The process of identity formation for youth growing up in multicultural familial contexts

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A thesis in

The individualized program

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts, Individualized program

Concordia University

Montreal, Quebec

November, 2017

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

School of Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

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Entitled: **The process of identity formation for youth growing up in multicultural familial contexts**

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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Abstract

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The present research examines the process of identity formation for young people who grew up in multicultural contexts. While identity development has been studied by many researchers, there is little research examining how young people who are simultaneously growing up in multiple cultures experience the process of identity formation. In the present research, ten young people (20-24 years old) who have parents from two different cultures that are different than the Euro-Canadian culture, and at least one parent is considered part of visible minority, were interviewed. Two of the participants took part in a focus group to enrich and validate the findings. The overarching category that emerged was processing being different. The first aspect of processing being different was exploring one's belonging and one's personal choices. The other aspect was managing relationships with family members and friends; and managing conflicts that arise in these relationships. While exploring different possibilities in how to belong to different cultural contexts and what choices to make, young people find themselves always trying to balance relationships and conflicts with significant people in their lives. The process of identity formation for multicultural youth is complex and dynamic. It requires them to exercise agency in exploring and making decisions. An appropriate support system that allows young people to express themselves and feel heard may facilitate the process of navigating between different cultural contexts and building resilience.

Key words: identity, multicultural youth, process, cultural context, agency.

Acknowledgment

My Master's journey started when I was admitted to the youth work graduate diploma at Concordia University. Since then, I knew that I wanted to learn the practical aspect of working with young people, but I was also interested in research. My research methods class with Dr. Natasha Blanchet-Cohen was the source of my inspiration and guidance in shaping and refining my area of interest.

The professors, staff, and colleagues in the department of Applied Human Sciences have been a great source of support and encouragement throughout the graduate diploma and afterwards. I will never forget their continuous support and care.

I am fortunate to have supervisory committee members who provided me with continuous feedback, encouraged me to think critically, allowed me the time I need to work on my ideas, and believed in my ability to complete my research. Dr. Natasha Blanchet-Cohen, Dr. Warren Linds, and Dr. Holly Recchia: I learned a lot from you and I am very grateful for all the support that I received.

I am grateful for the individualized program at Concordia University since it allowed me to continue my journey that I started at the youth work program. Thank you Darlene Dubiel for your dedication to the INDI students and for being always available.

My parents –Neima and Mohammed- and my siblings: thank you for believing in me and encouraging me to follow my goals. Thank you for babysitting my children, for feeding us from time to time, and for always caring.

Wassim, I cannot express my gratitude for the unconditional support for me and for our children throughout my academic career. I know it was not possible for me to complete it without your help. Maria and Ibrahim, my beautiful multi-cultural children, I hope you find this research inspiring one day. I love you.

I would like to thank all the professionals, youth workers, and researchers who I have met during my academic and professional career for being a source of inspiration.

Finally, the multi-cultural young people who I met as a practitioner, and those who I interviewed for this research: I am grateful for your openness, interest, and patience in answering my questions; and for making this research possible.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction of Thesis

The process of identity development is a major developmental task for adolescents and young adults. Young people try to differentiate themselves from others and develop a coherent understanding of the self (DeSocio, 2005). During the process, youth use their culture as a point of reference in order to decide the norms that are socially appropriate and the roles that they are expected to adopt in their societies (Jensen, Arnett, & McKenzie, 2011). As it will be explained later in the literature review, culture may be defined as the meaning system of a group of people that is different from others in terms of language, rituals, values, and influential figures (Hofstede, 1994). Some young people are born into multiple cultures and may have access to multiple meaning systems at once. Some of these cultures may have overlapping values and norms and others may have contradicting ones. The impact of growing up in such contexts will be explored in this research.

The Greater Montreal area, in Quebec Canada –where the research took place- is an example of a place where young people are exposed to multiple cultures while growing up. There are two official languages in the city; and over half of the population speak both languages, being English and French. In addition, the mother tongue of 22% of the population is a language that is not official (Statistics Canada, 2012). Indeed, a little over 25% of the population in Montreal reported belonging to more than one ethnic origin (Statistics Canada, 2009a); and 16% are part of a visible minority (Statistics Canada, 2009b). The reality of growing up in multicultural contexts is not limited to

Montreal; it is becoming the reality of young people in many areas in a globalized world. Globalization is

> an umbrella term for what is taking place around the world in association with global integration of economies, rapid media and information flow facilitated by new communication technologies, international migration of labor, the rise of transnational and pan- regional organizations, and resultant cultural transformations challenging traditional social structures (Lam, 2006, p.214)

The rapid flow of cultural experiences through media outlets, technologies, and ease of traveling reduces the particularities of geographical localities (Tomlinson, 2003). While this rapid exchange does not mean that we are heading for uniform culture worldwide, it means that culture is less determined by the practices and values of a closed group of people in one specific location since locations are being penetrated by people from different backgrounds, locations, and cultures (Tomlinson, 2003). One of the outcomes of the globalized world is the increase in intercultural unions and marriages (Bustamante, Nelson, Henriksen, & Monakes, 2011); and children who have parents from different backgrounds. These children may face challenges regarding integrating multiple meaning systems; but they also gain some benefits from belonging to these systems.

Some of the advantages that are related to identifying with a multicultural identity include intercultural sensitivity, cultural competence, knowing multiple languages, and a lower risk of substance use (Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2010; Fisher, Zapolski, Sheehan, & Barnes-Najor, 2017). It is possible, however, for young people to face a challenge in integrating multiple identities within the self and in developing a coherent sense of the

self (Yampolsky, Amiot, & de la Sablonnière, 2013). Some of the challenges that these young people may face include a sense of confusion about one's belonging to a specific culture, and a feeling of isolation from surrounding cultures (Navarrete & Jenkins, 2011). The process of identity development of young people growing up in such a multicultural environment is therefore an important subject area to study. The present research will examine their experience through interviewing young people who simultaneously live in at least three cultures.

The following chapters will examine the research topic using a multidisciplinary approach that include the following fields: child and youth work, psychology, education, and applied human sciences. Chapter two will start with a literature review to have a better understanding of the research question and the gap in the existing literature. Chapter three will discuss the methodology, which is the grounded theory method; the participants and their characteristics; and the details of the methods that were used. I will also discuss some ethical considerations. Chapter four will present the categories that emerged from data analysis and the emerging theory. Finally, chapter five provides a discussion of the findings and their implications, including a discussion of the strengths, limitations, and future direction for this research.

The Use of Terms

In this research some of the terms that are used may have varying meanings and interpretations that depends on the context of the research. Hence, I will list some of the terms and clarify the way they were used in this dissertation.

Culture. The definition of culture is discussed in the literature review. In this part, I need to clarify that in the context of this research, it is used to refer to the ethnic

backgrounds of the parents. During the interviews, the participants defined these backgrounds in their own way. More details regarding the definition of culture will be provided in upcoming chapters.

Bicultural. The research that discusses bicultural youth and bicultural families refers to a home of one ethnic background that is different than the majority. For instance, a home in Montreal that adopts the Chinese culture is considered bicultural. In this research, it is used to refer to youth growing up with in a home that has one culture that is different than the culture of the Euro-Canadian majority.

Multicultural. The research that discusses multicultural families and youth often refers to a home that has two cultures that are different than the culture of the majority; or to people moving from one place to another and experiencing multiple cultures. In this research, I refer to youth who grew up in homes with two different cultures that are different than the Euro-Canadian culture as multicultural young people or multicultural youth. I am aware that the term multicultural may be interpreted in many different ways and it may have political connotations, but it is used to make the text easier to read when I am referring to young people who are growing up in homes with multiple cultures.

Biracial/multiracial. The terms biracial and multiracial were only used if I am referring to a study that used these terms. Research that was cited in this thesis that used the words biracial and multiracial generally defined these in the same way that I defined bicultural and multicultural in my own study.

Cultural context. I use the term cultural context to refer to circumstances and spaces in which young people's experiences are largely impacted by their cultural backgrounds. Participants used these contexts as areas for exploration and as points of

reference when searching for values and beliefs to adopt. Some of these contexts included family gatherings, cultural parties and events, school, and countries of origins.

Standpoint of the Researcher

Before starting with the literature review, I think it is important to situate myself as a researcher since reflexivity is an important part of the methodology of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Urquhart, 2012). Reflexivity is a process of critical self-reflection in order to be aware of biases from the part of the researcher (Urquhart, 2012). I identify myself as a woman of African descent who grew up in two bicultural environments. My parents (of Eritrean origins) moved from the Middle East –where I was born- to Canada when I was 13 years old. I lived in a home with African traditions; and in dominant cultures that have different values, worldviews and languages. I lived in both places as a visible minority; and thus, I was always conscious of being different.

In addition to my personal experience while growing up, I am now a mother to two children who are growing up multicultural contexts as my partner and I come from different cultural backgrounds that are different from the culture of the majority. Although my experience growing up is not similar to the participants' in this research, my children now are living this experience of a multicultural home with cultures different than the culture of the majority. Thus, my insights and thoughts regarding the participants' experiences come from a parent's perspective rather than the child's perspective.

In relation to my professional experience, I worked with children and young people from various backgrounds. I met young people who are new immigrants, refugees, and Canadian-born bicultural and multicultural youth. Consequently, I always had

interest in learning about different cultures, and traditions. I have also wondered about the meaning of these cultures to the young people; and the way cultures influence these young people.

Another interest that I had throughout my academic and professional career is the mental health of young people. I chose to complete my undergraduate education in psychology and human relations, which allowed me to increase my knowledge about mental health disorders, prevention, and interventions. My personal experience in addition to working with youth led me to hear many questions related to identity development such as: Who am I? Where do I belong? What are my values? I have also observed the impact of mental health issues on young people's well-being.

As I started my graduate degree in Youth Work, I started learning more about the impact of globalization, traveling, and immigration on the identity formation of young people (Jensen, Arnett, & McKenzie, 2011). While completing my classes in this diploma, I gradually started formulating the question of this research. My personal history, academic, and professional experiences along with my interest in youth work, cultures and mental health led me to pursue an area that has not been thoroughly addressed, yet is the reality of more and more youth growing up.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Identity formation and individuation are central tasks during adolescence and early adulthood. The developmental task for young people at this stage is to develop who they are, where they belong, and how they see their future (Erik-son, 1968). In answering these questions, they are expected to explore roles and worldviews; and commit to them. This research is interested in the process of identity development for young people who are growing up in multiple cultural contexts for reasons that will be discussed below. The literature review in this chapter has the function of situating the current study within existing research; and providing a context to understand the purpose of the research question.

In this chapter, I will start with an overview of how identity research has evolved and the current trends in the field, such as the trend that focuses on outcome and categories, and the trend that focuses on process. This part will be followed with a discussion related to existing research in relation to cultures and the development of cultural identities. A particular attention will be given to discussing the research around bicultural and multicultural identity formation. The known advantages and challenges, and areas that still needs to be addressed will be discussed.

Identity Research

To understand how identity research emerged and how identity is discussed in the literature, it is important to understand the part of Erikson's psychosocial development theory that discusses identity development as he is credited with founding identity research (McLean & Syed, 2015). His theory includes a stage in life in which young people either develop their identities and commit to their choices or remain in confusion

about their roles and who they are (Erikson, 1968). According to Erikson, identity consists of three interrelated components, which are social identity, personal identity and ego identity. The three components and their functions will be discussed below.

To start, the social identity is concerned with having a sense of belonging to a certain group or culture. Developing a social identity is the process that a young person goes through in an effort to answer 'where I belong?' and develop an affiliation to a group or several groups (Mclean & Syed, 2015). Belonging is the part of the identity that makes one securely feel part of a larger group and is a process that is produced through regular encounters and experiences with one's environment (Anthias, 2006; Visser 2017). Thus, through these experiences young people start referring to their groups as meaning systems when adopting values, morals, and worldviews. In other words, young people use their social groups as points of reference to determine acceptable life choices in relation to worldviews, occupation, and sexual orientation.

The other two components that are required to develop a comprehensive identity are personal identity and ego identity. Personal identity is concerned with making life choices regarding personal ideologies and roles in life (Erikson, 1968). Young people try to answer 'who am I?' through exploring choices, and then committing to some of the choices (Mclean & Syed, 2015). This process of exploring and committing to choices is theorized by Marcia (1966) who identified four outcomes that may result from the process. A phase that is characterized by high level of exploration, and then high level of commitment to life choices leads to identity achievement. A phase that is high in exploration, but low in commitment is identified as moratorium. Foreclosure is the status of those who have low level of exploration but high level of commitment to life choices.

Finally, identity diffusion is characterized by low levels of exploration and commitment (Marcia, 1966). In order to go through the process of exploring and committing to develop a personal identity, it is important to have a strong sense of affiliation and belonging to certain groups (McLean & Syed, 2015). The social identity, which is related to one's sense of belonging, serves as a point of reference regarding available options to explore. For instance, a young person of African origin who has a strong affiliation to her community will explore the values, worldviews, and expectations of her community from young people; and then commit to some choices that are within accepted options in the community. Thus, a clear sense of social identity is required to gain a sense of identity achievement (McLean & Syed, 2015).

The third component of identity is ego identity. It is concerned with making sense of the self throughout time (McLean & Syed, 2015). It is each persons' narrative of their own lives from birth to present, and the way they foresee their future. In other words, it is trying to find out 'how did I come to be?' and 'where am I heading?' (McAdams & McLean, 2013). Well-developed social and personal identities contribute in developing a coherent and positive narrative of one's life. Young people who have positive and coherent life stories are those who have greater maturity and ability to adapt to adversity (McAdams & McLean, 2013). This process of developing ego identity and meaning making of one's life usually emerge during late-adolescence or early adulthood as it requires advanced cognitive abilities (McAdams, 1988).

Erikson's stages of psychosocial development (1968) and Marcia's status model (1966) have set the groundwork in identity research. The focus in both theories, however, is on the outcome of the process of identity development. Erikson's stages focus on the

resolution. A successful resolution of the stage of 'identity versus role confusion' leads to a sense of fidelity to oneself and to decisions taken in life (Erikson, 1968). It also leads to smooth transition to next stage in life. Marcia's work is concerned with the outcome after a process of exploring choices. Consequently, research approaches that focus on the outcome of identity development dominate the field (McLean & Syed, 2015). Less emphasis has been placed on the process of identity development (McLean & Syed, 2015).

The process of identity development looks at how one makes a choice regarding belonging to a certain group, how one initiates the process of exploring, and why one decides to commit to certain worldviews and roles (McAdams, 1988; McLean, 2008). A narrative approach to identity research is an example of an approach that is process-oriented rather than outcome-oriented (e.g. Li, Wu, Wen Li., & Zhuang, 2012). A narrative approach to identity research assumes that individuals construct part of their identities by engaging in the meaning making process of selective events in their lives in order to formulate their life stories. The process allows individuals to understand contradictions in their past experiences and to integrate these experiences in one story (McLean, 2008). Life stories may have different levels of coherence. Narrative coherence "has been used as an indicator of well-being in social psychology and clinical research" (p.5) since it is significantly related to measures of well-being such as happiness and satisfaction (Yampolsky et al, 2013). In addition, narrative incoherence is related to psychopathology such as schizophrenia (Baerger & McAdam, 1999). In cultural identity research, narrative coherence has been used to examine one's ability to reconcile more than one cultural identity within the self. For instance, Yampolsky et al. (2013) found that

young people who failed to integrate multiple cultural identities had lower coherence in their narratives. The details of the study will be presented later in this chapter.

In the present research, the aim was to take an approach that focuses on the process of identity development of young people who are growing up in homes that have two ethnic cultures that are different from the majority in the society. The process of identity development in this situation may provide insight in understanding how young people seek to form coherent narratives of their life stories and comprehensive identities (social, personal, and ego) while living in contexts that may expose them to many contradicting or competing values and worldviews.

Culture and Cultural identity

In this research, the participants had parents who identify themselves with two different cultures other than the Euro-Canadian culture. As a result, in addition to the culture of the majority, the participants are experiencing two other cultures at home. This research aims to better understand the process that young people growing up in multicultural homes undergo in making choices related to social and personal identities. Their narratives of their life stories will also help in understanding their ego identity. As mentioned in the introduction, I use the term cultural context in this research to refer to circumstances and spaces in which young people's experiences are largely impacted by their cultural backgrounds. Participants use these contexts as areas for exploration and as points of reference when searching for values and beliefs to adopt. Some of these contexts included family gatherings, cultural parties and events, school, and countries of origins. Cultural context is an important aspect of the research. Therefore, it is essential to establish a definition of culture and cultural identity.

There are numerous definitions of culture; and they mostly include terms such as shared worldviews, languages, and practices of a group of people. One of the most comprehensive definitions according to Worrell (2015) is the one used by VandenBos (2007). Culture is defined as "1. The distinctive customs, values, beliefs, knowledge, art and language of a society or community. 2. The characteristics attitudes and behaviors of a particular group within society, such as a profession, social class, or age group" (VandenBos, 2007, p.250). Based on that definition, cultures could include practices and worldviews of a specific age cohort such as adolescents' culture, people belonging to the same profession, or same ethnicity. Another definition that is relevant to this research is Hofstede's (1994) definition that states culture is "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another" (p. 1). Thus, individuals consider themselves as part of a culture when they share a framework with one category of people that is different from the frameworks of other categories of people. To further explain the definition, Hofstede explained that the category of people may include –among others- ethnic groups, nationalities, gender, and age group; and the collective programming of mind includes –for instance- languages, values, manners, and boundaries. Hofstede's (1994) and Vandenbon's (2007) definitions take into account the importance of having distinctive features such as language, ethnic background, and social class that differentiate one group of people from another. In the current research, the two ethnic identifications of the parents' of the participants and the Euro-Canadian culture of the majority were the three cultures that were examined.

