding questions are: In what ways do Asians define themselves beyond the MMM? and how do they navigate the imposition of the MMM on their identities?

CHAPTER 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Common theoretical framework that Asian scholars use to frame the MMM is the critical race theory (CRT), which was primarily envisioned by Black scholars (Love, 2004; Noh, 2018; Poon et al., 2016; Ray et al., 2017;). This framework explains that the MMM is ultimately used as a hegemonic tool for 1) creating a wedge between races on the racial hierarchy (Noh, 2018; Poon et al., 2016) and 2) invalidating or disputing the struggles of Black people while preserving whiteness as the norm (Love, 2004; Noh, 2018; Poon et al., 2016). Furthermore, CRT transposes onto the Middleman Minority thesis, which Wong (1985) frames as an attempt to segregate East Asians from the White-Black binary. Concurrently, it can be inferred from Hunter (2002) that Asians are relatively invisible in race epistemologies. For this MRP, CRT and the Middleman minority thesis (Poon et al., 2016; Wong, 1985) are the primary lens to examine, analyze and challenge the MMM.

CRT begins with the axiom that “racism is normal” (p. 7) (Ladson-Billings, 1998). CRT argues that race and racism play fundamental roles in “structuring inequality and relationships of power” (Poon et al., 2016, p. 472). CRT aims to unveil how whiteness maintains racial inequalities (Love, 2004; Ray et al., 2017). According to Love (2004), there are three underlying tenets of CRT that produce relationships of domination and subordination: 1) a great deal of our reality is socially constructed 2) dominant realities silence subordinated groups 3) giving voice to the reality of subordinated groups corrodes dominant groups’ power over being able to name the reality of others. Lastly, CRT is a scholarly resistance to the subtle forms of racism manifesting in institutions and policy that rolled back the advances of the civil rights era that continues today (Delgado, Stefancic & Harris, 2017).

CRT ultimately speaks to race relationships that structurally produce and reproduce subordination. Furthermore, tools like counter-stories in CRT challenges the traditional claims of liberalism in our society (Bell, 1995). In the context of the AAPI and institutions of higher education, CRT allows for the comprehensive understanding of how racism operates in education despite aggregated socioeconomic data suggesting there is parity (in comparison to Whites) (Poon et al., 2016). To deconstruct how this racial hegemony is produced and stratified, CRT, according to Poon et al. (2016), is one of the approaches to conduct these examinations critically.

CRT challenges any claim that “camouflages for the self-interest of dominant groups” (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002, p. 170) and is suspicious of the basis of liberalism (Bell, 1995). For example, stances of color-blindness according to Love (2004) are “a way to insist that race does not matter and to dispute and deny the experience of African Americans, while preserving the privilege of White people to be surprised when race is mentioned” (Love, 2004, p. 230). CRT theorists argue that any master narratives are incomplete if subordinated stories are not included (Love, 2004). Thus, this MRP challenges the monolithic views of Asians in institutions of higher education, using CRT lens to analyze, examine and challenge claim of meritocracy and multiculturalism, which is specific to the Canadian context that acts to subordinate the Asian diaspora.

In the context of CRT in education, whiteness becomes a standard of measurement to which humanness is defined for racialized bodies. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that Asians have enjoyed white proximity and have internalized whiteness. According to a meta-analysis by Rowe and Malhotra (2007), “whiteness is a process we all negotiate” (p. 272) which occurs in mundane ways through “conformity, assimilation, coercion, violence, internalization,

socialization, desire, fear, care, love, hate, and other social forces” (Tokyosaki, 2015, p. 247).

This speaks to how Asian diaspora is complicit in maintaining whiteness in the race hierarchy and white supremacy. Without naming and resisting Asian participation in securing and maintaining white hegemony in exchange for the material outcomes, the Asian diaspora would be doomed to perpetuate it further.

Ahmed in McElhinny (2016) argues that the diversity discourse has been used to replace equity, anti-racism and other nodes of social justice work. The MMM converges with the diversity discourse (i.e. multiculturalism) in Canada to maintain monolithic views of the East Asian population and dismisses challenges to the status quo (Pon, 2000). Furthermore, discourse of diversity reproduces the very racism it says it fights (Pon, 2000). Celebration of diversity in a conflated way perpetuates racism in the form of legitimizing whiteness as the racial standard and the subsequent exclusion of non-Whites (Pon, 2000). Furthermore, the multicultural paradigm conflates race with ethnicity and culture; where structural barriers of race experienced by students are interpreted as cultural differences (Pon, 2000). For example, the implicit message of the “Too Asian” Maclean’s article highlights the ‘meritocratic’ post-secondary system that made Asians successful, largely due to the cultural acceptance of multiculturalism without mentioning this same framework disadvantages Blacks and other racialized bodies in Canada (Coloma, 2013).

CRT critically examines the idea of racial progress for the Black population (Rey et al., 2017) but it can be used to transpose on to the experiences of the Asian diaspora. The MMM coalesces with the racial progress discourse as it is used as a strawman justification to subordinate the other who are not seen as achieving well in comparison to the Whites. Furthermore, it justifies the limiting political, civic voice of Asians and in redistribution schemes

as they are perceived to be doing well (Poon et al., 2016). The argument for the MMM is primarily culture based; When the term model minority was first introduced in 1966 by Petersen, he attributed the Japanese social-economic success as cultural or because they were based on strong Confucian values that paralleled the Protestant work ethic (Petersen, 1966). If the primary reason for East Asian success is due to the centering of Confucianism in Asian diasporic culture, this explanation marginalizes Asian subgroups with similar Confucian basis with different challenges. For example, Hmong in America has the same Confucian cultural foundation, however they have vastly different educational outcomes in comparison to other East Asians (Lee & Zhou, 2017).

Argument for racial progress buttresses the assumption of success in the Asian diaspora. Furthermore, it accounts for the resilience of the MMM and gaslighting as a “good” stereotype when it is used as a tool of subordination and assumes that Asians are not subordinated. Crenshaw (1995) describes two aspects of oppression that were used to describe subordination of Blacks that can be used to operationalize experiences of subordination of the Asian diaspora. Symbolic subordination speaks to the “denial of social and political equality to all Blacks” (Crenshaw, 1995, p. 276), social exclusion, separate restrooms - to justify racism (Crenshaw, 1995). For the Asian population, the symbolic subordination for the Asian diaspora happened in overt terms - Chinese Head Tax, Anti-Miscegenation laws and the Chinese Exclusion Act that banned Chinese immigration for 24 years. Material subordination speaks to the economic exclusion that subordinated Blacks to Whites (Crenshaw, 1995). For Asians, specifically the Chinese, while they experienced economic exclusion, they were permitted to be indentured workers in the Trans Canada Railway with fraction of pay of their White counterparts. In contemporary discourse, any success of the Asian diaspora should not be conflated with racial

progress. Over a hundred years later, Asians are still required to do more to receive equal economic compensation (Boyd & Tian, 2016). Furthermore, the racial progress discourse should inspire further suspicion when the group experiences passive exclusion when politically convenient to do so.

Racial progress cannot be measured if the standard in which you measure success is whiteness. The idea of Asian racial progress can be empirically challenged by the paradoxical response to Asian presence in Canadian post-secondary education throughout history (Coloma, 2013; Pon, 2000). CRT predicts that racial progress from history of racism for Blacks are “...conflicted, contingent, and reversible” (Ray et al., 2017, p. 148). This prediction parallels the empirically observed experiences of the Asian diaspora in Canada as they continue to be highlighted in the educational institutions with the status of being “un/wanted” (Coloma, 2013) throughout history. For example, Findlay and Köhler (2010) in the *Maclean’s* “Too Asian” article argues that Asian students are “single-minded in their approach to university” (para. 5) and makes normative that only White students prioritize “social interaction, athletics and self-actualization” (Findlay & Köhler, 2010, para. 6) in universities. Consequently, Findlay and Köhler (2010) notes that these differences are a barrier to integration for Asian-students in Canadian institutions and implies that self-segregation (of Asians) will be an antithesis to diversity. Thus, CRT explains for the journalistic piece where Asians are indirectly celebrated as upholding the discourse of meritocracy but shamed for resisting the diversity discourse by segregating themselves.

Ladson-Billings (1998) argues that in a racialized context where whiteness is normative, every racialized individual is ranked on a racial hierarchy based on the binary measure. Taking this binary context into consideration, Poon et al. (2016) argues that the Middleman minority

thesis is an expanded definition for a group that acts as a buffer between privileged and underprivileged groups; this was notable in groups such as the Jews in Europe and Armenians in Turkey (Poon et al., 2016). Furthermore, the confluence of the middleman minority thesis with CRT describe the Asian diaspora as a buffer race between privileged (White) and the othered (Blacks or other racialized groups); the exploitation of this liminal group maintains the White hegemony but does not absolve them of the complicity in subordination of the other. Thus, the MMM is a patronizing stereotype that justifies the limiting political, civic voice of Asians and in redistribution schemes as they are doing well (Poon et al., 2016) while justifying subordination of Blacks and other racialized bodies. Consequently, model minority discourse re-situates its role as a buttress of white supremacy (Poon et al., 2016).

In addition to the confluence of middleman minority thesis and CRT, there needs to be an examination, analysis and redefinition of the theoretical framework when it comes to Asianness. For example, Asian scholars rejects the notion of essentialization of Confucianism (Liu, 2018; Pon, 2000), but they do not explore beyond the safety of established Western epistemological foundations. Liu (2018) articulates that Asian academics need to go beyond the current epistemologies in social sciences, which have origin in Cartesian dualism, and draw from their own ethnic roots. Contemporary forms of Confucian philosophy, according to Liu (2018), that is axiomatically rooted in interconnectedness and epistemologically rooted in relationalism can buttress theoretical framework coined by non-White scholars. Examination of the model minority experience with this foundation can have new insight into the paradox of Asian liminality.

