



A WORKSHOP ON

INTERSECTIONAL APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING ASIAN CANADIAN YOUTH EXPERIENCES OF INTEGRATION AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN DIASPORA

Friday, September 7th, 2018
1:30 pm to 4:30 pm

519 Kaneff Tower
4700 Keele St, York University

**Organized by: Women's Health Research Chair in
Mental Health Office
Faculty of Health, York University**
<http://nkhanlou.info.yorku.ca/>

Funded by:

York Centre for Asian Research (York University)



Dr. Nazilla Khanlou
Women's Health Research
Chair in Mental Health

Welcome Note

7 September 2018

We welcome you to our workshop on “Intersectional Approaches to Understanding Asian Canadian Youth Experiences of Integration and Cultural Identity in Diaspora” at York University.

The Office of Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health recognizes that many Indigenous nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been cared for by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Huron-Wendat, and the Métis. It is now home to many Indigenous Peoples. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

The purpose of our workshop is to engage in and present on interdisciplinary and intersectional approaches to understanding Asian Canadian youth identities within multicultural contexts. Throughout the workshop we have the privilege of hearing from leading scholars, and current and previous graduate students on their community-based research related to youth, identity, diaspora, and mental health.

This workshop is inspired by our project titled “Asian and Latino Canadian Youth Experiences of Cultural Identity: An Intersectional Exploration of Contemporary Immigration and Multicultural Narratives,” funded by York University's SSHRC Research Opportunity Grant. The workshop is financially supported by the York Centre for Asian Research (YCAR). We are grateful to Professor Abidin Kusno (Director of YCAR) and Ms. Alicia Filipowich (Coordinator of YCAR) for their ongoing support of the workshop.

A special thank you to Dr. Attia Khan and Dr. Luz Maria Vazquez for all their help in the planning and support of today's workshop.

Our sincere gratitude to you for taking the time to participate in the workshop. Our identities are shaped by those around us. And we are grateful that you are accompanying us today on this journey of exploring youth identity narratives.

Nazilla Khanlou
Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health
Faculty of Health, York University

Programme

Time	Item	Speakers
1.30 pm to 1.50 pm	Welcome and Introductions	Nazilla Khanlou Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health, York University
1.50 pm to 2.00 pm	Opening comments	Shahirose Sadrudin Premji Director and Professor at the School of Nursing, Faculty of Health, York University
2.00 pm to 2.30 pm	Keynote speaker	Fernando Nunes Department Chair and Associate Professor Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia
	Presentations	
2.30 pm to 2.45 pm	A Cross-cultural Study on Self-regulation of Shame and Guilt, Self-construal, and Self-monitoring among Mainland Chinese, Chinese Canadians, European Canadians, and International Chinese Students in Canada	Chang Su
2.45 pm to 3.00 pm	Ethnic Identity, Self-Esteem, and Resilience: Examining Mental Health Attributes among Immigrant and Canadian-Born Youth of Pakistani Ethnicity	Attia Khan
3.00 pm to 3.15 pm	The Role of Parents in Negotiations of Cultural Identity and Mental Health Among Tamil Youth of Sri Lankan Origin Living in the Greater Toronto Area	Babitha Shanmuganandapala
3.15 pm to 3.30 pm	Understanding Identity and Mental Health from Syrian Refugee Adolescents' Perspectives	Tali Filler
3.30 pm to 3.45 pm	"Children are going on a Different Path": Youth Identity from the Bangladeshi Immigrant Parents' Perspective	Farah Islam
3.45 pm to 4.00pm	Contemporary multicultural narratives and immigration politics: Intersections of gender, racialization, and cultural identity among Asian and Latino Canadian immigrant youth	Luz Maria Vazquez Lisa Seto Nielsen
	Feedback	
4.00 pm to 4.30 pm	Discussion and feedback	Nazilla Khanlou, Luz Maria Vazquez, Lisa Seto Nielsen & Attia Khan

