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Immigrant Youth in the Schoolyard:
Identity, Liminality and Belonging

by

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ABSTRACT

Liminality, or the state of being in-between, describes the adolescent life stage as it is considered to be a passage from child to adult life. `Liminal identities', and `liminal spaces' refer to existing in-between, belonging to more than one culture, ethnicity, or place, and yet not truly belonging to any. Immigrant youth in Canada may be considered as doubly liminal: as adolescents, and as being lodged between original and new cultural identities. Drawing from a multidisciplinary framework, this thesis explores the schoolyard experiences of immigrant Muslim youth in Calgary junior and senior high schools. Video walkabouts conducted by the youth reveal school spaces of inclusion and exclusion, illustrating the complexities of ethnocultural, racial, religious and linguistic identities, of liminality and of belonging. The portraits of the six Muslim youth provide a textured and nuanced look into the embodiment of multiple identifications, the strategic use of physical space, and the connections to belonging.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Trying to understand identity and the links between place and identity is becoming an increasingly popular focus of social science research. With immigration, the quest to understand how movement and settlement impact on identity, culture, religion, gender, and language of individuals and groups is an urgent challenge for researchers and theorists.

The present study seeks to illuminate the connection between place and identity, with a particular focus on the concepts of liminality and belonging in the social and spatial experiences of immigrant adolescents in Canadian junior and senior high schools in Calgary. With concepts of diaspora, hybridity, transculturalism and transnationalism circulating in the discourse of postmodern identity, the notion of belonging becomes elusive. Exploring how immigrant youth learn to belong in a new society, a peer group, a school, a community, while continuing to develop identities related to their home country, culture, language and religion can contribute to our understanding of belonging, place and identity.

The present study draws from a three-year project (1998-2001), funded by SSHRC and Canadian Heritage, which seeks to uncover the underlying strategic competence of youth in their process of becoming Canadians. This is accomplished through three distinct phases exploring identity, spatiality and associativity (Year One); second-language learning strategies (Year Two); and developmental tasks of adolescence (Year Three). The longitudinal study includes youth aged fourteen through sixteen attending junior and senior high schools in the City of Calgary. This larger project is described in the third chapter on

methodology.

From the overall study, this thesis focuses on six individual students who represent diverse ethnocultural backgrounds, having immigrated from different world regions in the last four years, and who share a common religion: Islam. Encompassing an array of elements from these backgrounds, their religious identification intersects with identifications related to age, culture, gender, race, language, and nationality.

Youth's multiple identifications impact on peer group relations, strategic use of physical school space and processes of integration. These experiences in turn will play a role in their continuing process of identity formation.

Identities of individuals and groups are composed of several elements interwoven and in a constant state of change. Though immigrants who move to Canada bring with them cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic identifications, these do not necessarily transcend local and global contexts. The modern view of immigrants as arriving with an entire culture, with a fixed stable identity, has been replaced by the postmodern conception of a continuous process of making identifications, weaving elements from the old and new settings (Yon, 1999: 12-13).

Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to document the social and spatial experiences of six immigrant Muslim adolescents in Calgary high schools and how these are shaped by and serve to impact on the youth's diverse identities. The values and attitudes of the home cultures do not always coincide with those the students learn

through formal and informal school situations. Immigrant youth must make choices on a daily basis to respond to these challenges based on their conception of self and their diverse identities. The need for policy makers, administrators and educators to understand the social experiences of youth inside as well as outside the classroom is important because of the significance of these interactions in identity formation, citizenship, and the potential implications for school performance and engagement.

This thesis provides insight into these issues as encountered by the youth, and the strategies they employ to integrate into the new Canadian school setting, making it partly their own and contributing to their sense of connectedness. The portraits of the six Muslim youth provide a textured and nuanced look into the embodiment of multiple identifications, the strategic use of physical space, and the connections to belonging.

Research Questions

This thesis explores the concepts of identity, liminality and belonging. The specific questions addressed are the following:

- How does an immigrant adolescent situate him or herself in the physical spaces of the school?
- What places does an immigrant youth of Muslim origin claim in a school comprised of hundreds of students representing diverse backgrounds?
- What are the spaces of inclusion, exclusion or rejection and how does this relate to learning to belong?
- Why do spaces mark liminality or learning to belong?

Organization of Study

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter One introduces the project, and provides an overview of the methods and concepts, which are integrated into the research. The second chapter presents an overview of research focusing on liminality, identity, and belonging; it concludes with a description of the theoretical framework guiding the research and analysis. Chapter Three details the qualitative and innovative methodology employed to study the research questions. The participants, materials and procedures are described, along with the method used for analysing the data. Chapter Four presents descriptive portraits of each participant and their experiences in schools. The fifth chapter provides an analysis of the portraits in terms of liminality and belonging. The sixth, and final, chapter discusses the findings, with analyses of the walkabouts and narratives, and provides implications for further research.

Scope of Study

This study is derived from a three-year research project incorporating qualitative and quantitative methods with the goal of understanding the strategic competence of immigrant youth. The present work focuses on the qualitative multimedia methodology employed in the first year of data collection for the research project. The main study involves the participation of over sixty students from diverse world regions, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and includes second generation Canadians alongside very recent arrivals. I draw from this large sample, a small group of youth on which to focus an in-depth study of their school experiences. Video-recorded walkabouts conducted with six junior and senior high

school students are accompanied by artefacts created by the students, along with accompanying narratives from focus groups with other students in the same school. Video walkabouts are planned, recorded walks through the schools, giving the researchers a 'guided tour' and commentary as they move through the spaces. The procedures followed during the walkaouts are described in more detail in the fourth chapter of this thesis.

A phenomenological approach to this focused study was adapted to seek an understanding of the events and meanings as experienced by the youth. The data are presented as portraits of each individual, using thick description to detail their experiences in schools, and the articulation of various aspects of their identities in the spaces. Additional background data from focus groups and artefacts are incorporated into the portraits in order to present a more complex view of the youth's identities. The specific criteria for selection of participants, and an in-depth discussion of the methods employed are discussed in Chapter Three which describes the research methodology.

Concepts

The concepts of identity, liminality, and belonging are very complex. The various meanings attached to each of these concepts must first be explored and clarified before proceeding with what they mean in terms of past research and the present study.

Identity

Two main conceptions of *identity* can be found in modern and postmodern literature. The first stems from modern literature where it is considered as a stable

and fixed attribute developed and attained during adolescence. In this conception, answering the question "Who am I?" would call upon a person's culture, race, gender, age, nationality, and religion.

In postmodern conceptions, the fixed and static notion of the self is challenged and replaced by a dynamic definition that insists on a multiplicity of *identities,* contextualized and formed in relation to the Other (Hall, 1991a). This constructed self negotiates views held by others and is formed along multiple axes, including ethnicity, race, gender, language, age, nationality, religion (Yon, 1999). The difference here is that the postmodern theorist emphasizes the constructed and multiple meanings of culture, race, ethnicity, and gender. Recent studies incorporate connections between place and identity, so that the questions of "Where am I?" and "Who am I with?" also become relevant. The use of the mobile term 'routes' replaces the fixed and stable notion of having 'roots' when talking about identity, calling to attention the changing locations and meaning of identities through the movement of peoples (Pile & Thrift, 1995a).

Liminality

The concept of *liminality* was first explored in the field of anthropology and used to study rites of passage from one life stage to another in tribal societies. Theorists such as Turner (1967) and van Gennep (1960) defined liminality as the state of being 'in between' life stages, belonging nowhere while they move through transitional rites and spaces. This concept has been incorporated into theories of culture, societal economic trends, and space. Across each field, the term liminality signifies, generally, all that is 'in-between'.

Immigration calls upon individuals and groups to experience a sort of liminal phase whereby they leave a home country, seemingly with their own cultural and ethnic identities, to settle in a new country where they will adapt to and adopt new ways of life and world views. The term 'hybridity' refers to the effects of globalization and technology on peoples and cultures experiencing the world transnationally (Bhabha, 1994). The hybrid identity is conceived by Bhabha as the 'third space', essentially a liminal identity where an individual or group belongs to two cultures, and yet to neither culture at the same time.

According to Massey (1995), 'space' is conceptualized as "stretched-out social relations" (54), combining the local and the global. 'Place', then, is set within wider space and viewed as the site where local and global connections meet and intersect (58-61). Places, like identities, are considered to have different meanings for individuals and groups, with temporary and permeable boundaries. A place is formed out of the interactions that occur at that location, and thus the nature and meaning of a place changes as the social interactions are enacted within (Massey, 1994). When considering the school in light of these theories, the school may be viewed as a liminal space where adolescents move through the rites of passage to adulthood. They are guided along time-space paths, according to age, gender, subject matter (Gordon & Lahelma, 1996; Lesko, 1988), finding places of belonging and exclusion along the way. It is a symbolic transition where the promise of the future intersects uneasily with the uncertainties of the present (Fitzclarence, Green and Bigum, 1995).

Belonging

Belonging underlies the notion of identity. According to some theorists, to "become, it is first necessary to belong" (Burridge, 1969: 46) and therefore to answer the question of "Who am I?" we must be able to determine where we belong. This frame of thought follows the modern conception of identity where it is fixed and stable, connected to a place and time.

What, then, does belonging mean in terms of conceptions of multiple identities? Ignatieff (1993) stresses that belonging means to be understood, to be recognized, and to feel safe. Challenging the notion that primary forms of belonging are linked to nation, the nation that protects citizens and keeps them safe from violence, this conception of multiplicity leads us to seek primary belongings closer to safety. With the movement of peoples, individuals and groups seek new ways and places to belong (to), learning how to belong to new homes, communities and nations. This lifts the boundaries of belonging, placing it closer to contextual terms.

According to Rose (1995), identity is connected to place by the feeling of belonging to that place, the feeling of being comfortable, and at home. Part of a person's self-definition is symbolized by qualities of a place.

By looking at the liminal period of adolescence, of place and of immigration, this thesis explores the links between liminality, identity and belonging.

Limitations

This research focuses on the school experiences of a small group of students sharing a common religion. Although this affects the generalizability of

qualitative study to other groups of students and to immigrant youth in general, the case study and descriptive approaches employed allow in-depth insight into the experiences of each youth in the study. The portraits provide an avenue for the voice and agency of the participants, acknowledging the complexity of the events and perspectives that shape their lives. Although the larger research project includes immigrant youth of all major religions, the focus on one group allows us to see variation or similarity of experiences related to shared religious affiliation.

My background as a white, Canadian-born and bilingual female impacts on the research process and my interactions with the youth. The research partner involved in this project in year one was herself of Muslim immigrant background, and introduced me to the cultural complexities facing the youth. In conducting the focus groups and walkabouts with her, the youth may have been more open to sharing perspectives and sensitive events with a researcher of a similar cultural background.

The research reflects a moment in history and, one would expect that the results would vary over time, as students change schools, acculturate and integrate, change friendship groups and as their competencies in English improve. In that light, this thesis provides a snapshot, or portraits, of moments in the lives of the youth at a time that is important in their identity formation as school is often the first place immigrant youth learn about Canadian life and where they learn and practice citizenship.

Islam and Identity

The five pillars of Islam, or *abadah*, and other socio-religious activities are

community related in spirit and practice, involving individual and group commitment to strengthen community bonds: (1) *Salat*, prayers conducted five times each day; (2) *Saum*, fasting during the month of Ramazan; (3) *Haj*, the pilgrimmage to Mecca which must be completed once in a person's lifetime; (4) *Zakat*, alms-giving; and (5) *Jihad*, or struggle which is aimed at the expansion and protection of Islam (Haw, 1998: 44-45). The importance of family and community comprise the essence of Islam, across social, cultural and geographical variations.

Stating the essence of Islam, however, does not contribute to an understanding of what it *means* to be Muslim in South Asia, in North Africa, in Canada, or in any other part of the world. Efforts to capture a single common view of the "Muslim Identity" or the "Muslim world-view," based on religious identities are greatly contested (Abu-Laban, 1991; Hasan, 1998). An extreme diversity of social habits and cultural traits among Muslim communities around the world stems from the historical, political, geographical and cultural variations in how Islam has been experienced and understood.

Much of the recent research on Muslim identities in minority contexts are conducted in non-Islamic countries like Britain, and often focus on issues of gender (Yousif, 1992). Some attention is now being given to the Muslim world and its interactions with Western societies (Diop, 1997; Schiffauer, 1997). As few studies have explored in-depth the experiences of Muslim communities and youth involved in the negotiation of Islamic and Canadian identities (Yousif, 1992), this thesis contributes to the development of needed knowledge. It may be expected that the events of September 11, 2001 will spark a further interest in research on Muslim

groups in North America, and explore their relations to societies, experiences of racism and host society attitudes.

The dominant discourses on Islam and Muslim populations conflate Muslim identity with an adherence to fundamentalist beliefs commonly assumed to be incompatible with Western societies (Hasan, 1998: 17). Some research suggests that these dominant discourses act to construct the identities of immigrant Muslim youth as liminal and "caught between two cultures", with conflicting values between the modern and the traditional, concretized as between the school and the home (Cayonne, 1982; Dwyer, 1998; Talbani & Hasanali, 2000).

'Muslim youth' in the present study will refer to those who self-identified as Muslim on the information cards in the larger longitudinal project (see Appendix A). It is important to note that Islam means different things to different individuals and groups. Therefore, the focus on Muslim youth in the present study seeks to uncover some of the diversity and commonality of experiences, identities and forms of belonging by exploring not only religious identity, but also ethnocultural, racial, linguistic and gender identity markers.