Within the backdrop of the theoretical framework of this MRP, this research aims to reveal that the MMM is ultimately used as a hegemonic tool to keep Asian diasporic

communities subordinated. Aforementioned, this structuring of inequality happens by creating specific hierarchical divisions between races by legitimizing whiteness through upholding institution of higher learning - for example by the highlighting of achievement gap in Black students while overeducation in Asians in the dominant culture. This research, using the tenets of the CRT, assumes that the Asian diaspora is subordinated by the social construction of Asian identity as the MMM. Furthermore, this identity is maintained by the culture of whiteness that give monolithic definitions like the MMM based on race rather than recognizing diverse diasporic communities living in North America. Lastly, giving voice to the voices of people who seemingly fit into the generalization of the model minority can self-define the Asian diaspora.

CHAPTER 4. METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on the research design of the study. In order to produce knowledge that involve nuanced insights into participant's identities that are omitted in the MMM, qualitative method of narrative approach (counter-storying) was selected. In the first section of the methodology chapter, there will be the justification for using qualitative method and counter-storying methodology in this MRP. In the second section, the integration of Confucian concept of relationality into the methodology is discussed. Third, information provided to the participant pertaining to their involvement in the interview are elaborated. Lastly, the procedure used in data analysis of the counter-stories are discussed.

Qualitative Method in the MMM Research

Positivist methodologies and methods of data collection are common in the study of the MMM (Boyd & Tian; 2016; Chen & Fouad, 2013; Hensfield et al. 2014). The MMM in quantitative studies are operationalized by grades and degree acquisition without different measurements of success or achievement (Suyemoto et al., 2009). However, this method ignores context and critical examination of social, historical and political factors of the social phenomenon (Maiter & Joseph, 2017).

The assumption that positivist research is bias free leaves scholars exposed to discursive blindsides that reinforce their own implicit biases of others. For example, Boyd and Tian (2016) concludes that educational levels in the Asian Canadian context do “not produce occupational or earnings disadvantages relative to third-plus generation Whites” (p. 722). However, closer examination of their results further supports the meritocracy myth of multiculturalism argued by Coloma (2013) and the silence of negative action against Asian population (Liu, 2008). Boyd and Tian (2016) seem to omit in their results section that while East Asian Canadians have a

greater likelihood of achieving higher education than third generation White Canadians, their overall comparative earnings are equivalent. While the predictive power of post-secondary education on economic achievement is not the scope of this paper, it is worthy to note this nuance: Boyd and Tian (2016) obscures the fact that White Canadians are earning more despite achieving less educationally. This highlights a major epistemological error in most literature on the model minority, according to Toyosaki (2015), where most of the literature are and is “methodologically situating Whites as a comparative standard; where whites become synonymously treated as ‘human’” (p. 248). Thus, capturing aggregates of the Asian post-secondary experience based on specific variables or as a comparison to whiteness are not indicative of Asianness or chip away at the MMM; it simply observes in a limited way and the social action piece is not privileged.

Qualitative research methods allow for in-depth interviewing while requiring finesse and methodological rigour that parallels the process of practicing social work (Maiter & Joseph, 2017). Furthermore, qualitative research offers an opportunity to critically examine social phenomena in relation to power, pursuit of social justice, it’s political, historical and social context (Maiter & Joseph, 2017). This is important because Maiter and Joseph (2017) argue that epistemological positions must be congruent with the methodology in qualitative research. Otherwise, it risks reproduction of marginalization through knowledge production without critical analysis of social identities, such as race (Maiter & Joseph, 2017). It can also reinforce the idea of Western Knowledge as superior to subordinate populations, further supporting the dominance of whiteness (Maiter & Joseph, 2017). Current qualitative research of the MMM are not focused on social justice, equity and does not centre race. For example, some qualitative studies have shown that participants have sophisticated knowledge of their experiences (Chae,

2004; Muses, 2008) but the researchers remain impartial and uninvolved in with their participants.

Narrative Approach - Counter-Storying

Narrative research is described as inquiring into the experiences of those who speak on their lives (Chase, 2011). Furthermore, it is a form of meaning making in the moment where the self is constructed and produced within the constraints of social resources and circumstance (Wolgemuth, 2014). Researchers in a narrative inquiry on the individual “...shed light on identity struggles as constituted in stories...and ways in which stories of ‘self’ disrupt oppressive social discourses” (Wolgemuth, 2014, p. 587). The aim of this MRP is to reveal the identity struggles of members of the East Asian community due to the MMM and the ways in which participants resist against hegemonic norms in the moment. Specifically, this research used counter-storying approach as it can be utilized to corrode the monolithic identity of the MMM, centre negative action towards the Asian community in institute of higher learning and is epistemologically consistent with CRT (Love, 2004).

Counter-storying according to Love (2004) has several purposes but for this MRP it focuses on the way it changes the “form and content of research and conversations about events, situations, and societal participation” (p. 232). Which means that in discussions of the MMM, we can start from a different premise with the same data. For example, the data on overeducation of Asian diasporic community should not be framed solely based on cultural reasons but can centre the idea of the “buffer race” (Poon et al., 2016) in explaining the gaps in achievement in higher education between Asians and other groups. Thus, CRT allows centring of race while challenging these persistent and recurring stories that subordinate the Asian population as the model minority; revealing assumptions made in the dominant culture explicitly allows for

analysis and examination (Love, 2004). Then, counter-stories can identify how specific experiences, rather than broad generalizations of racism, are connected to the individual, system, institutional and societal levels (Love, 2004). Lastly, counter-story is a tool that allows for non-Asians to gain access to nuanced stories and a point of conversation for understanding (Love, 2004).

The CRT method of counter-storying is a form of narrative resistance. McKenzie-Mohr and Lafranz (2017) argue that there is utility of narrative resistance in research and ways for researchers to support this goal of resistance. The meaning of resistance in this MRP is consistent with Wolgemuth's (2014) definition: resistance is seen as "between oneself and a dominant social structure" (Wolgemuth, 2014, p. 587), based primarily on race in the case of the MMM "and/or the refusal to be identified as oneself" (p. 587) as the MMM.

The significance of narrative resistance is exemplified in Chae's (2004) research as he attempts to have his participants resist the model minority myth. Chae's (2004) participants felt that their "teachers, non-Asian youth and 'the media'" (p. 66) were primary reasons for their misrepresentation. Chae (2004) highlights the descriptive accounts of the master narrative of the model minority without opening discursive space for narrative resistance. Furthermore, when the space for narrative resistance is opened inadvertently, researchers do not take the opportunity to reframe it in novel and transgressive ways in the way McKenzie-Mohr & Lafranz (2017) describes, nor uses the opportunity to name reality from the perspective of Asian subordination. For example, Museus (2008) remains uninvolved with a participant who chose to disengage from her classes and not reach out to educators for help in fear of being ridiculed for not being smart for a model minority. This was a missed opportunity to help create a discursive space

(McKenzie-Mohr, 2017) where reaching out for help can be co-created and reframed in different ways to make approaching their instructors palatable for the participant.

In this study's methodology, there needs to be a nuanced examination of Asian diasporic identity that plays an integral part in the interview process. According to Pon (2000), the assumption that individualism is as normative and universal is an incomplete view of populations that are collectivist leaning. While generalized statements of cultural differences in the conceptualization of the MMM and the Confucian roots of East Asians are acknowledged in research (Pon, 2000; Poon et al., 2016), conceptualization of social justice issues are fundamentally focused on outcomes impacting the individual. The MMM scholars overlook the critical examination of the ontology of Asian identity itself. Therefore, this MRP challenges the way the self is conceptualized in the Western context through counter-storying.

The liminality of the Asian diaspora is explained in this MRP by conceptualizing the self as a "relational being" (Thompson, 2017). This concept positions the self not as discrete or independent entity that interacts with the world and responds objectively to it, which is the basis of the self in Western epistemologies, but as dynamic characteristics that take form in the context of relations (Thompson, 2017). Thus, it is the privileging of the context of relations a priori to the individualization of the self. Confucian epistemology speaks to how the notion of self has been characterized, molded, and identified through their relations (Thompson, 2017). For example, Huang (1994) in Lorenzo et al. (2000) assert that Western conceptualization of the adolescence is incompatible with Asian definitions, where they are expected to be more independent. Autonomous identity is inconsequential in Eastern epistemologies. Instead, the adolescent is expected to become interdependent and be proficient in maintaining horizontal (i.e. friends) and vertical (i.e. bosses) interpersonal relationships (Lorenzo et al., 2000). Thus, as a relational

being, the Asian diasporic relationship to subordination and privilege become inclusive of the idea that there are outside forces that shape what are expected of the Asian diaspora and how these imposed identities are internalized. For example, second-generation Asian diaspora can be “Too White” by the standards of first-generation Asians who recently entered Canada, which is a subtle critique to white proximity, and “Too Asian” by the standards of whiteness in Canada, which ultimately embodies the MMM.

It is important to note that narrative inquiry is consistent with the idea of the relational being; Wolgemuth (2014) explains the narrative interview is intersubjective where the narrative is a joint production between the interviewer and the participant. Thus, narrative approach explores how the East Asian diaspora occupy a liminal space in the race dichotomy. Furthermore, it is how those who are affected are engaging the MMM and are engaged by it.

It is the priority of this research to compile intersubjective production of narratives that privilege the voices of the subordinated through counter-stories that are consistent with Confucian epistemology, specifically the concept of relationality. While narrative inquiry involves narrative and production of resistance as a joint construction between the participant and the interviewer, it does not recognize the relationships of power. CRT recognizes that relationships are a function of power (Love, 2004). In addition, considering the social identity of Asianness, this research centres the individual voices of the Asian diaspora through counter-stories.