As mentioned earlier, social identity identifies one's sense of belonging to a specific culture or group, and thus, one's cultural identity is part of the social identity. For

instance, Jensen (2003) defines cultural identity as “a broad set of worldview beliefs and behavioral practices” (p.190) that are shared by members of a community. It mainly relates to belonging to a group and using the worldviews of that group as a point of reference in adopting values, and acting based on them (Jensen, Arnett, & McKenzie, 2011). Consequently, one of the main emphases of cultural identity research is understanding how one negotiates identifying with more than one culture at the same time; how one uses these cultures as meaning systems and points of reference in order to develop personal and ego identity; and what factors influences the level of identifying with each culture (Jensen, Arnett, & McKenzie, 2011; Phinney, 1990).

Previous research in relation to identity formation in a multicultural context mainly took into consideration two cultures. The two cultures are either heritage and mainstream culture, or home culture and host culture. When research addressed issues related to heritage and mainstream cultures, the context was usually related to second generation youth (e.g. Bauer, Loomis, & Akkari, 2013; Umaña-Taylor, Bhanot, & Shin, 2006). Thus, it addresses the experiences of young people living with parents who identify with a similar ethnic group that is different from the culture of the majority. When research addressed issues related to home culture and host culture, the context was either first generation immigrants, or Third Cultures Kids (e.g. McDonald, 2011; Walter, & Auton-Cuff, 2009). Third Cultures Kids (TCK) are those who have lived a significant part of their lives outside the parents’ culture due to their parents’ occupations or lifestyles; their lives are characterized by geographical mobility (Pollock, Van Ruth, & Van Reken, 2009). Thus, geographical mobility is a requirement for research addressing

home culture and host culture. Below, I will provide more details regarding these studies that mainly discusses biculturalism and bicultural identity.

Benet-Martínez, Leu, Lee, and Morris (2002) introduced the concept of compatibility and opposition between two cultures for a bicultural person. The authors recognized that there are individual differences in adopting and integrating two cultures; and thus, they proposed the Bicultural Identity Integration (BII) continuum as a model that may explain individual differences in integrating two cultural meaning systems. Biculturals who have high BII perceive their cultural identities as compatible. Those who have low BII perceive their identities as oppositional. The study confirmed that participants maintained two independent cultural systems that were activated by cultural cues from their environment. Those with high BII behaved in a way that is consistent with the cultural cue. Thus, if they were exposed to Chinese cues, for instance, they responded in a culturally-expected manner for Chinese people. Participants who had low BII resisted cultural cues by activating the opposite cultural system. Thus, when participants were exposed to American cues, they responded in a way that is appropriate in a Chinese context (Benet-Martínez, et al., 2002). In addition, another study examined the impact of individual differences in adopting a bicultural identity on well-being and psychological adjustment (Chen, Benet-Martínez, & Harris Bond, 2008). The series of studies found that bicultural identity dynamics (e.g. high BII, Low BII) played an important role in psychological adjustment of the participants who were immigrants. Those with high bicultural integration have better psychological adjustment than participants with low BII. The study also identified “acculturative stress” (p.831) –such

as discrimination, learning a new language, and isolation- as negative predictors of psychological adjustment (Chen et al., 2008).

The two studies tried to explain the dynamics of integrating two cultural identities and the influence of a bicultural identity on well-being. What about the integration of more than two cultural identities? Is psychological adjustment harder or more complex for young people with multicultural identities? The current research attempted to address these questions to help understand how young people who grow up in a multicultural context integrate multiple cultural systems within the self; and to understand how to support them during that process.

Multicultural Youth: The Challenge of Developing an Identity

Chen et al. (2008) found that people who perceive their two cultures as oppositional have lower psychological adjustment. Are these results applicable to people who have more than two cultural identities? Yampolsky, Amiot, and de la Sablonnière (2013) from the University of Quebec in Montreal examined the process of integrating multiple identities of youth who were born into two or three cultures; and the impact of this process on their well-being. The study used the cognitive developmental model (Amiot, de la Sablonniere, Terry, & Smith, 2007) as a framework in order to examine identity integration. Amiot et al.'s model includes four "cognitive configurations" (2007, p. 369) that explain dealing with multiple cultural identities. The researchers defined cognitive configuration as the stage of change that is occurring within the self in relation to one's social identity. The first configuration is only applicable to those who experience geographical mobility. The rest of the configurations are applicable to youth who are born in multiple cultures. The second configuration involves categorization which is

characterized by identifying with one culture over the others. The third deals with compartmentalization which is characterized by identifying with all cultures. In this case, each culture is not seen as compatible with the other; so each is kept separate from the other. The fourth is integration and is characterized by identifying with all cultures, finding similarities, and connecting the cultures (Amiot et al., 2007).

Yampolsky et al. (2013) found that those who adopted the integration configuration in perceiving their identities had higher narrative coherence. As explained earlier, narrative coherence is related to a higher state of well-being. Participants who compartmentalized their identities had low narrative coherence. Finally, contrary to the authors' expectations, those who adopted the categorization configuration had higher narrative coherence than those who used compartmentalization (Yampolsky et al., 2013). Thus, viewing several cultures as incompatible and keeping them separate may be an indication of lower psychological adjustment. In another study, Brook, Garcia, and Fleming (2008) asked participants to list up to 12 identities such as groups (e.g. gender, ethnic group) and roles (e.g. student, sister, and parent); then they had to identify the level of importance of each identity. The following step was to identify the identities that are in harmony; and the ones that are conflicting. Due to limited resources such as time and energy, some role or groups may be hard to combine; and others may facilitate each other. For instance, being a student and an athlete may constitute two competing identities as they both require a so much of the student's time. On the other hand, belonging to two closely related cultures may have helpful effect on understanding the cultures and fitting in both of them. The researchers found that those who had important identities that are competing had lower level of psychological well-being. Those who had

important identities that facilitate each other had higher level of psychological well-being (Brook et al., 2008). Thus, it is possible that participants who were using the compartmentalization configuration (i.e. identified with all cultures but see them as incompatible; and hence kept them separate) in the study of Yampolsky et al. (2013) attribute a high level of importance to their ethnic identities, but view them as competing. The competition between important identities may have negatively their well-being.

Individual differences in psychological well-being can be explained by the level of importance one attributes to the cultures and by the perception of compatibility between these cultures (Brook et al., 2008). These differences can also be explained in terms of resilience. Ungar et al. (2007) defined resilience as the interaction between the individual characteristics and the quality of environment that allows the individual to overcome adversity. Ungar (2008) explained that resilience is embedded in a cultural context that has great influence on the individual. After conducting interviews in 11 countries with young people ranging in age from 12 to 23, Ungar et al. (2007) found that young people who are resilient deal with seven tensions related to resilience. Identity, cultural adherence, social justice, and cohesion are part of these seven tensions that highly relate to the tensions faced by multicultural individuals as it will be explained later in this section (Navarrete & Jenkins, 2011; Vivero & Jenkins, 1999). The other three tensions are access to material resources, relationships, and power and control. Thus, multicultural young people who are resilient find a way to successfully manage and resolve these tensions, and seek the resources available to them.

Nguyen and Benet-Martinez (2010) presented some of the strengths of being multicultural as discussed in the literature. For instance, multiculturalism is related to

greater academic success during childhood and adolescence; multicultural people have the intercultural competence that is needed in a globalized world; and they have greater cognitive complexity and creativity. Thus, it is possible that multicultural young people who successfully deal with the tensions related to resilience are also able to manage and develop specific skills and strengths. Another recent study found that the higher the ethnic identity among young people, the less substance use they reported (Fisher, Zapolski, Sheehan, & Barnes-Najor, 2017). A meta-analysis of 83 studies concluded that attachment to two cultures is associated with positive psychological outcomes (e.g. self-esteem) and sociocultural outcomes such as behavioural problems (Hong, Zhan, Morris, & Benet-Martínez, 2016).

Researchers have also looked into the challenges that are faced by multicultural individuals. Vivero and Jenkins (1999) coined the term cultural homelessness to describe individuals who are growing up in multicultural environment and feel confused about their membership and loyalty to each group. The term includes people who do not have a clear 'cultural home' due to factors such as living in a bicultural home, and geographical mobility (Navarrete & Jenkins, 2011). The cultural home is needed to feel the safety of belonging to a specific meaning system that provides them with values and norms. The safety of belonging to a well-defined meaning system fosters the development of the social identity. Youth growing up in multiple cultures and adopting multiple meaning systems, however, may be minorities in several cultural communities. They may not fully develop the feeling of safety towards any of the meaning systems that they have experienced (Navarrete & Jenkins, 2011; Vivero & Jenkins, 1999); and thus, the development of their cultural and social identity may be compromised. Navarrete and

Jenkins found that although cultural homelessness may be experienced by any multicultural young person, it is more apparent amongst visible minority than those who are not. Children of European immigrants in Canada, for instance, do not experience the feeling of cultural homelessness with the same intensity as the children of Chinese immigrants. In addition, Navarrete and Jenkins (2011) found an association between cultural homelessness status and risk factors associated with cultural homelessness such as growing up in an ethnically-mixed family, inconsistent cultural practices, and speaking different languages and having low self-esteem. Those who reported these risk factors had higher cultural homelessness.

In Canada, people who belong to visible minorities are those who are non-Aboriginal people, and who are of non-Caucasian origin; visible minorities include those who are Chinese, south Asian, Black, Arab, West Indian, Pilipino, Southeast Asian, Latin American, Japanese, and Korean (Statistics Canada, 2009c). Given that the impacts of cultural homelessness is more apparent among visible minorities, in the present research participants were required to have parents with different ethnic backgrounds where at least one of the parents is considered part of a visible minority.

Understanding the dynamic interaction between all components of identity within the self is essential to understand the challenges of youth growing up in a multicultural environment. In the absence of an agreed upon theoretical framework that explains the integration of multiple systems within the self, (e.g. Benet-Martínez, et al., 2002; Yampolsky et al., 2013), this research aims to build a theory that emerges from the collected data. As it will be detailed later, Glaser and Strauss (1967) labeled the approach as grounded theory method since the concepts and theories are grounded in the data.

Through this exploratory study, I aim to gain insights into how young people deal with multiple identities; how they integrate them; and what are the strengths they have and what are the challenges that they face.

The Present Study

Previous research that used Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (Erikson, 1968), Marcia's identity theory (Marcia, 1966), the cognitive developmental model (Amiot et al., 2007), or bicultural identity integration (Benet-Martínez, et al., 2002) as theoretical framework mainly put emphasis on the outcome of the identity development. There may be, however, rich data in the process of forming one's identity based on multiple meaning systems.

Another remark about previous research is that it mainly took into consideration two cultures: the culture at home, and the culture of the majority. Other researchers have looked at young people who lived in several cultures due to geographical mobility. Some youth in Canada, however, are living in multicultural homes without having to move from one place to another. They are also living in homes that have multiple heritages that are different than the Euro-Canadian culture. According to the results of the Canadian National Household survey, 42.1% of all respondents reported multiple ethnic origins (Statistics Canada, 2011). In the United States, the number of people reporting two races or more increased by 32% from 2000 to 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). These individuals potentially experience multiple cultures; and may find themselves in situations where they are codeswitching between meaning systems.

The present study addressed the following research question: how do youth who grew up in a multicultural environment –where at least one of the parents is visible minority- experience the process of social, personal, and ego identity formation?

Questions around social and cultural identity explored young people's sense of belonging to the different cultures available to them. Questions related to personal identity explored the choices of young people in terms of beliefs, values, career, and significant relationships. Ego identity, which deals with the meaning making process of selective events in one's life in order to formulate a coherent life story, was explored through the narratives of the young people. In addition, questions regarding their experiences with practitioners, teachers, and youth workers were asked to identify the type support that may contribute in shaping a well-developed comprehensive identity (Appendix A).

The targeted participants in this study had to be aged between 18 and 25. Based on Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1968), young people at this age are phasing out of the adolescence phase and are becoming young adults. Arnett (2000) labeled this process as emerging adulthood; and it is distinct from both adolescence and adulthood. Emerging adulthood is characterized by a peak in identity exploration, instability, focus on the self, and feeling in-between adulthood and adolescence (Arnett, 2006). Emerging adults explore their love lives in a way that is different than adolescents do; the focus of emerging adults is on what type of people they are looking for to form lasting relationships rather than what would they enjoy experiencing at the moment (Arnett, 2006). They also explore the educational and occupational choices that are available to them; and thus, they frequently change jobs. Arnett also explains that they

start getting exposed to worldviews that are different than their parents, so they start challenging the worldviews they have known as children. It is expected that participants in this age bracket are highly engaged in the process of exploration and making choices about their career, love life, and worldviews. In addition, this age group is similar to the age groups that were used in several previous bicultural and multicultural identities research (e.g. Benet-Martínez, et al., 2002; Yampolsky, 2013). Consequently, living as an emergent adult in a multicultural familial context is a phenomena of the modern world; and is worth examining to better support the healthy development of these multicultural youth.

Chapter Three: Methodology and Methods

Methodology

This research used grounded theory method as the methodological framework. Grounded theory is used as a qualitative research methodology developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). It is "most suitable when the research problem entails the development of theory, explanation of a process, or the development of a general abstraction or interactions and actions of people" (Green, Creswell, Shope, & Clark, 2007, p.475). It is a systematic way to collect data with the objective of forming a theory that is "grounded in the data themselves" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 2). The exploratory nature of the current research, which aimed to look at the process of identity formation for multicultural young people, encourages the use of grounded theory.

To start, while the researcher is not expected to rely on literature review to come up with a theoretical framework or to contribute in the process of data analysis. It is also not expected that the researcher starts the research as a blank slate (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). While founders of the theory suggest to delay literature review until data analysis is done, subsequent grounded theory researchers view the role of literature review as informative:

> The tactic of a preliminary (non-committal) literature review works well when using GMT. It examines what theory exists in the area and how other people may have addressed aspects of a research problem, but does not then impose a framework on future data collection (Urquhart, 2012, p. 30).

The role of literature review in this research is to inform the researcher of the work that has been done in relation to the research question. Categories and emerging theories are based on data. The literature review is revisited and extended following the emergence of theory.

During the process of data analysis, the researcher allows themes to emerge from data (Urquhart, 2012). The researcher should not impose what is known in the research to give meaning to the new data. In other words, one has to ask what the data are implying instead of trying to force a specific interpretation. Another important characteristic of grounded theory method is the constant data comparison. Concepts are constantly reviewed as new data are coded; thus, the researcher asks how the new data relate to the existing concepts (Charmaz, 2006; Urquhart, 2012). The concept of emergence and comparison allow for reducing the bias that may result from the interpretations of the researchers. Once the emerging theory is established, one can compare the emerging theory and the research that has been done in the field.

Glaser and Strauss had different views on the process of coding; and thus, there are two famous strands of data analysis (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The initial method of Strauss and Corbin (1990) presents paradigms that must be used by researchers and do not allow for flexibility in data analysis. The latest version, however, is more lenient since the authors stated that the paradigms are suggestions (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The process of data analysis presented by Strauss and Corbin starts with open, line-by-line coding. Then, they suggest to use axial coding as a next step which is the act “relating categories to subcategories along the lines of their properties and dimensions” (Corbin & Strauss, 1998). Selective coding follows axial coding; and it is

the process of finding the codes that are relevant to the researcher's question and upscaling them to a level that includes more codes. Finally, theoretical coding is the process of coming up with an emergent theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Urquhart, 2012).

Glaser's version is simpler one and allows for greater flexibility in data analysis (Urquhart, 2012). Glaser's coding process is open coding, selective coding, and finally theoretical coding. Charmaz's (2006) method is an extension of Glaser's version of the theory (1978). Her approach seems the most suitable for this research as it encourages going back to open coding after selective coding as it may allow for the emergence of interesting ideas. In addition, Charmaz (2006) considers the option of using axial coding after the selective coding depending on the research that is at hand. In this research, Charmaz's version of the theory will be used as the methodological framework as it allows for flexibility in the process data analysis, but also takes into consideration all types of coding.

According to qualitative research principles and the grounded theory method, it is important to use more than one research method in order to ensure credibility of the data (Shenton, 2004; Urquhart, 2012). Thus, in addition to interviews, the researcher invited the participants for a focus group as it may allow one to verify the categories that emerged; and participants may provide their input in the relationship between the categories. Figure 1 shows how the grounded theory works with the methods that were selected for this research. More details about this figure will be discussed in the methods section of this chapter.