Policy Context

Understanding the identities of immigrant youth is especially important in Canada which officially encourages immigration for purposes of maintaining the social system whose policy of multiculturalism encourages and promotes attachments to cultures and languages of origin.

There is a need for educators to understand identity because of its significance in youth's school experiences, performance, engagement, and

citizenship (Ghosh, 1996; Gougeon, 1996). In the critical stage of adolescence, there is a need for students to develop a sense of belonging and connection, to become known to others and to feel self-empowerment as they learn to engage in society as active citizens.

Research on identity stresses the views of identities as multiple, fluid, and changing over time and space, and explores the relationships between spaces and identities (Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Hayden 1996; Massey and Jess 1995). With increased globalization and immigration, there is a need to understand how youth are constructing themselves in new contexts, in new spaces, while recognizing the changing associations to previous homes, schools, and communities.

Expected Outcomes

This analysis will provide educators with detailed portraits of Muslim students from diverse ethnocultural and linguistic backgrounds, and experiences with immigration, with the school setting and with peers. These portraits will contribute to a deeper understanding of the diversity of students' lived experiences and forms of belonging, putting into question the predominant liminal positioning of minority youth.

Furthermore, this study raises awareness of the immigrant youth adaptation process by exploring their use of school spaces, their perceptions of their place in the school in relation to others, and their social networks. These will reveal lived experiences of inclusion and exclusion, of boundaries (social and physical), and of adaptation and integration. Giving voice to their experiences in school will shed light on how immigrant youth are adapting and interacting in the spaces of the

school outside of the classrooms, termed the 'physical school' by Gordon and Lahelma (1996). The social interactions and use of spaces before, between and after formal classes also impact on the adolescent's construction of self, sense of belonging and sense of place. By exploring the use of space and perceptions immigrant youth have of what it is like to 'hang out' at school, a clearer image is drawn of what they experience with others in that space, conflicts which arise and their agency in the process.

As these youth pass through the spaces of the school, they engage in processes of making identifications and claiming places of belonging strategically, while being assigned identities by others around them. Their contextual and spatial enactment of racial, ethnocultural, linguistic, religious and gender identities reveals complex experiences of belonging and otherness. The routes and routines they follow throughout the school reveal a complex negotiation of inclusion and exclusion constructed through difference and similarity.

The next chapter outlines the relevant literature on youth and identity in modern and postmodern schools of thought. This discussion leads the way to the framework of the thesis and details how the youth's experiences are presented and analyzed.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Generally within the philosophical framework that informs a modern perspective, adolescence is viewed as a period of time between childhood and adulthood, a period in which youth attempt to take on more and more adult-like characteristics, responsibilities and privileges, while maintaining some of the freedoms of childhood. Adolescents are defined and labelled based on their ages, with society constructing the appropriate activities and identities to correspond with the life stage. This particular life stage continues to be altered and prolonged by social changes, mostly brought about by technological advancements requiring an increasingly specialized workforce.

The anthropological concept of 'liminality' describes this aspect of being in-between two life stages. Immigration has similarly been described as a period of time between two places of being, one in the culture and country of origin and the other in the culture and country of adoption. From a postmodern perspective, however, cultures, ethnicities and identities experience ongoing change and immigrants can no longer be portrayed as arriving with set cultural attributes and values which they apply in the new context. Continuing with the earlier discussion, the start and end of this liminal immigration period are indeterminable. The notions of hybridity, diaspora and transnationalism extend this liminality indefinitely, having serious implications for belonging and identity. Examining these notions today is critical as globalization and migration urge people to create new communities of belonging in local and global contexts (Hall, 1995).

The development of a sense of identity, or knowing who one is and who one

is not, has long been considered to be one of the central processes of adolescence (Erikson, 1968), and this sense of identity is formed in a variety of school and life situations and places. Immigration involves an aspect of identity formation for persons of all ages as they seek to adapt to new contexts and expectations. For immigrant adolescents, the process of identity formation must be accomplished in a new setting, adding to the complexity of the process.

There are two predominant conceptions of identity in the social science literature. One conceives the project of identity formation as being propelled by a lack and that one needs to identify with something; the other is a dynamic and multiple conception of identity (Pile & Thrift, 1995a: 9-10). The literature reviewed here argues for the latter conception, showing how these are lived and contested daily among youth.

The research covered in this chapter draws from several disciplines, including anthropology, psychology, cultural theory, and social geography. Firstly, I explore the research relating to liminality in adolescence from anthropological and other disciplinary perspectives. Secondly, the concept is discussed in terms of culture and belonging, theorized in postmodern literature through the terms hybridity and diaspora. Lastly, liminality is discussed in relation to spatiality with special reference to gender. The conceptual framework draws from these three broad theoretical arenas, converging to form a multi-disciplinary map for analysing the students' narratives and artefacts.

Liminality of Adolescence

Adolescence may be considered as one of the "series of passages from one

age to another" (van Gennep, 1960: 2-3), through which every individual in any society must move. Based on anthropological research, the phase of adolescence may be defined as a 'liminal' phase where the subject is caught between life stages, where he or she is in the process of becoming an adult. According to this viewpoint, "...neither child nor adult, the adolescent is lost in between, belonging nowhere, being no one" (James, 1986: 155) until he or she moves through the 'rites of passage' to adulthood which are determined by the particular culture.

According to Turner (1968), van Gennep views the subject in the liminal phase as having "few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state" (94). In his own work, Turner emphasizes the ambiguity of the phase, and elaborates on this period by identifying the "unity of the liminal: that which is neither this nor that, and yet is both" (1968: 99). Thus the adolescent maintains links to the previous world of childhood (pre-liminal) while adopting aspects of the new adult world (post-liminal).

According to the work of van Gennep (1960), these rites of passage "may be subdivided into rites of separation, transition rites, and rites of incorporation" (11), with the transition period representing the liminal stage of becoming. In some tribal societies studied, the liminal individual is separated from the rest of the group in a liminal space until the rites are fulfilled, or entry into the next stage is granted.

While these studies shed light on this life stage, they are limited to primarily homogeneous societies where the social distinctions are often sex-segregated. Therefore, the findings and analyses in these works are not complicated by issues of gender, race, religion, and ethnicity and do not consider how these may interact

and conflict.

With the ambiguity of lines between childhood and adulthood, the challenge is to define the stage of adolescence in terms of the way they are excluded from certain activities and spaces in the community and in the larger society since adolescents are deemed either too young or too old for their presence and participation. The adolescent is physically mature in many ways, yet may not participate in society as an adult until he or she has reached the socially and culturally recognized age of adulthood. One researcher explains that the only boundaries defining the teenage years are boundaries of exclusion which define what young people are not, cannot do or cannot be (James, 1986: 156). While they are expected to display more responsibility and awareness in and of their world(s), thus distancing themselves from childhood innocence, adolescents are excluded from participation in 'adult' places and rights such as voting, driving, drinking, engaging in sexual intercourse, and must still allow their activities and hangouts to be supervised and determined by the adults around them.

Many studies attempt to capture a clear picture of the stage of adolescence in various contexts through a diversity of methods and frameworks. Earlier socio-psychological studies have looked at the physical changes that occur in adolescence, and their impact on youth behaviour and psychology (Blos, 1982; Coleman, 1980; Coleman, 1961; Erikson, 1968). These studies also document the changes in family and peer relations, which occur at the adolescent life stage. They note the increased importance that peers play in the lives of adolescents, and the attempt to break away, or resist parental influence and control.

Cross-cultural ethnographies have focused on the evolution of adolescence brought about through time and through contact with Western influences (Condon, 1987, 1990; Schlegel and Barry, 1991). In this literature, the boundaries that exclude or confine adolescents in cultures and societies around the world, as well as their use of space, are explored in a multidisciplinary fashion.

The Birmingham School of Cultural Studies beginning in the 1970s, focused on youth sub-cultural theory through ethnographies and participant observation, and emphasized youth resistance to dominant cultures (Willis, 1977; Hall and Jefferson, 1987). To understand how the experience of being an adolescent is lived in a variety of situations and contexts, ethnographic research within cultural studies attempts to step inside the everyday worlds of adolescents.

While the earlier work neglected the particular experiences of girls, feminist work in cultural studies began to integrate gender into the field. This interest in the study of gender and power distinctions continues to influence current studies which also focus on issues of race and geography (Frick, 1999; Herst, 1998; Phelan, Davidson and Yu, 1998; Valentine, Skelton and Chambers, 1998). These studies succeed in providing descriptive, intimate snapshots and accompanying narratives which offer insight into the actual struggles, successes, and cultures of youth, empowering them through the research process.

Liminality has been employed as a concept for analysing how youth are living the transitions between the new global and technological world, and the traditional world. The works of Condon (1987, 1990) and Bettis (1996a, b) explore how globalization, changing economies, and modernization of traditional societies

have impacted on youth identities, aspirations, and on the stage of adolescence in general. Condon (1987, 1990) studied a Canadian Inuit community managing the effects of interventions from the southern Canadian society which brought an influx of influences (i.e., television) and changes to leisure and educational activities of youth. This rural study shows findings similar to those of an urban study conducted by Bettis (1996a, b) which examined the impact of deindustrialization of cities on high school students and their construction of self and aspirations for the future. Bettis uncovered the uncertainty inherent in the urban students' perceptions of schoolwork and the future, which are shaped in part by the economic and social changes in the city.

While this work on liminality and youth reveals the continued changes to adolescence with globalization and contact with other societies, they do not explore the issues of ethnocultural, racial, religious or linguistic differences encountered in diverse communities and schools.

Cultural Liminality

The view of identity as a stable and core set of attributes is being challenged by postmodernist conceptions that emphasize the notion of identity as an ongoing and open-ended process of making identifications, rather than as a fixed and stable state of being (Pile and Thrift 1995a; Yon 1999). These conceptions have implications for liminality and for belonging.

Liminality is highly marked for immigrant adolescents. Not only are they experiencing the transformations from childhood to adulthood physically and socially, as well as the corresponding ambiguity and boundaries of exclusion, but

they are also facing experiences in a new country where they must make choices that will affect their sense of belonging to their original country or cultures, or to the new environment.

Since the categories of childhood, adolescence and adulthood vary in their conceptions, constructions and practices in societies and cultures around the world, youth migrating to Canada, from East Africa or elsewhere, may experience new freedoms or restrictions, depending on the gendered and other context-specific definitions of their age group in the new country. They would experience new cultures and societies which invite them to adopt and conform to new identities while feeling the attachments to their home countries, the cultures and religions in which they were raised and in which they have formed their identities thus far (Cotterell, 1996). Though Canada, as a plural country, is viewed as a place where one can maintain both the new and old cultures, the reality is that there are pressures towards conformity to the dominant language and culture. The pressure, or desire to succeed in the dominant society and language (English or French in Canada), may prove to be stronger, with the home language and culture taking second seat. To add even more complexity to the process, once the individual has formed identities linked to both worlds, he or she may still face the possibility of not being accepted by members of the new group or being rejected by the group of origin.

These are competing discourses: those viewing the migrant as arriving with a defined culture and identity; and those recognizing the multiple processes of identification that exist even prior to movement and settlement. It is important to

acknowledge that many groups have experienced movement and settlement prior to coming to Canada. Thus, their cultural identities have previously undergone transformation in the complicated process of migration and integration.

Recent philosophical research on identity in France employs the term 'métissage' to describe this process of identifying with more than one heritage. This term, however, invokes images of 'half-breeds' or impure children who were born of a 'native' parent and a 'white' parent (Audinet, 1998). The term 'métissage' in the present contexts of discussions on immigration and identity may be transformed into 'mixity.' From this more neutral notion, 'mixity' refers to an individual who partakes of more than one culture simultaneously, with the consequence of being perceived as belonging to neither the new culture, nor to the culture of origin. Parallels may be drawn between 'métissage' understood as 'mixity' and the states of adolescence and immigritude: "Je ne suis pas d'ici et je ne suis pas de là bas" which all have in common a liminal position of the subject (Audinet, 1998).

Drawing from postmodernity, cultural liminality may be employed to contest constructed binary identities of self and other. These are most often expressed through the terms hybridity and diaspora to portray the realities of migration, with its pluralities of cultures, knowledges and identities. According Bhabha (1994), the liminal may constitute a third space which transcends the binary mode of understanding. This emphasis on hybridity argues for the inter and in-between, situational accounts of identity and culture, rather than for ethnic or cultural rootedness (May, 1999a: 22-23; Pile & Thrift, 1995b). Wicker (1997) however,

argues that this hybridity is predicated on a notion of the previous culture as a complex whole.

The concept of diaspora refers to the dispersal of a people "who belong to more than one world, speak more than one language,...inhabit more than one identity, have more than one home", and who "speak from the in-between of different cultures" (Hall, 1995: 47-48). Following these theorists, the liminal becomes the norm, with new kinds of cultural identities being invented along with more open relationships to culture and to place.

A review of recent studies employing multidisciplinary frameworks to study the ethnocultural, racial, religious, linguistic and gendered identities of youth reveals how liminality of adolescence and culture are explored through various methods. Ethnographies incorporating participant observation, interviews and, in some cases, videos, explore youth identities in a variety of school and life situations, considering how culture, race and identity impact on schooling experiences (Back, Cohen & Keith, 1999; Dwyer 1998; James 1986; Kelly 1998; Rathzel & Hoerder, 2000; Phelan, Davidson and Yu, 1997; Yon 1999). Postmodernist conceptions of culture and identity guide the research and analyses which examine how identities are negotiated differently in different contexts. Drawing from theories of culture and identity as conceptualized in cultural studies, identity is conceived as multiple, and as being woven of various elements in time-space relations, and "articulated out of particular places, histories and experiences" (Dwyer, 1998: 51).