Speakers



Nazilla Khanlou, RN, PhD

Nazilla Khanlou is the Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health in the Faculty of Health at York University and an Associate Professor in its School of Nursing. Professor Khanlou's clinical background is in psychiatric nursing. Her overall program of research is situated in the interdisciplinary field of community-based mental health promotion in general, and mental health promotion among youth and women in multicultural and immigrant-receiving settings in particular. She has received grants from peer-reviewed federal and provincial research funding agencies. Dr. Khanlou was the 2011-2013 Co-Director of the Ontario Multicultural Health Applied Research Network (OMHARN). She is founder of the International Network on Youth Integration (INYI), an international network for knowledge exchange and collaboration on youth. She has published articles, books, and reports on immigrant youth and women, and mental health. She is involved in knowledge translation to the public through media.



Shahirose Sadrudin Premji, BSc, BScN, MScN, PhD, FAAN

Shahirose Premji is the Director and Professor at the School of Nursing, Faculty of Health, York University. She has been an Associate Professor in the school of Nursing, at the University of Calgary. Prior to this appointment she was an Assistant Clinical Professor and a Clinical Lecturer in the School of Nursing at McMaster University. She has over 20 years' experience in newborn health and has practiced clinically or provided technical expertise Nationally and internationally in countries such as Australia, China, Kenya, Tanzania, Pakistan, Syria, and Uganda. Her administrative experience includes Directing the MScN program at Aga Khan University School of Nursing, Pakistan. She also has governance experience for organizations such as the Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research, and the Council of International Neonatal Nursing. Dr. Premji also has an impressive record of research, scholarship and mentorship including more than 60 journal papers, invited commentaries, and book chapters.

Presenters



Fernando Nunes, MEd, PhD

Fernando Nunes is an Associate Professor with the Department of Child and Youth Study, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. He has conducted research on at-risk immigrant children, the academic underachievement and civic participation of Portuguese-Canadian youth and on Canada's model of immigrant settlement services. He also has acquired over 35 years of volunteer, consultancy and employment experience within education, social services and public health.



Chang Su, PhD

Chang Su received her Ph. D in Social and Personality Psychology at York University. She has over ten years of teaching and research experiences in psychological area. Dr. Su's research interests expanded to include cultural differences in parenting styles, and cultural differences in experiences and responses to shame and guilt, perfectionism, perfectionistic self-presentation and mental health studies. She finished her second and third postdoctoral fellowship with Dr. Nazilla Khanlou in Lillian/Meighen Wright Women Mental Health Research Centre in York University. and focused on the effect of stress, social support and traditional Chinese cultural beliefs on Chinese immigrant mothers of children with developmental disabilities in Canada by using qualitative and quantitative research methodologies.



Attia Khan, MBBS, MSPH, PhD (Candidate)

Attia Khan is completing her doctoral studies in Health Policy and Equity, Faculty of Health, York University. Attia has practiced as a physician for several years and has also specialized in public health. She has been involved in several hospital and community-based research studies, and with different populations. As an affiliate of the office of Women's Health Chair in Mental Health, her on-going research projects include OPC funded young adults with development disabilities' access and use of digital technology and SSHRC funded exploratory study of Asian and Latino youth on multiculturalism. Attia's doctoral research uses mixed-methods to explore mental health in Pakistani youth.

Presenters



Babitha Shanmuganandapala, RN, MScN (c)

Babitha Shanmuganandapala, RN, BScN, graduated from York University, Magna Cum Laude, in 2014. As a first generation Tamil immigrant, who grew up hearing about too many occurrences of suicide within her community, and informed by her experiences as a front line mental healthcare professional, she decided to pursue a thesis based Master of Science in Nursing (MScN) degree, at York University. She received an Entrance Scholarship awarded to the highest ranked students entering the program. Under the supervision of Nazilla Khanlou, she is currently conducting research on the perceptions, practices and experiences of health, wellbeing and mental health among first and second-generation Tamil-Canadian youth of Sri Lankan origin. She hopes to address the intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, and class, within the individual, familial, community, and societal levels. Her aim is to increase knowledge, and inform opportunities to address mental health through mental health promotion, education, practice/service delivery, and further research for, and within, this population. One avenue in which she hopes to accomplish these goals is through the creative use of arts and film. As she completes her studies, Babitha currently works as a Nursing Inspector at the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care.