Relationships manifest in CRT as a function of power; relationships structurally produce and reproduce dominant or subordinate groups (Love, 2004). The dominant groups are inherently able to name the reality of others through master narratives and silencing of the other (Love, 2004). Thus, counter-stories become the praxis of naming and privileging subordinated voices

with the intention of interrupting the power of the dominant group to name reality for others (Ladson-Billing & Tate, 1995) but it sees the relationship between the researcher and the participant in relation to power rather than relationality.

Counter-stories follow a tradition of storytelling that is emphasized in African American and Indigenous communities (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). According to Solórzano and Yosso (2002), counter-stories have three general forms and they cover experiences of racism and sexism: 1) personal stories or narratives 2) other person's narratives 3) composite stories.

Personal stories in the context of this MRP is the autobiographical reflections of the author (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) in relation to the MMM. Second, other person's narratives are the participant experiences (Love, 2004; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) of the MMM. Finally, composite stories draw from both biographical and autobiographical analysis, where the author creates composite characters and puts them in an institutional context to discuss forms of subordination (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

In this MRP, counter-stories include personal narratives of resistance that are co-created with the interviewer and interviewee that acknowledges the power relations and the relationality aspect of this methodology. As mentioned in Confucian conceptualization of the self, the unit of analysis is relational instead of the individual (Thompson, 2017). Thompson (2017) describes the concept of confluence to express relationality (Thompson, 2017). Confluence speaks to how two individual stories on the same flow of the MMM combine to become a comprehensive story and used to privilege the voices of the subordinated and give them an opportunity to navigate through their own experience of the MMM and express their own identity through their counter stories.

Sampling, Recruitment and Data Collection

Three participants (two identified as female and one as male) who identify with the East Asian community that are attending (2) or completed post-secondary education (1) in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) were interviewed. The reason to have the participants identify with the East Asian community is to acknowledge the diversity within the community and the experience and association with the MMM is sometimes not by choice. For example, a Filipino person, who is technically South East Asian may be identified by others more with the East Asian community because of the lightness of their skin. Furthermore, the definition of the MMM is maintained and imposed on the Asian diaspora based on the standard of whiteness that is also maintained by Asians.

Purposive snowball sampling was used to recruit participants who identify with the East Asian community. The participants responded to the author's Facebook timeline (Appendix B) showing interest. The author provided information, the consent form and a meeting area if they agreed. The interview occurred at a mutually agreed upon location that ensures privacy. Beginning of the interview, the author went through the consent form and had the participant view the consent form closely. The participant gave the interviewer a pseudonym to be used for the interview. After the interviews and feedback, the participant, if they wish, received the researcher's contact to give to another potential participant.

As in the interview guide, the researcher explained how the MMM is defined in literature during the interview, then spoke to the institutional outcomes for the Asian diaspora in the post-secondary setting (Appendix D). It was an unstructured interview schedule that was under one and half hours with the audio data being collected from the MacBook. The audio file was moved to the Ryerson's Google Drive folder and then transcribed into Google Docs in the same drive. This was in case of data loss or unforeseen circumstances that leads to revisit the audio file and

transcription. The researcher and the research supervisor had access to the drive and the files were deleted at the final submission of the MRP.

Data Analysis

Wolgemuth (2014) developed critical resistance analysis (CRA) to examine participant stories from both structural and critical perspectives that can analyze participant's resistance in narratives. In Wolgemuth (2014), CRA analysis "make(s) explicit why, how, to what ends and under what contexts people narrate themselves as resistant and/or compliant" (p. 588).

The narrative of resistance to the MMM that is analyzed using Wolgemuth's (2014) CRA asks: What kinds of subjects are constructed by the MMM? What are the discourses that intersect with the MMM and allow its construction? What is the influence on the participants and their relationship to the MMM? The CRA is consistent with the overarching methodology of narrative and counter-storying; it allows for the examination of the MMM discursively, using the critical lens of race. Wolgemuth (2014) explains CRA has four analytic foci for the qualitative interviews: deconstruction trace analysis, discourse-argument analysis, resistance analysis, and intersubjectivity analysis.

Deconstruction trace analysis is rooted in Derridean deconstruction (Wolgemuth, 2014). Deconstruction is fundamentally the analysis of binaries in the way we experience our reality (Derrida, 1997, as cited in Wolgemuth, 2014). Duality search mentioned by (Boje, 2001: 23 as cited in Wolgemuth, 2014) identifies explicit or implicit thematic binaries. By highlighting the binary (passive/active), it aims to dissolve singular viewpoint and bring in subordinated voices (Wolgemuth, 2014). Subjectiveness of deconstruction in participants are tied to social constructions of broader themes - like gender (i.e. experience of the MMM as a woman, a queer woman), and the construction of the binary is dependent on subordination as a function of power

(Wolgemuth, 2014). There were several themes that were revealed for this research.

Deconstructive trace analysis looks like what the participants experience, relate to, dismantle and reconstitute the broader socially constructed themes like gender, sexuality or race within the dominant discourse of the MMM. And exploring how the new ways of thinking may accompany being complicit, resistive and becoming uncomfortable by the MMM.

According to Foucault (1972, as cited in Wolgemuth, 2014), discourse like the MMM is a system that constructs the participant and their social environments they are in. Consistent with Wolgemuth (2014) discourse-argument analysis examines how participants are constructed through the argument's discourses of the MMM. Thus, the *argument* that the Asian diaspora do well because they are hardworking speaks to the *logic* of the MMM. And the *analysis* speaks to how they are linked to participant's conceptualization of the self. For example, how the participant constructs the binaries (i.e. male/female (man/woman) in gender), how they understand the nature of gender (i.e. performative, binary) and what are the participant reaction to this information (Wolgemuth, 2014). This can be a place where the Confucian idea of relationality can be expressed in research where, participants who experience the MMM especially describe how they understand the nature of their experience of the MMM and their reaction.

Resistance analysis seeks out "harmonious and/or discordant relationships with and between the subjects elicited in narrative inquiries" (Wolgemuth, 2014, p. 595). In understanding this from a critical structuralist and critical resistance perspective (Wolgemuth, 2014, p. 595); examining the self constructed to resist the hegemonic influence of the MMM (critical structuralist) and resisting ways to be identified as, align with or complicate the monolithic ideals the MMM (critical resistance perspective). Furthermore, it assumes the individual as an active

participant in their own self-production of identity and the acts of resistance to self-identification can reconstruct the discourse on a macro level (Wolgemuth, 2014). Thus, the acts of resistance can reconstitute what an Asian person can be identified as in the North American setting. This analysis is consistent with the CRT in the way creation of counter-stories, as narrative resistance, can be used to resist and erode old self-identities, highlight negative action on Asian population and reconstruct new ones. For the purpose of this MRP, resistance analysis will exclude analysis from the critical structuralist perspective as to center CRT which is a post-structuralist perspective consistent with counter-storying and the middle-man minority thesis. Furthermore, the resistance analysis examined the three participants together to demonstrate continuum of model minority outcomes.

Intersubjectivity analysis is what the presence of the interviewer is eliciting in relationship to the participant and the interview (Wolgemuth, 2014). I am part of the East Asian diaspora and a part of the group that is classified as the model minority. Like the participants, I am searching for my own truths when it comes to the MMM. As Wolgemuth (2014) explains, I must attend to the interview process/relationship and consider the part I play in enabling/limiting participants narrative elicited in interviews.

In conclusion, data analysis of the participants' narratives using the four analytic foci of the CRA were intended to reveal and categorize the way in which people were complicit and resistant to the MMM. The CRA is inclusive of my positionality as a researcher and the way in which researchers influence narrative approaches. Furthermore, CRT and Confucian epistemology were integrated into the analysis. This integration of the analysis is important because, as established in the theoretical framework of this MRP, Asianness is monolithically represented by the MMM within the White-Black binary of race discourse. By integrating the

types of analysis within the theoretical framework of this research, this MRP aims to center Asianness and reveal hegemonic tools that subordinate the Asian diaspora.

Ethical Issues

There are three ethical issues with the interview as the participants shared stories of resistance to the MMM. First, participants may have shared stories of the MMM that intersect with their own experience of trauma. This is likely because the participants shared stories that were personal in nature. As a result, it may have led to discomfort and surfacing of negative emotions. Secondly, there is a dual-role risk where the researcher and the participants have an existing relationship. For this study, this dual-role risk was necessary to co-create the meaning of Asianness and describe resistance to the MMM. While the narratives are personal by nature, it was important that there was a relationship between the researcher and the participant that was greater in duration than the length of the interview. Lastly, conceptualization of relationality in this MRP means that there is reciprocity between the researcher and the participant when it comes to sharing stories of resistance. Reciprocity was approached with caution due to the participant/researcher power relationship; I could have camouflaged my own stories as a form of reciprocity to privilege my own stories of resistance in the interview. To mitigate this, I made my position open to participants and the existing relationship I had with the participants contributed to the openness of the dialogue. With the participants we were able to identify stories of resistance and discuss Asianness. Thus, while cognisant of the positionality as a researcher, the open conversations provided richer narratives beyond the research questions.

CHAPTER 5. MAJOR FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The MMM influences the way that the participants interact with their world and the way they are socially constructed by others. Furthermore, the way the participants choose to engage with the MMM is dependent on their context and deeply personal. The presentation of findings is based on the narratives of complicity and resistance to the MMM. Furthermore, thematic binaries are introduced to bring into light the participant's experience of post-secondary education based on the intersection of their identities (i.e. female, heterosexual and Asian). This is important because it connects the participants to broader social constructions such as gender or heteronormativity and allows them to examine its relationship based on power. Relationships of power are important because it provides context in the pursuit of social justice (Maiter & Joseph, 2017).

Overall, all three participants saw the MMM as socially constructed and maintained through whiteness for the benefit of white people. Furthermore, participants centered specific social identity or theme to explain their experience of the model minority. They agreed that the model minority myth was not the sole reason for their experience but was part of the formulation. All three participants said that they were at some point oblivious of the influences of the MMM but in reflection they were able to speak on instances where they resisted or were complicit.