Multiple Identities

Recognizing that identities are multiple and contextual, several studies of youth in the United States, Canada and Britain explore how identities can shift and change across spaces and contexts (Dwyer 1998; Phelan, Davidson and Yu 1997; Yon 1999). Identities articulated in the home are contrasted with those observed on the street, in the school, and in other contexts. Processes of self-reflexivity, contestation, contradiction, border crossing, and transition characterize multiple identifications, as elucidated by several contemporary studies of youth. These projects will be presented in the next section and discussed for their relevance to this thesis.

The self-reflexivity inherent in the process of identification is stressed in studies of youth identities (Kelly, 1998; Dwyer, 1998; Yon, 1999). The youth are involved in an ongoing process of acting upon knowledge and discourses as they in turn act upon them. Kelly (1998) presents this through exploration of Black identities in Canada, Yon (1999) through youth cultural and racial identities in Toronto, and Dwyer (1998) through Muslim women identities in Britain.

In the British study, young Muslim women are observed to be challenging the dominant discourses and representations about their ethnicities through dress, music and television (Dwyer, 1998). By contesting the dominant representations of culture, their identities are negotiated differently in the spaces of the school and the neighbourhood. The women may use traditional dress styles of Islamic culture, or the dominant 'English clothes' to strategically portray the identities they wish to express depending on the context (Dwyer, 1998).

A Canadian study conducted in a Toronto urban high school observes similar contextual, but contradictory identities expressed through narratives and behaviours (Yon, 1999). Conversations with teachers and students, as well as observations conducted over a one-year participant ethnography, reveal the tensions of how identity is lived in the discursive space of the school. Yon (1999) employs the term "elusive culture" to capture the view of culture as an ongoing, ambivalent, ephemeral, and often contradictory process. This elusive culture is evidenced in the ways in which the diverse youth in his study talk about culture, race, identity and schooling in global times. Students' talk of identity reveals multiple place associations and imagined homes, which are termed diaspora identities. The complex ways of becoming and belonging are conceived in terms of 'routes', rather than 'roots'. These associations shape culture and identity as experiences, as processes, thus transcending fixed notions of stable attributes, and the youth are found to belong to Canada in different ways (Yon, 1999: 134-135).

How youth of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds manage the transitions between their home, school, community, and peer worlds is examined in another ethnographic research project set in the United States (Phelan, Davidson and Yu, 1998). Participant observation and interviews reveal how youth move through various linguistic, gender, sociocultural and economic borders throughout their day. Using the "Students' Multiple Worlds Model", these transitions are categorized as being smooth, difficult, or resisted, in combination with an analysis of the congruency of each of the different worlds (Phelan, Davidson and Yu, 1998).

"[Guided] by the perspectives of the youths and the ways in which they interpret and give meaning to their lives" (Phelan, Davidson and Yu, 1998: 196), the research provides information relevant to understanding their orientations toward school, peers and family. The qualitative and descriptive case-study approaches used by Phelan et al (1998) resemble the portrait approach employed by Yon (1999) to present individual background data on adolescents of diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds.

The identity construction of visible minority youth and the interaction of various aspects of youth identities with socialization at schools are explored in a multidisciplinary study by Kelly (1998), revealing how race, ethnicity and culture relate to the schooling of immigrant youth, and black youth in Canada in particular. Based in part on focus groups conducted with Black youth in Edmonton, Alberta, Kelly shows "that the way in which others perceive them [Black youth] in society and the way in which they perceive themselves affects the construction of their various identities" (1998: 17). Students may see themselves as "under the gaze", that is as visible Others among the majority White students, with the sense of their social spaces and social interactions being monitored and controlled. Though not all of the youth in Kelly's study were immigrants, their narratives show how identities are developed through difference, "not just by selecting aspects of one's identity but also by differentiating the self from others" (Kelly 1998: 121).

The youth in these studies access a variety of sources of identity such as film, television, music, sports, dress, all which may be both ascribed to and adopted by the youth. These identities and meanings of race, culture, and religion

also affect relations with peer groups in the school. The youths' comments in the Kelly (1998) study suggest that they chose to spend time with friends from the same racial/ethnic group because of feelings of comfort and the belief that they share an understanding of each other (85). They viewed other visible minority groups as sticking together in peer groups within the school and pointed to hierarchies among the groups. Their experiences reveal how they are Othered in school, contributing to a process of cultural reproduction whereby the youth are involved in forming identities and in reproducing raced meanings of Black identity (Kelly, 1988: 119). The social networks of youth in Yon's (1999) study reveal how they reinforce boundaries of race and ethnicity at one moment, then transgress them the next (64). The network is thus conceived as being full of holes and openings which have more to do with where the youth are now than with where they are from. Both studies observe the constraints and empowering aspects of categories of race, religion and culture.

Dwyer's (1998) study illustrates how a conception of minority youth as "caught between two cultures" perhaps does not capture the complexity of the daily lives of young British women in England. They are involved in a negotiation and redefinition of old and new cultures, strategically challenging the dominant discourse and representations through dress and through media, thus emphasizing the agency of each youth.

Embodiment and Spatiality in Schools

The concept of liminality provides a frame for analyzing the concept and nature of schooling during adolescence. Youth are placed in junior and senior high

schools for the greater part of the day during this critical transitional identity formation, or what Erikson (1968) terms as a 'psychosocial moratorium'. James (1986) considers this as a strategy of separating from the past and future worlds of childhood and adulthood, but leaves them with 'nobody to be'. They are separated from the wider society and placed in schools which reflect the values and power relations of dominant society.

These liminal 'containers' direct students through time-space paths, allowing for the spatial ordering of youth (Gordon and Lahelma, 1996; Gordon et al., 1999; Lesko, 1988; Massey, 1998). In these liminal spaces, students develop social worlds and engage in the claiming and territorialization of spaces within. Groups of students, and individuals, claim spaces strategically in relation to Others. This involves an aspect of power as hierarchies emerge, and spaces in turn become associated with identifiable groups. In the school youth have the opportunity to network and to make connections, but these relations are structured in part by the school, and it is also here that they learn about relations of power within the society (Lesko, 1988: 11). Groups of students compete to claim and territorialize spaces within the school, which works to both include and exclude based on ethnicity, race, gender, language, age and religion.

Prominent throughout current literature on culture and youth, the concept of the multiplicity of identities has implications for developing a sense of place, and the use of space. People have a different sense of the same place and thus use it differently (Hetherington, 1997; Massey, 1994, 1998; Uguris, 2000). The experience of a space, and belonging to a place, may vary depending on one's

identities related to gender, race, ethnicity, class, religion, language, and age in a specific situation or interaction. Hanging out at school can thus reflect, among other things, aspects of a youth's gender, ethnic, social, cultural and religious identities as they are embodied in their interactions, in spaces of exclusion and inclusion.

Part of identity formation, 'belonging' is understood as a balance between self and others, and between conformity and individuality. James (1986) has focused on adolescents' use of their bodies as vehicles for their concept of style, and to construct the liminal phase in the absence of clearly defined boundaries and roles. Through dress and style, the body represents a symbolic mode of being which signals belonging to this particular life stage.

Embodiment and space in schools have received little attention in educational research (Gordon and Lahelma, 1996; Gordon et al., 1999). To explore these concepts in Finnish and British school environments, Gordon and Lahelma (1996) employed a framework outlining three layers of schools: *official, informal and physical* (302). The *official* level includes the formal hierarchies, curriculum, lessons and classroom interaction; the *informal* school comprises the application and interpretation of rules, as well as social interactions among students in other areas of the school and between teachers and students outside of the instructional relationship inside classrooms; and the *physical* school encompasses the embodiment of the official and informal levels, with the focus on the school as a physical space and the location and movement of bodies.

It is in the physical school context where practices and processes that

produce differentiation are shaped (Gordon and Lahelma, 1996: 303). In summary, the authors found that students look for snatches of privacy, or places to call their own in the school, and that they tend to avoid spaces of the official school (i.e., classrooms, office) where their behaviours and interactions may be under regulation, with the exception of some classrooms (306-307). Further, seating patterns in classrooms, and hangouts (or stations) are differentiated along gender and ethnic lines (307).

Places are conceptualized in spatial theory as having multiple meanings. The multiplicity of identities in postmodern times means that people have a different sense of place (local and global), and use it differently (Massey, 1994; Uguris, 2000). This is evidenced locally, for example, in how students routinize their use of school spaces, with some spaces being the correct, or incorrect positions for individuals and groups of students, depending on the time of day; and gender patterns (i.e., boys are observed using physical spaces more extensively, and moving around more in classrooms) (Gordon et al. (1999).

While the Gordon and Lahelma (1996) and Gordon et al. (1999) studies focus on gender, there is little reference to the interaction of race, ethnicity or culture with spatiality. Though their theoretical framework is based on concepts of differentiation and marginality, the discussion does not allude to these processes beyond gender. In addition, the authors do not include student voice in the research and analyses. There is no indication of how students would explain their motives for spatial use, or how they interpret the informal and official hierarchies which supposedly organize their movements throughout the school day.

Conceptual Framework

The interdisciplinary conceptual framework for my study incorporates Hall's (1991a) model of identities and a model from the field of spatiality in order to analyse the narrative and artefact data in terms of liminality.

Hall's (1991a) model of identities is frequently employed and adapted in postmodern studies of youth. According to this model, identities are relational and incomplete, multiple and in process, and constructed through difference (Hall, 1991a: 19-39). Displaced and dispersed peoples are viewed as speaking from the liminal spaces, from in-between cultures, and "finding ways of being both the same as and different from the others amongst which they live" (Hall, 1995: 48). The notions of a 'homeland' and 'roots' no longer exist in the postmodern world. Instead, 'home' is a place we cannot return to, and/or the place where we are at, and 'routes' replaces the previous fixed notion of identity, culture and belonging (Pile and Thrift, 1995a; Yon, 1999). The factors that contribute to cultural identities include social characteristics, such as race, gender, ethnicity, age, along with psychological and other institutional factors which include education, citizenship, and religion (James, 1999: 39-40). These factors change over time, as does the individual's relationship to them.

Immigrant youth's diasporic identities are conceived as living with multiple associations, and being immersed in social networks that span countries (Yon, 1999: 16). It is in this sense that the school may be considered as being at the intersection of the local and the global, where contests involving belonging and otherness are enacted on a daily basis (Yon, 1999: 17). Belonging, like identities,

is contextual and in process, may be represented by a place, or by relationships with other places (Massey, 1994). Key to the conceptual framework of the current study is this positioning of youth simultaneously in the multiple spaces of adolescence, of identities, of places, and of belonging.

The framework also incorporates the typology of the official, informal, and physical school spaces utilized by Gordon and Lahelma (1996), and Gordon et al. (1999). A focus on the physical spaces and 'routes' claimed, rejected, and or forbidden to the students in the present study will provide insight into how youth identities are embodied in the use of school spaces. These 'routes' and routinizations represent the lived experiences of youth in the liminal spaces of the schools.

By incorporating issues of diversity predominant in Calgary schools, my analysis of the videotaped walkabouts elaborates on the exploration of the physical school, and the embodiment of cultural and religious identities. In doing so, I attempt to uncover the worlds and experiences of immigrant adolescents in Calgary by exploring their processes of being in-between life stages and cultures, as well as the boundaries imposed upon them and which they impose upon others, and by capturing pictures of their daily experiences of being teenagers, immigrants, students, and citizens in the process of becoming.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Qualitative approaches to research provide a process by which key research issues are identified and questions are formulated, and assist in the discovery of what is important to participants. The focus is on striving to understand human experiences through thoughts, feelings and perceptions. In making sense of the data, a 'portrait' approach (Yon, 1999) is used to present thick descriptions of the events and meanings that are relevant to the youth.

This chapter outlines the process of participant selection, the types of data, the procedures for collection, the materials created and employed, as well as the methods used for analysing the data.

Participants: The "Identity Formation Project"

The participants are selected from within a larger, longitudinal research study entitled "*Strategic Competence: Identity Formation of Immigrant Adolescents*". The project includes youth born outside of Canada and of visible minority backgrounds originating from several different world regions (i.e., South and South East Asia, East Asia, Pacific Islands, South and Central America, African countries). The criteria also targets youth who have been in this country for three years or longer, ensuring that participants would have sufficient English language abilities and would thus be able to understand the questions and activities, and respond clearly.

The overall study received the ethical approval of the Host University and of the two Calgary school districts. Consent forms were provided and received from all participants (see Appendix B).

Recruitment

Various strategies were employed to recruit student participants, with a target goal of up to one hundred and twenty youth. The project team, including the principal investigator, Yvonne Hébert, myself and a second research assistant, Rani Murji, first approached junior and senior high school principals at schools that were known to house significantly diverse populations of students. By providing advertisements, or brief announcements of the project to be included in school newsletters and/or to be read aloud in classes by supporting teachers, interested students could self-select to participate by contacting a teacher or administrator. Through the principals, the researchers were introduced to ESL teachers and other teachers who were interested in helping to locate participants who met the above criteria. Though support was strong among administrative and teaching teams, few students indicated interest at the beginning stages of the project. In retrospect, we realized that asking youth to come forward as 'immigrants' was an alienating process for them. Essentially, they were being asked to acknowledge themselves as different from the majority of their peers in school, during a time in their lives when fitting in is often an important goal (Hébert, Racicot & Murji, 1999).