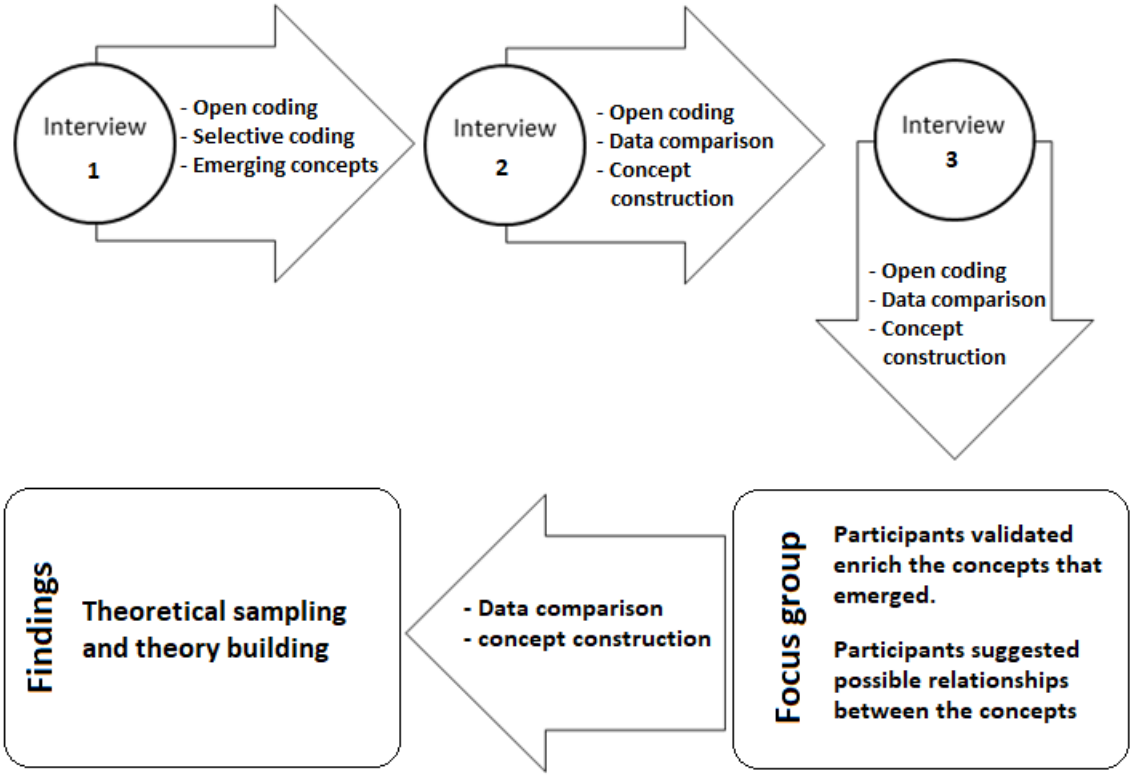

Figure1. Research method

The use of grounded theory with multicultural participants. In each step of the research that is using the grounded theory as a methodology, some aspects in relation to the diverse backgrounds of participants have to be taken into consideration. Green et al. (2007) defined primary diversity in grounded theory research as the research brings the voices and experiences of certain groups of people from diverse cultural communities that are different from the mainstream culture. The research question in this study specifically addressed participants who have parents with different ethnic identifications and at least one of them belongs to a visible ethnic minority. In addition, participants live in the city of Montreal in Quebec, Canada, which is characterized by a high level of linguistic and cultural diversity (Yampolsky et al., 2013).

The researcher has to take into consideration certain elements into consideration with primary diversity. First, in the process of data collection, the researcher needed to have a high level of self-awareness of diverse backgrounds of participants to avoid missing salient themes that may be very relevant to the participants (Green et al., 2007). The rigorous process of emergence and data comparison helped in including all important themes despite the different cultural backgrounds involved in the research.

Another element that the interviewer has to take into consideration is increasing cultural competency by being highly aware of one's own values and worldviews, informing oneself about the interviewees' worldviews, and developing interview skills such as appropriate choice of words and nonverbal gestures (Green et al., 2007; Shenton, 2004). As discussed earlier in the introduction, reflexivity is an important part of grounded theory methodology and it is a process of critical self-reflection in order to be aware of the researcher's biases. Thus, it is a practice that helped in increasing my cultural competency as a researcher as I became aware of my own values and worldviews which were sometime different from the participants'.

Methods

First, individual interviews were conducted with participants. In order to explore different aspects of identity, in-depth interviews were chosen as a research method. Interviews allow for access to people's lived experiences in relation to abstract concepts; and they allow for understanding the perspective of a certain group of people (Seidman, 2013). In this research, interviews helped in understanding the participants' process of meaning making regarding developing their identities in multicultural contexts. Individual interviews, however, are time-consuming and requires intensive work

(Seidman, 2013). The time and energy needed to contact participants, schedule meetings, interview, transcribe, and analyze was very demanding. Other challenges that I faced during the process of interviewing included last-minute cancellations and requests to reschedule. At the end, the choice of research method has to be based on what is being studied (Seidman, 2013) and interviews –despite the challenges related to them- were suitable for this research.

Questions in the in-depth interviewing were based on certain essential constructs for personal and social identity such as exploration, commitment, discrimination, conflicts and sense of belonging (Appendix A). An example of a question related to social identity would be "how was your experience growing up in these cultures?" As for the personal identity questions, participants were asked about the impact of different cultures on certain areas of their lives such as worldviews and beliefs, significant relationships, and choice of career. In order to ensure that questions are asked in a friendly manner for young people (Punch, 2002), different techniques such as sentence completion and reactions to certain sentences in relation to cultural identification were employed.

As for the ego identity, one open-ended question was asked in relation to the life story of the participants. Then, probing questions were asked once participants have completed telling their life story. As mentioned earlier in chapter one, the function of ego identity is to understand contradictions in one's past experiences and to integrate these experiences in one coherent story. Ego identity develops in late adolescence and early adulthood, which is the developmental stage for the participants in this research. The participants were asked to play a role of a storyteller to tell their own lives; they were

expected to select themes that seemed relevant to where they came from and who they are today. The open-ended question was an adapted version of the one used in Yampolsky et al. (2013; Appendix A). Although this was used to assess narrative coherence, it was used in this research in gain greater depth in participants' understanding of who they are.

In addition to the three components of identity, participants were also asked about their experiences in different settings and systems such as school, summer camp, and doctors' offices. This part is to have a better understanding of their interactions with their environments and of their needs as multicultural young people. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes and 90 minutes.

Secondly, according to the principles of grounded theory method, it is important to use another research method to ensure the credibility of the data. Thus, as figure 1 demonstrates, a focus group was planned in order to validate the concepts that were generated from the individual interviews (Appendix B). Participants in the in-depth interviews were invited to participate in a focus group and they were asked to validate and enrich the discussion around categories that were generated from the process of selective coding (Appendix C). Out of four participants who responded, three accepted to attend and only two showed up the day of the focus group.

In this conversation, the researcher presented a story that is composed of quotes taken from different interviews to represent the subcategories of each category. The researcher presented six stories for each of the six categories (Appendix D). Participants were asked to comment on these stories, discuss how they relate to these stories, and in which way they agree or disagree with these stories. Finally, the researcher and the

participants discussed possible relationships between the categories as a way to take the participants' views on the emerging theory.

The use of interviews allowed participants to have greater privacy in expressing themselves and telling stories that they would not share in a group setting. On the other hand, the focus group allowed for more dialogue and greater depth in discussing the categories that emerged.

Participants

Qualifying participants had to have parents from two different ethnic backgrounds, with one of the parents belonging to a visible minority. They had to be between 18-25 years old. As explained earlier, young people in this age group are in a phase that is in-between adolescence and early adulthood and are at the peak of their identity exploration (Arnett, 2006). In addition, this age group is similar to the age groups that were used in several previous bicultural and multicultural identities research (e.g. Benet-Martínez, et al., 2002; Yampolsky, 2013). At least one of the parents was expected to be in Canada as a first generation immigrant. Since the process of seeking independence and understanding oneself starts in early childhood (DeSocio, 2005), participants had to be born in Canada, or having arrived in Canada as children younger than seven years old. These criteria ensured that that each participant grew up three different cultures: mother's culture, father's culture, and the culture of the majority. Demographic information were taken from participants to document the range of ages and different cultures that were involved in the research.

In order to recruit participants, a non-probability sampling approach was used, which means that participants were chosen to reflect particular features (Choak, 2012).

Recruitment started with a Facebook announcement in the pages for students from different departments at university. That included the page for students from the departments of Applied Human Sciences, Sociology, and Linguistics at Concordia University; and the page for students from the department of Psychology at McGill University. Afterwards, snowball sampling occurred as well. Snowball sampling allows the interviewee to be a source of information for the interviewer by suggesting or referring other participants to be interviewed (Choak, 2012). In addition, printed posters were put in the libraries of Concordia University and announcements were made in classes. The aim was to either interview ten to 15 young people or reach a theoretical saturation point –whichever came first. In the context of grounded theory method, a theoretical saturation is reached when interviews are no longer generating new concepts (Urquhart, 2012).

Using this recruitment method, I was contacted by 19 young people; 13 of them met the criteria; and ten accepted to meet for individual interviews (two male and eight female). As for the focus group, three participants accepted; two of them were present on the day of the interview (one male, one female). Each participant had a combination of two of the following backgrounds: Chinese (1), El Salvadorian (1), French/Polish (1), Honduran (1), Italian (4), Jamaican (1), Lebanese (1), Moroccan (1), Mauritian (1), Pilipino (3), Syrian (1), Turkish (2), Ugandan (1), and Vietnamese (1). Table 1 provides more details about these combinations by showing the larger regions for backgrounds of each participant. Six participants were born in Montreal, Quebec and lived there all their lives. Two participants were born outside Quebec (Ontario and Alberta), and moved to Montreal to complete their university studies. Two other participants were not born in

Canada: one was born in Germany and arrived as a baby less than 12 months old; the other was born in Morocco and arrived as a seven years old. Participants were all between the ages 20 and 24; and they were all university students (nine undergraduate students, one graduate student).

Table 1. *Participants' backgrounds*

Participants' codes	**Parent 1**	**Parent 2**
A.A	Europe	Southeast Africa
C.K	Middle East	South America
D.J	Southeast Asia	East Asia
E.G	Middle East	Europe
E.K	Europe	North Africa
J.J	Europe	Southeast Asia
K.B	Middle East	Middle East
M.S	South America	South America
S.B	Europe	Southeast Asia
Y.M	East Africa	Southeast Asia

Data Analysis

Following the guidelines for grounded theory research, I engaged in a process of simultaneous data collection from the interviews and data analysis (Charmaz, & Henwood, 2008). To start the coding process, I worked from verbatim transcripts of the interviews. I started with line-by-line coding and continued with concept construction. Emerging concepts were re-evaluated as new data were compared to the previously collected and analyzed data. The focus group was transcribed as well. Participants' feedback on the stories and the categories were included in the coding and data comparison process to help build a theory. Finally, demographic information were taken

into consideration to know the range of ages and cultural backgrounds that were involved in the research.

Ethical Considerations

One of the major ethical consideration in this research project is related to cultural sensitivity. It goes beyond being aware of others' cultures by recognizing the different nuances between one's culture and the other cultures (Norton & Marks-Maran, 2014). Cultural sensitivity also involves understanding the sociocultural context that affected the individual who is participating in the research and using inclusive approaches when working with this person (Norton & Marks-Maran, 2014). Since the research design aimed to include participants who have varied cultural backgrounds to be part of the study, cultural sensitivity related to ethical practices within different cultures is necessary. As Choak (2012) pointed out, it may be impossible to be aware of cultural variations in what is considered appropriate or inappropriate. It is important, however, that researchers acknowledge their limitations and ensure that participants are encouraged to express their discomfort at any point during their participation. to overcome this limitation, The consent form empowered participants by reminding them of their right to refuse answering any question that brings them discomfort; or seems culturally inappropriate to them (Appendix E).

Power relations between the interviewer and the participants are always an ethical concern in research (Choak, 2012; Holland el al., 2010). Some practices are necessary to reduce the power relation. Informed consent and process consent –regularly verifying with participants that they are still consenting- are important practices to empower interviewees. The consent form empowers participants by reminding them of their right

to withdraw, to change their mind regarding using their data, and to only tell stories that they feel comfortable while sharing them (Appendix E). Prior to the focus group, I reminded the two participants of the consent form that was signed and of its content. In addition, while the design is not participatory, the focus group had the aim of encouraging a collaborative relationship between the participants and the researcher by listening to the participants' feedback in relation to the categories that were generated and by taking their perspectives on the relationship between these categories.

Other ethical considerations are related to consent and confidentiality. Consent was given in a written format before starting the process (Appendix E); and I was aware that it is a continuous process throughout the interviews and the focus group. The objective of the study, publication information, participants' right to withdraw at any time, their right to anonymity, and their right to confidentiality were communicated to potential participants. Confidentiality was a possible issue in the focus group since the researcher cannot control the behaviors of other participants. Thus, at the beginning of the focus group, I reminded the two participants to only share stories that would not make them feel uncomfortable; and they were encouraged to keep each other's information private after the end of the meeting.

Finally, I –as a researcher- had to be aware of my own biases. These biases may allow researcher's subjectivity to interfere with the way questions would be asked, or during the process of data analysis. First, the author may use the 'why- interview' method which addresses the motives behind the phenomena being studied and the research question (Roulston, 2010). The researchers should be able to position themselves in relation to the phenomenon that they are studying in order to recognize their personal

experiences in relation to the research questions (Roulston, 2010). Then, it is necessary to engage in a process of reflective practice such as keeping a journal that includes important milestones in research and challenges that were faced (Choak, 2012). At the first chapter of this dissertation, I situated myself as a female researcher who belongs to a visible minority and briefly presented the reasons I chose to study this specific topic. In addition, I kept a journal throughout the process of data collection and data analysis to keep track of my reflections and to make sure that I was not imposing my own interpretations, rather than going through the systematic process that allows me to understand what the data is telling us. Finally, the focus group helped in overcoming this issue as participants had a chance to revisit the findings and bring my awareness to any missing ideas. For instance, as it will be discussed in the findings, while context was mentioned as part of the process of identity formation for young people in the initial findings, the two participants in the focus group emphasized that it is a salient part of the process for multicultural youth.

Chapter Four: Research Findings

The current study explored the process of identity development for young people who grew up in multicultural familial contexts. After analyzing the transcripts of ten interviews and one focus group that the researcher had with two of the participants, several categories emerged from the coding process. This chapter will examine the categories, describe them, and present the theory that emerged from these categories. In order to ensure confidentiality, each participant is identified by a two letter code. All information in quotes taken from the interviews that may identify the participants has been removed. If this information is not removed, or if the participant shared information of a sensitive nature, the code of the participant will not be provided to ensure confidentiality.

Below, I shall first present the overarching category of processing being different. Second, I examine more specifically the two subcategories related to processing being different: Exploring, and managing. Third, I shall present the emerging theory that demonstrate the relationships between the categories that are discussed. Finally, I will examine some facilitators and barriers of processing being different in multiple contexts; and the needs that were expressed by the participants.

Being Different

The overarching category that emerged is processing being different. This category relates to the process whereby young people start realizing and dealing with the fact that they are different than other youth around them. Experiences of discrimination and/or stereotypes lead young people to realize the difference. They realize that they look different given their physical appearance and facial features. As a result, they try to fit in

at first; but then they start accepting being different and find ways to identify themselves in various contexts such as home, school, cultural events and other countries (Table 2).

Table 2. *Being different*

Category	Key points in the definition
Processing being different	• Being different • Being identified by others based on physical appearance • Experiencing stereotype or discrimination • Trying to fit in • Accepting being different • Self-identifying depending on context

Participants became aware of their multicultural backgrounds following experiences of stereotypes and discrimination; and experiences of being identified by others based on one's physical appearances. Such experiences led the participants to know that they are different. As a participant expressed her feelings "I felt like there was something in my gut that made me different from others" (S.B). Participants realized that they were different from other youth around them from their early experiences that may include discrimination and/or stereotypes. For instance, a participant who has an Italian parent recalled being told that he is part of the mafia as a joke from his classmates. Another participant who had Asian features was told by her teacher to make sure that she uses the microphone for her presentation as Asians "have small voices." The participant described her thoughts after hearing the teacher's comment "I feel like she put a lot of focus on our voices […] because she didn't even really know us because she only came to evaluate us so she never heard us in class." These examples of stereotypes made participants aware of their cultural backgrounds and made them realize that there may be something different about them.

These experiences were not always negative, but the feeling of being different was expressed. For instance, a participant with European features felt always out of place in Filipino events that she frequently attended with her mother. The context in this case is the Filipino event and she did not feel part of the group. Although she did not have any negative experiences, she noticed being different than the rest. Another participant recalled her first experience feeling being different:

> We're all sitting down talking about beauty and she's like "*Oh! toi tu es belle, toi tu es belle, Oh toi tu es ok*" she looked me like that and I'm like WHAT! And I was probably grade four or three at the time. I told my mom. I cried.

In the quote above the participant recounts her experience with a teacher who classified classroom students as beautiful or as fine. At a young age, she was able to remark that her darker hair and different facial features led the teacher to classify her as fine; and thus, she knew she was different. As participants encounter people in their lives, others try to identify them or make assumptions about their origins "I got a lot of weird remarks my whole life others look at me oh you Jewish or you're Lebanese, you're Greek. It's always a mix of things" (S.B). Early experiences in participants' lives allow them to notice their differences; and consequently, they start a process of dealing with these differences.