Profile of Participants

Dani

Dani is a self-identified queer East Asian woman who is currently in gender studies. She described her family unit as an atypical Asian household where she was the only one to attend university among her siblings. Dani expressed that the MMM was not the sole reason for her

struggles but her primary experiences of the MMM was internally manifested; she experienced self hate, shame of being East Asian and strived towards whiteness to regain a semblance of normalcy. She explained she felt ostracized for not fitting into the stereotype and how external forces pressured her to maintain this stereotype at the threat of exclusion. She was revalidated through critical reflection, Asian media, fashion and scholarship.

Clint

Clint self-identified as East Asian heterosexual male raised in a single parent household. He was an international student who has lived in Toronto most of his life. He studied Kinesiology initially, but before he entered the second year, he moved to study in Quebec to take advantage of the faster permanent immigration pathway for students. He experienced pressures to attend and do well in post-secondary settings, specifically university, from home. Clint described his academic struggles and his financial struggle to pay for the tuition as an international student. Clint's goals were to attend and succeed in university, he used the MMM to supplement his academic success and dealt with his frustrations by radically accepting the reality of the MMM.

Jane

Jane identifies with the East Asian community as a female who attended trades college for television and broadcasting then corporate communications twenty years ago. She saw her struggle mostly in the broader themes of gender and ageism as she was in a White male dominated field at the time. She was clear that she did not observe her own Asianness until she graduated, even though she suspects it played a part. She summed her experience as being treated like an "older sister" or a "younger sister." Where older sister is perceived as having an overbearing nagging presence like a mother, while younger sister is something to be protected

and cherished. Furthermore, her resistance to the MMM did not happen in her college years but after she graduated and became involved with the Asian arts community.

Major Findings

Participant narratives of complicity and/or resistance to the MMM and the discussion of Asianness are presented within the framework of the CRA. The major findings are in the sequence of Dani, Clint and Jane. Intersubjectivity analysis and resistance analysis are presented with the participants together. Intersubjectivity speaks to my positionality as a researcher and presenting the participants together helped complicate the shared reality that we experience as East Asians. Resistance analysis showed three outcomes of how the participant's identities were affected based on their congruence to the MMM. Thus, bringing the participants together in the analysis helped to elucidate the findings.

Dani's Narrative - Counter-Story

Resistance Analysis (to the MMM)

Dani saw the MMM consistent with this MRP's literature review:

I see the model minority myth as a tool used by white supremacy to put East Asians in particular... I say East Asians, because I think there is a hierarchy even within the category of Asian: South, Southeast Asian. East Asian being Chinese, Japanese, Korean and some might consider Vietnamese because culturally it's more East Asian, even though it is geographically located in Southeast Asia.. East Asians are put on a pedestal, so you can see that in like employment or living conditions or academics which is what we are talking about right now. There is this image that East Asians are doing so well exceeding so well, in Canada in particular. And that, we should be the example that other racialized group ascribe to, so I feel like [pause] there is a weird sense of [pause] like it is racism. I feel like its like East Asians are inherently THIS and inherently THAT and we fall into this narrative that we can't be anything else other than academically achieving and like doing financially well for ourselves and there is room for other narratives...

Dani describes the MMM as a hegemonic tool described by CRT scholars and the Middleman Minority Thesis (Poon et al., 2016; Wong 1985) to legitimize and maintain whiteness mandated through the state. Dani continues:

...[pause] but I also think its white supremacy, like it's an envy, like white supremacy sees East Asian success as a threat. I feel like it is very strategic, I feel like it really works well in the narrative that Canada purports and especially the multiculturalism dialogue its like "Look at these coloured people doing so well and then look at these other coloured people aren't doing so well like Black and Indigenous folks. And so, I feel like the model minority myth can act like a shield (for) white supremacy so that the attention towards the oppression gets directed towards East Asians instead of white supremacy. And that's my understanding of the MMM.

Towards the end of the interview Dani made an addendum to the definition of the model minority for her.

OK in terms of your question, I think something I didn't mention early, the model minority myth pertains to certain kind of East Asian person. Someone who is heterosexual, cis-gendered, gender conforming, gender performing. It's someone who [pause] look I have this image of this robot, because I feel like you are devoid of emotion and your devoid of complexity, devoid of personality, nuance. [pause] Your devoid of like queerness, mental illness, poverty and all these things and so. Many of these things, many of these identities have not been ascribed to me. And I feel like, in particular with my queerness, I don't think there's a least in my head what the model minority myth is there is no room queer East Asian person. Because then what kind of model minority are you? right? Because you're already deviating from the norm and so what is that mean for me in terms of how well I do how far I go or what kind of jobs I get or how well I fit into like a work culture or school culture.

In her narrative, Dani embraced the identity of queerness and fashion as a form of resistance:

D: *...And for me that like I think a lot of my struggle (regarding the MMM) has been feeling alienated from other East Asians I grow up around because so many of them fell into those kind of stereotypes (of the MMM) [pause] and so I think it is complicated because there is truth to it but the truth is, the truth comes from people adhering to what is expected of them. So, it's like oh, like I saw these Asians doing stereotypical Asian things but if they weren't Asian would they be?*

- J: *...there is this monolithic identity about them (Asians), right? it's also gendered and not to mention that, for example, queer Asians don't exist, right? [laughs]*
- D: *A 100%, your (Asians) all straight, your all gender conforming, there's no deviating from that ...If you do deviate, you are exoticized [pause] for the white gaze, the White male gaze. And I think too at least for me growing up, part of the falling into the stereotypes was the pressure by other kids, especially by White kids. I can like [pause] like White kids would run to the Asians kids for their math problems, they run to them for their science problems and so I feel like all that. All that works to reinforce it and like all the images that we see of ourselves and in media right [pause] for like, for me I saw my own version of media because me and my mom would watch T.V. shows from Hong Kong, that was a different narrative than like Jackie Chan and 800 movies (in North America) and he is supposed to represent us all. And he is always doing some Kung Fu or some kind of mythical image of the karate man, so yea.*
- D: *(later on, in the interview) ...We might have been reading an article written by an East Asian person, it made me really reflect on my view's, my self growing up, my family. I remember constantly wishing that we were White, I constantly remember hating that we were East Asian, why can't we just be normal. Obviously other factors played in the violence, the abuse, like my own mental health and all my other identities.*
- J: *How did you respond to the stereotypes?*
- D: *I mean the one thing that comes to mind, and its not maybe particular or pertaining to the academic setting, but I think being a queer person being resistant to norm and the narrative. And I feel like its, I feel it is very obvious the way I present myself, that I'm not straight and you can problematize that in however way. I feel like gradually like there's a lot of resistance to myself to present the way I want to present because I felt I had to fall into this image of the nice feminine quiet East Asian girl. And I am not a lot of those things, and so the clearest marker for resistance for me is the way I dress.*

In the post-secondary setting, Dani spoke about her resistance against the MMM in a post-secondary setting a specific story of fighting to be believed and resisted against the MMM:

... I spoke about growing up as a Chinese person in a Chinese East Asian culture (in class). And having a sense, that culture was homophobic, whether or not too grandee of painting of all Chinese culture, that was my perception of it growing up. That's still my perception of it now, when I am talking to people in my friends and real life. I'm like yea, Chinese people can be really like homophobic and they're against non-normativity whatever sense the word. Obviously, that is complex and nuanced, the model minority myth all these things play into it but when I am talking to people like I don't go into all that. I just talked about, yea

man I really ostracized by the East Asian community, because I don't feel like I fit in anywhere. So, when I talked about those experiences, I had [identifying information] tell me I was essentializing my own culture. And that I was ignoring queer Chinese culture and [pause] I remember sitting in that class and having them say to me in front of all my peers after I have been very vulnerable in this video where I talk about my mental health my trauma my queerness, my... all these things that, like, made my life so difficult and to have that come from someone outside the culture who is part of the dominant group in North America, in the world maybe I would argue. Like I, I was hurt, I was like "How dare you tell me [pause] that my experience of my own culture is wrong" and like, and I explained that I don't know what queer Chinese culture is or what it looks like because I never had that community. I've never had like, I've met one or two other queer East Asian people I can count on my hand and that's not the broad Chinese culture, its not queer. And you can, I did a lot of reading the context of LGBTQ people living in China. There's, you have to hide that (being queer). Many people in China will marry like a person of the different genders; man marries a woman but like secretly (live in) whole other subculture that forces you to like live your actual life as a queer person in secret in hiding. And so that just felt so devaluing of my experiences and of the pain that I felt and so I said all these things to the professor. I think normally I maybe two years ago, I wouldn't have because this idea of submissive, quiet, obedient, not angry, emotionless Asian woman that I for years I struggled with, I was terrified of my anger. I was like "If I expressed my anger who am I? I can't be loud. I can't be angry. I have to be docile." But I think that my journey now has in realizing that in many ways I am never going to ascribe to the perfect ideal of the model minority myth gave me the freedom to be like, no I am not going to take this. I'm not going to accept and say "Thank you, thank you for your criticism and feedback." In a room full of people, (I) stood up to a person who had authority over me...

Deconstruction Trace Analysis

Dani's account of the MMM is fundamentally about her experience of marginalization being excluded from the identity of the MMM and of whiteness. Dani reveals two broad thematic binaries between heteronormativity/queerness and normativity(whiteness)/marginality in relation to the MMM. She expresses being troubled by the imposed heteronormativity in the implicit assumption of the MMM and how her queerness is rejected by the Asian diaspora. Meanwhile, she shared that normativity in North America is whiteness, while she actively invests in this through her own livelihood, she is also resistive of its influences over her.

The MMM imposed on Dani created a binary of heteronormativity/queerness, where she felt like she had to embody “*the nice feminine quiet East Asian girl*” and one clear way she was resistive to this was in the way she dressed and presented herself as a queer Asian woman. Furthermore, she explains that the MMM implicitly assumes that Asians are heteronormative and there is a lack of knowledge about the gendered nature of the MMM.