The broad framework of the project enabled the researchers to modify the criteria for participation to include newer arrivals, second generation Canadians of visible minority status, as well as Canadians who had moved. All of these youth would provide insight into the process of identity formation among immigrant and Canadian adolescents. A range of length of residence in Canada would allow the researchers to consider more in-depth how time impacts on the various identity

and integration factors studied in the project.

With a second ethical approval to include a wider participant profile, more participation from students was made possible. At some schools, entire classes participated in the activities as a large group, incorporating the subjects and issues discussed into classroom activities and journal writing. By the end of the first year of this project, sixty-seven students in the larger study had participated in most or all of the research activities.

Participants: The Present Study

As this large sample is too large for the present study, I chose to focus on a small group of the participants in order to present in detail their experiences and perceptions. From the larger group, I chose six Muslim youth who represent a time depth range from less than one year to four years in Canada, and who had not yet received Canadian citizenship. These students share a religious orientation, come from different ethnocultural, and linguistic backgrounds, and have distinct experiences with immigration. There are, however, two students at School F (see Table 1) who have similar ethnocultural backgrounds. These youth were included as their portraits, presented in chapter four, reveal interesting gender differences in their experiences of the school.

An important selection criterion is that all of the students for this thesis have completed each of the five project activities in the first year. These are described further in the next section on materials. The students selected for the present study participated individually in the video-recorded walkabout session in the school spaces, collected in Year One of the overall study. This criteria is

significant as many students in the study conducted these walkabouts in pairs due in part to time constraints. While some students preferred to engage in the activity with a classmate, others were eager to conduct the walkabout individually.

Following the above criteria, three females and three males were identified, in grades nine and ten, to include in this exploratory study. The chart below details the profile of each youth.

Table 1: Participant Profiles

Code name	Gender	Country of birth	Other countries of residence	Time in Canada	Ethno-cultural background	Home language	Age	Grade	School
Salsoura	F	Algeria	France	< 4 years	Arab	Arabic French	14	9	C
Nazir	M	Gaza Strip	N/A	< 2 years	Palestinian	Arabic	14	9	C
Kamal	F	Pakistan	England	> 2 years	Pakistani	Hindi Urdu	15	9	G
Yasmin	F	Pakistan	Saudi Arabia	< 1 year	Pakistani	Urdu	16	10	F
Abdie	M	Pakistan	Saudi Arabia	< 1 year	Pakistani	Urdu	15	10	F
Neal	M	Afghanistan	Pakistan	< 3 years	Afghani	Pashayi Farsi	16	10	E

Among the group of female youth are two girls who were born in Pakistan, one in grade nine and one in grade ten, and a grade nine girl originally from Algeria. Each of these students experienced movement between countries prior to moving to Canada, and their time in this country ranges from approximately less than one year to four years. The three males also represent diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences with immigration. One grade nine male is from the Gaza Strip, and the two grade ten males are from Afghanistan and Pakistan. The male students have each been in Canada for less than three years. More detailed

portraits of each youth are presented in Chapter Four.

Procedures

This section presents the procedures for data collection in the first year of the project, beginning with the video-recorded walkabouts and accompanying narratives in spaces that form the focus of the thesis. Four other research activities were conducted with the groups of students and are used here to provide the background and supporting data for the analysis of identities and spatial strategies found in Chapter Four and discussed in Chapter Five.

The multimedia methodology was borrowed and adapted from a parallel project, in Hamburg and London, where video-recordings of 'safe' and 'unsafe' spaces were collected and analysed (Back, 1999; Back, Cohen and Keith, 1999; Cohen, 1999; Cohen, Keith, and Back, 1996; Keith, 1999; Rathzel & Hoerder, 2000).

Video Walkabouts

Video walkabouts are planned, recorded walks in the schools, with the youth giving the researchers a 'guided tour' and commentary as they move through the spaces. For the walkabouts, the two research assistants, myself and Rani Murji, accompanied each youth through a video-recorded tour of the schools. These were conducted during class time to reduce the number of students who would be in the hallways and various places in the school during filming. This would reduce the anxiety participants may have felt about being filmed in front of others, and would also reduce the number of non-participating students from being filmed. This is an ethical and a security issue as non-participating students would not have

signed consent forms and their images would have to be blurred from the recording for purposes of dissemination and publication. This possibility was deemed acceptable by some school administrators and unacceptable by others.

Youth were asked to show the researchers the places in the school where they spend time, alone or with friends, throughout the day, the places where they feel comfortable, or where they may not feel comfortable spending time. The students were advised of the procedures and questions in the session preceding the scheduled walkabouts; these were repeated before beginning the tour.

Using a SONY Handycam videocamera, the youth had the option of being filmed by the researchers while walking through the school, or of handling the camera themselves and filming the walkabout. While walking through the school, the participants were asked questions about hanging out at school, what groups they see at school, how they felt in each place that they chose to claim as a hangout or as a place of exclusion or rejection.

The walkabout recordings were each approximately twenty-five minutes in length, and the narratives were dubbed to audiocassette tapes and then transcribed. The video-recordings were then reviewed along with the transcripts in order to document the visual aspects and physical spaces. Of the five sessions in Year One of the Identity Project, this was the last session conducted at the schools. The other forms of data, including geneograms and sociograms, are described hereafter and I draw from them to complement the participants' portraits.

Profiles and Focus Group

In the first session conducted at each school, groups of up to ten

participants were provided with an introduction to the study and a summary of each activity. The research assistants then provided brief introductions of their own backgrounds, interests and lives, including experiences of moving to new cities and new schools. This helped to establish an atmosphere of confidence, trust and sharing between the researchers and the participants.

Each youth was then asked to fill out an information card detailing his or her age, gender, ethnic and religious backgrounds, country of origin and other countries lived in, languages spoken (indicating first language learned at home, and dominant language), time of migration, current citizenship, and personal contact information (address, phone number, email). This provided the researchers with a basic demographic profile for each youth, including self-ascribed ethnic, religious and linguistic identifications and migration paths.

The focus group discussions among the youth addressed the following questions: *Let's talk about your journey to Canada. What is it like to live in Canada? What does it mean for you to be a Canadian? What is it like to be part of a group of friends, part of a family, part of a community? What are your favourite hangouts?*

The researchers also asked questions throughout the discussions to challenge the youth to elaborate on responses, asking "Why?" when students voiced short answers to the open-ended questions. The discussions would last from half an hour to forty-five minutes, depending on the length of the period allotted at each school. Focus groups allowed the researchers and participants alike to view how the youths' experiences were both similar and different. Each

focus group discussion was audio-recorded and transcribed, with the two research assistants reviewing each tape in order to ensure accuracy of the data.

Geneograms

The second session, conducted in groups, focused on the genealogy of each participant. At the conclusion of the previous focus group session, the researchers described the upcoming genealogy activity to the youth, encouraging them to consult with their families about their relatives, their places of birth and family histories. Before beginning the geneograms (family trees), the groups were provided with general instructions and a visual example to create individual geneograms. They created the diagrams on legal size paper (11"x14"), using pencil, ball pens and/or felt markers. The youth were encouraged to provide first names for each relative, and to start with those with whom they were familiar.

Following the creation of the geneogram, each youth was asked to describe their family to the group. The research assistants asked more detailed questions such as family members' current place of residence, the type of contact entertained with different relatives, and the frequency of contact or visits. The sessions generally lasted up to one hour, with approximately twenty-five minutes allotted for discussion which was tape-recorded and later transcribed.

Sociograms

The third session was conducted in groups at each school and focused on the creation of a sociogram, or friendship network, requiring requiring approximately forty-five minutes. Each participant was provided with one sheet of legal size paper (11"x14") and a pencil. The researchers gave each instruction

step by step, but the youth organized the information in their own way on each page. First, each youth was asked to place his or her name anywhere on the page. Then, he or she was asked to place the closest friends close to his/her name on the page, and so on. Those friends who were less close were then placed further from his/her name on the page. A coding system was then detailed, so that each friend on the page was identified as either male or female (M/F), as the same ethnic background or not (using rectangle for 'same', circle for 'different'), the frequency of contact between the youth and each friend (represented by solid or broken lines), and current residence in a different country (C), or enrolment at the same school (A), or a different school in Calgary (B), and/or as a relative (D)

Following the completion of the sociogram, each youth was asked to describe his or her friends, focussing on the closest friends. A group discussion followed which allowed youth to talk about what "friend" means to them, what they look for in a friend, or what is important in a friend, and the types of activities they engage in with friends. The purpose of this descriptive exercise was to reveal patterns of friendship choices in terms of language, religion, ethnicity, values and prior experiences. This session was audio-recorded, and then transcribed.

Spatial Maps

The fourth and final group session involved the creation of spatial maps by each participant. In this activity, each youth was provided with pastels and one large sheet of drawing paper and were asked to map out the spaces where they spend time, or where they have spent time in the past, and that are important to them. They were also asked to include a representation of self and others (i.e.,

friends, family) in each of the spaces mapped out. They were given twenty-five to thirty minutes to complete the task and were then invited to describe the space(s) they had mapped out, and why these were important to them. In addition, the discussion addressed hangouts of the youth and other groups in school, leading into a description of walkabouts in order to allow the youth to prepare in advance for the activity. This fourth session was audio-recorded and later transcribed.

Data Analysis

This next section details how the visual and narrative data are presented and analyzed in chapters four and five. Chapter four portraits each of the six youth, focusing on the video walkabouts and incorporating background data from the artefacts and focus group sessions. These provide insight into various aspects of their worlds and their identities, which are discussed in chapter five and analyzed utilizing the identity and school frameworks outlined in the third chapter.

Case studies are "interpretation in context", that is, they are descriptive and are concerned with insight, discovery and interpretation (Merriam, 1988: 11-13). In this thesis, the youth are presented in a portrait format utilized by Yon (1999). These are intended to provide a detailed and complex picture of each individual's experiences with the school, identities, place, and belonging. As a case study approach, the portraits focus on the individual perspectives and experiences of youth, how they make sense of their lives, how they interpret these experiences and how they structure their social and spatial worlds. The approach allows for the illustration of the complexities of situations, and for the inclusion of information from

a variety of data sources.

The narratives are examined for evidence of racial, ethnocultural, religious and linguistic identities, belonging and liminality. The discussion and analysis strive to capture the meanings of what the youth say, or of the events. The links between identities, belonging, and liminality are explored at the individual level in the portraits and then are compared cross-case to highlight significant similarities and differences found in the experiences.

The walkabouts for each individual student are analysed as routes and routines, alluding to the time-specific pathways followed by students on a daily basis. In the analytic discussion of the portraits, Chapter Five, the spaces claimed, rejected or excluded from, in the walkabouts, are categorized according to the Gordon and Lahelma (1996) typology of official, informal, and physical schools.

The names of the youth have been changed to protect their anonymity and where applicable, self-selected code names were used. The schools in which the research was conducted are identified by their corresponding letter only. This serves both to preserve confidentiality, and to retain consistency with previous analyses emerging from the *Identity Formation Research Project*.

CHAPTER FOUR: STUDENT PORTRAITS

Focussing upon six youth's routes and routines throughout each school and the relationships with their identities, this chapter describes their profiles, background and historical information, students' own descriptions of self and their experiences, social network data, and detailed descriptions of each walkabout through the spaces of the school. The descriptions refer to the spaces claimed as hangouts, as well as those either rejected by the youth, or perceived as spaces of exclusion as these may provide an even more nuanced view of the student's experience in the schools. The next chapter provides an analysis of the themes and concepts in the narrative and artefact data, and how these relate to the multiple aspects of the identities of each individual.

The goal of the present chapter is to portray the routes and routines of each youth's school day experiences, and their relation to ethnocultural, racial, linguistic and religious identities. The physical routes followed by each youth will be presented in a narrative, with the youth's own words inserted in italics to elaborate on their own experiences and feelings in the spaces.

Salsoura

Salsoura's walkabout begins at the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom of her junior high school. She has one ESL class, but her other courses are part of the prescribed curriculum. It is through this ESL class that she became involved in the current project. Salsoura is a fourteen-year-old, grade nine student at School C in northwest Calgary. This is her fourth year in Canada and her second year at this junior high school as her family settled first in Halifax, Nova

Scotia, upon immigrating to Canada.

She first films a space situated at the end of this short hallway.

> *Right there is where all the popular people hang out. And uh, sometimes they can be very annoying because the pop machine, and uh...and they always block your way. And they won't move because they're very arrogant.*

Passing through this space, Salsoura explains how she feels this peer group treats her.

> *Yeah, it's hard. They look at you funny if you are not one of them.*

To Salsoura, this group is *Canadian*, mostly *blonde*, and their dress styles are *revealing* among the girls, and *jocular* among the boys. Her perceptions of this peer group are that they are lazy about their own education, and that membership in this group requires thinking and dressing in a similar way as well as smoking.

Salsoura begins to walk through the short and long hallways, to a staircase leading to the second floor. She diverts the camera to a space on the floor just outside what was her homeroom class the previous year and where she spends time with friends. It was here that she was first invited to join a group of female students shortly after she came to this school.