As part of processing being different, participants try to blend in the larger group before accepting that they are different. The experience of trying to blend in may include wanting to eat food like everyone else at lunch time or feeling grateful that one may "pass as a Caucasian." As described in A.A's words:

> When we were kids we wanted to blend in with people obviously that implies putting aside your ethnical differences trying to become something that you're not really. You're trying to be like people around you to blend in to not seem different so you put away everything that does make you different everything you can because obviously skin tone you can't put that away.

The participant understood fitting in the larger group required him to sacrifice who he is by adopting an identity that did not fully represent him. Also, his experience implies that the physical appearance plays a big role in the process. One participant who felt she may "pass as a Caucasian" because of her physical appearance felt privileged compared to other students who looked different in her high school since she was able to blend in much easier than them. Some participants' experiences of trying to blend in is harder than others given their skin tone, hair texture, and other physical features.

As emerging adults, participants felt that they gradually started to accept being different. For instance, A.A accepted being different from the rest "I just realized that that was my life and that other people lives weren't like that and that was okay, it wasn't a problem." Acceptance is reached differently by each individual. For instance, some participants have accepted all three cultures that they are experiencing; others adopted one culture; and others accepted parts of their cultures. S.B shows that she is proud of all the three cultures that she is experiencing:

> I love the fact that I'm half [European] and half [Southeast Asian], because both cultures are beautiful and diverse in their own way. I feel like I'm proud […] but in regard to Canadian too, of course, I'm even more proud.

While some have immersed themselves in all three cultures that they are experiencing and felt comfortable identifying with these cultures; others have chosen to reject part of the cultures that they were raised in: “by meeting certain people in my life, like certain friends who had somewhat of a similar conflict we decided as a little community to break through those types of values, the values that we didn't like in our [European] diaspora” (E.G). Thus, participants had different possibilities to reach acceptance; and they experienced it differently. The cultural contexts of participants and their individual experiences influenced the form of relation they had with the cultures that they are experiencing. Some of these contexts included family gatherings, cultural parties and events, school, and countries of origins.

Part of the process of understanding being different includes trying to identify oneself in different contexts in order to reach acceptance. The influence of context was discussed in the focus group. A.A and M.Y considered this process unique to people who are similar to them: “for me it's very dependent like sometimes I'll feel more [European] than I feel [Southeast African] and Canadian depending on the context” (A.A). M.Y agrees and expresses herself with more details “I agree with you on it depends on context because like yah, [when] I'm with all my mom's friends and family or with my dad's, I feel more part of their culture.” They cannot identify themselves the same way every time as they see themselves differently in different contexts (e.g. being Filipino in Filipino parties, and being Italian in Italian parties).

The discussion around context demonstrated that the presence of participants in a certain cultural context where people are predominantly from one culture allowed them to feel greater belonging to that culture. Participants, however, also realized that their

differences stand out in these contexts. As the participants interact with people in a certain cultural context they realize that they are different from the rest in the room. For instance, a participant gave an example of her presence in events related to her father's culture: "I would just say that I'm Syrian. Then [they] start asking more questions and I always say my mom is not Arab." Other participants gave the example of standing out when visiting their countries of origin since they are seen as Canadian: "*Je parle Français*, but clearly I'm not Quebecois, but as soon as I go to [Europe], I'm the Canadian cousin and like I don't have a problem with it" (A.A). While in Quebec, his ethnic backgrounds stand out; and being Canadian mainly stands out when he is outside of Canada. M.Y also agreed with that experience as she explained "the whole Canadian part though […] it's only when I leave here that I feel... they're like oh you're Canadian." Depending on participants' interactions with others in various situations, they become highly aware of the way they stand out.

As seen in the previous examples, being Canadian mostly stood out when they were outside of Canada. While living in Canada, the other cultural backgrounds stands out. In regards to Quebec's context, the same concept applies while interacting with people who identify as Quebecois. Participants' differences stood out to them when interacting with people who identify as Quebecois. Participants, however, did not identify themselves as Quebecois even when one is fluent in French (which is an important part of the Quebecois identity). The details of the affiliation to the Canadian culture and the Quebecois culture will be discussed later in this chapter as part of the exploration process.

In order to process being different, participants explore the contexts that are around them while managing relationships and conflicts that arise as they explore. In the following section, the exploring and the managing categories will be discussed.

Exploring

Exploration is the main intrapersonal aspect of processing being different as it requires cognitive and emotional processing. Participants explored their cultural contexts in order to develop their social identities (belonging) and personal identities (choices). The analysis of the interviews and the focus group led to the generation of two main categories: exploring belonging, which relates to one's social identity; and exploring choices which relates to exploring one's personal identity. Key elements in each category are described in table 3 and will be examined in this section.

Table 3. *Exploring*

	Category	Key points in the definition
Processing being different – exploring	Exploring belonging	• Realizing the dominance of one culture over the others • Feeling the connection based on culture • Dis/connecting to Quebec's culture • Learning languages (or not learning) • Traveling to places of origin (or not traveling)
	Exploring choices	• Being fed ideas • Constructing one's own ideas / shifting ideas • Choosing Canadian values / different values • Making decisions about one's beliefs / worldviews • Un/valuing traditional education

Exploring belonging. This category relates to building young people's connection to the cultural contexts that they are living in, including Quebec's cultural context. In exploring their belonging, participants realize the dominance of one culture in their homes or in various circumstances around them. Factors such as their ability to

travel to places of origins and knowing the languages of their parents may influence young people's ability to develop a sense of belonging to the cultures around them.

The ability to speak and understand the languages of the parents influenced participants' ability to build relationships with others who speak the same languages.

> When we say different words in another language they get so happy they start talking to you in their language, […] it gave me that kind of sensation like connection it was very nice to feel and I just wanted to feel more part of it and more close to it (S.B).

In this quote S.B describes the connections she built with other cultures around her and the fact that it was influenced by her ability to speak and understand the language. The ability to use the language served as a tool of communication between the participants and people from their cultures. As a result, it encouraged them to have a sense of belonging to the cultures related to that language. In the focus group meeting, A.A and M.Y agreed that language influences the level of connection one has to a specific culture. M.Y. described her experience in relation to not speaking or understanding the languages of her parents:

> Both my parents speak multiple languages but never taught me any of them. […] That's something I always I wished I had because they make friends very easily. They go to the grocery store and all of the sudden they have a new friend. It's like that language is what tie them. It's like that secret connection more than just physical appearance.

M.Y's quote shows the difference between her and her parents in building connections. The ability to use a language of a culture to communicate helped the participants in

having a sense of belonging more than their physical appearance. In some cases, participants had a physical appearances that lead others to assume that they are part of a specific culture. Participants, however, did not build a connection to that culture as they did not speak the language. The reverse is true as well. For instance, a participant who had an Italian parent felt a great sense of belonging to the Italian culture despite having confusing physical appearance (as described by the participant).

Despite speaking French, participants felt that Quebec's culture is a special context. None of the eight participants who grew up in Quebec identified themselves as Quebecois but they had different levels of connection to Quebec's culture. A.A felt he can relate to the Quebecois culture even when his Quebecois friends cannot relate to him based on his cultures as they have little knowledge or experiences with these cultures. Despite this connection, and despite feeling confident that he knows so much about this culture, he did not identify as Quebecois.

> I am at university and this Quebecois friend, I can talk to him I can come to your level, I can try relate with you even though I am not Quebecois, I'm [European/Southeast African], you have no way of relating with me […] I can actually come to you and talk to you about things that are from your culture.

S.B, on the other hand, clearly does not identify as Quebecois, but also affirms her identification as French-Canadian: "I feel also it goes down to like, is that defined being Canadian? Being Quebecois? I don't even affiliate as being Quebecois, I consider myself French-Canadian to say the most." Thus, in her case, speaking French and growing up in Montreal did not help in building a connection with Quebec's culture. The third example

does not affiliate with the French culture in Canada at all –including Quebec's culture. S.M specified his Anglophone identity: "I feel zero connection to the French culture here in Canada due to being an Anglophone […]. Then and there I feel more like the other, and like an outsider around them."

These three examples show different levels of belonging to Quebec's culture. In an upcoming quote, it shows that A.A has been to different areas in Quebec, he lives with Quebecois flat mates, and he studies in a French university.

> Definitely I'm well informed and I participate in the Quebecois culture. I have a lot of friends who are from Quebec, you know I was part of the cadet program which is like a youth program and I played a lot of music so during the summer we did a lot of concerts all over Quebec, so definitely you meet a lot of people within Quebec and you realize you're from Saguenay, you're from Gatineau, you're from Rimouski.

These experiences contributed in building his connection to Quebec's culture. He shows a level of belonging and considers himself a contributor to the culture. In another interview, however, S.B talked about attending a French elementary school and high school but lived in an Anglophone household. She also continued post-secondary education in English. She described feeling not welcomed and unfairly treated by some of her employers due to the fact that she is an Anglophone; as a result, it was difficult for her to feel a sense of belonging to Quebec; but affirms her belonging to Canada and describes herself as French-Canadian. Finally, S.M was firm that as an Anglophone, he has no connection to Quebec's culture and he sometimes feels like an outsider despite living in Montreal. To summarize, while language may contribute to developing a sense

of belonging to cultures, it does not always lead to that connection since personal experiences and cultural contexts play an important role as well.

Traveling to countries of origins came up in the interviews, as it was considered an important factor for participants to feel a sense of belonging to their parents' cultural backgrounds.

> I just went four or five times in my life but every time I had a great dose of the Arabic language, the Arabic culture and all. Because I had no choice but to speak in Arabic because my family only speaks [Arabic] there so I had to force myself so I learned a lot.

Other participants also described similar experiences. They felt fully immersed in the culture and had a better understanding of it after traveling to their countries of origin. Such trips gave participants the chance to speak the language, meet extended family members, and learn about the cultural norms and expectations. On the other hand, two participants who had not visited the countries of origin of both parents, and three others who only visited the country of origin of one parent felt a lower level of belonging to these cultures. J.J, for instance, reflected on the impact of not traveling to her mother's country of origin on her feeling of belonging to that culture.

> My mom is unemployed for a while so that definitely impacts people's freedom and ability to be independent and sort of give their kids like the option to go visit back home […] and I feel that's a big reason why I just feel it's not part of me and I feel I like to go back, but I feel like not having done it especially as a kid so I don't identify much.

Just like language, growing up in Canada without traveling to countries of origins did not always mean a lack of connection and belonging to the culture. For instance, a participant who always lived in Montreal had a great level of connection to her mother's culture as she grew up and lived in an area that is predominantly composed of people from that European culture. Thus, in addition to language and traveling to countries of origins, participants' individual experiences while growing up influences their level of belonging.

These varied experiences of participants determine the dominance of some cultures over others at home and in different contexts. For instance, C.K was aware of that fact "at home the [Middle Eastern] culture is more dominant." In addition to her experiences at her father's country of origin, she also believes her parents chose what to introduce to their children.

> At home they decided to just keep French because we were studying French, and then [x-father's language] for the religion that was very important. So that was okay, we had to remove [y- mother's language], my mom said we can even learn [it] later.

Other situations include having extended family members from one side of the family and living in an area where most people belong to the culture of one of the parents. As one participant explained, his "Italian side comes out more", and he feels sometimes more Italian than some friends who have two Italian parents. In addition, as mentioned in a previous quote, the socioeconomic level of parents may also impact their abilities to introduce their culture to their children; and thus, the other culture dominates. The dominance of one culture in the contexts around the participants contributed to increase their sense of belonging to that specific culture.

Participants' experiences in developing a sense of belonging to their cultures of origins is influenced by factors such as speaking and understanding the languages of these cultures, traveling to countries of origin, and living in a household of with one dominant culture. The level of belonging is mediated by participants' individual experiences –such as the families' socioeconomic level and having extended family members who live in the same city.

Exploring choices. The second subcategory in exploring is related to choices. Participants explore the options that are available for them in their cultural contexts. It is a process that starts with being fed ideas by parents and family members until young people realize that there are other possible choices. Participants then start exploring these options; and construct their own ideas. Consequently, they make decisions regarding their own beliefs and worldviews that may be in agreement or in disagreement with their parents' cultural values. They decide whether they choose the Euro-Canadian culture as their main point of reference and/or other cultures. Since all participants were university students their process of exploring career options included their educational choices and the limits that were set by the parents on these choices.

At a younger age, participants adopted their parents' worldviews and ideas but at some point they realized that they have choices; and they can explore the contexts available to them. A.A, for instance, described the moments when he realized that his opinions were actually his parents' views and not necessarily his own "we're kind of fed these different views on things but then you get… when you're 18 even 16, 17 years old you're like ok is this really what I believe, is this really what I think." College in Quebec and first year university for the participants who are from other provinces was the

marking point for them to start exploring their options, which is approximately between 16-18 years old. Realizing that he was reiterating his parents' ideas led A.A to do his own research about the topic; and gradually he started forming his own views and ideas.

> At school and in CEGEP, the students' [fees] hike, there was a vote happening and I was like this is stupid and I was like why are they being spoiled and a friend of mine was like did you actually read about it, did you think about it. Maybe you're right maybe you're wrong just read about it. I did and I started getting more and more involved in the cause.

A.A's situation was related to a sociopolitical situation in Quebec. The process of thinking involved being fed ideas, realizing that these are not one's personal ideas, researching, and constructing one's own beliefs/views. This process of thinking was applied to many other contexts and situations in the lives of the participants. For instance, E.G's explained her process of thinking in the context of her religious beliefs.

> I attended Catholicism, I got my communion and confirmation and all that and after that as soon as I finished my confirmation I decided I didn't want to attend anymore.

At first, she followed her mother's and grandparents' beliefs, then she realized that these were not choices that she made. She decided to believe in Christianity in a different way than her family members.

> We both stopped believing Christianity or the type of Christianity that everybody believed in, we educated ourselves about everything, about every type of religion we educated ourselves about the world the society,

> we went to college together, we just continued to learn, I still continue to learn about diversity.

She and a friend of hers decided to start searching and teaching themselves in order to develop their own beliefs from the options that are in their contexts which included beliefs in her father's culture and the Euro-Canadian culture.

All participants discussed the influence of the Euro-Canadian culture on their choices of values. The influence varied depending on one's contexts and experiences. For instance, J.J realized that Canadian values identify her more than the values of any other cultural contexts around her such as her mother's or father's values "I identify like I guess more as a Canadian [than] any other part of my background". Being Canadian came first for M.Y, but she recognizes that her values are influenced by her parents' values as well "I grew up Canadian in a way but with this influence of [East African] and [Southeast Asian] values." For C.K, however, she chose her values from her cultures at home, then also combined Canadian values: "I like to take what's nice from the culture and apply it to my life but for the rest I feel I'm pretty Canadianized" (C.K).

Participants also discussed the specific influence of the culture of the majority on their religious beliefs. Most participants distanced themselves from their parents' faith. S.B reflects on the Euro-Canadian values towards religion:

> The society of Canada is very work oriented I feel like in other cultures they make time for religion and you know. I feel like here as a Canadian, it's really hard to put that in your schedule sometimes.

The participant believed that faith is not necessarily one of the most important values in Canada as people do not make time for it. The Canadian "work-oriented" values also

influenced the parents who were initially religious. She explained although they are still connected to their faith, they do not practice it as much as they did when she was younger.

> Again I feel a lot of time they got influenced by the Canadian culture because at the end with so many diversity you kind of stem away from finding what is really close to you what is true to you.

In this quote, she reflects on the effects of diversity as potentially discouraging people from the attachment to their original belief systems. During the focus group meeting, A.A added some depth to the same idea. He explained how his grandmother who lives here in Canada practices much less than his young cousins who live in their country of origin. He believes that she would have been more attached to her faith if she did not leave home "so maybe it is a Canadian thing for sure, […] maybe the fact the society is a little bit more open, less focused on religion." Openness, diversity, and work were the values participants attributed to the Canadian culture.

In terms of career choices, the process for some participants included negotiations with their parents. Most parents had set restrictions on what their children could study. The values around education differed in each family. For some parents studying music was not an option; others discouraged their children from pursuing a career in arts. In most situations, parents had a preference for conventional education. M.Y described her parents' conditions regarding her career choices.

> They didn't want us to be professional athletes because we... me and my brothers play hockey and there was few opportunities where […] people have asked us to play on higher levels sports teams, further training, and

> they kind of shut those down, they were just like you're not becoming a professional athlete. […] They don't think it's a stable career, they would prefer if we put more efforts towards more cognitively challenging career, instead of physically challenging.

Participant had different reactions to the limitations that were set by their parents. Some had accepted them and had no issue since their interest did not contradicts their parents' desire. This was the case for M.Y, her parents valued cognitively challenging careers and she was interested in one that fit their description. Others managed to find a compromise between what they wanted and what their parents were requiring. For instance, E.G's mother wanted her to go to university, while she was still not sure about her own choices. She accepted to go to university following her mother's desire, but she insisted of a program of her choice that did not fully satisfy her mother. Others have followed their parents' desire then they felt some regret for not pursuing their own interests. C.K, for instance, pursued a career related to the medical field as she was always told to be ready for such a career. After graduating, however, she decided to pursue her personal interest; and thus went back to study a different program.