Tali Filler, MSc

Tali Filler is a recent graduate from the Global Health Master's program (thesis stream) at McMaster University. Tali's thesis research focused on Syrian refugee adolescent mental health and wellbeing. Through her research, she gained insights from both youth themselves and service providers who work directly with this population. Tali collaborated with a community organization in Toronto called North York Community House that focuses on settlement and community building for newcomers. Tali is currently a research assistant at the Office of the Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health. She is also involved in teaching and learning research at McMaster University, which looks at the influence of high impact learning practices on building MSc students' global health research competencies. Tali continues to be passionate about community and mental health.

Presenters



Farah Islam, PhD

Farah Islam completed her postdoctoral fellowship in the Social Aetiology of Mental Illness (SAMI) program at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and the University of Toronto and her PhD at York University. She explores mental health and service access in Canada's racialized and immigrant populations, using both quantitative epidemiology and mixed methods research. Farah orients her research and community work around breaking down the barriers of mental health stigma.



Luz Maria Vazquez, PhD

Luz Maria Vazquez is the research coordinator of the Office of Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health in the Faculty of Health at York University. She is a PhD from the Department of Sociology at York University. She worked for more than ten years in a research center in Mexico where she acquired strong research skills based on extensive ethnographic and qualitative work in Latin American contexts – Mexico, Belize and Guatemala. During the last four years she has collaborated in various community-based research projects that address issues of health inequities, social determinants of health, gender, disability and migration status in the GTA.



Lisa Seto Nielsen, RN, PhD

Lisa Seto Nielsen is an Assistant Professor at the School of Nursing, York University. She completed her doctorate at the Lawrence S. Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto. Her doctoral dissertation explored the palliative home care experiences of Chinese immigrants with advanced cancer in the Greater Toronto Area. Her current work is examining the cancer and palliative care experiences of undocumented immigrants. Undocumented immigrants often do not have health care insurance, have precarious employment, and limited social and legal protections. Dr. Seto Nielsen is interested in understanding how the intersection of these dynamics shape the cancer and palliative care experiences of this marginalized population. Dr. Seto Nielsen's research interests integrate the areas of palliative care, home care, death and dying, vulnerable groups, racialized immigrants, and the health care system. Her approach to research is informed by critical social theory, such as postcolonialism and intersectionality, and critical qualitative methodologies.

Presentation Abstracts

Toward interdisciplinarity and intersectionality in exploring youth identities

Presenter: Nazilla Khanlou

Interdisciplinary inquiry and intersectionality approaches provide a context-specific understanding of the dynamic nature of youth identities. In multicultural and immigrant-receiving settings youth identities are impacted by support for diversity and inclusion, and are constantly reshaped in the face of global migration and transnational diaspora. Our systems-based conceptual framework attempts to explicate youth cultural identity by applying a social ecological perspective (Khanlou et al., 2018). It has aided us to work toward policy and practice informing research, in considering transactional influences from micro to meso to macro system levels. At the same time we attempt to be reflexive in our research by recognizing the impact of our implicit ontologies and epistemologies in our community-based studies. As researchers we are transformed through learning from youth as they share with us their narratives on agency, identity negotiations, and resistance to ascribed identities

Critical and Intersectional Perspectives on Youth Cultural Identity

Presenter: Fernando Nunes

The task of exploring and discussing issues of cultural identity, concerning Asian youth in Canada is a difficult task, as these originate from a variety of nations, cultural backgrounds and migratory experiences. This is also complicated by the fact that ethnic identity formation has traditionally been studied from a number of different theoretical and empirical approaches. This implies that the process of youth cultural identity formation needs to be analyzed from a historical, interdisciplinary, intersectional and systems perspective. The speaker will comment on some of the factors that may be important in this intersectional and systems perspective, as well as some of the opportunities for further research on Asian youth that he perceives through the systems model