> *Well on my first day here I was invited to eat here and it was really special to me, because I had never made friends that quickly.*

This contrasts with her experiences in Halifax where she found it difficult to make friends:

> *And so they were like 'Wow, the new thing! She speaks French.' So for a week they were nice to me, but then they just forgot all about me.*

As she films the homeroom classroom, three of Salsoura's friends greet her

and she introduces each of them while continuing to film. She continues to eat lunch here with the same group of friends, though the group has changed somewhat. This is the only school and Canadian place that Salsoura has included in her spatial map. The other spaces mapped out are situated in either Algeria or France and depict scenes with family in these countries. The connections she associates with these countries are discussed in chapter five.

The second group spends time at the other end of the same hallway, in the art classroom, and Salsoura divides her time between the two groups throughout the school week.

> *This year, my friends all like drifted away from that main group. Some of them eat in the art room; some of them eat by the stairwell. And so I try to alternate, like during the lunch hour.*
>
> *Because people change. Some of them uh, well some of them grew up, like they became more mature. And others just like stayed the same.*

The art room group of friends is described as *very, very intelligent*, engaging in discussions together.

While walking through the hallways on the way to the next space, Salsoura explains how she feels she is perceived by other students in the school.

> *They think I talk Chinese, because there are a lot of Chinese people here and they talk Chinese a lot.*

In addition, she feels that she and other ESL students are excluded from certain groups because they are viewed as having a different culture and different beliefs.

Though she speaks French, one of the official languages of Canada, she does not have the opportunity to speak it among friends in the school as English is

the main language of her school and of her social groups. Language impacts on Salsoura's social network and interactions in the school. Her sociogram reveals a network of sixteen friends at the school, eight of whom are identified as sharing the same ethnicity as her own. She also describes a preference for friends who are at an equal level of English language abilities:

> *It's easier to get along with someone who...like who has the same level of language abilities as you. Because if you can't pronounce words, and like people you hang around someone who was born English and speaks English ever since they were little, it's kind of hard to get along with that kind of person.*
>
> *Because like everyone was laughing at what I was saying.*
>
> *They treat you like an idiot if you can't talk like them.*

Born in Algeria, Salsoura's family moved to France when she was a child to join other relatives already settled in the country. Arabic is the language that she first learned in her home country, Algeria; however she feels that French has become her dominant language and a part of her identity. In a focus group discussion, she reflects on language, identity and the difficulties she and her family face in maintaining connections with relatives in Algeria, a third world country.

> *It's very important to me to keep it [French] because it's a part of my culture; it's a part of me. So that's why I really, it's really important to me to go back to France and Algeria every year. Because it's nice to be surrounded by your people.*

In the walkabout, when discussing language spoken amongst friends, Salsoura elaborates on how French and Arabic are a part of her identity:

> *I speak French, but I'm not really French. ...Well I used to speak Arabic, but I lost it over the years. But yeah, I'm Arabic. That's my culture.*

Continuing to make her way past classrooms and lockers, she reflects on her experiences in the school and how she feels about leaving it to attend a senior high school in the near future.

> *I've suffered a lot sometimes here. Uh...I had my best friend ditch me for like other people, and she just ridiculed me in front of everyone one time. I don't think I'll miss this place.*

Salsoura views rejection by groups of students as being based on dress styles, language, personal tastes and the way people think.

> *In my country, like pop and punk rock music was really kind of banned. And here, it's like if you're not like into that kind of music, you're rejected.*

The next hangout on the route is the school lunchroom.

> *That's the lunchroom, and it's here that I first felt really lost in grade eight, because all the grade nines would sit here and...they didn't like me.*

She describes the feeling of being lost, and then recounts how a friendship was formed with a younger student in the same room, revealing this as both an inclusive and exclusionary space for her.

She also reflects on the importance of socialization within the school, noting that many of these connections with peers happen during class time, and that teachers could encourage different groups of students to interact.

> *...and if you don't socialize with a variety of people, then you're lost. So I would like make groups of like, at a table I would sit the class, the popular people and just, like anyone. I would take a person from all groups and put them at the same table so that they would get to know each other.*

In addition, she would like to see clothing regulations enforced in the school that would restrict female students from wearing clothing that she views as too

revealing. When asked how she could be involved in making the changes she suggests, Salsoura replies:

> *Because it's just me. I won't make a difference. I am just one of like five hundred teenagers.*

The last place on the route is the library, where Salsoura visits with friends and reads the newspaper. The social group here is again described as intellectual and Salsoura prefers engaging in discussions with the friends here, rather than using the computers.

Nazir

Nazir attends the same junior high school, School C, as Salsoura. He films the walkabout, starting at the same ESL classroom. Nazir, fourteen, moved to Canada from the Gaza Strip at the age of twelve and is in his second year in a class of students who require ESL support for core classes.

Nazir's walkabout moves through the spaces he included in his spatial map, which focused almost exclusively on school hangouts. The map illustrates several specific hallways, classrooms and a sports field where Nazir spends his time with friends on a daily basis. The one space outside of the school included in the spatial map is the YMCA where he engages in sporting activities on weekends with friends and family.

The first hangout is a long, narrow hallway situated near the main office, where pictures of previous graduating classes are framed on either wall. Here, Nazir and his friends often eat lunch and make fun of the students in the old pictures.

His friendship group here includes Arab and Indian friends, and they most often speak Arabic in this space. He identifies his own ethnicity as Palestinian and his first language is Arabic. His sociogram reveals a network of fourteen friends, twelve of whom are male and eleven, of Arab background.

> *We..I'm in a...always hang out with Arab people. Because other people used to bug me last year. So I say why should I be friends with them. Then, and this year uh, the Arab people are good with me.*

In choosing friends, Nazir notes that it is important that they be viewed positively by the teachers and that they be *good.* He expresses that Canada represents a free country with educational opportunities where he experiences both freedoms and restrictions. His educational aspirations and view of teachers are reflected in his careful choice of friends. Nazir explains:

> *Because if she doesn't like him then he...then they do bad things and they don't behave. So that kind of student you don't want to be hang out with. Because then the, then the teacher thinks that you're the same and treats you the same as them.*

Nazir feels that teachers and other students think that his group are talking about others when they are speaking Arabic. In this school, students are expected to speak English in class, but may use their first languages in social settings. Next, Nazir films as he walks through the hallways towards the main office and main entrance. He exits the school and films a hangout situated to the right of the main doors. Nazir and his friends spend time in this outdoor space at lunchtime as well, and the nature of the interactions with friends and others are similarly described in both spaces.

> *Yeah, here we hang. ...We sit and then we talk about some*

problems. We talk...like we have fun talking, telling some jokes, some good stuff that happen in the school, some bad stuff that happen too.

While outside, Nazir points the camera towards the soccer field and explains that he and his friends often play soccer during breaks at school and talk about problems in the space. Though his group is open to anyone playing soccer with them, Nazir reveals that relations are not always positive on the field.

Some days it's good, sometimes it's bad. Sometimes there's trouble, sometimes there's not.

Nazir then re-enters the school, and walks through a hallway and a stairwell to reach the grade seven hallway on the second floor of the school. Here, Nazir films his friend's locker and a black line that is painted on the floor next to a locker. He describes a routine of hanging out with friends here before classes begin for the day, talking and watching the grade seven students in the hallway. His group engages in a game of blocking the hallway and letting some students pass over the black line, while joking with them.

Nazir then makes his way back to the main floor through the back hall of the school towards the area where the grade nine lockers are located. Along this route, Nazir passes by a set of doors leading outside where *sometimes at lunchtime the smokers go out and smoke and they get in trouble.* Nazir does not hangout in this space. He observes the others' behaviours and has decided that he does not want to be associated with the group and their activities.

After passing by this same set of doors, Nazir finds himself in the grade nine locker area. There are three spaces in this hallway where he spends time. The first is a doorway to a classroom where he greets a friend in grade eight once each

month to say hello and talk briefly. The second space is a homeroom class where Nazir begins his school day. His social network inside the homeroom is described as *different* from his friendship group which he defines as mostly Arab or Muslim. In this classroom, he interacts with most of the students but makes a distinction between the level of intimacy expressed with different types of friends.

> *I sit in a different, in a different group inside. ...most of the class I can talk to and have, like can talk. But like two or three...like kind of that I can share like my problems or tell them about stuff. ...I know like many students in my homeroom and others that I can talk to any, anything. Not like important stuff, but like mostly just talk. Yeah it's just fun like talking to a few in English. Most of the times in here I talk in English because there's no, there are just two Arab guys and all of them are Canadian, so we talk English. Then after we talk in Arabic.*

The last space he describes in this hallway is his locker. He and two friends have their lockers close to each other and follow a routine of moving as a small group between each friend's locker. They talk about their school day, and sometimes talk with *Canadians* who are walking around.

> *...because they're in grade nine and they're tall and stuff. Yeah and just, we know them, we don't want to like have...bad...like relations with them and stuff. So like we move, stand here, we talk.*

Nazir feels like he belongs in this school more now than he did in his first year in Canada. He relates this feeling of belonging to knowing more students, including friends and acquaintances.

At the end of this hallway is another doorway where the popular, smoking group hangs out. This is the same space that Salsoura discussed in the previous portrait which is situated just outside of the ESL classroom. Nazir explains that the smokers here have girlfriends and are part of the same group that smokes outside

the doors at the other end of the same hall.

> *...the smokers hang out there who have girlfriends... And they stand. That's, that's the group who go outside. And then...I don't like to hang out with because they're, they smoke and they do drugs and stuff. And it's against our religion if you have a girlfriend and stuff like that.*

Nazir has observed some of the students kissing and hugging each other in this space. He explains that this is against his Muslim beliefs.

> *Because if you have the, like if you have a phone number of a girl you're not supposed to do that. If you have like touching a girl and stuff. That's, that's against our religion.*

He and other Muslim students are allowed to use a school conference room on Friday, a weekly prayer day in the Muslim faith. They are allowed to use this space Fridays to pray together and to talk about what is important to them, including maintaining religious values relating to dating.

At the end of the walkabout, Nazir reflects on how he feels the other students in the school perceive him. He feels that the Canadian students do not know anything about his religion and instead attribute a generalized ethnicity or race to him.

> *...they don't know what religion I am and stuff. They don't know anything about me. They just know that I'm Arab and that's it. They don't know if I'm Muslim or Christian or anything like that.*

To address this issue, he proposes to

> *teach other kids how to like, to be Arabic and Muslims and like [being] a different guy in a different country.*

Nazir observed that teachers were not enforcing the school rules for student conduct. In response, he wrote an anonymous letter to the principal to state his

beliefs and how he felt about students having girlfriends and boyfriends in the school. In the letter, he explained that it is against his religion to have a girlfriend and that it is inappropriate to see girls and boys kissing in the hallway. He expressed pride in what he believed to be the administration's reaction to his letter. Though school administrators rarely act on the requests of anonymous letters, Nazir's perception is that his efforts effected change. Teachers, he explained, now monitor this peer group's behaviours. This has impacted on his experience of being a student at this school.

> *I feel like so, like good and like I am responsible in this school. I am a part of this school.*

Lastly, Nazir films the ESL classroom. He distinguishes it from the class this year, specifying that in his first year at this school, the ESL classroom was important to him because it was in this classroom where he first made friends and connections, and learned to speak English.

Kamal

Kamal's walkabout begins at a corner just outside the large open cafeteria, where she and her friends eat their lunches. Though the cafeteria contains several tables and chairs where students can sit together, Kamal's group prefers to take a spot on the floor where it is more quiet and private. The cafeteria is at the centre of the school, with four 'centres' branching off from it. This year-round north east junior high school, School G in the larger study, divides students into five 'tracks', each one having its own 'centre' with classrooms, teachers, lockers and timetables. By alternating vacation weeks, the schedule ensures that there are four tracks, or

clusters of students, attending the school at any time.

Though herself a grade nine student, most of Kamal's friends are in grade eight and thus attend different classes and tracks. Her sociogram shows a network of fifteen friends, all female, with thirteen attending her school and seven being noted as sharing the same ethnicity as her own. Kamal and her friends meet at lunch hour to talk about the events of the day, and prefer to gather in the quieter corner situated just outside of the cafeteria and out of view of most tables within the large space.

She describes her friendship group as being mixed:

> *Because having different types of friends in my group. I have like one Caucasian, one's like African-Canadian, and I'm friends with Chinese people. I like making friends with different types of people.*

Kamal herself is originally from Pakistan and moved to England when she was of elementary school age.

> *I don't remember Pakistan because I was seven, I think. But I went back for my brother's wedding. Places I remember now, and places where I grew up...and it's a nice place to be because you just remember your past, like if you go there.*

Now fourteen, she has lived in Canada for just over two years. She feels that her parents worry about her and her siblings losing their culture and language in Canada:

> *Yeah, they worry about kids leaving their culture when they leave...home, like their hometown. You come to like a place that's Caucasian people then you start acting like them. My mom, what she does is she goes 'If you don't talk to me in your language then I'm not talking to you.' So that way we've kept our language.*

Kamal describes a community centre situated next to this school. She

chooses not to film the centre and instead describes it while standing inside the school, focusing on her reasons for avoiding this space where the popular group spends time.