The focus on this part was on exploration as part of processing being different. Participants explored their belonging to the cultures that they grew up in and they determined their level of belonging to each one of them based on varied experiences such as speaking the languages of the parents and traveling to countries of origins. They also explored choices that are essential to their identity which include their worldviews and career. These processes occur simultaneously while managing relationships and conflicts as it will be discussed in the next section.

Managing

While participants' belonging and their choices of faith and career are personal to them, they are influenced by significant people around them in different contexts. Managing is considered the interpersonal part of processing being different. The interviews generated two subcategories in relation to managing: relationships and conflicts (Table 4). As discussed above, the way participants managed relationships and conflicts in their cultural contexts had an impact on their sense of belonging to the cultures around them, and on their choices of values and beliefs. This section will examine how participants managed these relationships and conflicts.

Table 4. *Managing*

Processing being different – managing	Category	Key points in the definition
	Managing relationships	• Being influenced by extended family members • De/valuing family values • Understanding relationships • Growing up in different conditions than one's parents
	Managing conflicts	• Experiencing gender differences • Sharing (un)common faith • Avoiding conflicts • Confronting

Managing relationships. This category is related to the work done by young people to build and maintain relationships with family members, friends and significant others. These young people are challenged by the fact that their parents were raised in conditions that are different than them. As a result, the participants are growing up in cultural contexts that are different than their parents; and are exposed to different values.

Competing values from three different cultures may make building and maintaining relationships a struggle for the participants. A.A relates his experience in managing his relationships:

> [In TV and movies] we see how teenagers supposed to be and I was like I'm not like that so you try kind of imitate that anyways, what I'm trying to say is that in my relationship I struggled to see… I struggled to know where the priorities are.

In this case, the participant was used to certain values from the two cultural contexts at his home; but they were in conflict with what the media outlets portray as the image of a typical adolescent or young adult. Depending on the situation and the choices that the participants make, these conflicting values lead participants to be in conflict with their friends or with their parents.

Depending on the parents' immigration history, some participants have extended family members living close to them and others do not. For instance, most participants had grandparents who played a significant role in raising them and transmitting some of their values: "my grandmother stepped in and she raised us for the first five years of our lives so definitely a big Italian influence at the beginning early stages." This participant was able to notice the influence of the Italian culture on his values that were mainly transmitted by his grandmother. Values held by extended family members were not always in accordance with the parents' values. It is possible that extended family members transmit their values to the participants despite knowing that they contradict their parents' beliefs. For instance, grandparents may know that the son-in-law or

daughter-in-law have differing values but they try to make sure that their values are the ones that are adopted by the grandchild.

> My mom would sign this form saying I cannot get the vaccine and my grandma took me to the doctor to get me this vaccine so there's a lot of conflict between religions.

The participant in this case was aware of the conflict between the parents' and the grandparents' values. Her mother's religious beliefs led her to refuse the vaccination that was offered by the school. The paternal grandparents, however, did not agree with her decision so they made sure that the participant got the vaccination. In another case, the maternal grandparents wanted to make sure that their granddaughter would follow their religious beliefs and not her father's. Thus, while managing their relationships with both family members in both sides of the arguments, participants also had to make decisions regarding the values that they believe in the most.

Other participants did not have any grandparents or extended family living close to them. As a result, their parents were the only point of reference when it came to knowing about their culture and heritage.

> You know [European] and [Southeast Asian] have big families, unfortunately for me I was raised here, my whole life only my father, my mom, and my sister came along. Because my father's [family lives] everywhere else but here Montreal and my mother the same thing so […] I grew up with no grandparents […] so it's really hard because like again because I don't really have anyone to talk who's been there from the beginning.

This participant found that she was not able to connect with her parents and understand their cultural contexts as they did not have the support of extended family members who may help in transmitting the values. She expressed her feeling of loneliness as there was no one who knew her from the beginning of her life to understand the way she grew up. The participant expressed that her relationship with her parents was impacted by this fact.

> To be honest with you, I don't have a close relationship with my parents in regards to personal things […] my relation with my parents more like you know just respect them, doing chores, see if they need help.

Participants agreed on the role that extended family members may play in transmitting cultural values and in helping participants in developing a better understanding of their parents' cultural contexts.

Participants' differences with their parents were reflected in different views on relationships. They have different values than their parents when it comes to dating and developing relationships with significant others. E.G shared that she does not believe in marriage but she knows that her parents' expectations include that she gets married.

> I don't believe in marriage both of my parents believe in marriage. It's very important for them, I don't because I have, because I grew up in a very liberal progressive... I have a progressive mindset, um for me I have an issue with the idea of marriage.

She believed that the difference between her understanding of marriage and her parents' understanding stems from the different mindsets that they have. She described herself as progressive and liberal while she believes that her parents are traditional; and thus, they do not share same values. Another participant found himself in constant conflict with his

father due to his misunderstanding of the participant's sexual orientation. After a process of exploration, the participant came out to his family; but the father refused it as it contradicted his values. Overall, participants described themselves as more open-minded and accepting than their parents when it comes to different values around relationships.

In some instances, the conflict may also arise between the participants and other significant people due to different values. One of the participants explained that his girlfriend did not understand his attachment to his family. She considered the fact that he visits his parents every weekend as a sign of lack independence. He viewed it as a culturally important practice in his family, and it is not related to independence. Both his parents' cultures valued close family relationships and care more than individuality. The participant found himself in a situation in which he is dealing with conflicting values in the Canadian context and in his parents' contexts.

The cultural contexts of the parents are different than the participants'. Participants believe that they are growing in conditions that are different than their parents. Each participant had at least one parent who had a lifestyle that was characterized with mobility before settling in Canada; and thus, they had lived in different cultures before settling in Canada. For instance, one of the parents moved from Italy to Germany and then to Canada. Another parent moved from Africa to Europe, and finally to Canada. Historical and political events at the time and place they were growing up had an influence on their values. Participants agreed that they have different struggles and concerns than their parents: "the fact that we were born in Canada, we were born in Montreal so you know growing up here and growing up in [Europe] and growing up in [Southeast Africa] it's different." On the other hand, each participant had access to a

cultural context from each of the parents; and they were able to use these contexts as points of reference when they make decisions about values that are important to them. Thus, despite sharing some values and views with their parents, they find themselves growing up in a different place and time with different values than what their parents had as values while growing up.

In the focus group, A.A and M.Y discussed this point in greater depth. For instance, A.A brought up the example of the tuition fees protests that occurred in Quebec. He explains that his parents were against students protesting due to living a period were the tension between the Anglophone and the Francophone in Quebec was at its peak. Knowing that these protests started in the French educational institutions, they discouraged their children from participating. He believed their worry was based on previous unpleasant experiences. For him and other students, however, their experience was different, they were supporting a movement that affirms their right to have affordable access to education. M.Y agreed:

> I've never protested because my parents have the exact same mentality because in the countries they grew up in like that is associated with bad things. People will hunt you down but then here it's just young culture no real harm for most of people generally.

Participants grew up in different social, political, and historical contexts than their parents; and thus, the two sides view the same situation with different lenses. Different understanding and points of views may lead to conflicts in relationships. The next subcategory will discuss how these conflicts are managed by participants.

Managing conflicts. This category is related to the process of maintaining relationships with friends and family members while accepting that they do not share common values and beliefs all the time. Maintenance of relationships is done through avoidance or confrontation. It also includes dealing with issues that they experience in society and at home such as gender differences and discrimination.

Depending on the context and depending on each participant's personality, they either avoid disagreements or face them. For instance, S.B described the change that occurred in the way she dealt with conflicts with her parents. During her adolescence, she confronted her father about all disagreements in values and beliefs "I learned from when I was younger always rebelling against him always butting heads and again I blame it on my *naivness* because I didn't understand what kind of person he was." She realized that she reacted that way due to her immaturity and younger age. Today she takes into consideration different factors such as his health conditions and the fact that they will always be different.

> Nowadays like I would still tell my opinion but I always try to consider his although I don't believe in it but just so he's just not going to get a heart spasm, he's not going to get angry you know because I don't want to argue with him you know

She realized that the way she was confronting her father was not effective and she had to accept that they are different "for me it's just a moment when I realized I can't force what cannot be forced." Other participants preferred to avoid conflicts in all situations like in C.K's case:

> I actually don't like to have disagreement because it makes me feel very anxious so I try to just be like chill with everyone. If there are sometimes certain situations I know they might lead to disagreement I just avoid them.

This participant and others avoid conflicts for different reasons. For some – like C.K- it causes them stress. For others, it is due to being raised in a household where "there's a power differential between the parent and the child […] they are the source of knowledge and wisdom and they're always right" (M.Y). The rule in these houses is to follow the parents' rules. Refusal and disagreements are not expected from the children.

Another way to deal with the conflicts is to assess the worthiness of the conflict. Some participants choose the issues that they would discuss further with their parents (confrontation) and the ones that they would let go (avoidance). For instance, D.J talked to her parents many times before convincing them to study abroad for a year. She explained that she puts time and energy in situations that are very important for her; she also avoids conflict and abides by their rules pertaining to issues such as staying out late with her friends. During the focus group, Y.M and A.A discussed the issue of managing conflicts. They discussed the fact that time and maturity bring some changes to the way they deal with their parents in conflictual situations. A.A described the change that occurred in his relationship with his parents:

> It took a long time before we started like really talking and getting to know our parents as like people instead of parents because when you're a kid they are your parents […] you know laugh once in a while but it was a

> parent-child relationship it wasn't like adult to adult, it's a big difference there. That only happened last year two years ago something like that.

The parent-child relationship gradually becomes a relationship between two adults; and thus, the dynamics of the interactions change. Participants start having discussions with their parents, disagree, express their opinions, and accept being different.

The issue of gender differences and its influence on shaping participants' identities came up in the interviews with the two participants who have male siblings and with another who is an only child in her family. The rest of the participants discussed witnessing such situations around them but not experiencing them. M.Y discusses her experience:

> There is a difference, however, between male and female on how we were raised because within both my parents' cultures they raised to be like traditional female, like the traditional male role.

Despite the fact that her parents come from two different cultures, they both agreed on the traditional male role and female role. M.Y also explained how she processed these gender differences in her family and her current understanding of what it meant to her now.

> Because I was raised into these traditional female roles, I also, I enjoy it. I mean like being in school has kind of confused me a little bit because in school you learn about all these equal rights and I should stand up for all these things but I was raised to be the one who cleans the house, be the one who cooks the meals be the one who just take care of everything kind of idea. […]They still totally believe in education that was anything about

> me being a housewife […]. I'm also a very independent person so I wouldn't want [anyone to take care of me financially].

M.Y noticed the conflict between her parents' values and the values of the culture of the majority. M.Y was confused at first by the fact that she did not mind the traditional female role that she knew while growing up as it seemed to conflict with what she was learning at school about equality and women's rights. She finally understood that she enjoys it as it allowed her to learn independent living skills such as cleaning and cooking; she affirms that it has nothing to do with being a housewife or a dependent person. For another participant, however, she avoided discussing gender differences with her parents even when she was not convinced as she did not like confrontations and she was not sure how these discussions end in her family. She did not accept it but she also did not voice her opinion. Finally, the participant who is an only child had a particular experience that allowed her to become highly aware of issues related to gender differences that are motivated by cultures.

> My dad really wanted to have a son and for really long time when I was young he would cut my hair as a boy, I even have a picture of me as a child, I look like a little boy and call me my son, and my mom was totally against that and in that sense I was grateful to the fact that she was opposed to the fact of girls being seen as less than boys.

Being raised in a society that values males more than females, the father treated her as a male child. This participant was grateful for having a mother and a grandmother who empowered her as a female so she refused to be assigned a gender that did not identify her. This experience raised her awareness about gender differences in society and the

impact it has on families. She first was trying to accept these differences. By exploring her cultural contexts, she learned that she has other options, so she decided to fight these inequalities.

As participants are processing being different through exploring belonging and choices, they sometimes find themselves in disagreement with different people around them in different contexts. They are required to manage the relationships they have with friends, colleagues, and family members who may have differing values. During this process of managing conflicts and relationships, participants expressed their need to be supported and understood.

Being Understood

While participants are navigating the larger process of being different, they want to be understood. Being understood was also a category that was generated from the analysis of interviews and the focus group. Being understood meant having the space to express oneself, being heard, and being simply treated as a human being.

Participants expressed that they seek being put in a position where they can express themselves instead of finding themselves in a position where others are making assumptions about them or talking on their behalf.

> It's more getting, putting them in a position where they can express their culture in an open way and […] just being a kid and being able to speak about your household and your parents and where are you from in front of people

In a context where children are in a classroom or group activity, A.A believed that they should have the space and the safety to express themselves and talk about their homes

that maybe different than the rest of the children. A.A believed he has a perspective on his culture that people do not know.

> I can talk about my culture in a way that is not bad like the teacher is just giving me the tool, just putting me in a position where I can tell people because I know what it is but he doesn't or she doesn't.

A.A thought that teachers are able to give children the opportunity that they are seeking to express themselves and talk about their households and different backgrounds. He explained that space allows participants to talk about their culture in a way that provides greater depth than reading a book or an article since they will include their personal experiences. M.Y agreed and explained further that people usually activate the assumptions that they have in their minds about specific cultures instead of giving her the space she needs to express herself. Thus, participants felt better understood when practitioners offered them the space that they are seeking to express themselves; who they are; and how they relate to their cultural backgrounds.

It is not enough for the participants to have the space to express themselves, as they also want to be heard. As J.J explained “I think just more listening more attentively to people. I think that's a big thing. Just like checking in other people's perspectives and knowing that like there's like more diversity than one culture.” She expected from people in positions of authority around young people to listen, make sure they understand them correctly, and keep an open mind while listening. S.B also explained how she would listen if she is in a position of authority “for me whenever I meet somebody I want... the floor is theirs I just want to know tell me. I just want to know everything about you.”

According to this participant, listening also included having curiosity and interest in the story of the young person.

In some situations, participants also wanted to be simply seen as human beings regardless of their religion or culture. As C.K expresses this idea in her own words:

> I think it's really respecting everyone no matter what their religion is or origin, country whatever they're from because I want people to respect me so I do the same. I give them what I want them to give me back, which is I think respect.

A.A affirmed the importance of acceptance and respect "there are ways to make it easier, to make it better for everybody. Making everybody accepting of one another; that works both ways again, being valued as a human being exactly."

The process of identity formation for the participants -who grew in multiple heritages- required them to process their differences in multiple contexts by exploring their belonging and their choices; and by managing relationships and conflicts in their lives. During this process, participants seek understanding, listening, acceptance and respect from people around them in general. Most importantly, however, they sought them from practitioners –like teachers, physicians, and youth workers- who were around them while they were growing up.

Emerging Theory

Given the grounded theory method used in this study, it is expected that from the categories one can provide a theoretical explanation of the relationship between these categories and the way they answer the research question. Figure 2 represents the theory that emerged from these categories.

Figure 2 shows that processing being different includes exploring and managing. Young people who have parents from different backgrounds explore their belonging in different contexts; and they explore their choices in terms of beliefs, worldviews and career. While exploring, young people have to manage relationships around them and conflicts that may arise. Exploration and management are not mutually exclusive. As explained earlier, they occur simultaneously as young people are exploring, they are managing as well.