Dani explains that “truth comes from people adhering to what is expected of them.” Thus, to Dani, the MMM is an interpretation of Asian diasporic experiences in the lens of whiteness; there is an operating assumption of whiteness in the MMM. Consequently, Asianness in North American setting is moderated by standard of whiteness and those who resist are marginalized by Asians and Whites who rigidly adhere to the model minority view of Asians. For example, Dani’s lived experiences as a Chinese queer woman is invalidated by her community and in a post-secondary setting by a professor who does not identify with the community. Even if the professor’s intentions were to prevent essentializing the Chinese community as homophobic, the outcome has led to a situation where it reifies the reality Dani is actively trying to undermine and challenge.

Dani explicitly expresses that her experience as a queer female is approaching double jeopardy; attempting to approach normalcy is simultaneously marginalizing her. This is because Dani recognizes that legitimizing whiteness (such as attending post-secondary education) means that there are certain privileges that are inherently given due to white proximity. The privileges that provide an opportunity to escape from materialistic subordination (Crenshaw, 1995).

Discourse-Argument Analysis

Dani constructs two different arguments to understand the construction of her response to the professor in her class. First, the MMM is a hegemonic tool ascribed to whiteness that is

imposed on the Asian diaspora. Second argument is that the people on the margins who do not ascribe to the MMM are invisible and their stories are actively silenced.

Dani's experience is an internalization of the liminality of the Asian diaspora and their status as un/wanted as argued by Coloma (2013). Dani's feelings about being East Asian is reflective of the logic that she is ostracized: *"I remember constantly wishing that we were White, I constantly remember hating that we were East Asian, why can't we just be normal"* This is a source of her shame not being able to be part of either whiteness or the model minority as a queer individual. Furthermore, Dani was explicit in saying that she hated her East Asian identity and wanted to be a White person. In this narrative, Dani argued that White was better than being East Asian as it brought comfort. Her statement has an inherent assumption that the struggles she was experiencing would be minimized as a White body due to its normalcy in Canadian society.

Dani does not disavow the MMM totally and agree it is a possible identity for the East Asian individual but not for the entire community. Her argument is that the MMM and other discourses have alienated her and others who do not fall into the stereotype. For example, Dani mentions that there is a large silencing of queer Asian diasporic communities; especially due to the homophobia that queer individuals experience within these diasporic communities. Dani's argument has been thematically consistent with Strayhorn's (2014) observation of isolation in the Korea gay community in America. Furthermore, Dani brings into light the assumption of heteronormativity, gender conformity and the essentialization of gender implicitly assumed by the MMM.

Clint's Narrative - Counter-Story

Resistance Analysis (to the MMM)

Clint describes his experience with his father when he became interested in becoming a musician:

...He (Clint's father) literally said and I quote, I can't succeed in a White man's society as a person with brown eyes and black hair, as an Asian I can't succeed in North America as a musician. He told me to go to Korea if I wanted to be a musician.

Clint describes his experience of the MMM in post-secondary education:

C: *...There are example(s) when TAs (Teaching Assistants), TAs definitely give more attention to certain ethnicities, not always. [Pause] Most because [Pause] I got more attention maybe, I don't know if it was because I was Asian. But I do remember for sure (them) paying attention to me. Yeah.*

J: *How can you tell?*

C: *So, for example, during presentations. (They) Ask specific questions to me than anyone else in the group...In my group I am not sure (if there were other Asians) ...I definitely didn't work as hard as my other friends.*

J: *(Later in the interview) You spoke about TA helping you more, more responsive to you. How did you respond to that?*

C: *Nothing, half the time I'm trying to survive. If I'm getting more attention that's great. Like, it's, I didn't even think about the whole like, this is like after reflecting, while later. At the time, I don't care, if he is going to give me participation marks, or answers. I'm all for it, I don't care about the reason really.*

In order to receive permanent resident status, Clint attended college in Quebec. Clint paid for international fees and expressed his frustrations regarding the MMM as it assumed that he was financially comfortable, and he did not look like an international student:

C: *Yea def(initely), when I told people I was international (student), "you don't dress like (international students)." I identify with the model minority because I had a lot of, tons of extra work. On top of non-Asian peers. Even Canadian Asian peers had to go through, I couldn't get OSAP couldn't get scholarship they wouldn't give it out to international students. At the time I was really angry at a lot of things, angry and bitter. Maybe that's where I started where my thing for weakness is a bad, not asking for help amplified, because I felt like I was going through it alone. And I felt that asking for help now I would look weak. Maybe that's what it was. And I was also very angry that I couldn't have access to certain seemingly basic things that my peers had access to like OSAP"*

However, Clint reframed his story into acceptance:

- J: *If you were to reframe your story how would you reframe it? If they put you in a box, how would you reframe it. Other way than the model minority myth?*
- C: *"...I mean, the thing with me right now is that [pause] I'm at a peace with a lot of things, in a sense that, while working, while exploring different parts of society, it is pretty obvious that certain, discrimination and certain stereotypes the way certain people would view me as because of my ethnicity it is pretty obvious, but I'm at peace with it in a sense that I accept that this is what society is and instead of trying to be angry, I guess just, just angry about it I am learning to work around it. And for example, if I come across positive stereotypes, obviously I know that is it not necessary right, if it works in my advantage, I will work it to my advantage. And in a case it doesn't, for example if someone will give me a job they think I'm good at math, I will turn it down, that is not to my advantage that is getting myself into a hole."*
 (later in the interview) *...More like, I accepted that's the structure, I tried to figure out a way to climb, instead of break free of it.*

Clint continued to experience the MMM when he started to look for a job:

...So, by the time I finished and looked for a job, I knew nothing. My only real experience is working in restaurants, so I put in my CV everywhere, I obviously didn't get a lot of calls, but I put in that (computer and phone) repair shop, they called me back. I was really surprised that they did, I had nothing in my CV. I was 21 at the time. And yea, I don't know, I know some of the people that brought in later, I eventually became manager and I got involved in the hiring process, and there were a lot of more CVs that looked more impressive, there were engineering students, forty year old's had their own company in their home country, people who can build you a computer from scratch; like solder on CPU and what not, some ridiculous crap. And my co-workers can pull off some ridiculous crap, but they hired me for some reason. I became pretty good at it admittedly, you know the fact that I got the job is surprising.

Deconstruction Trace Analysis

Clint's account of performing the MMM in post-secondary setting makes use of marginality/privilege, invisibility/visibility and citizen/non-citizen binaries. Invisibility is regarding the Asian diaspora where their marginality is not centered in literature nor mentioned in naming race epistemologies. It can be inferred from Hunter (2002) that race epistemologies center around the White-Black binary and the place for Asians are not defined. Clint is in the margins, he is an international student who pays double for his education, living in a single

parent household and not being interested in fields dominated by Asians. When Clint is visible, he is viewed in the lens of the MMM where he is 'privileged' in the post-secondary setting by the way he is treated by his teachers. Furthermore, his 'privilege' is extended to him landing a job in the computer repair shop without any prior experience in the field (more in the discourse-argument analysis). Clint's situation is complicated and nuanced as he may have been pushed further into the margins if he didn't get that help at school or got the job. Furthermore, it speaks to his resilience that he has continued this education by any means necessary.

Discourse-Argument Analysis

The model minority as a discourse is taken up by Clint's (and his parents) logic that Asian diasporic community were powerless to define for themselves and that Asian community cannot succeed in certain fields in North America. This is summarized by the way Clint's dad spoke to him when he was a child in response to him being interested in becoming a musician in Canada.

Clint's understanding regarding the positionality of the Asian diaspora in the North American society is further reinforced by his own experiences that confirm what his father told him; being hired for a job he was underqualified for after his post-secondary education. He realizes this as he sits on the hiring as a manager. Clint remains complicit to the MMM and takes advantage when he can despite harmful definitions of Asianness in Canada.

Jane's Narrative - Counter-Story

Resistance Analysis (to the MMM)

Ja: *To work in the field, in my chosen field...broadcasting for film and television, I took, at the time it was combined with multimedia and what not. It was a good 20 plus years ago. This was the age before the television landscape looks vastly different when I started. So at that time [pause] it was almost as if Asian were 'in' I guess, and particularly if you are female, but it was only on, like, if you are*

in front of the camera. I didn't want to be in front of the camera, I wanted to be, I wanted to learn things behind the camera, because there is only so much a pretty face can get you. So [pause] what I wanted to do, well, I figured that, if I was in when I got accepted, you had to actually give in a portfolio, you had to put together a portfolio for you to get accepted into the program. So maybe they accepted me because I was female, I was a woman, a person of colour for all I know. And I remember, when I heard whispers, there were whispers as to like 'oh you probably got in because you are female and your Asian' because they were looking at the time it was predominantly White (people) in my program. So in broadcasting, you know, particularly in Canada it was very White landscape twenty years ago, and still it is very very White, because they were actually looking for people of colour to get them accepted to move them through the system so they would have the diversity. Because generally Asians go to enroll in these types of programs, you just don't see it. It might be different right now. At the time it was a very White landscape. So, when I heard about that, I got really upset. Because I had worked [emphasized] very hard to try put together my best portfolio that I can that I could. And I wanted to get accepted on my merits, and I didn't want to be just sort of a quota on a piece of paper...