> *Yeah, that's all the popular people. Like they think they are popular so they can hang out there and smoke and everything.*

When asked to define 'popular', she explains that a group is popular because

> *...they think they're better than everybody else. And they think they're like, they can boss everybody around and they're like the best, or something.*
>
> *You can tell by the way they look at you and stuff. Like you're a lower class person, or something.*

Though she first describes this group as having *different types* of people, she reconsiders this and describes them as mostly Caucasian with only a few people of Chinese or African origins. She highlights a mutual rejection between herself and this group:

> *I think I wouldn't want to be in it, even if I was allowed to be in it. I wouldn't want to be in their gang because it ruins your...because you have to do what they do to stay cool. And then you don't have your own style and stuff.*

Another hangout for Kamal is her 'centre' in the school where her track has classes and lockers. This is a space where she feels comfortable and can go to teachers for guidance when she needs to.

> *It just makes you feel nice because you're with your own group of people, your own track. Because if I went to another track I wouldn't know anybody, and I'd have to make friends with people. Because you know people in this centre, so it makes you feel nice, because you know people.*

Generally, she does not feel that there are any spaces within the school

where she would feel unwelcome and feels that she can go anywhere she likes. However, she explains that sometimes outside of the school and near the community centre she does not feel comfortable. She describes having seen a female student being pushed out of the centre because *they thought she wasn't cool*.

Kamal indicates Pakistani as her ethnicity and Hindi and Urdu as the two languages she speaks at home. She considers Canada as a country where she and her family can celebrate with others who share their background. Her younger brother attends a school with specific programs for Muslim students in Calgary. She cannot attend this school as it does not offer grade nine. When asked if she would like to see Muslim programs offered in her present school, she replies that this would not be fair to the Canadian students. She perceives the popular, English groups as reacting negatively to students in the school who speak their home languages and maintains that it is her family's responsibility to maintain their own culture through small group or community events.

> *That wouldn't be fair, though, because we came to their country. They let us in their country, and we start our own things. I think that's wrong because...they let us celebrate our like festivals and things like that. So that's nice for us, but then if we start doing everything for our own country...like you can do it at home, but not too much often or it's like invading their country or something.*

Lastly, Kamal films the library as one of her infrequent hangouts because it is not often open to students during the lunch hour. The library is also valued because it is a quiet place where she can go with friends at lunch hours to use the computers or study.

Kamal films a poster with the acronym 'STARS", which means Standing Together Against Racism in Schools. She is involved in this program, and recently conducted a play with her friends for which they won second place in a national contest. Talking about discrimination in the school, Kamal explains:

> *It has to happen once in a while if you're not Caucasian. So, people have to make fun of you because they can't help it. Or the popular group again, like they think uh...if they call your name then that means they're even cooler.*

She views the school as playing an important role in teaching students about different cultures, and that very few people in the school *just go their own way, and stay with their type of people.*

> *Last year, last year people would talk their own language. Like there was a lot of African people and everybody they were 'Oh this is an English school. Talk English.' ...And they think they're better than us, because I don't know, because they just talk English. And they think we talk about them all the time, and that's not true.*

Yasmin

The first space Yasmin films is an ESL classroom in School F, where she attends grade ten classes. Though she does not presently have a class in this particular ESL room, she studied here in the previous semester and it continues to be a place where she spends time during her breaks.

She emigrated from Saudi Arabia less than one year earlier, and is originally from Pakistan where she had most of her previous schooling. Her spatial map focuses on three places: her school and home in Pakistan and Disney World where she went on a trip with her family after moving to Canada. Though she did learn some English at her school in Saudi Arabia, Yasmin required a beginning ESL

curriculum in her first semester, before moving into an advanced ESL class in the present term. This class is held in a separate room and she chooses to focus on the former classroom as her preferred hangout:

> *First of all, I spend most of my time in the class because it was my ESL class last semester. So I spend my break time here with my friends. So it's fun because everybody is in here...in ESL.*

After exiting this classroom, Yasmin films as she walks the hallway of classrooms and lockers on the way to her second hangout, the library. Along this route, she passes through a central foyer where the main office is located and a wide doorway provides the main access to the school. She does not claim this space as a hang out, and films specific benches near the doors describing the space as being frequented mostly by Arabic students.

> *Yeah, most of the Arabic people. Like all the people who speak Arabic they hang around, they always gather here in this place.*

> *They just stay together the Arabic people. I don't know much about them. Just stay together. Some of them have classes together so it is easy for them because they like speak their own language with them.*

When asked if others are free to join this group, she replies:

> *I don't think so, like because this is the spot for Arabic people. They're always here, always gather here. So we don't go there. ...Well language is maybe the main reason. But I don't know why they always gather here.*

This high school in southwest Calgary is a small school in relation to the majority of high schools in Calgary. The enrolment is just under 900 students, whereas many high schools must provide for 1200 to 1500 students. The student population at School F is very diverse culturally, racially, linguistically and socio-

economically. Yasmin notes that the peer groups within the school are highly segregated along gender and ethnic lines.

The cafeteria is located off the hallway that is reached through this foyer, however it is also described as a place where she chooses not to spend time. She describes the ethnocultural and linguistic peer groups who spend time in the cafeteria and throughout the school.

> *Because I don't really go in the cafeteria. I don't go in the cafeteria. There are like some Korean people, or Chinese people who are always there together.*
>
> *Like there are some Korean students in our class. They are always together. They talk with each other, they fight and they have fun and like that. We also have a group of Pakistanis like who talk the same language and we have fun with each other. And I have seen other Canadian students like they are all like girls and a group of boys.*

Yasmin then moves through the foyer to the library situated next to the main office. She explains that spends time in the library at lunch hours with a small group of students of Pakistani and Indian backgrounds. They meet to work on the computers. She also meets her sister in the library to do work together or to talk. She films a table which is situated between tall bookcases and is more private than the other tables and computer stations in the library.

> *It's a quiet place, so I can do anything.*

As Yasmin makes her way back towards the ESL room where the walkabout began, she describes her language use in the school. She explains that she is accustomed to speaking English throughout the day because of her previous education in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Many of the teachers allow students to speak their first languages, Urdu in Yasmin's case, during classes, but the ESL

teachers insist that the students speak English. She feels that students who do not speak Urdu wonder what she is talking about if Yasmin and her friends speak their first language in the school. For this reason, she does not like to use her first language around diverse groups of students.

> *Well I don't really like to speak Urdu in front of other people who can't really understand that. Because they always think like what are we talking about.*
>
> *But it feels good to, when we get a friend who is from our, our country. But I think we should talk with other people too, who speak English. So we can learn English more, like from speaking with other people.*

Yasmin spends her time with Pakistani and Indian friends in the school, though she does sometimes talk informally with a Korean student in her computer class. Her sociogram reveals a friendship network anchored mainly in her family, with her mother and sister identified as her closest friends. The few other friends included in the network are two friends from her present school and a few friends from her former school in Pakistan.

> *All of my friends are like the same religion as mine. They are all Muslims. And I don't really have close friends, but my sister [name] and my mom are really very close to me.*
>
> *I don't talk with any Canadian ones, any friend or any person from another country. Just talk to Pakistanis here. But I don't know why. I can speak English, but I don't know why I don't talk to them.*

The differences in education between Canada and Pakistan were difficult for her at first.

> *Coming to Canada was like...was difficult because we had like a new language here, new people, and it was totally like different from my country. And especially the education is very different. The system is very different. I was really confused about the education system*

here, and now I have come to know how it is.

Like other students in the present study and in the larger project, education is understood as her family's main motive for moving to Canada. In addition, she notes how the male and female interactions in schools differ in Canada with her previous education conducted in gender-segregated schools or co-educational programs with little interaction between the male and female students.

> *So I never talked to boys there, I never talked with boys. I just talked, like had friendships with girls.*

Abdie

Attending the same school as Yasmin, School F, Abdie films the walkabout and begins with the same ESL classroom. Abdie has moved into English 10 in his second semester at this school, and describes the ESL room as a place where he used to spend most of his time, and still frequents to spend time with friends, the teachers, or to ask for help. He describes why he feels comfortable in this space and has chosen it as a hangout:

> *So, we did not have any like, anything to hide from anybody. We usually did like our things and sometimes we could speak our language.*

His first language is Urdu and there are other students in his ESL class and friendship group who share this language. He does feel a connection to the English 10 class, but finds it more difficult and does not film the class as a hang out.

> *But in English 10, you always have to speak English with other people and they're regularly English. So it's a bit hard to...be there, but it's okay.*

The second space on Abdie's route is the library. As described in Yasmin's walkabout, to arrive at the library he must walk through a hallway and pass through the main foyer. The main office is glassed in and has a full view of all of the events in the foyer. He describes how he uses the space of the main foyer for a specific purpose, not claiming it as a hangout, but explaining the time-specific use of the space.

> *Like if you want to call somebody, like 'Meet me here at that time'. If I'm a the library, or if I'm at the office, they just come here and sit down. So they might be...they might be able to find them.*

Abdie and his friends, including Yasmin, go to the library after lunch to use the computers. The library is also a space where he would go alone, or where he would go to talk to a friend about something more personal.

After leaving the library, Abdie films while walking to the cafeteria which is situated in what he calls the *Sunshine Hallway*. This name comes from the fact that it is lined with windows to one side, allowing direct sunlight throughout the day.

Abdie describes the cafeteria as a space where *pretty much everybody* can go, though there are certain groups who usually sit in the Sunshine Hallway. The students in this space are described as Arabic speakers, and though he does not claim this space as a hangout, he feels that he is not excluded from the area and that he would be accepted if he wished to join them.

He is aware of peer groups being divided along ethnic lines and questions whether this may be due to race, language, or culture.

> *A guy came from Africa here, like he won't meet much friends as a guy from England who would come here. So it depends on like your colour maybe, or your language, or your background, or your race.*

For Abdie, friends are an important part of his experiences at the school.

> *So, we spend time together and like go together if possible in the school. It's fun and you also get some company, somebody to talk to...Like you're alone and you do not have many friends, or maybe he's not here today. So it might be a bit difficult.*

He also points out the challenges he faced in the new school, with a new language, and explains that there was a period of adjustment when he knew no one and talked to no one.

> *Yeah it is hard time in school. Like no friends in the first place. Sit in class, be quiet. ...I realized that nobody would want to socialize with me unless I want to socialize with them. So it depends how much talkative you are. If you talk to them, they will talk to you. That's how it begins.*

For Abdie, religion is a very important aspect of his background and it plays a factor in his friendship choices and network, and in his interactions and experiences in the school. His sociogram reveals a network of four friends in Canada and nine friends who live in Saudi Arabia or Pakistan, and eleven of the thirteen friends are identified as having the same ethnic background as his own. Of his four friends in Canada, two are the same ethnicity and are in his ESL class, and all four attend School F. His spatial map also focuses on Saudi Arabia, with a single drawing of his previous home making up the entire representation of his spaces. Now sixteen years old, Abdie moved to Canada approximately one and a half years earlier; first settling in Toronto and then moving to Calgary after a short period. He was born in Pakistan, but moved to Saudi Arabia at the age of six. He notes the differences between friendship behaviours of Canadian youth, and those of Muslim youth.

You can't have a 100 percent good life in everywhere. You might get something bad and you might get something good. So it depends on you. The main thing is to maintain your religion.

I say that in Canada friendship depends on culture. Because friends in Canada they just hang out, they like to go to malls, go to movies. We are not supposed to do that. Like we go out but with family, not friends. ...Like the religion is a big difference. It does make a big difference.

He observes many Muslim students in the school who have been here longer, or who were born in Canada and who have *adopted their changes to the environment of Canada*, forgetting about their religion and engaging in drinking and dating. When reflecting on the place of religion in schools, Abdie stresses the differences between schooling in his former countries and in Canada. While Muslim prayers and observances were integrated into the school timetable and calendar in his home country, in Canada he notes that these may not be observed during school hours and his religious holidays are not provided for. When asked how he feels about this, he explains that small numbers of practicing Muslim students do not warrant time for this type of allowance.

I'll say that there is 800 students in this school and basically we are only three ones who are asking them for a twenty minute break. That's not possible. It might be more if there were 20 or 25. Like they all are changed by their environment. Like there are more Muslims as we are. Like 25 percent of our school are Muslims but they don't care about that. Like they have been changed. ...That they call themselves Muslims, but they don't even like, they don't act like that. So they say they are Muslims, but if you see them in a religious way they are villain.

Abdie describes his strategy for connecting to the school and to other students through engaging in sports. He has played on several school teams throughout the school year, and describes it as fun and as a way to fit in with the

rest of the school. Though his sociogram reveals a small network of four friends at his school, this may only reflect a portion of the number of people that he interacts with. While he indicates that sports is a way for him to get to know others in the school, these new connections may not have progressed into what he would consider friendship relations.

> *I'll take part in every event and every team mostly. Like recently I was in the badminton team, and I also played soccer, and baseball and basketball. ...for fitting in even. It's a really good way to meet new people. Then you get appreciated by your fellow students, and by your teachers. And then they know you quite well.*

When asked if there are any places in the school where he does not feel comfortable, Abdie replies:

> *Not really. Most of this school is really good and like you feel protected each time by teachers and by fellow students. Like there are teachers present at, always in the school, and every places. So you do not feel uncomfortable any place.*

The fourth place he shows us is his locker, though he does not say much about it. He sometimes will talk with friends around there, because his friends also have their lockers near his own.

Lastly, Abdie leads the walkabout to the second level of the school where he has a science class. It is closed at the time of the walkabout, but he describes it as a space he frequents because he likes science and considers the science teacher to be *really good* and *nice*.

Abdie also notes the importance that education played in his family's decision to move to Canada:

> *My parents said that they basically came here because of us. But they say that they did not have much trouble living in Saudi Arabia*

there. It is only education that is why we came here.