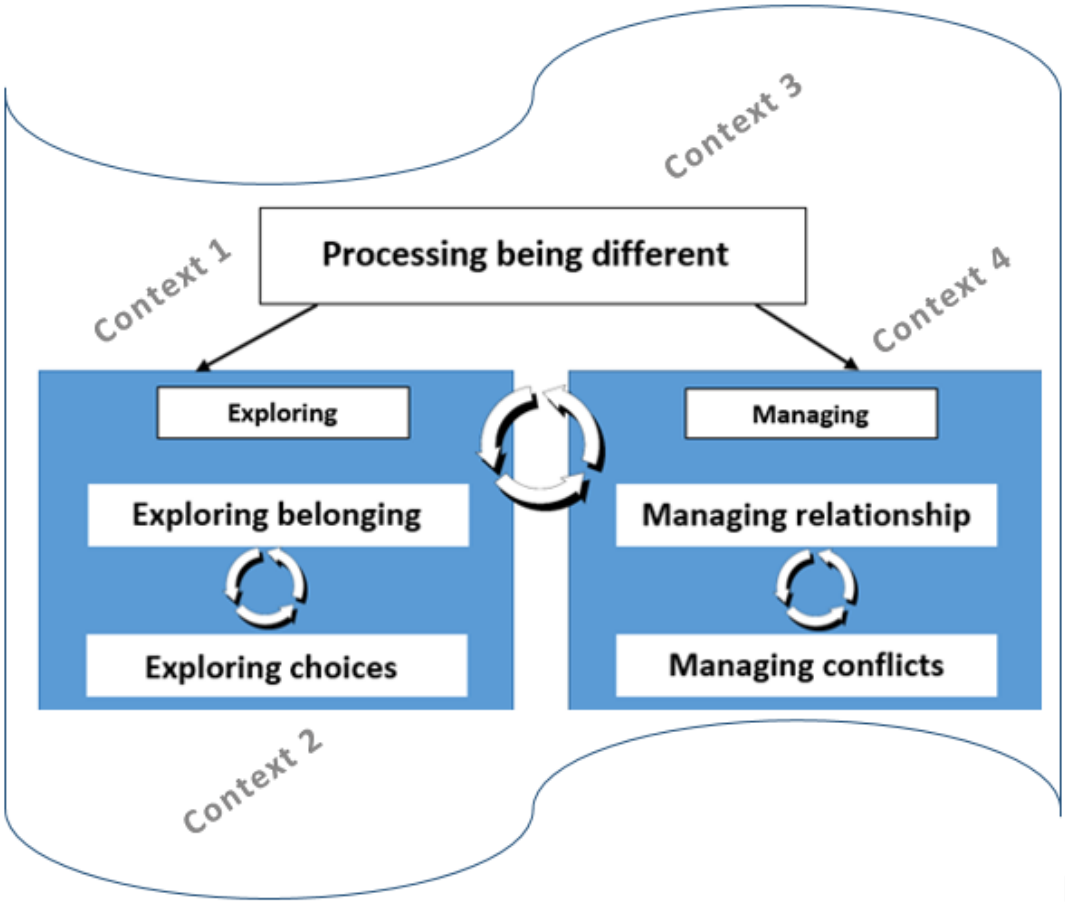

Figure 2. Emerging theory

As mentioned earlier, A.A and M.Y agreed in the focus group that what makes these young people unique is that they go through the process of forming and understanding their identity in multiple different cultural contexts. During this process,

participants meet diverse people who have different roles in their lives such as grandparents, friends, teachers, physicians and other professionals; and thus, they learn and observe many different values. While making their choices during the process of exploring these values, they have to maintain relationships in their lives and resolve conflicts that may arise because of participants' choices.

Participants' expectations from people around them is to understand them by offering them a space to express themselves and by listening to them. The experience of identity formation in multiple contexts for these participants was impacted by several factors that either made it easier or more challenging.

Facilitators and Barriers

Participants discussed some factors that facilitated or challenged their identities formation while exploring their identity in multiple contexts such as their homes, schools, environments are dominated by one culture, and parents' countries of origins. Facilitators such as living in a home that has a lot of common values, and being informed about one's culture encourages participants to explore their cultural contexts. Barriers such as living in a home that has differing values, having a confusing physical appearance may constitute a challenge to the participants; and hence, discourage them from exploring. Below I will present some of the facilitators and barriers.

Living in cultural contexts with similar/different values. Participants who perceived their cultural contexts as close had easier time navigating between these contexts; and defining themselves within each context. For instance, a participant had parents who both have Asian backgrounds; and another had parents who both had Middle Eastern backgrounds. D.J explains this point:

> I wouldn't say it was a challenge, it was easy because these two cultures are so similar like the majority they have the same values it's not difficult to grow up in two different cultures it will be different if it was a European and an Asian.

While D.J had an easier time navigating the two cultural contexts at her home, it was hard for another participant to integrate two cultural contexts that she is experiencing as she was not able to find the similarities between the two: “it's still difficult for me sometimes to integrate the Canadian culture and the Asian culture.”

In addition, nine out of the ten participants who were interviewed had parents who shared a common religious belief and that helped in closing the gap between two cultures at home. As C.K stated “I think the religion [can] actually combines everything, like we can blend everything together.” The cultural differences between her parents due to different ethnic background were mediated by the shared religious beliefs. On the other hand, the participant who had parents with different beliefs had an experience in which her grandparents made sure that she will follow their beliefs. People around her who knew about her father’s origin assumed that she follows his faith. Her process included exploring both beliefs and refuting assumptions that are made by people around her about her religious affiliation. Thus, the disparity between values in the contexts around the participants was a factor that made their identity formation more challenging.

Being un/informed. Participants believed that knowing enough about a cultural context makes it easier for people to explore their identities in that context. For instance, as mentioned earlier, although A.A was not sure if he identifies as Quebecois, he was

sure that he knew a lot about the culture, the language, and the regions of Quebec; and thus, it was easy for him to understand that context and feel part of it.

> I don't know whether I consider myself French-Canadian or Quebecois, definitely I'm well informed and I participate in the Quebecois culture […]. Again it's dependent when I'm with my Quebecois friends I don't seem completely out of the circle.

He had friends who are Quebecois, played music with a Quebecois band, traveled to different regions. He is not only living in Quebec; he feels that he participates in the culture and he is somewhat part it. These experiences helped him in exploring his identity in that context.

On the other hand, he talked about his friends' experiences who decided to stay among their cultural group and do not partake in the Quebecois culture.

> Even though they're born here they are raised here like me and I feel… kind of [they] shut the door for other people […] they're really closed subgroup of society or something. They really try to stay among themselves […] but I know that whenever you kind of show that you know or that you're also interested in another culture again the Quebecois culture or the Canadian culture in general, people appreciate that and it makes them more open to you and it's easier that way and it's better.

A.A and other participants believed being open towards other cultural contexts makes it easier for them to explore these contexts. Staying within a subgroup does not allow people to learn about some cultural contexts that are part of their daily lives such as the Canadian culture. In the quote, A.A believed that abstaining from exploring contexts

does not help people to develop a belonging as they will not be able to identify themselves as part of that culture.

Corresponding (or non-corresponding) physical appearance and cultural context. The physical appearance have added a challenge to some participants as their physical appearance did not always correspond to the cultural context that they are trying to explore. For instance, a participant with predominately European features in a Southeast Asian event did not feel adequate as she felt that others always stare at her and that she is in a wrong place. Another participant described his experience with his physical appearance:

> You can't tell where I'm from. You can tell he has dark skin tone so he's maybe Indian maybe he's south American maybe he's African something like that but then my facial features kind of deceive that because I don't have classic Indian facial features, I don't have classic African American, African features. I don't have Italian I don't have South American. My hair is another thing. I don't have that curly small hair, I don't have straight hair it's a weird mix of everything.

His physical features that did not fully correspond to any cultural context made it hard for people to know his origins; and thus, exploring some contexts was a challenge as he did not seem to belong to these contexts.

On the other hand, it was mentioned earlier that another participants felt privileged that she had Caucasian features. Her features prevented her from experiencing bullying at school since she looked like the majority of the students. The few cultural

students in her school were always subject to bullying as they did not have the Caucasian-like appearance that she had.

Experiencing stereotypes or discrimination. To follow up with the previous example, the participant who had Caucasian features had and easier experience at school than other students who had ethnic features: “I think they had a much harder time. I wouldn’t have a hard unless somebody knew what my name was because they would automatically see that's an ethnic name that's why I would have hard time.” Her experience as a multicultural person was easier than others who had the features of ethnic people since they were subject to more discriminations and racism.

In relation to exploring belonging, a participant who had Southeast Asian features but did not feel that she is part of that culture had a harder time exploring the Canadian culture as she has always been identified by others as Southeast Asian. She expressed that she did not feel heard as others always assumed she is Asian. As explained by M.Y “I know as soon as I say something, they're going to activate all these assumptions and I'm like no no you really don't know me that well.” Thus, stereotypes make it harder for participants to explore certain contexts since they need to face the assumptions that others make about them.

Being in-between. All participants talked about one personal characteristic that served as a strength and a weakness at the same time in the process of exploring different contexts and managing relationships. Being in-between is one of the main challenges faced by the participants in this study. As it was expressed by one of the participants “I feel like I'm sort of this other category.” In all cultural contexts, they do not feel fully part of any of them. “I feel the fact that I'm always kind of emerging from place to place, I fit

everywhere but at the same time I fit nowhere." Despite having difficulty being fully part of a cultural context, participants still consider fitting everywhere as a strength.

In terms of strengths, participants believed that their experience of being in-between have taught them to be open-minded to people with different backgrounds. D.J explained "I became more open-minded about different values and more flexible […] I have like opportunity of having to have access to three different cultures like you get to know more of each culture". And as mentioned in the previous quote, while the participant feels in-between, he still feels that he fits in many of different cultural contexts. This openness gives the participants the desire to learn about others. They expressed this desire by showing their interests in learning the languages of different cultures, reading and learning about different cultures, and listening people who are telling their stories.

These facilitators make the navigation from one cultural context to another smoother and less troublesome. The more participants experienced these factors as barriers instead of facilitators, the harder the process of identity formation in multiple contexts.

To conclude, as part of forming one's identity, young people growing up in multiple cultural contexts need to process being different through exploring their contexts while managing relationships and conflicts that may arise from that process. It is important to understand that the process if very different from one person to another depending on participants' personal experiences and the different cultural contexts they are exploring.

Depending on participants' different backgrounds and personal experiences, some elements facilitated the exploration of multiple contexts; and others that made the process challenging. Despite these differences, however, participants in this study had a clear sense of where they come from, who they are, and where they are heading (i.e. ego identity). They also expressed the needs of young people growing up in multiple contexts; and their expectations from practitioners and other people who play important roles in their lives. As it will be discussed in the next chapter, knowing the needs of these young people is important as it is possible for some young people who grow up in multiple cultural contexts to face greater challenges such as mental health disorders, addictions, and dropping out of school. Practitioners may get an insight of what is needed to work with multicultural young people and provide access to them.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Summary of the Study

The present research examined the process of identity formation for young people who grew up in multicultural contexts and had at least one parent who belongs to a visible minority. While identity development has been studied by many researchers, there is little research examining how young people who are simultaneously growing up in multiple cultures experience the process of identity formation. In the present research, young people who have parents from different backgrounds –other than the Euro-Canadian culture- were invited to participate in individual interviews to examine the following question: how do youth who grew up in a multicultural environment experience identity formation? To enrich and validate the findings from the interviews, two interviewees participated in a focus group with the researcher to provide greater depth to the categories. In this chapter, I will discuss the findings, their implications, the strengths and the weaknesses of the research, and future directions.

Discussion of Findings

To summarize the findings, the experience of identity formation for the participants who grew up in homes with multiple cultures requires them to process being different in multiple contexts (see figure 2 on page 66). The exploration aspect of processing being different includes exploring one's belonging in these contexts and one's personal choices. These experiences are mainly intrapersonal; and require cognitive and emotional processes that are private to the young person. These processes, however, are shaped by interactions with the contexts and events in the life of the young person such as traveling, and attending cultural activities. The management aspect of processing being

different includes managing relationships with family members and friends; and managing conflicts that arise in these relationships. During the period of exploration and decision making, participants expressed their need to be understood and heard from people in positions of authority such as youth workers, animators, and teachers. Specifically, they wanted a space to express themselves openly and decide who they are; and they wanted to be heard. Some factors such as physical appearance and the perceived similarities or differences between cultures can impact the significance of that experience, either making it smooth or harder. Below I will start by discussing the two aspects of processing being different: exploration and management; then I will discuss the expectation and needs of the multicultural young people when dealing with practitioners.

Exploration. Exploring is one of the two aspects of processing being different. As discussed in chapter two, the process of exploration is crucial to make choices regarding one's worldviews, beliefs, career, and relationship (Marcia, 1966). Exploration is related to Erikson's personal component of the identity in which a person tries to find out who she is. Following the process of exploration, young people are expected to commit to certain choices to reach identity achievement. Identity achievement is reached when young people engage in a process of high exploration, and become committed to their choices (Marcia, 1966). The formation of personal identity through exploration and commitment requires a well-developed social identity. Social identity is the component of the identity that deals with one's sense of belonging to a certain group (Erikson, 1968). The sense of affiliation and belonging to a certain group or culture is important as these cultures serve as points of reference regarding the options that one may explore (McLean

& Syed, 2015). Thus, a clear sense of belonging facilitates the process of developing one's personal identity.

In this research, the participants had access to multiple cultures and had to explore their cultural contexts to determine their belonging. Consequently, their process of exploration was not only related to the development of their personal identity, but also to the development of social identity. These findings are consistent with existing research as Fisher et al. (2014) found that multicultural young people find themselves in positions where they have to engage in greater exploration than monocultural young people. The discussion below will start with the exploration of belonging (social identity) and will continue with the exploration of choices (personal identity).

Where and how to belong? As defined in chapter two, belonging is the part of the identity that leads one to feel the security of belonging to a larger group; and is a process that is produced through regular encounters and experiences with one's environment (Anthias, 2006; Visser 2017). Although the sense of belonging is mainly developed through a process of emotional and cognitive exploration, it is not possible for it to develop in a vacuum. It is influenced by external interactions such as experiencing stereotypes, traveling to places of origins, actively seeking belonging, and being denied or granted the belonging.

Young people in this research became aware of their multicultural backgrounds following experiences of stereotypes and discrimination; and experiences of being identified by others based on one's physical appearance. Such experiences led participants to know that they are different in different contexts. Existing literature about bicultural and multicultural young people discusses some of those incidents as

experiences of identity denial. The term identity denial refers to the "incongruity between a person's self-perceptions and others' perceptions of that person" (Townsend, Markus, & Bergsieker, 2009, p.188). This incongruity puts multicultural young people in situations that confirms to them that they are different. Participants in the research of Townsend et al. (2009) experienced identity denial in multiple ways. One of the most reported forms was related to their appearance (28.8%). They would be told, for instance, that they do not look very Asian –or any other ethnic background. As discussed in the findings of this research, the discrepancies between one's physical appearance and ethnic affiliation may constitute a challenge for young people with mixed ethnic backgrounds. Those with a great incongruity between their physical appearance and the commonly known appearance of a certain group are more susceptible to experiences of identity denial.

In addition to appearance, participants in this research also experienced discrimination and stereotypes, which are both discussed by Townsend et al. (2009) as part of identity denial since 17% of their participants reported experiencing this type of denial. For instance, one may not be welcomed to a students' cultural club due to his/her other background. In this research, participants shared some situations such as others questioning their existence in a certain context due to their other cultural background; and thus, they would be denied from the full affiliation to some cultures. Thus, the incongruity between how others perceive these young people and how they see themselves lead them to experience identity denial and realize that they are different. In addition, multicultural people who experience identity denial find themselves in a

position where they have to actively explore and negotiate their belonging to these cultures (Fisher et al., 2014).

My findings are congruent with Visser (2017) who found that multicultural young people negotiate being part of different contexts around them through a process of seeking and being granted belonging. For instance, a participant in this research felt greater belonging to the Euro-Canadian culture but her Asian background influenced the way others treat her as they expect her to have so much knowledge about that side of her family. In other words, she sought belonging to the Canadian culture but her belonging was questioned due to her experiences with other cultures that are different than the Euro-Canadian culture. Experiences of identity denial come into play when people try to challenge the process of granting multicultural young people the experience of belonging to a certain group. In Visser's (2017) research, participants described their belonging to Britain meant that they speak the language, live there, and are formally British since they hold the citizenship. These factors, however, were not enough to grant them the belonging to the British culture. Experiences of discrimination, rejection, poverty, changing policies and differences in values between cultures influenced their level of belonging (Visser, 2017). In the current research as well, I also found that despite the fact that all participants hold Canadian citizenship, they had different levels belonging to Canada and to their cultural backgrounds –as will be discussed later in this chapter. Their level of belonging was influenced by their knowledge of the language, socioeconomic level of the family, experiences of discrimination or stereotype, and conflicting values. Thus, the process of seeking belonging, and being granted or denied belonging to multiple cultures is complex; and is influenced by participants' personal experiences.

Participants expressed that the way they identify themselves (i.e. Canadian, Filipino, Turkish, etc.) changes depending on their contexts. Previous research shows that young people go through a process of exploration as they try to understand who they are in different contexts; and how they belong to each context (Renn, 2000; Pauker & Ambady, 2009). They "frequently reconceptualize their identity across situations. Regardless of the outcome a multiracial individual chooses, such challenges require adaptation" (Pauker & Ambady, 2009, p. 70). The process of adaptation requires a level of cognitive flexibility to enact different identities in different situations before choosing where to belong and how to belong to each culture.

To have a better understanding of the process of negotiating belonging, I will provide more details on the mechanisms that were used by the participants in this research. Some multicultural young people in this research tried to blend in the larger group. The process of trying to fit in has led them to let go of some features that make them different such as the food they eat or the languages they speak. It is not always possible, however, to blend in due to physical features that may not match certain cultural groups. Renn (2000) found that the inability of multicultural young people to fit in a single monocultural group in college and university led them to further explore their identities. Two-third of the participants in Renn's research attributed their growth in terms of multiracial identity development to their experiences of not fitting in. Her participants –who were university students- found that monoracial groups and associations in their campuses did not represent them; and thus, they engaged in a process of exploring other aspects of their multiracial identity such as belonging to different groups or spaces (Renn, 2000). In some instances, young people in this research also tried

to fit in but found themselves in a position that is in-between. This position encouraged them to engage in further exploration.