Jane did not see herself as a beneficiary of the preference for Asian students in broadcasting twenty years ago as alluded to by the “*whispers*” in her program from other students. Furthermore, she did not express this as a manifestation of racism but saw it mostly as framed within the broader themes of gender and age in her post-secondary experience:

“I'm sure there were many instances me being Asian did come up, but I don't think it was the 'thing' I think in particularly in college the 'thing' was me being female.” She explains through this narrative:

Ja: *When I was in college, I never felt that my Asianness was the thing. It was me being female. Because there was a project where we had to do a production of something or another. I had to write an elaborate piece that was like a James Bond spoof that incorporated all my friends in it. And I was the director and producer on it. What I found was that, even though I was trying to direct people, particularly the boys had their own ideas and didn't really listen to the instructions that I was giving them and then I would be like: 'why is it so difficult to show up with your costume' like 'you done it , I am also driving you to the location, why can't you show up with your costume on.' so it was one of those things that is more like it was incredibly incredibly frustrating. It wasn't everybody but a good portion of them that did not care.”*

J: *Was it because they (males) didn't want to listen to you? They had their own ideas?*

Ja: *I just remember one time that, somebody, like my main actor (male) had said "stop nagging me" now and I don't think he would have said the same thing if it had been one of his bro friends.*

When Jane changed to another post-secondary environment (corporate communications); she went from a White male dominated field (broadcasting) to a White female dominated field (corporate communications) at the time. Jane was able to identify the factor of her youthful appearance despite her age in the way people were treating her; she interpreted as being looked at younger means less experienced, thus not to be taken seriously. Therefore, she felt the identity that was privileged switched from gender to age when she went into a White female dominated field (corporate communications).

Ja: *I do recall feeling, something was off, but I could not put my finger on it. [pause] it almost like you question, is it, are they taking you seriously? A lot of times, here is an instance, in the corporate communications program filled with women, most, you know are all supportive we all went on, not all of us, maybe eight of us to a ski trip to Collingwood, I think it's Collingwood, I can't remember. Anyways, we went on a ski trip timeshare blah blah blah, whatever. We went up there was this one girl in that group who kept on saying I looked like twelve...I was in my twenties, but she says like: "what are you twelve?" then I look at her incredulously (and told her) "I'm twenty-one."*

J: *What you think she meant by that?*

Ja: *I think part of it, what the feeling was: you will not be taken seriously because you look so bloody young.*

J: *This has something to do with Asianness?*

Ja: *Oh well Asians generally look a lot younger than I guess...*

J: *You felt like you weren't taken seriously, because you look young and connected to Asians, being an Asian person?*

Ja: *That I don't know, but I can't deny that my youthful appearance [laughing], my youthful appearance is what it is [pause] I look a lot younger than I am...*

J: *So, you think that, that led to people not taking you seriously?*

Ja: *Oh ya, I felt that I was not taken seriously, many many times. I think it was, I was chalked up to not being Asian, but me looking so young.*

Jane explained that being in a male dominated school environment she felt like a “Big sister” while in a female dominated environment, she was treated like “Little sister”:

...When I talk about it, it's not so much me being Asian but being female. How men react to you is either big sister or little sister. So Big sister is like “Oh! You're a nagging big sister,” kind of like the mom effect. Little sister is like, “Oh! I'm going to take care of you,” they want to sort of guide you along...

Jane spoke about how “Asian issues were not on the radar, but you were discovering it on your own.” and this realization came from the conversations and questions she had from her friends in college. Jane's own self-discovery came after her post-secondary experience. She discovered the Asian arts community and media which allowed her to present herself in new ways through Asian role models. This was also challenged with her discursive meddling:

Ja: *It was only until when I started to work in Asian arts community that I had some modicum of idea of what kind of makeup I should be wearing...I didn't have any examples or I guess for the lack of term, role models who are Asian females to mimic. I didn't have enough...*

Ja: *(Jane revisited this topic again later) ...Again it was only until I went sort of dived into deep into the realm of Kpop (Korean pop) and Asian pop culture was then like: Oh! That's what it looks good. Because I'm still I am very Asian: I have an Asian build and features.*

Ja: *(returning to the topic after digression) ...I didn't know [mumbles] how to dress myself, it was only until, it was only until I bought a T-shirt from Japan and I put it on and it fit like a glove. It was and it was normal T-shirt. THIS is how a T-shirt is support to fit.*

J: *This is very interesting...This is what the social workers call standard of whiteness. Standard of whiteness is like (White) culture and you measure up to that...This is how you responded to the experience by not participating in it...*

Ja: *I don't fit (to the standard). I absolutely do not fit... I recognized it in my early to mid twenties. Because I didn't know.*

- J: *...When that lady (from corporate communications college) said you look 12, she's imposing certain maturity, or expectation on you...She's imposing standard of whiteness on you, you are going like I'm 21. You tried to follow the standard (but) you realized early, "this does not work for me."*
- Ja: *It was only until, I think that's what the impetus was that I started actually embrace, before it would be like, not so much reject but mute my Asianness. Because that was, you know, people I was surrounded by did not understand it. So therefore, it was just too much energy to explain shit. And then I started to be involved in Asian arts community, I went to ReelAsian, I worked for ReelAsian at one point, and I wrote for various Asian Canadian publications and I had a podcast that was, did specifically Asian arts community work.*
- Ja: *(returning from digression) ...Standard of whiteness is here I guess (motioning up) and Asian conscious culture is down here. I was trying to bring it up to, with my knowledge from broadcasting, trying to bring a need. Thankfully I had a good co-host who helped me, who was able to do a lot of the polishing as well. And then I wrote for numerous other publications, mostly online. And I also had like, ended up having two podcasts one that dealt with just Asian pop culture and music. And another one dealing with Asian current events, and like sort of like a lifestyle podcast, I think I did eight episodes of that. And yea, I wish I had the energy to continue, but because most of the staff was, I didn't have any support up here (Toronto), most staff was in San Francisco.*
- Ja: *(returning to the topic) ...When I started doing that work, that's when it all clicked to me. When we started telling stories and listening to stories things about, you know, people. Not so much like Asianness but stories by Asian people or you know those kind of thing. So like yea, that's- the show I really wanted create more, basically you and I talking...*

Deconstruction Trace Analysis

The primary theme in Jane's experience in the post-secondary setting has been man/woman and white/non-white race binary regarding her race. Jane struggles to find voice in a male dominated field of broadcasting for film and television. She is treated differently by some of her classmates because she is female and the chatter in the background that challenges the merit of her acceptance to the program despite her hard work to build a portfolio. Moreover, when she started corporate communications courses, which is dominated primarily by White

women, she is then infantilized and judged on her external appearance due to her stereotyped youthful appearance.

Jane's experience is described by Liu (2008) as negative action against Asian population where it is evident in the White preferential treatment in the program runs so rampant that the exclusivity of broadcasting and television is envisioned by and for White students and any new faces are just beneficiaries of diversity initiatives. Furthermore, this perpetuates the "illusion of meritocracy" asserted by Coloma (2013) where Jane must constantly prove her merit despite being accepted into a program because of a strong portfolio and have to work harder to achieve similar results. This is exemplified in the way her male colleagues resist listening to her directives in group projects or not being taken seriously by White female classmates in her time at corporate communications.

Discourse-Argument Analysis

Jane has one argument that is important to understanding her counter-story. She felt that her post-secondary experience was largely affected by being a woman more so than being Asian and how:

men react to you is either big sister or little sister. So Big sister is like Oh! You're a nagging big sister, kind of like the mom effect. Little sister is like, 'Oh! I'm going to take care of you,' they want to sort of guide you along...

Jane's argument reveals the logic that her experience can be generalized to all women. However, it is impossible to compartmentalize socially constructed identities in isolation and observe the outcomes reductively. The way Jane interprets what her classmates had said behind her back, fundamentally acknowledges the intersection of race and gender: "*oh you probably got in because you are female and your Asian.*" Her intersecting identities are greater than the sum

of its parts and her narrative allows to help problematize treatment of Asians attending schools where they are un/wanted (Coloma, 2013) by the student population.

Discussion of Resistance Analysis: Dani, Clint & Jane

The participants resist normative ideals of the MMM in several ways: participant counter-stories, describes one of three kinds of outcomes for the MMM in the post-secondary setting. First, complicity when the subject's identity closely resembles the MMM. Second, resistance when the subject's identity does not resemble the MMM at all. Third, somewhere in between. Furthermore, their resistance evolved after they left post-secondary education.

Clint is exemplary in the way in which he was complicit to the MMM. Clint accepts that the MMM is normal, in the way CRT assumes racism as normative (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Clint sees the MMM as a tool to benefit him: *"...I was definitely influenced by it (the MMM). You know. Even now, I am pretty sure I am being affected by it in some way or form. I no longer have that has that as my identity. I kind of shed that at a certain point."* Clint's resistance comes from understanding the social construction of the MMM and tried to climb it to benefit him materialistically. Clint does not try to unveil whiteness nor attends to racial inequalities directly. Thus, in the institute of higher learning, he plays a part in perpetuating the legitimization of whiteness that maintain racial inequalities. Clint continued to be complicit to the MMM until he was able to break free from some aspects of it, this was exemplified in his decision to pursue ergonomics.

...I thought I needed to find something really niche and way to kind of, what's the word, to get myself out there. By that time, my model became it wasn't about strength and weakness, I need to adapt to survive. And did some research and asked around and found out ergonomics could be the next big thing, and so far that's what it looks like it is. I learned to adapt I learned to be more flexible.

Dani falls into the second outcome where her resistance towards the heteronormativity assumed in the MMM is resisted through her queerness. Dani constructed her narrative as standing up to the MMM in institute of higher learning. Dani expresses her unique identity through fashion that is atypical to what an Asian female “should” look and/or act. The incident she described is particularly impactful as she stands up to the professor, who has institutional power over Dani. Dani resisted by not ascribing to the MMM as a “*docile female*” and stood firmly to a professor who had authority over her in front of her classmates. The professor attempted to gaslight Dani into thinking that her experiences were invalid, and this was particularly traumatic for Dani as she grew up “*hating that we were East Asian.*” It also shows her ability to be courageous and resilient.

Jane represents somewhere in between Clint and Dani. She was complicit to the MMM as she was not able to name it until she moved on from her post-secondary education. However, in time she was able to create resistive stories through her knowledge of broadcasting to create Asian media content. Her work allowed dissemination of Asian diasporic stories that contributed towards the Asian arts community in Canada being involved in ReelAsian and starting a podcast.