Neal

Neal's walkabout beings in the library, and he films as we move through the tables where students are seated engaged in work. He films a spot at the back of the library where he usually sits—it is an open area, close to windows, with several tables and short bookcases. He explains that he comes to the library alone, or sometimes with friends. His spatial map reflects a quiet side to Neal as he has mapped himself in the centre of the page seated and reading under a large tree. This represents a park in Pakistan where he would go to read alone. The other two spaces in his map portray sports fields: cricket in Pakistan and baseball in Calgary.

During the walkabout, as we head out of the library to the main floor of the school, Neal talks about having more freedom at school here during his free time.

> *In here we are allowed to go outside of school too, right. In breaks, play outside and do whatever you want. But in Pakistan you are not allowed to, you know there were the gates. You were not allowed to get out of that.*

Neal was born in Afghanistan, but lived in Pakistan for most of his life prior to moving to Canada three years earlier. First settling in British Columbia, his family moved to Calgary two years ago. This is his second year at School E, where he is in grade ten and continues to receive ESL instruction.

As we move through the hallways of this large school, Neal reflects on the differences between having friends in Canada and friends in Pakistan:

> *We were going to same school. Like I mean in school we were talking to them. Like I mean, I could talk to them in Urdu and stuff,*

> *right. But in Canada, here in Canada like school, we have to speak English and everything. So it's really that you know, I mean you have to be in English. Like you can't talk you know, I mean it's not fair to talk in other languages. Because if someone hears it then they'll think something else.*

After moving through a series of hallways, past classrooms and up staircases, Neal arrives at a spot on the second floor of the school. There are windows to the right looking over the playing fields and to the left it is an overhang looking onto the main foyer below. It is a large, open area with benches; a few students linger. Neal films through the windows and indicates that he sometimes sits in this spot, eating lunch with friends, and other times he plays soccer outside on the fields.

> *In breaks, most of the time I am here. Stand here. Just watch over who is here, and who is not. Stand with friends and talk to them. ...There are many, you know I mean everyone can go there. But sometimes there are many people in there. Yeah, watch and see what they are doing and everything.*

He plays soccer with friends from school, and explains that they are all *different kinds of people.* His sociogram indicates that he has a friendship network of four friends, with ethnicities different from his own, at School E out of a total of sixteen friends. Unlike the other students in this study, Neal has a larger representation of friends who attend other schools in Calgary, nine in all, with eight identified as relatives. The remaining three friends are noted as living in Pakistan and sharing his ethnic background.

> *Sometimes you know, we have English people too. And Lebs, Lebanese, Chinese and so everyone, you know I mean. Everyone comes and plays there. ...Out there we would speak English. So I mean, it's not really you know we speak English everyday.*

He also notes groups divided along ethnic lines, but considers the boundaries as permeable and does not highlight conflict.

> *Because you know, Chinese people and you know, Lebs and everything, they are people that, you know, I mean they are good. They won't say anything you know I mean, if you join them they won't say anything. Go and talk to them. Sometimes they'll speak in English so everyone else can hear them and join them.*

Neal's home language is Pashayi, and he also speaks Farsi, but he will often speak Urdu with friends at school. He feels maintaining his first language is very important to him, as well as learning other languages such as Kachi and Urdu which some of his friends speak.

> *No one should, you know, no one should forget their language. Their language should be there but if you know your own language then, you know I mean, you can talk to your cousins and stuff. If they don't know English then, you know, big problem. You cannot even talk to them because you know English and they know their own language. So how would you talk with them?*

He notes that other students will sometimes make comments to his group if they are speaking their language, but does not feel uncomfortable speaking it despite others' reactions.

> *When they are walking, right they'll say that, you know you guys are talking about us. But we tell them no we weren't talking about you. We are just talking ourselves, you know. ...It's kind of my language, right.*

Proceeding from this second floor space, Neal walks down a hallway and films his computer classroom, stepping inside to record the class and the teacher. He explains that he spends a lot of his lunch hours in the computer room completing work, rather than spending time outside with friends. At the end of this hallway, Neal films the doorway to his ESL class, but does not enter to film so as

not to disturb the class activities.

Turning down another hallway and Neal proceeds towards a set of double doors then a stairwell leading back to the first floor. Passing through a corridor lined with sports paraphernalia and trophies in cases, Neal films this space and explains some of the sports teams represented, noting in particular the male basketball team's recent victories. In regards to his own participation in school sports, Neal explains that he has not been involved this year:

> *Uh that's because I am in ESL and we have more school work to do all the time. So that's why. We don't really get time for this.*

We head back towards the library. He points towards where his locker is, but does not choose to film it as a hang out.

Reflection on Portraits

The portraits of six students depicted here illustrate complex negotiations of school spaces and identities that are enacted on a daily basis. By focusing on the walkabouts where the youth are physically in the spaces as they film and narrate them, it is possible to capture the youth both reflecting on their relation to the places and to the networks and interactions that they observe within them. While an ethnography, or participant observation study, would have documented the routine patterns of behaviours within the spaces, the video walkabout method provides the youth with an opportunity, within the research process, to reflect on themselves and their place(s) in the school, narrating memories and feelings, and creating a video memoir of their experiences.

The six walkabouts represent only a sample of the data collected within the

larger Identity Formation Research Project. As expected, the other videos contain similar types of spaces (as found within schools) and complex experiences forming and formed by ethnocultural, racial, religious and linguistic identities. A detailed portrait of a small number of individuals in the study is provided here in order to begin to explore the concepts of identity, liminality and belonging in the school through the use of video walkabout technique. The portrait method may also prove to be a useful tool in analyzing the larger collection and in making comparisons across the various ethnocultural groups represented among the participants.

The portraits reveal how religious, linguistic, ethnocultural, racial and gender identities shape and are shaped by youths' experiences in the school and their use of particular spaces for social purposes. As illustrated in the portraits, religious background and identities represent a part of the youth's experiences and use of school space. Linguistic identities, ethnocultural, racial and gender influences are also shown to construct spaces and interactions.

Chapter five describes in detail how these identity markers interact within the school to construct spaces as inclusionary and exlusionary for the youth and explores the implications of the experiences for the concepts of liminality and belonging as they relate to adolescents and immigrants.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS

The portraits of youth depicted in the previous chapter are distinct and yet share common threads of experiences. This chapter discusses the portraits through the use of the theoretical frameworks outlined in the methodology section of this thesis. Firstly, the spaces filmed in the walkabouts are presented in terms of the tri-layer typology outlined by Gordon & Lahelma (1996), previously described in Chapter Two. The walkabout routes and routines are discussed in reference to the official, informal and physical school layers to draw comparisons to the 1996 study and Gordon et al. (1999). The portraits are then discussed through Hall's framework of identities which stresses plurality and difference by emphasizing that identities are multiple and in process, constructed in ongoing conversations with others (1991a). Local and global connections, multiple identities, gender differences and processes of othering highlight the major themes found in the portraits. These themes are outlined and discussed in relation to the implications for the conceptions of liminality and belonging. The identities framework applied challenges the modern notion of identity as the essential answer to the question "Who am I?". Instead, questions like "Where am I?" and "Who am I with?" are proposed to address the contextual, fluid, and sometimes strategic, process of making identifications.

These questions frame the discussion of ethnocultural, racial, religious and linguistic identities embodied in the walkabouts and expressed in the narratives, and illuminate the complex and tenuous distinctions between liminality and belonging. As discussed in the first chapter, the notion of liminality, which is

inherent in modern and postmodern theories about adolescence, migration and identity, has implications for conceptualizing belonging for newcomer youth.

Routes and Routines

When applying the three-layer framework of the school to the spaces filmed by the youth in this study, there are some interesting parallels and contrasts to be made with the Finnish study. While the spaces filmed are categorized primarily as the physical layer of the school, they also may be viewed in terms of how they embody the official and informal aspects. The physical routes and locations of hallways, the library, classrooms, lunchrooms and sports fields are inclusionary or exclusionary due to the official and informal processes that occur within them. For example, the ESL classroom in the different schools is claimed as a hang out by several students in the present study and is described in terms of the official aspects of learning, interactions with students and teachers, rules for conduct and the language of communication. The physical spaces of hallways, locker areas, cafeterias, libraries and sports fields represent the informal level where students interact with each other and with teachers. These are not directly associated with the official school as they are imbued with informal hierarchies and the practical application of rules. Though classrooms and libraries are physical spaces where informal schooling takes place; they are also closely associated with the official layer of the school as they are often supervised by teachers and administrators when classes are not in progress, and are spaces where official curricula and instruction govern activity during class periods. The hallways and cafeterias filmed by the students in this study, though not spaces where official instruction is

provided, are also within the bounds of the official as they are situated near the main office or directly outside of classrooms where supervision would be ensured. The sports fields represent relatively informal physical spaces outside of the school building where students may experience more freedom from authorities, and also find themselves less protected.

The Finnish study by Gordon & Lahelma (1996) found that students were more likely to avoid spaces associated with the official school in their free time throughout the day. With the exception of a few noted classrooms, students stayed away from areas close to main offices and teaching areas in search of more private spaces. In the present study, classrooms, libraries and hallways close to the official spaces of the school were preferred by students and were narrated in terms of safety, relationships with particular teachers and languages of communication in the spaces.

While the Finnish study did not address ethnocultural, racial, linguistic and religious diversity in the schools in a focused way, the researchers did note that some spaces were delineated along ethnic and gender lines. The six walkabouts profiled in chapter four map out the diversity of schools in a more detailed way. The six youth record on film and through their narratives, the specific ethnic groups claiming spaces throughout the school and categorize them as either inclusive or exclusive of others.

Routine permeates each of the walkabouts with the youth detailing the routes and spaces they encounter on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. In addition, the aspect of time is an important marker of the spaces. A space filmed as a hang

out at a certain time of day may be occupied by a different group at a different time and may represent exclusion rather than inclusion. Youth routinize paths and spaces according to the level of belonging and safety they may find within them. These routes and routines embody the racial, linguistic, ethnocultural and religious identities of the youth and will be discussed in the next sections of this chapter.

The Local and the Global

The portraits illustrate how the youth continue to experience global connections with family, friends and places in former countries along with local and recent experiences in Canada and in their present schools.

The geneograms illustrate family relations spanning continents. Geographically, the connections between family may be distant or close and the frequency of contact varies from daily communication to no contact at all. The geneograms by Nazir, Abdie, Neal, and Kamal all show relatives who have moved to Canada either before or after their own families arrived. Salsoura's geneogram traces family in Algeria and France, but not in Canada; and Yasmin states that her immediate family are the only ones who have settled here as well.

Similarly, the sociograms reveal friendship connections in Canada and abroad, and the spatial maps depict local and global spaces where the networks are or were enacted. Abdie, Nazir and Yasmin's sociograms all reveal that they consider their friends in the home countries to be their closest friends, though the contact between them is less frequent than with friends in Canada. Neal identifies a large proportion of his friends as family members living in Calgary, illustrating overlaps between his social and familial networks. Kamal and Salsoura have a

much higher proportion of friends at their schools than do the other four students in this study. This may be due to the fact that they have lived in Canada longer than the others and have thus attended their respective schools for a longer period. Although she has attended School C for the same amount of time as Nazir, Salsoura reports a larger network of friends at this school.

The spatial maps created by the youth mirror in some ways their social and familial networks, and contradict them in other ways. For example, Salsoura's sociogram reveals a large number of friends at her school and yet her spatial map focuses on the spaces of Algeria and France, with the exception of the one school hangout highlighted in the walkabout. This may represent a range of local and global attachments, memories and strategies to connect to both worlds. Abdie and Yasmin, on the other hand, have spatial maps portraying spaces of their home countries and reflecting, perhaps, the relatively small number of connections in Canada that are visible in their sociograms and geneograms. In addition, Kamal's map focuses on Calgary spaces, in harmony with her sociogram which indicates that her entire friendship network is enacted in Calgary. Neal and Nazir's networks and maps reveal the complexity of their connections, with combinations of friends and family in Canada and abroad, and spaces representing both local and global relations.

Many immigrant families experience displacement and settlement in other countries prior to coming to Canada. The students in the present study are no exception. Each had moved to another country from their birth country before migrating to Canada, and had received schooling in one or both of the prior homes.

In addition, their relatives and friends may have moved to one or more countries from the points of origin as well. The identities associated with past and present homes play out in the school and are implicated in networks and interactions. In addition to having left behind many close relatives in the home country, families may find themselves further separated by one or both parents working abroad to support children and spouse remaining here. This is the case for Abdie and Yasmin. Yasmin's strong friendship with her mother and sister reflect the impact of the separation from family and friends in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. For Salsoura, returning to France and Algeria provide her with the opportunity to reconnect with family, with her culture and with her languages. Kamal and Neal focus on their memories of their homelands, which they left at a young age.

These memories expressed during the focus group sessions, through the maps and networks reveal a continued connection and identities linked to the home country, or countries, to family and places they once knew, along with new connections to the present context. According to Hall's conception of diaspora (1995), the changing nature of global societies and identities would make the youths' relationship to the current countries very different from the 'homes' that they remember. In this sense, the youth would be situated in a liminal space between the local and lived home, the remembered homeland and the current state of the home country.

Multiple Identities

According to Hall's (1991a) model, identities are relational and incomplete, multiple and in process, and constructed through difference. The portraits reveal

gender, linguistic, ethnocultural, racial and religious identities expressed and embodied in each place.