The increased level of exploration in this research helped participants in the process of reaching acceptance of who they are and how they belong to their cultural contexts. Some accepted all the three cultures that they are living in and felt an affiliation to all of them. Others chose to identify with one particular culture; and some chose parts of each culture and let go of others. Renn (2000) introduced the concept of patterns of "occupying a space" (p. 410) for multiracial students. Her research yielded several patterns of occupying spaces. Some "moved between monoracial cateogries, adopting situational definition of monoracial identity" (Renn, 2000, p. 411). Others created a new category of multiracial or biracial identity. These two categories are congruent with the choices made by young people in this research who have accepted all three cultures or those who chose parts of the cultures around them. For instance, the participant who found her two cultures at home are very different than the Euro-Canadian culture acknowledged that she is part of all these cultures but chose to adopt one monoracial identity at a time while moving between the cultures at home and the culture of the majority. On the other hand some chose to adopt –at all times- a distinct multiracial identity that is composed of all three cultures around them. A third pattern in Renn's (2000) research was those who simply adopted a monoracial identity at all times. One participant in this research chose to only identify with the Euro-Canadian culture. None of the ten participants expressed identifying solely with a minority group. The experiences of navigating spaces and exploring how to occupy them, enduring identity

denial, and trying to fit in allowed participants to decide how to identify themselves and how to belong to the cultural contexts around them.

To summarize, multicultural young people go through a process of cognitively and emotionally seeking belonging to the cultures they are exploring. The process, however, is not entirely up to them as ecological factors play a role in granting them that belonging. As young people face these factors and explore, they exercise some agency to know where they belong; and how they belong to each culture.

Belonging to Canada and Quebec. The role of ecological factors is demonstrated by the influence of historical and sociopolitical factors on participants' belonging to Quebec and Canada. Although discussing these factors is beyond the scope of this research, it is important to understand the particular experience of growing up in Quebec as eight of the ten participants who were interviewed grew up in Quebec; and all ten of them currently live there. Historical events in Canada led to the development of competing political identities between Canada and the province of Quebec in Canada (Banting & Soroka, 2012). Thus, there is a competition between the two in the process of welcoming immigrants and nation-building. While Canada's federal approach to multiculturalism[1] recognizes the coexistence of all cultures without defining a central culture, Quebec's approach is centralized around its Francophone culture that aims to unite all other cultures around it (Banting and Soroka, 2012; Labelle, 2004). Interestingly enough, however, none of the young people in this research identified themselves as Quebecois. Some expressed a certain level of belonging to Quebec; and others did not

[1] The term multiculturalism is used here to refer to the political philosophy and government policies rather than to refer to families of multiple backgrounds as it was defined in chapter 1.

identify as Quebecois or French-Canadian. As for belonging to Canada, the two participants who grew up in provinces other than Quebec –Ontario and Alberta, expressed clear belonging to the Euro-Canadian culture more than any other cultures around them. Those who grew up in Quebec expressed varying levels of belonging to Canada and the other heritages that they are experiencing.

These findings are consistent with the current research of Banting and Soroka (2012) who found that second generation minorities growing up in provinces other than Quebec had higher level of belonging to their provinces that those who are growing up in Quebec. In addition, second generation minorities who were growing up in Quebec had lower level of belonging to Canada than those in other provinces. It is important to note that all participants –who lived in Montreal- spoke fluent English, four had native-like fluency in French, three considered themselves highly functional, and three did not speak French at all. Montreal is a highly diverse metropolitan area and 90% of the minority groups in Quebec reside there (Labelle, 2004). Consequently, the high level of diversity, and the knowledge of multiple languages may have a role in leading youth in the current research to develop a higher belonging to Canada rather than Quebec; and a lower belonging to Canada than multicultural youth in other provinces.

To conclude, while this part specifically discussed belonging to Canada and Quebec, the impact of sociopolitical and historical factors could be seen in different contexts as well. Young people who grow up in multicultural contexts go through a process of negotiating their belonging; the sociopolitical and historical factors play a serious role in granting them that belonging.

Exploring choices. Young people in this research had a point in their lives when they started forming their own worldviews and choices, which were not always in agreement with their parents' values. Côté (2000) introduced two pathways that are related to making choices about one's personal identity. There are levels of agency that emerging adults may pursue. The default individualization pathway involves little agency; emerging adults in this pathway would follow a life course with minimal resistance. The developmental individualization pathway requires higher level of agency; and emerging adults following this pathway search for continuous growth in variety of areas in their lives (Côté, 2000). Schwartz, Côté, and Arnett (2005) examined the adoption of default individualization or developmental individuation among emerging adults who were either White, Black or Hispanics. Their research have shown older emerging adults tend to follow a developmental pathway more than younger ones. In the present research for instance, a young person adopted a default individualization pathway when she first studied a major that was fitting her parents' expectations. After graduating, however, she decided to use her agency in making different decisions and choosing a new career path that is congruent with her personal interests. The turning point in making one's own decision started for the participants in this research somewhere between 16 to 18 years old. Then, they continued to develop their worldviews and choices over time. Thus, the level of agency of the participants differed depending on their readiness to address certain issues and on their maturity.

Consistent with the findings of this research, Fisher et al. (2014) found that multicultural young people find themselves in positions where they have to engage in greater exploration. While there may be greater agency involved in this process, young

people may opt for a default individuation in some instances. The choice to adopt the values of the mainstream culture, for instance, without exploring the other values around a young person is an example of default individualization. One the other hand, the same young person may exercise greater levels of agency in other areas of his life. That is similar to the case of one of the participants who chose to avoid her parents' cultures by physically distancing herself from her family and moving to a different city instead of exploring the cultures. She, however, exercised agency in her choice of career and beliefs. Thus, multicultural young people may choose to exercise different levels of agency in different areas of their lives and at different times.

As for career choices, participants in the current research had to negotiate with their parents vis-à-vis the choices that are available to them. In other words, parents had set some restrictions on what their children are allowed to explore; and some young people negotiated these limits to fit their goals. The longitudinal research of Polenova, Vedral, Brisson, and Zinn (2017) examined the process of career identity development for Asian American students. They found that the participants' decisions were influenced by their culture and families' expectations. Participants' individual characteristics such as their motivation and locus of control moderated the influence of family and culture. In this research, participants' responses are consistent with findings of Polenova et al. (2017). Young people were impacted differently by the limits that were set by the parents due to their individual characteristics. For instance, in the earlier example in which a participant followed her parents' expectations and then started a new major after graduating, locus of control may have played a role in her decisions. In other words, she may have felt that she has no option but to fulfill the expectations of her parents. As she

matured, she may have realized that she can be in control of the decision; and consequently, adopted a developmental pathway to her vocational identity development.

The process of developing one's choices in terms beliefs, values, and career is a cognitive process that requires exploring certain contexts over time. This process requires young people to explore the values and expectation in their cultural contexts before committing to choices. The practiced agency in searching for meaning and choices helps young people in their growth and learning (Côté, 2000), but it also puts them in situations that require negotiating relationships and managing conflicts.

Management. Management is the aspect of processing being different that deals with maintaining relationships with family members and friends while exploring one's options; it also deals with managing conflicts that arise in these relationships. As presented in the findings, choosing values that contradict the values of one cultural context (e.g. home versus friends) causes conflicts between the multicultural young people and others around them. As a result, they find ways to commit to their choices while maintaining relationships with significant people in their lives.

Managing relationships. Relationships are part of the interpersonal interactions in the young person's environment. Competing values in the lives of young people may result in conflicts or disagreements between them and their families or between them and their peers. It is known that the trend in immigration has been that the majority of receiving countries have individualistic values and the majority of immigrants are coming from places with collectivist values (Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Senécal, 1997; Schwartz et al., 2006). Multicultural young people may be growing up in homes with collectivist values, or homes with a mix of collectivist and individualistic values while

living in a dominant culture with individualist values. The challenge for these young people is related to committing to values and beliefs that may make them stand out since they remain a minority despite being born in the receiving country and mastering the local languages. The mainstream individualistic values seemed to be in competition with collectivist values of the parents' cultures.

Young people in this research acknowledged that they are growing up in Canada in conditions that are different than their parents. Their parents arrived to Canada as adults or young adults and had to live through a process of acculturation. Schwartz, Montgomery, and Briones (2006) explained acculturation of international immigrants as the adaptation in adopting the values and beliefs of the new society and in retaining the values and beliefs of their culture of origin. The second generation may find themselves facing challenges related to acculturation as well since they learn their values from home and from the dominant group (Schwartz et al., 2006). In this research for instance, the young person who adopted his parents' collectivist values such as visiting his family and helping parents on a regular basis was seen as a dependent person by people around him who belonged to the majority group. It is possible that the challenge may be greater for multicultural young people as they have two sets of values at home in addition to the Euro-Canadian values. The greater discrepancy between these sets of values the larger the challenge. A home with Vietnamese-Chinese cultures has less competing values than a home with African-Asian cultures. Acculturation and adoption of values could be more challenging for young people who have three cultures that have few commonalities.

Consistent with the findings of Sarkisian, Gerena, and Gerstel (2007), extended family members in the present research had a great influence on participants' lives. It also

led to some conflicts putting the young adult in a position where they have to actively make a choice and decide which values they would like to adopt. Sarkisian et al. (2007) found that, while the nature of the support differed, extended family members play an important role in families of different ethnic backgrounds. For instance, participating in taking care of children was a type of help was often offered by Hispanic females (Sarkisian et al., 2007). In the present research, some participants discussed the influence of their grandmothers in the early years of their lives. The involvement of extended family members is consistent with collectivist values and is expected from these family members. Due to immigration, however, some participants grew up without extended family members around them; and thus, that role was not fulfilled by anyone around them. Three participants expressed feelings of loneliness and regret for not being able to meet and form relationships with their extended family members. It is possible that their desire to know their extended family stem from the collectivist culture at home; and/or it could be part of the exploration process.

Managing conflicts. Participants reported different conflict management styles that depended on their culture, age, personal preferences, and seriousness of the issue. These findings are consistent with previous research that found that different cultures (i.e. collectivist versus individualist) attribute different meanings to different ways of handling a conflict (Cai & Fink, 2002).

This research found that avoidance is used to maintain the calm and reduce stress; and it is used when young people start accepting the differences between them and their parents. As a result, they avoided engaging in an argument, despite the fact that both parties know about the disagreement. Avoidance was also sometimes the result of a

hierarchal parent-child relationship, in which the "parents are the source of knowledge and wisdom and they are always right" (M.Y). The same conflict management style had different meanings to the participants. Pruitt and Carnevale (1993) came up with a conflict management model that is based on two constructs: concern for self, and concern for others. They suggested that avoidance is the result of low concern for others and low concern about the self; and they considered it a negative way of dealing with conflicts. Based on other research, however, individuals in collectivist cultures may choose avoidance and covertness as a conflict management style out of high concern for others and to maintain important relationships (Ohbuchi & Takahashi, 1994). In other words, in order to maintain harmonious relationships, and to value traditions, one may choose to avoid addressing the issue (Ohbuchi & Takahashi, 1994; Cai & Fink, 2002).

This research shows that the challenge in the case of multicultural young people is the fact that they are simultaneously growing up in collectivist and individualistic cultures. They are faced with multiple meanings for conflict management styles. For instance, does confrontation mean assertiveness or disrespect? Respect is highly valued in collectivist cultures; but assertiveness is also an important value in individualistic cultures. This is demonstrated in the response of S.B regarding facing conflicts with her father. As an adolescent, she frequently confronted him; then, she decided it was "wrong" as she was concerned about his health condition. She insisted, however, that she has her own views and opinions; and she expresses them sometimes. The decision of how to handle a conflict for multicultural young people requires greater reflection and conscious decision making. It is possible that some of their choices stem from collectivist values and others stem from individualistic values.

Some participants discussed using a strategic way in handling conflicts such as conforming to the parents' rules in smaller issues so they can put their energy in convincing their parents about more serious issues. In that case, young people used a more elaborate conflict management style such as cooperation and compromising. Cooperation is a conflict style that reflects high concern for oneself and for the others; and compromising is a style reflects moderate concern for oneself and others (Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993). In this research, an example of cooperation would be the participant who convinced her parents to study abroad for one semester; she discussed the advantages of that experience and talked about it repeatedly until the parents were able to see that it was a good idea. Finding a middle ground about career restrictions that are set by parents is an example of compromising.

The experiences discussed in this research are consistent with the findings of Cai and Find (2002); they found that people from collectivist cultures prefer the cooperating and compromising style more than people in individualistic cultures. Thus, a high level of concern about others and about themselves led the young people to adopt compromising or cooperating as conflict management styles. It is possible, however, that they choose avoidance in a strategic way to maintain relationships or to leave confrontations for more important issues. Thus, participants have shown cognitive flexibility and agency in choosing a conflict management style in dealing with conflicts and managing their relationships.

Being understood. Multicultural young people in this research expressed their need to have the space to express and present themselves as they see fit. In addition, they want to be heard. They expect listeners in positions of authority (e.g. teachers, youth

workers, physicians) to have an open mind, be ready to correct their assumptions, and to show curiosity and interest.

As discussed earlier, participants had experiences of identity denial such as denying their belonging to a certain group, challenging their authenticity as members of a certain group, or treating them as exotic beings due to their backgrounds or appearance (Museus, Sariñana, Yee, & Robinson, 2016). These experiences have an impact in shaping the identity of multicultural young people. Schools, health care systems, and youth centers are places that may play a salient role in these experiences as they usually reflect the values of the mainstream majority (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). As a result, these milieus have the chance to provide multicultural youth with what is needed to foster healthy identity development. Policies, training programs for staff, and activities are some of the ways they can offer that space to young people.

As part of her research regarding the importance of the impact of space for multicultural students, Renn (2000) states that "access to and inclusion in public space created opportunities to explore or to validate privately held ideas about identity" (p. 408). Public spaces such as educational institutions, communities, and health care systems that respect diversity, offer a space for self-expression, and encourage cross-cultural dialogues allow multicultural young people to safely explore their identities (Renn, 2000; Berry et al., 2006). Thus, being heard with a sense of openness and curiosity, having a space to express oneself, and being seen beyond one's cultural identification were the needs that were discussed in this research; and they are consistent with what is previously discussed in the literature. The implications of these findings will be discussed later in this chapter.

Barriers and facilitators. The discussion in this chapter in relation to multicultural identity formation shows that it is not a simple and linear process. Exploration of multiple contexts and the commitment to values is a dynamic and complex process that occurs over time (Fisher et al., 2014) and require multicultural young people to exercise agency to know who they are in the multiple contexts around them. The findings of this research demonstrated that some factors may either facilitate the process or make it more challenging for multicultural young people. The closer the cultural contexts are to each other, the less challenges the young person may face. For instance, the participant who had two Asian cultural backgrounds found that the overlap between the two was great; and thus, navigating between the two cultures was not a challenge. She felt that the overlap between her Asian backgrounds and the Euro-Canadian culture was minimal, so she had harder time navigating between these two contexts. Consequently, she decided that she belongs to all cultural contexts, but she adopted one identity at a time (i.e. being Canadian outside, being Asian at home).

Other barriers include experiences of discrimination and stereotype that make the interaction between cultural contexts complicated for young people. As found in Berry et al. (2006), experiences of discrimination for bicultural youth were related to youth choosing to only affiliate to their ethnic group, or to be confused. Those who experienced less discrimination were more likely to integrate both cultures. In addition, the same study found that integration of both cultures promotes healthier psychosocial and sociocultural adaptation (Berry et al., 2006). Thus, multicultural young people may benefit from receiving social and psychological services that support them through the process of acculturation. As will be discussed as part of the implications of this research,

a support system that minimizes the impact of barriers and strengthen the facilitators may allow multicultural young people a smooth and more positive process of identity formation.

Implications of Research

As discussed earlier, being understood was the category that emerged from the responses of the participants regarding their needs and expectations. They asked to have spaces to express themselves without having to compromise their identities. They wanted to be heard while others are not making assumptions about them. Knowing that identity formation is a crucial developmental task for one's psychological well-being (Erikson, 1968; Brook et al., 2008), it is important to support multicultural young people into forming comprehensive identities that do not drive them to compromise any part of who they are.

Previous research has found that some of the difficulties that are associated with multicultural identity include depressive symptoms, anxiety, and confusion (Fisher et al., 2014). It is argued that the complex nature of the identity development for multicultural young people makes them more susceptible to mental health difficulties (Fisher et al., 2014). As discussed in the literature review, however, it is important to note that there are many advantages that are related to the multicultural identity. For instance, a recent study found that ethnic identity was a protective factor against substance use for young people (Fisher, Zapolski, Sheehan, & Barnes-Najor, 2017). A meta-analysis of 83 studies on biculturalism found that the endorsement of bicultural identity by young people was related to positive psychological and social adjustment (Hong, Zhan, Morris, & Benet-Martínez, 2016). Thus, the goal of practitioners, researchers and institutions working with

young people should include minimizing the impact of the complex nature of multicultural identity formation and increase their resilience.

Integrating the findings of this research with previous research, it is important to take into consideration the role that institutions can play in supporting young people, making resources available, and ensuring safe identity exploration and commitment. To start, knowing that experiences of discrimination act against the integration of ethnic identities, it is important for schools and other places where young people spend a fair amount of time to act against it and offer young people places to express who they are without experiencing any denial. This intervention is best implemented by institutions which have the ability to introduce policies and encourage a culture that fights discrimination and identity denial.