Discussion of Intersubjectivity Analysis: Dani, Clint & Jane

This research draws from Bell (1995), Poon et al. (2016), Wong (1985) that the MMM is the maintenance of a monolithic representation of the Asian diaspora that is used as a hegemonic tool to oppress other racialized groups (including Asians) to legitimize whiteness. Furthermore, the MMM marginalizes those who do not fit the stereotype while restricting individual’s identities defined by whiteness. My interview methods were biased; I assumed the experience of the MMM existed for every Asian participant. My interview method was intentional; I challenged the participants to tease out stories of resistance and reframe their stories to validate

the self-identity they fought hard to keep or to rediscover. The participants in their narratives makes a conscious or unconscious choice to remain complicit or resist social constructions of who they are determined by whiteness.

In this MRP the subjectiveness of the MMM were expressed through the narratives of the participants. Their stories asserted experience of subordination of their Asianness; whether this realization happened in the moment or later in their lives through their own personal discovery of what they defined as Asianness. Their stories either resisted or remained complicit to their context and never static or reductive. Through their stories there were new challenges to the MMM; the MMM is axiomatically representative of heteronormativity, gender conforming, ageist and accept whiteness as the norm. The area that were not discussed was the exotification of Asian females and emasculation of Asian males in the North American society.

One commonality that I shared with the participants is how they used fashion or the way they presented themselves to remove themselves from the MMM. Moreover, being active in discovering our own Asianness through exposure to Asian fashion, aesthetics and pop culture. Clint did not dress like a typical international student, which is stereotyped in the community to brand name items signifying wealth. Dani, as a queer woman, wore clothes that are not different from what is expected of her gender or clothes that symbolized Asian female docility. Jane, by learning how to do makeup and wearing clothes designed for Asians by Asians found whispers of her muted Asian identity emerge from the deafening vibrations of whiteness. With the participants, specifically Jane, I shared how I struggled to distinguish myself from what is stereotypically expected of me as an Asian male and had a habit of changing hairstyles as a form of self-expression.

As an Asian male, I have been complicit to the MMM most of my life and have implicitly accepted that East Asians are second on the racial hierarchy. I was cognisant about interrupting female voices to perpetuate the stereotype of traditional Asian male. Furthermore, my own complicity to the MMM may have influenced my interaction with Dani as she had vocalized that she was surrounded by other Asian people who fit into the MMM growing up.

Clint was the only Asian male I interviewed in this MRP. Clint's story was a reminder to me that it is a privilege to have the time and space to think and reflect on the hegemonic influences of the MMM on the Asian diaspora. Furthermore, his story humbled me and challenged me to complicate the impact of the MMM on individuals; Clint was swimming in whiteness and he was complicit in the MMM, but he kept his head above water long enough to find a trajectory in his life he identified with. Furthermore, as a researcher I had to be cognisant that the research questions I posed to them is something that is difficult to answer in a one-hour interview. I shared with Clint the difficulties of answering the research questions that I proposed as a fellow Asian male, noting that the MMM is also implicitly gendered:

...it is difficult to answer these questions that you've (Clint) been sitting with almost all your life. I realize the absurdity in that, because it's definitely, it is one of the challenges I had as a researcher is that: Most people don't realize it when they are in it, when you are swimming in it you don't realize it. You are busy trying to swim and to survive. Only when you step back and you observe it or trained to do that in the beginning (you can start to ask these questions) ...

Dani's narrative has enabled deeper conversations into whiteness and the MMM as we both shared a similar lens based on post-structural theories. There is privilege in sharing similar nomenclature of oppression, critical lens in their daily lives and theoretical foundations. Furthermore, someone who may have had a longer time to reflect on the terms and how it relates to their lives, rather than having the term be introduced to them in a one-hour interview. This

made me vulnerable to the outward joy I would show to Dani when our narratives converged, and it may have been something that allowed her to share such rich narratives.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION

This MRP and the participants argued that the MMM is a reductive story of the Asian diaspora that does not define them in the post-secondary setting and beyond. While the MMM is a social construction that represents a microcosm of Asianness in North America, Asianness is not and should not be defined by the MMM. The definition of the MMM is credited to a sociologist channelling a collective gestalt during the Civil Rights period; trying to rationally justify his racism and institutional racism during the 60's that reverberates today.

The participants revealed that the MMM is axiomatically gender conforming, heteronormative, gendered and defined in whiteness. Participants counter-stories resisted these social constructions when it was imposed on them, but the resistance looked different for each person. Even being complicit to the model minority, as long as it contributes towards survival it became a form of resistance. However, this form of resistance is a double-edged sword as it allows the subject to take advantage, but it also maintains and confirms the stereotype to observers. This is especially problematic when these observers have the power label, name and essentialize Asianness through media, academia and culture. Thus, the MMM by nature is somewhat tied to the forfeiture or control of Asianness in exchange for the materialistic security in North America; we are forfeiting our identities for the paved path of whiteness and white proximity.

Regarding the perpetuation of the MMM, it is also worthy to label and challenge the dangers of confirmation bias and negative action that perpetuate the stereotype. For example, Jane was judged by her peers of being accepted into the program because she was a woman and an Asian person. This is an insidious way in which the Asian identity is gaslighted by whiteness, where the outcomes of Jane's hard work become shamed and casually related to Jane's race

(Asian) rather than her merit. Especially in an institutional setting where it is dominated by White bodies.

The implications of this work are that it reveals stories of resistance and challenges the dominant story of Asians maintained by whiteness. Furthermore, it added to the conversation of what is Asianness in the institution of higher learning and beyond.

CRT and the Middleman minority thesis with the acknowledgement of Confucian concepts have been the primary lens to examine the MMM for this MRP. The theoretical framework of this MRP called for resisting the MMM through critical analysis and adding to the definition of Asianness beyond the MMM. It can be argued that the MMM is an expression of whiteness as it defines a group of diverse populations with a monolithic identity. This has been demonstrated throughout history as it “camouflages for the self-interest of dominant groups” (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002, p. 170) by the creation of the achievement gap between races and rewarding those who adopted whiteness. Furthermore, how the Asian diaspora negotiates whiteness through complicity has implications for the survival of the community, continued oppression and oppression of other groups in North America. All participants in this study acknowledged the power of whiteness in some way or form in their narratives. However, every participant found ways to manage their complicity, complicate their relationship to whiteness and resist in their own way. This leaves with more questions: What do complicity and resistance look like? Are they mutually exclusive? Are they in confluence? This research has explored some of these realms. Thus, future areas of research can deconstruct what complicity means as there are levels to complicity demonstrated in this research and what structural resistance looks like. Strength of this MRP came from the participant narratives that chipped away at the monolithic identity of Asianness by their added voice. Furthermore, challenging the

current Western frameworks through resistive stories creates space for Asianness as a framework. Limitations of this MRP was the fact that the interviews were one hour to two hours depending on participants; a single interview is not enough to gather nuanced information. Moreover, this MRP speaks of confluence and rationalism rooted in Confucian philosophy without demonstrating it sufficiently in writing, as it is a concept still in development. Lastly, the argument of what Asianness is not is only a part of Asianness. Thus, the epistemological basis of Asianness remains elusive.

Returning to the concept of negative action by Liu (2008), the resistance of the participants revealed that the discovery of Asianness in the North American context as it pertains to the individual is of great importance. Although it is already happening in the Asian diaspora today, the next step from naming negative action against the Asian diaspora should be the reclamation of Asian identities. Where it involves development of Asianness in North America and the creation of new identities. Identities that creates new boundaries but never rigid, that overlap but never the same, flexible but always resilient and Asians have the power to make these changes; *Asianness BY Asian people*.

APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM

Consent Agreement

Thank you for participating in this narrative research. Please read this consent to understand your involvement in your participation. Please feel free to ask any questions before you consent to ensure you fully understand what this study aims to do and what questions would be asked.

“Too White”: Model Minority experiences in post-secondary setting

INVESTIGATORS:

This research study is being conducted by Joe (Jeong) Han, supervised by Dr. Purnima George, from the School of Social Work, at Ryerson university.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Joe (Jeong) Han at j1han@ryerson.ca or Purnima George at p3george@ryerson.ca

PARTICIPANT:

- Identify with the East Asian community
- Currently living in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)
- Attending or have attended post-secondary institution

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

This study is designed to explore the diversity of stories beyond the stereotypes of the model minority myth. **Model minority myth** is a scholarly label that is primarily put on East Asians as a hard working and successful diasporic population despite the experience of discrimination and oppression (Poon et al., 2016). Furthermore, it is used to weaken claims of systemic racism by other racialized minorities (Poon et al., 2016).

The study aims to highlight the array of stories within the model minority context and reveal stories that are not bound to the tropes of the model minority in a post-secondary setting. It aims to disrupt the stereotypes of a “good Asian student” as a single acceptable story for the Asian diaspora.

The study will interview **2-4 participants**. Participants will be least 18 years of age and identify with the East Asian community in Canada. Participants must live in the Greater Toronto Area. This study is a graduate degree requirement for the completion of the Master of Social Work degree.

WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DO:

The participant will be in a one-on-one interview for 1 – 1.5 hours and audio recorded. They will be asked to define model minority myth and use of probing questions to find out in what ways their experiences in the Canadian context have been different from this discourse.

- The participant will decide how long they speak about the issue and can leave any time of the interview.
- The interview will not take place in a residence. The interview will occur at a mutually agreed upon location that ensures privacy.
- Participants can expect questions like:
 - What were your intentions or goals as an East Asian student in a post-secondary setting?
 - Please tell me the story as an East Asian student in a post-secondary setting that stand out to you
 - How did you respond these experiences?
 - Does the Model Minority Myth (MMM) correspond to your story?
 - What were the impacts of these life experiences on you as a student?
 - If you can reframe your experience in another way, what would that look like?