Presentation Abstracts

A Cross-cultural Study on Self-regulation of Shame and Guilt, Self-construal, and Self-monitoring among Mainland Chinese, Chinese Canadians, European Canadians, and International Chinese Students in Canada

Presenters: Chang Su & Michaela Hynie

Effect of cultural background on the self-regulation of shame and guilt was addressed in undergraduate students of European Canadian (EC, N = 99), Canadian Chinese (CC, N = 86), and international Chinese in Canada (IC, N = 65) and mainland Chinese (MC, N = 69). Participants read the 18 scenarios, and rated each scenario on a 12-item Shame and Guilt Self-Regulation Scale (SGSRS) and answered self-construal and self-monitoring scales, MANOVA analyses showed that MC endorsed more positive approach (i.e., problem focus coping, support seeking) to the guilt and shame scenarios than CC and EC. Gender differences also emerged, women endorsed more positive approach strategies to shame than men and less withdrawal (denial). Regression analyses showed that interdependent self-construal in identity development, but not independent self-construal or self-monitoring, partially mediated between MC culture and responses to shame problem focused coping. Thus, cultural norms and immediate environment clearly affect the responses to these self-conscious emotions. Culture affects self-regulation to shame and guilt through both norms and personality variables (i.e., interdependent self-construal).

Ethnic Identity, Self-Esteem, and Resilience: Examining Mental Health Attributes among Immigrant and Canadian-Born Youth of Pakistani Ethnicity

Presenters: Attia Khan & Nazilla Khanlou

Background: Identity formation is a key component of healthy youth development, it helps them in assigning life roles and to develop future goals. In diverse societies ethnic and cultural identity play an important role in shaping the mental health and maintaining wellbeing of migrant minority youth.

Objectives: The aim of this study is to examine the role of Ethnic Identity, Self-Esteem, and Resilience, on the mental health of immigrant and Canadian-born Pakistani youth using a Systems Framework Context.

Methods: Here we report on the quantitative exploratory component of a mixed-method study (PhD thesis in progress). As many as 61 participants (21 male and 33 females) completed the on-line (n= 28)and paper-based (n=33) survey, that gathered information on demographics, self-reported physical, mental and social health, 4-item Current Self-Esteem scale (CSE), 12-item Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R), and Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM-12).

Results: Descriptive statistics generated, 69% were Pakistani-born, household income of less than 50K reported (Pakistani-born 66%, Canadian-born 33% youth), 60% had good to excellent health, 74% were stressed on most days, 50% identified as South Asian, and 18% as Pakistani. The overall average scores for Multigroup Ethnic Identity-Revised (MEIM-R) [3.14 (0.39 SD)] Resilience (CYRM-12) [4.23 (0.2 SD)], and Current Self-Esteem (CSE) [6.5 (2.13 SD)] for the group were high.

Presentation Abstracts

The Role of Parents in Negotiations of Cultural Identity and Mental Health Among Tamil Youth of Sri Lankan Origin Living in the Greater Toronto Area

Presenter: Babitha Shanmuganandapala

Background: The Sri Lankan Tamil community of Canada is the largest to be found outside of Sri Lanka; however, literature focusing on Tamil youth and their mental health (MH) is currently non-existent. The aim of this study was to explore, discover, and understand the meanings, beliefs, practices, and experiences of health, wellbeing, and MH from the perspective of thirteen first and second-generation Sri Lankan Tamil youth, aged 18 to 24, living in the Greater Toronto Area.

Results: Participants strongly identified with being “Tamil” and “Canadian” and less strongly with being “Sri Lankan”. The role of parents emerged as a major theme and reflects the impact that parents have on this population’s negotiations of their identity, as well as their meanings, beliefs, practices, and experiences of MH. Participants experienced intergenerational trauma, culture clash, and discrimination/racism while navigating their mental health and cultural identities in Toronto.