In addition, in relation to mental health and psychological adjustment, practitioners should take into consideration certain practices that will increase their cultural sensitivity and decrease the risk of dropout rate from therapy. Siegel, Haugland, Reid-Rose, and Hopper (2011) evaluated three mental health programs. Each program provided services to a specific community: Afro-Caribbean, Latino, and Chinese. The common elements for the success of these programs were identified as cultural competencies. Some of these competencies included communication (non-verbals, forms of address), trust-building, stigma reduction, and friendly milieu (Siegel et al., 2011). Implementing these competencies into practice may address participants' needs (listening without making assumptions and offering the space to express oneself). While Siegel et al.'s (2011) study identified what worked for all cultures from the three programs, it still

does not address the nuanced interactions between individual differences and multiple cultures.

Since most treatment models were developed with Euro-American and Euro-Canadian population in mind, they may fail to take into account defining characteristics of individuals such as their cultural backgrounds, languages, and spiritual affiliation (Roysircar, 2009). As a result, people from multiple cultural backgrounds may find these models unsuitable for their needs and end up not seeking help whenever needed. To address some of these shortcomings in treatment, the Jewish General hospital in Montreal integrated a different approach to practice that may be successful with multicultural young people who are seeking help. A team of researchers and practitioners developed the cultural consultation service (CCS) for mental health and it is used "when care as usual is not enough and intervention difficulties might be related to social and cultural issues" (Kirmayer, Groleau, Guzder, Blake, & Jarvis, 2003; Rousseau & Guzder, 2015, p.611). An example of their intervention was a 21-year-old woman who seemed unresponsive to treatment. While the treatment team thought her relationship with her mother was enmeshed and wanted to limit her visits, a consultation with CCS made them understand the cultural importance of that relationship and how it could be used to be part of the treatment (Kirmayer et al., 2003). Multicultural young people may benefit from such a model as it does not group communities and assume that one model will fit them all, and look at each case as a unique case with its own complexities. In addition, such models may cater to a greater number of youth who belong different communities and/or consider themselves multicultural. The integration of such models should happen in other

spaces such as the school, and community centers as it will offer a more nuanced service to multicultural young people.

In short, practitioners working with multicultural youth should take into consideration elements that increase the resilience of young people to support them in developing their identities. As discussed in chapter one, resilience of young people is related to resolving tensions that are related to aspects such as identity, cultural adherence, access to resources, relationships, and power (Ungar et al., 2007; Ungar, 2008). Thus, supporting multicultural youth in exploring their cultural contexts, while having access to the necessary resources and supportive relationships is a way to increase their resilience. The appropriate support system may contribute to decreasing the impact of some of the barriers, and in improving the experience of multicultural young people.

Strengths And Limitations

Previous research that discussed multiculturalism took mostly two cultures into consideration. As mentioned in the first chapter, these two cultures are either living in a home culture and a dominant culture; or living in different cultures one after the other due to geographical mobility (i.e. home culture and host culture with every move). Other research that included young people with homes that have multiple cultures did not differentiate between those who are growing up in two cultures (mainstream and home) and those who are growing up in more than two cultures (two or more home cultures in addition to the mainstream). Fisher et al. (2014), for instance, discussed this point as one their weaknesses since they did not look into the different nuances between participants. In my research, I focused on participants with parents who came from two different origins that are different than the culture of the majority. Although this criteria limited the

pool of possible participants, it ensured a focus on studying identity formation in the context of multiculturalism.

Another strength of this research was the fact that identity formation was addressed as a whole and not only the cultural aspect of it. In addition to the social identity, the ego and the personal part of the identity were included to understand how multicultural people go through the process of comprehensive identity formation. Finally, the methodology is also a point of strength as the theory emerged from the data rather than an existing conceptual framework. Given that research regarding the process of identity development of multicultural people is in its early stages, grounded theory method was most suitable.

As for the limitations of this research, the major one is related to the participants' characteristics as there were only two male participants. Although data saturation was reached, an increase in the number of male participants may possibly influence the data in terms of showing variations between male and female. In addition, all participants were university students as the announcement was put in several students' Facebook pages and in campus. These participants were succeeding in their lives and education. They grew up with both parents and had access to resources. Young people who fit the criteria but did not continue schooling were not represented in the sample. Those with mental health concerns and other difficulties were not included in the sample as well. A discussion about their process of exploration and management may provide different perspectives. Finally, the focus group could have included more participants. A larger number of participants may stimulate the discussion and enrich the data with various perspectives in relation to the categories that were discussed.

Future Directions

The present study contributed to understanding multicultural young people, but there is still so much to be examined. First, a study with a larger and more diverse sample of participants and different methods may contribute to validating and refining the emerging theory. Second, the process of identity formation from adolescence to emerging adulthood may contribute in better understanding of change over time and the impact of support that these young people receive. Thus, a longitudinal model that follows young people from adolescence until late emerging adulthood will be rich in data. Third, it is important to evaluate programs that already succeed in supporting multicultural young people and identifying successful strategies. Then, the inclusion of these culturally sensitive practices in other programs may be evaluated. Finally, while this research touches on the subject of the needs of multicultural young people, more research is needed to understand their experiences with specific systems, such as the health care or the educational system.

In relation to the theoretical framework that is adopted by researchers and practitioners, the findings that emerged using grounded theory method encourage the adoption of a polyculturalist paradigm in which "an individual engages with and gets shaped by more than one culture" (Morris & Chiu, 2015, p.634) rather than a categorical paradigm that places people in rigid groups. Polyculturalism is "associated with willingness to criticize one's own cultural tradition, eagerness for intergroup contact, and positive attitudes toward people from different cultures" (Morris & Chiu, 2015, p.652). Morris and Chiu (2015) summarized some of the positive findings in research that are related to polyculturalism. This paradigm encourages openness and learning about others

rather than distancing oneself from a group that seems different. Most importantly, the polycultural paradigm encourages multicultural young people to explore different spaces and contexts without having to compromise part of their identities. It also encourages researchers in the field to consider methods that do not place people in rigid categories when addressing research questions. Thus, the adoption of this paradigm acts as a framework that may give practitioners and researchers a new perspective in dealing with young people who are growing up in a globalized world.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

To summarize, the process of comprehensive identity formation for young people who are simultaneously growing up in multicultural contexts puts them in a position where they have to exercise agency in many aspects of their identity development. Their agency is first required in exploring their social identity to make a decision regarding their belonging to different cultural contexts around them. The development of a social identity help multicultural young people in using their cultural contexts as points of reference for values and worldviews. They also exercise agency in the process of exploring choices regarding worldviews, careers, and choices of partners. When managing relationships and conflicts, agency is needed when multicultural young people make choices that are not accepted by some while maintaining the relationships; and when they decide on conflict management styles. Consistent with the findings of other research, this study finds the process of multicultural identity formation dynamic, complex and situational (Renn, 2000; Morris & Chiu, 2015). As a result, multicultural young people need to be supported by important figures in their cultural contexts such as teachers, youth workers, and other professionals in order to reach identity achievement. The adoption of intervention and research frameworks that takes into consideration the complex nature of multicultural identity development could help in offering multicultural young people spaces in which they feel heard and accepted.

As discussed, resilience of young people is related to resolving tensions that are related to aspects such as identity, cultural adherence, access to resources, relationships, and power (Ungar et al., 2007; Ungar, 2008). Access to resources such as youth centers and community treatment centers (e.g. CLSC, YMCA) is an asset for multicultural youth.

In addition, supportive relationships from family, youth workers, teachers and other important figures are key element in building a coherent identity. Also, supporting multicultural youth in exploring their cultural contexts and in committing to certain values is also another way to increase their resilience, decrease the impact of some of the barriers, improve their experiences and reinforce the advantages of multiculturalism, which is a growing reality in our global world.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Guiding Questions for Individual Interviews

1- Demographic information

a. Parents' ethnic background
b. Participant's age
c. Participant's gender

2- Opening questions

a. To start, tell me a little about yourself and where you come from. (probe: have you always seen yourself the same way? Multicultural or…)
b. Tell me a little more about your parents and their origins. (cultural background, place of birth, number of years in Canada, languages)

3- Social identity questions

a. How was your experiences growing up in these cultures?
    - How did you relate to each culture? (level of belonging, when did it happen?)
    - How did you deal with differences in values? Did you fell there were some clashes in values?
    - How did it affect who you've become today?
    - Can you think of an example of events/incidents when you felt that all cultures have some common ground?
    - Can you think of an example of events/incidents when you felt that the differences were irreconcilable? How did you manage that?
b. How did you react if you've ever been in the following situations (or how would you react?)
    - A disagreement with one of your parents about a matter that is important to you
    - A difference of opinion with your friends/colleagues
    - Being asked "where are you from?"

4- Personal identity questions

a. I am wondering whether the different cultures that you've experienced have an influence in some areas of your life like your choice of career
   - What about your beliefs and understanding of the world? (probe: faith, religious services)
   - What about your significant relationships? (with your loved one's)

5- Experiences in different settings

a. How was your experience in the school? (did your home environment have an impact on your interactions with teachers/youth workers? If yes, how?)
b. As about other settings: physician, summer camp animators
c. Did you ever wish that your teacher (also ask about other service providers) approached some situations differently while dealing with multicultural people? (if yes, how?)
d. How was your experience compared to other people who were growing up with parents from the same cultural heritage?
e. What would you consider a key element to take into consideration if you are working with multicultural young people and children?

6- Ego identity question (Narrative)

a. In this part, you will be invited to play the role of a storyteller about your own life. I would like that you tell a story in relation to where you come from and how you grew up. You may choose certain events and themes that you believe are important. Think about what makes your story similar to others' and what makes it unique too (adapted from Yampolsky et al., 2013).

7- Conclusion

a. Anything that I missed and that you would like to add to help better understand where you grew up where you come from impacted who you are?
b. Do you have any questions for me?
c. Ask about the group interview

Appendix B: Group Interview Guide

1- The researcher will welcome the participants and ask them to present themselves to each other.

2- The researcher will present the topic of research and the research question.

3- The major categories that emerged from the interview analysis will be presented to the participants (Appendix C).

4- For each category, a story that is composed of quotes from different participants will be put together and presented to the participants (Appendix D).

5- Following each story, the participants will be invited to discuss to which aspects they can relate; how they agree and how they disagree with the stories.

6- At the end, participants will be invited to discuss the links and the relationships that they see between the categories.

7- Finally, participants will be asked if they have anything to add and they will be thanked for their time and presence.

Appendix C: Categories

Categories		
Managing relationships	**Processing being different**	**Managing conflicts**
Being influenced by extended family De/valuing family values understanding relationships Growing up in different conditions than one's parents	Being different Being identified by other (based on physical look) Experiencing stereotype / discrimination Self-identifying depending on context Trying to fit in Accepting being different	Experiencing gender differences Sharing a (un)common faith Avoiding conflicts Confronting
Exploring choices	**Exploring belonging**	**Wanting to be seen (being understood)**
Being Fed ideas Constructing one's own ideas / shifting ideas Choosing Canadian values / different values Making decisions about one's beliefs / worldviews Un/valuing traditional education	Realizing the dominance of one culture over the others Feeling the connection based on culture Dis/connecting to Quebec's culture Learning languages (or not learning) Traveling to places of origin (or not)	Asking for space to express oneself Wanting to feel appreciated / heard Being valued as a human being

Appendix D: Stories Related to Categories

Exploring belonging I grew up in a home where my European side sort of took over more and they had more influence on my upbringing but we come here, we kind of merge ourselves into the Canadianness. I feel also it goes down to like is that defined being Canadian? Being Quebecois? I don't even affiliate as being Quebecois, I consider myself French-Canadian to say the most. My father really forced his culture into my life because he wanted me to go to school to learn the language. My Mom never spoke to me while growing up so I don't really have that language. I feel like language is a huge part of culture. When we say different words in another language, people get so happy they start talking to you in their language, it gave me that kind of sensation like connection it was very nice to feel and I just wanted to feel more part of it and more close to it. Another thing is that my mom is unemployed so that definitely impacted her ability to be independent and sort of give her kids like the option to go visit back home and I feel that's a big reason why I just don't feel it's part of me.
Exploring choices we're kind of fed these different views on things but then you get when you're 18 even 16, 17 years old you're like ok is this really what I believe, is this really what I think. By then you've read things and you've been exposed to different people to make your ideas so yah definitely being born here in Montreal had an impact. For me specifically I saw that shift happening when I was in CEGEP. I realized that I have a very progressive mind and I assume that's because I grew up in Canada like a liberal setting, so I just told my parents I don't really believe in this. I know that you do but I can't support the faith that I don't really have connection to
Processing being different I feel like people like people identify me as someone who's not white. I'm sort of this other category. I felt like there was something in my gut that made me different from others. I remember when I was in grade 3, we were talking about beauty and the teacher is like "Oh! toi tu es belle, toi tu es belle, Oh toi tu es ok". I was crying. So the impact of these cultures is still a question that I'm trying to answer, it's kind of depends on who I'm talking to, so I kind of switch between the two, like if I'm meeting someone that's not from Canada, I'll tell them that I'm Canadian before I tell them about my roots. When we were kids we wanted to blend in with people. Obviously that implies putting aside your ethnical differences trying to become something that you're not really. You put away everything that does make you different but then I just realized that this is my life and that other people lives weren't like that and that was okay. It wasn't a problem. Both cultures are beautiful and diverse in their own way but in regards to Canadian too, of course, I'm even more proud.

Managing conflict I will just be silent. Sometimes I would say why my brother is allowed to stay out late. It doesn't go that well. I actually don't like to have disagreement because it makes me feel very anxious so I try to just be like chill with everyone. If there are sometimes certain situations I know they might lead to disagreement I just avoid them. I can't force what cannot be forced
Being understood I think just never talk about things that make others uncomfortable especially when talking about negative things in the culture or religion because for me whenever I meet somebody, the floor is theirs I just want to know, tell me. I just want to know everything about you. I would make them feel special. I think it's really important to respect everyone no matter what their religion is or origin, country whatever they're from because I want people to respect me so I do the same.
Managing relationships Both cultures are family-oriented, and they try to be within the community, so I got brought up by my grandparents because my parents used to work a lot. In terms of relationships, I know when I was growing up my parents were very strict about drugs, sex and everything else, so I definitely I kept that close to heart even still today and honestly, it really makes my choices easier and clearer, absolutely clearer. I mean it all starts off by knowing the person is on the same boat with you in regards to values, like he believes in like hard work and of course Canadian culture is all about hard work.

Appendix E: Consent Form

INFORMATION AND CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Study Title: Identity formation for youth growing up in a multicultural environment

This study is a research project that is conducted by Hadia Alsaieq, individualized master's student and supervised by Dr. Natasha Blanchet-Cohen, associate professor who can be reached at (514) 848-2424 ext. 3347 or Natasha.blanchet-cohen@concordia.ca

You are being invited to participate in the research study mentioned above. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

A. PURPOSE

Young people growing up in a multicultural environment experience different –and possibly competing worldviews and beliefs. During the process of identity formation, these young people refer back to their environment in order to find out about possible options for important decisions regarding love life, career, and worldviews. The multicultural rich environment may have positive impact on young people as, for instance, it may increases their competency in understanding other cultures. This environment, however, may also have negative consequences such as confusion about one's belonging.

To better understand these young people, the purpose of the research is to understand the process of identity formation for those who are growing up in a home that has two cultures that are different the Canadian mainstream culture.

B. PROCEDURES

If you participate, you will be interviewed for 60-90 minutes. Then, you will be invited to participate in a group session to validate and enrich the results, which means, the researcher may share some anonymous findings from the interviews with all participants in the group. The group session will last up to two hours.

Depending on the convenience of the participants, interviews will take place either at Sir George William campus or at Loyola campus of Concordia University. The group session will take place at Loyola campus. Interviews and the group session will be audio recorded.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

You might face certain discomfort as the result of discussing some questions during the interview and the focus group. You may also face some discomfort when the researcher is anonymously sharing the findings during the focus group. If you experience discomfort, you can refuse answering certain questions or sharing certain stories. You might or might not personally benefit from participating in this research. Potential benefits include:

- Understanding the process of identity formation of young people who are born in multiple cultures.
- Understanding the impact of experiencing different cultures on young people.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

The researcher and the faculty supervisor are the only people who will have access to the data. Data will be stored in a portable disk with a password. Paper copies will be locked in a cabinet. Data will be reported and possibly published using pseudonyms for participants. Information that may identify the participants will be removed.

- We will not allow anyone to access the information except as described in this form. We will only use the information for the purposes of the research described in this form.
- The information gathered will be identifiable. That means it will have your name directly on it. We will destroy the information five years after the end of the study.
- By agreeing to participate in the study, you are automatically bound by a confidentiality agreement that prohibits disclosing the identity of participants in the focus group or anything that they will discuss outside the group.

E. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

You do not have to participate in this research. It is purely your decision. If you do participate, you can stop at any time. You can also ask that the information you provided not be used, and your choice will be respected. If you decide that you don't want us to use your information, you must tell the researcher before the end of the 20 days following your participation [before ___/___/_____].

There are no negative consequences for not participating, stopping in the middle, or asking us not to use your information.

F. PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described.

[ ] I accept that the researcher contact me to participate in the focus group

[ ] I do not wish to be contacted to participate in the focus group

NAME (please print) _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the researcher. Their contact information is on page 1. You may also contact their faculty supervisor.

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or oor.ethics@concordia.ca