RESEARCH DISSEMINATION

Participation in this study will further research on the model minority myth through potential presentations, exhibitions, and/or scholarly publications. Furthermore, Ryerson Digital Repository will have a copy of all Major Research Papers (MRP) upon completion to be accessed at any time or the researcher can be contacted (j1han@ryerson.ca).

[https://digital.library.ryerson.ca/islandora/search/*%3A*?f\[0\]=mods_extension_degree_department_ms%3A%22Social%20Work%22](https://digital.library.ryerson.ca/islandora/search/*%3A*?f[0]=mods_extension_degree_department_ms%3A%22Social%20Work%22)

POTENTIAL BENEFITS:

Potential benefits will be an opportunity to talk back against East Asian stereotypes and redefine their identity in new and positive ways. The participants can be active in creating a more helpful stories of the participant's lives despite stereotypes that take away their control over how they define themselves. Participants will disrupt the ideas of the model minority myth beyond the idea of the East Asian identity as a monolith. Furthermore, personal benefits will be subjective.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL RISKS TO YOU AS A PARTICIPANT:

There may be some discomfort as participants share stories and reliving situations where they struggled with the imposing of the model minority myth in their lives. Thus, sharing may be upsetting or uncomfortable for participant(s) for potential psychological risks if the experienced shared is traumatic.

Confidentiality will be the highest priority for this researcher. Furthermore, there is a low/minimal risk of the participant's identity being revealed. There will be more on confidentiality on the next section.

You may be an acquaintance of the researcher or have a relationship with another participant in this study. Your participation is completely voluntary and can withdraw any time; there will be no consequences on the relationship with the researcher and no loss of the incentives for the withdraw.

There are limitations to confidentiality in certain cases. As a social worker, the researcher has a duty to report. This means that the researcher will have to report any child abuse and/or neglect and for risk of harm. While sharing narratives on the model minority, the participants may share experiences of violence within the context of their lives.

You will be reminded of these limitations of confidentiality prior and during the interview when appropriate. Again, you may withdraw from the interview at any time.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND AUDIO RECORDING:

Participants in this research will remain confidential and there will be several measures that will be taken to protect the identity of the participants. The researcher will ensure that the audio recording is saved in the Ryerson Google Drive where the file will be encrypted and stored. A MacBook will be used to record the audio and it will be deleted after the audio data is transcribed and transferred to Ryerson Google Drive. The participant will use a pseudonym during the interview to protect their identity and they can choose to use their pseudonym to sign the consent form. The file will be deleted when the research is completed August 2019 with the permission from the research supervisor, Purnima George.

The information will be only be viewed by the researcher and if required, the supervisor, Purnima George without revealing any identifying information. Identifying information will not be accessible unless it is required by law where there are reasonable suspicions of abuse or risk or harm. You can access the final copy of the research in the Ryerson Digital Repository: <https://digital.library.ryerson.ca/>

Breach of confidentiality occurs if there are concerns for physical safety; risk of immediate physical harm to self or others, there is a Duty to report, by law, for the researchers to contact the authorities.

CONFIDENTIALITY IN TRANSCRIPTION:

Pseudonyms will be used in the interview for the participants and any identifying information will be censored in transcription. A MacBook will be used to transcribe the audio and be stored on Google Drive. The transcription will remain in the Ryerson Google Drive. The transcription will be deleted after it is transferred to Ryerson Google Drive.

The information will be only be viewed by the researcher and if required, the supervisor, Purnima George without revealing any identifying information. Identifying information will not be accessible unless it is required by law where there are reasonable suspicions of abuse or risk or harm. You can access the final copy of the research in the Ryerson Digital Repository:

[https://digital.library.ryerson.ca/islandora/search/*%3A*?f\[0\]=mods_extension_degree_department_ms%3A%22Social%20Work%22](https://digital.library.ryerson.ca/islandora/search/*%3A*?f[0]=mods_extension_degree_department_ms%3A%22Social%20Work%22)

The data may be disseminated to classrooms, workshops, conferences and/or publications.

Signed consent forms and audio recordings will be in a locked filing cabinet to be destroyed in early August 2019, once the MRP is completed.

INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATION:

Incentive to participate in the study will include \$15 Walmart gift card.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL:

Participation is wholly voluntary. If the questions make you uncomfortable you may skip or not answer the question. You may remove yourself from the study after the interview even after you signed the consent here. Please indicate your withdrawal from this study before June 1., 2019. Your choice will not impact your relationship with the researcher and Ryerson University.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY:

If you have any questions about the research now, please ask. If you have questions later about the research, you may contact:

Joe (Jeong) Han
Researcher, MSW Candidate
j1han@ryerson.ca

Purnima George
Supervisor
p3george@ryerson.ca

This study has been reviewed by the Ryerson University Research Ethics Board (REB protocol number: REB 2019-067). If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in this study, please contact:

Research Ethics Board
c/o Office of the Vice President, Research and Innovation
Ryerson University
350 Victoria Street
Toronto, ON M5B 2K3
416-979-5042
rebchair@ryerson.ca

“Too White”: Model Minority experiences in post-secondary setting

CONFIRMATION OF AGREEMENT:

Your signature below will indicate you have read and understood the information in the consent form and have had a chance to ask questions you have about the research. The signature also indicates that you are aware and able to exercise withdrawal from the interview at any time during the interview. You are also understanding by signing this consent agreement you are not giving up any legal rights you have. Furthermore, you have also received a copy of the consent form.

Name of Participant or Pseudonym (please print)

Signature of Participant

Date

I agree to be audio-recorded for the interview. I understand how these recordings will be stored and destroyed.

Signature of Participant or Pseudonym

Date

APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT FLYER

Counter-stories of East Asian Post-Secondary Experience
Research Conducted by Joe (Jeong) Han, MSW Candidate, Ryerson University

Looking for Participants!

Do you identify with the East Asian community and currently attending college/university or have in the last two years?

You will be asked to meet for an 1-1.5 hour interview at your convenience. At an agreed location, you can share about your experiences and the impact of post-secondary education to your personal life as a member of the East Asian community in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

Purpose: *Model minority myth* is a scholarly label that is primarily put on East Asians as a hard working and successful diasporic population despite the experience of discrimination and oppression. This study is designed to explore the diversity of stories beyond the stereotypes and the single story of the model minority myth.

Participant(s):

- Identify with the East Asian community
- Currently living in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)
- Attending or have attended post-secondary institution

Compensation: Each participant will receive \$15 Walmart gift card.

For more information please contact:

Joe (Jeong) Han
Master of Social Work Student at Ryerson University
j1han@ryerson.ca

This study has been approved by the Ryerson Research Ethics Board (REB protocol number: REB 2019-067) and is being conducted by a graduate student as per prerequisite for graduation.

Research supervisor can be reached at p3george@ryerson.ca or by telephone at 416 979 500 x 7146

APPENDIX C: REB APPROVAL

To: Jeong Han Social Work

Re: REB 2019-067: "Too White": Model Minority experiences in post-secondary setting

Date: March 18, 2019

Dear Jeong Han,

The review of your protocol REB File REB 2019-067 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 2019-067) on future correspondence.

Congratulations and best of luck in conducting your research.

Dr. Patrizia Albanese, PhD

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrizia", followed by a stylized flourish.

Chair, Ryerson University Research Ethics Board

- **References for REB.docx (submitted on: 03 Feb 2019)**

- **Interview Questions.docx (submitted on: 15 Mar 2019)**
- **Appendix A Consent Joe (Jeong) Han.docx (submitted on: 15 Mar 2019)**
- **REB 2019-067 Reponse .docx (submitted on: 15 Mar 2019)**
- **Appendix B Facebook Poster Joe (Jeong) Han.docx (submitted on: 15 Mar 2019)**
- **If any changes are made to the attached document throughout the course of the research, an amendment MUST be submitted to, and subsequently approved by the REB.**

APPENDIX D. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
“TOO WHITE”: MODEL MINORITY COUNTER-STORIES IN CANADIAN
INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Joe (Jeong) Han

Introduction

Go over the consent form.

We went over the consent form, before we start, do you have any questions?

MacBook records interview

Thank you for participating in the study. Purpose of the study is to create new stories for the monolithic views of the Asian diaspora in the context of post-secondary education.

What do you know about the model minority?

Model Minority Myth (MMM) was introduced during the Civil Rights movement by a sociologist named Petersen (1966) in a New York Times article to draw a negative comparison to racialized, specifically Black folks, by creating this myth of the model minority.

I chose the post-secondary setting as I see this as a primarily area of contention for the Asian diaspora, specifically the affirmative action lawsuit in Harvard. Today, Asian diaspora is being used by those in power to maintain subordination of racialized communities. It is true that Asians are discriminated against in Harvard in terms of the acceptance rates despite high SAT scores. However, it is led by an anti-affirmative action advocate named Edward Blum, who is using this opportunity to push for his own political agenda. Edward Blum believes it is discriminatory to have high scoring Asians be overlooked while Mexican and Black applicants benefit from affirmative action or a diversity quota in Harvard. His argument does not consider the Legacy (applicant who had a relative or parent attend Harvard) acceptance rates has been high throughout history. Furthermore, they take up large proportions of successful applications and among them, majority are White.

As a person who have attended post-secondary and spoken to other Asian individual who have attended school in Canada experience the MMM. Moreover, the way the individuals resist these narratives are different and unique. I would like to hear these stories or situations where you noticed you were being treated differently and pushed back. This in turn creates counter-stories where it can be used to erode the dominant story of the MMM.

Please tell me the story as an East Asian student in a post-secondary setting that stand out to you. How did you respond to these experience(s)?

Does the Model Minority Myth (MMM) correspond to your story?

What were the impacts of these life experiences on you as a student?

If you can reframe your experience in another way, what would that look like?

Conclusion

Thank you for your time. Do you have any other question? If you remember something to add or want to add something to your transcript, please contact me!

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