Discussion and Conclusion: Parents can be a great starting point in addressing MH and fostering a healthy identity within this population. Recommendations include awareness to break the stigma, and education around mental health for parents in English and Tamil, including how to approach and address the topic with their children, and how to practice and role model positive MH. Further research is required to analyze this issue from the parents’ perspective. Cultural representation in MH service providers, MH promotion, as well as the provision of culturally competent care would also be beneficial for this population.

Understanding Identity and Mental Health from Syrian Refugee Adolescents’ Perspectives

Presenter: Tali Filler

Adolescence is a critical stage of development for health, wellbeing and individual identity. As a result, mental health challenges often first emerge during adolescence. Refugee adolescents are a particularly vulnerable group, as normal adolescent stress is compounded with resettlement stress. This research examined how Syrian refugee adolescents conceptualize mental health. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews with Syrian refugee adolescents (n=7) and service providers (n=8) in the Greater Toronto Area. The development of this study was informed by the Youth Identity Framework. Data analysis was guided by grounded theory. The findings indicate that conceptualizations of mental health are highly dependent on how the concept is framed. The term mental health was not well understood amongst Syrian adolescents. However, when different terminology was used to describe mental health, adolescents were able to identify factors that influence mental health status, including individual, social and system-level factors. This study recommends future strategies for policy makers, service providers and researchers on how to effectively address Syrian adolescents’ mental health.

Presentation Abstracts

“Children are going on a Different Path”: Youth Identity from the Bangladeshi Immigrant Parents’ Perspective

Presenter: Farah Islam

Objective: To describe youth identity from the perspective of parents with a particular focus on the impact of migration on identity formation for both parents and children.

Methods: The semi-structured interview guide was developed using an intersectional lens (Collins, 2000). Interviews with Bangladeshi immigrants (n = 20) living in the “Little Bangladesh” locale in Toronto, Canada were analyzed using Braun and Clarke’s (2006) guide on thematic analysis and a systems framework (Khanlou et al., 2018).

Results: Parents described youth identity as a time of conflict, turmoil, confusion, loneliness, and dual identity. In terms of their own identity, parents saw their children as being very different from them, and yet, their identity as a ‘parent’ seemed to take precedence over all other roles in their life, particularly for mothers. Parents and children experienced changes in their identity at the macro, meso, micro, and individual levels through the process of migration and resettlement.

Conclusions: The high level of engagement of Bangladeshi immigrant parents in their children’s lives makes the parent-child relationship an important entry point for health and social systems intervention and programming.

Contemporary multicultural narratives and immigration politics: Intersections of gender, racialization, and cultural identity among Asian and Latino Canadian immigrant youth

Presenters: Luz Maria Vazquez & Lisa Seto Nielson
With Nazilla Khanlou & Attia Khan

Background: In the face of global migration and resettlement of youth, discourses around the intersections of identity, diversity, and inclusion are continually changing with youth negotiating and adapting to such changes. Purpose: To revisit youth identity and migration discourses through a community-based study.

Methods: Qualitative, in-depth interviews and focus groups were conducted with Asian and Latino Canadian youth between the ages of 18- 24, who live in the Greater Toronto Area. Analysis was inductive and code-driven.

Findings: Youths cultural identities are complex and fluid and shaped by multiple, intersecting factors. The findings represent three themes based on a systems perspective (micro, meso, and macro), respectively: 1) identity domains such as family, skin colour, religion, gender, immigration history; 2) lack of representation and invisibility in media; 3) mixed narratives on multiculturalism and critical views on global migration discourses.

Discussion: Youth narratives highlight the intersection of multiple factors that cut across systems levels demonstrating the complexity of immigration and identity for these youth. Interwoven in narratives were experiences of racial discrimination, gender inequality, and indeterminate belonging. Despite this, youth resist oversimplified representations by inserting their gendered, minority, and youth identity within mainstream multicultural narratives to make visible immigrant youth experiences/journeys.

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