Language is found to impact on where the students spend time in the schools and with whom. In each portrait the youths identify the spaces of the school where they speak their first languages, where they speak English, or both. While the ESL classroom was generally a place where students were expected to speak English, they mentioned the opportunities to converse in Urdu or Arabic in both this space and in other classrooms where teachers allowed it. It is represented by the students as a way to help each other with problems in class work, to continue to keep their first language and speak it with friends of similar ethnocultural backgrounds, and as an aspect of self.

As Salsoura, Kamal and Neal express, there may be multiple linguistic identities associated with the dominant language used, the mother tongue, and other languages spoken in social networks. In addition to ethnicity, language is often an important factor in friendship and social group formation, and thus inclusion and exclusion of group members. This is noted by the youth in each school and the spaces chosen by each ethno-linguistic group thus represent either inclusive or exclusive spaces to youth depending on their language backgrounds. For Yasmin and Abdie, the Arabic speaking group of students at their high school occupy the benches at the front entrance of the school and to them this represents a space of exclusion based on their ethnocultural and linguistic backgrounds. English may be viewed here as an inclusionary language in schools with high diversity. As Neal and Nazir explain, English spoken in classes and on sports

fields allows for students of many different backgrounds to interact and engage in games.

A youth's English language abilities are also found to limit the choice of persons with whom to associate for Salsoura, Yasmin and Abdie. For Salsoura, being ridiculed by other students has affected her level of comfort in speaking English at school. The ESL classroom represents a comfortable place for Abdie, Salsoura, Yasmin and Nazir, where they may interact with students of similar language abilities. This feeling of comfort to express oneself may impact on belonging and it is significant that these youth foregrounded the ESL classroom in each of their walkabouts.

While Kamal does not attend ESL, language use becomes an issue in her experiences within the school as well. Each of the students included in this study reported the perception that English-speaking peers believe themselves to be the topic of conversations when hearing foreign languages spoken in the school. This perception, found also in the larger study, would impact on a youth's sense of belonging to the school and her or his view of the home culture and language in the school and society.

The walkabouts by the six Muslim youth featured in this thesis hold different meanings for each participant. Their religioius identities are revealed in moments during the walkabouts as these interact with the experience of school spaces. While this means different things to each youth, there are moments in the walkabouts when their religious identities are revealed as interacting with the experience of school spaces.

In his walkabout, Nazir explicitly refers to his religious identity when he describes the behaviours of the *Canadian* youth in the hallway outside his ESL classroom. When he sees young women and men holding hands, kissing or hugging in the school, this affects how Nazir feels here and contradicts with his beliefs grounded in a Palestinian Muslim faith. For Salsoura, of Algerian/Shemith Muslim background, the behaviours in this same space are not referred to in religious terms. Instead, it is the dress styles and arrogant behaviours of the youth which make this an unwelcome and exclusionary space, though it is situated in close proximity to the welcome space of the ESL classroom. In Neal's walkabout, religion is not raised as an inclusive or exclusive aspect of his identity in his daily school routines. He, however, describes it as an important part of his life which he feels is necessary to maintain.

With Kamal, it is the school's inclusion of different holidays and observances which makes her feel as though her background and religion are a part of the school. For Yasmin and Abdie, their recent arrival to Canada sets them apart from the other Muslims in the school who are viewed as *changed* or as *villain*, not true to the Muslim faith. The behaviours of second generation Canadians and Muslim youth who immigrated at a younger age are portrayed as non-Muslim in Abdie's eyes. He considers drinking and dating to go against his Muslim values, and he believes that the other students who claim Muslim backgrounds should adhere to these standards as well. This perception of being 'other' to the group in the school which shares or approximates their religious, linguistic, racial or ethnocultural backgrounds has a strong significance for the discussion of liminality and

belonging.

As my analysis shows, religious identities may be conceived of as having inclusionary and exclusionary functions within the school, affecting the formation of social networks, the use of spaces and interactions in these spaces and feelings of belonging. The ethnocultural and racial backgrounds of the youth and of groups in the school are noted as an important aspect of students' experiences in the schools. As seen throughout the walkabouts and narratives, the youth observe social groups in schools as divided along ethnocultural, racial and linguistic lines. Abdie refers to the complex interplay of ethnicity and race when considering how friends are made in the school:

> *So it depends on like your colour maybe, or your language, or your background, or your race.*

At School F, Abdie and Yasmin filmed a place by their school entrance where Arab students gather, a place that they feel excluded from due to ethnicity and language. At School C, Salsoura and Nazir note the spaces dominated by 'Canadian' youth, and Kamal describes the community centre by her school where 'popular' and 'Canadian' students hang out. Neal is the only student whose walkabout does not film spaces associated with specific ethnocultural groups. While he does note that issues of linguistic differences arise in the school, he perceives that the main hangouts of students at the school (i.e., the main foyer, the sports fields) are open to all groups. This may be linked to the fact that this school (E) has a very diverse student population, serving neighbourhoods in Calgary that are marked by high concentrations of immigrant families and ethnic minority

groups. The 'visible minority' groups are closer to being the majority in this particular school, perhaps contributing to an environment where borders between ethnocultural and racial groups are more permeable.

Their own social networks reveal friends having both the same ethnic background as their own and different backgrounds. As may be expected, the youth with the shorter time depth in Canada have a higher proportion of same ethnicity friends in their social networks: Abdie, Nazir and Yasmin. Salsoura, Kamal and Neal show networks with smaller differences between the number of same ethnicity friends and friends of different ethnic backgrounds.

The spaces at the schools where ethnocultural, racial or linguistic barriers were transcended included classrooms and sports fields. In these spaces, English appears to be the language that allows several different groups to interact and cross ethnic and linguistic boundaries that may exist within other areas of the school grounds.

Gender

There are some gender differences found within the portraits relating to connections in the school and the use of space. As noted above, the sports fields in schoolyards are presented by the youth as places where students of different ethnicities and languages gather and play together. Only the male students in this small sample indicated that they participate in these activities and connect to others in the school through sports. Neal, Abdie and Nazir each describe playing sports either during breaks or as part of school teams and they note the significance this participation plays in expanding their social networks in the school.

At one point in Neal's walkabout, he films the trophies and awards won by sports teams at school E. He associates the winning players with popularity in the school and provides a concrete example of the place of sports in a school's identity and in the formation of groups within the school. Abdie and Nazir touch on this as well by acknowledging that sports have allowed them to be recognized by other students and teachers in the school and to make friends. Thus, participation in sports may represent a strategy for these youth to learn to be recognized in this school and thus to belong, by engaging in the activities that play a role in the development of school spirit and identity.

The three female students, in contrast, do not indicate sports places in their walkabouts through the schools. This is a pattern found within the larger collection of the *Identity Formation* project, and merits further investigation to determine patterns within each gender group. While their strategies for connecting to others in the school focus on making friendships in and out of classrooms, they do not accomplish this through engaging in sports activities. Salsoura and Yasmin's activities with friends appear to revolve around classrooms and the library. Kamal's participation in the 'STARS' program (Standing Together Against Racism in Schools) is one example of how she has connected to others in the school and has become engaged in extra-curricular programs.

Abdie and Yasmin at School F, both of Pakistani backgrounds, exhibit different strategies for connecting to the school. As mentioned above, Abdie focuses on sports as a way to 'fit in'. This may contribute to his feeling of comfort throughout the school, and thus his sense of belonging within the spaces. Yasmin,

in contrast, explains that she has little or no contact with students beyond her small group of Pakistani friends in the ESL classroom. This is an interesting difference as both students have attended this school for approximately the same amount of time and exhibit a similar level of oral English language ability. Research on immigrant adolescent friendships has found that newcomer youth tend to make friends with others from their own ethnocultural groups when first arriving in the new country (Shih, 1998). This strategy for forming social networks changes over time and youth will begin to establish friendships with diverse students as English language abilities improve and comfort level increases in new contexts (Shih, 1998).

Generalized Other

In different ways, the youth in this study report being perceived as a generalized 'other' in their school by other groups. Kelly (1998) applies the term 'under the gaze' to capture this process of being othered and othering among students in her study in a Canadian high school. In this thesis, the 'gazing' may have been expressed through a linguistic othering; as is the case of Salsoura when she explains that the Canadian students think she speaks Chinese because that is the larger ethnocultural and linguistic group in the school. For Nazir, his ethnicity is the basis for his perceived othering. He illustrates the central framework of the multiplicity of identities when he declares that other students do not know anything about him, except that he is Arab, thus recognizing that there is more to the self than one single identity marker and disputing assigned essential identity markers.

These students also engage in depicting groups in the school as

generalized in terms of their ethnicity and nationality, calling attention to the possibility of a reciprocal relationship of othering and exclusion. Salsoura, Kamal & Nazir refer to Canadian youth in their schools and use signifiers like 'popular', 'white', 'blonde', 'smokers' and 'English' to specify who they consider to be Canadian. Though they have Canadian friends within their social networks, these friends appear to be separate from the groups of smokers and popular students. For Abdie, second generation Muslim youth, as well as those who moved to Canada at a young age, have strayed from their Muslim values and practices. This reveals a form of othering within the religious group which may or may not be a reciprocal phenomenon.

This process of othering students who exhibit undesirable behaviours may be a strategy for these students to maintain their personal values and integrity. By othering the 'smokers' and the 'villain' Muslims, the youth are simultaneously stating that they are not part of these groups (Hall, 1991a; Turner, 1982), and that their own behaviours and values are essentially the 'good' or 'true' ones in relation to the school and to their cultural and religious backgrounds.

Liminality and Belonging

The portraits provide an interesting basis for discussing the concepts of liminality and belonging. As discussed at the beginning of this thesis, immigrant youth are often situated in literature and theories as being doubly liminal, that is, being in-between cultures and identities, and being in-between the child and adult life phases. Postmodern conceptions of identities and migration continue to include this liminal positioning of immigrants through the use of terms such as

hybridity and diaspora, by emphasizing the impact of on-going changes in local and global societies on communities and identities (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1991a, 1991b; Pile & Thrift, 1995c; Yon, 1999). The portraits provide examples of situations and expressions of the liminal and also allow insight into spaces and strategies of belonging. The notion of belonging, as presented in the first chapter of this thesis, goes beyond associations with nation and safety to include feelings of comfort and of being understood by others (Ignatieff, 1993; Rose, 1995).

Specific references to feeling 'liminal' in the school are found in Salsoura's walkabout where she refers to feeling 'lost' in certain spaces before she made friendships with others. Her spaces of exclusion are associated with her Algerian and Arab background, her tastes in music and dress, and her status as an ESL student. She perceives that other students in the school exclude her on the basis of these attributes and does not believe that she, herself, could enact changes in the environment that would possibly contribute to a stronger sense of comfort and belonging in the school. There are, however, spaces of belonging that Salsoura has claimed and filmed in the walkabout. These spaces are associated with friends with whom she engages intellectually and with whom she feels comfortable when speaking English.

Kamal shares a similar perception of being 'under the gaze' (Kelly, 1998), stereotyped by other students, and feeling that she does not have the power to change the situation. Instead, she takes the view that it 'has to happen' if you are not White. Kamal and Neal similarly express their views on the place of their languages and cultures in the school. As seen in their portraits, these students feel

that their cultures and languages should not be a part of the school or of social interactions within the school spaces. This illustrates a liminal aspect to their school experiences as the use of words such as 'their country' and 'invading' imply that they do not view their cultural backgrounds as belonging in the spaces of the school. For Kamal, this may also be representative of her previous experiences with migration to England (from Pakistan) prior to coming to Canada. Attitudes towards diversity in British society and schools, or her personal experiences in Britain, may have transferred to her view of the place of Muslim and Pakistani traditions in the Canadian setting.

Nazir also shows the school as containing spaces of exclusion and inclusion where he experiences both a sense of belonging and conflicts with his religious values. Acceptance and belonging is found with other Arab and Indian students in the school, while exclusion is associated with Canadian students and the spaces frequented by smokers. Through his walkabout, we see spaces where Nazir and his friends claim and control activities (i.e., the grade seven hallway), and where they feel less comfortable and 'under the gaze' of grade nine students. The space where he observed grade nine students kissing at one time represented a space which conflicted with his own beliefs and where he was situated between the home and school worlds. His actions, however, may have influenced a transformation of the space into the embodiment of his empowerment and citizenship, contributing to his overall sense of belonging in the school.

By participating in the 'STARS' program, Kamal has actively engaged in trying to improve student relations in the school and raise awareness of racism.

This shows that she is strategically working towards making the school a more comfortable space for herself and for others who may have experienced discrimination or exclusion based on their ethnocultural or racial backgrounds.

Yasmin, at School F, explains that making friends with ESL students and Pakistani students has contributed to making a challenging transition to a new country and new school easier for her. Abdie makes a similar comment, having made connections with students in ESL and through sports teams. While Yasmin maintains that she does not interact with Canadian students at the school, Abdie holds a more open network facilitated by his participation in school teams. In comparing their walkabouts, there are overlaps in their hangouts and in the spaces that they view as exclusionary. They both highlight the 'Leb Bench' in the foyer of the school, and highlight the ESL room and library as spaces of belonging. ESL represents for them, and for other students in the larger study, a place where they feel comfortable to express themselves in English or in Urdu and where they feel understood by fellow students. Abdie also notes two other hangouts (a science classroom and the cafeteria), and does not limit his interactions to students of the same ethnic group in the school. Both students, however, emphasize that religion is an important factor in their friendship choices.

The following chapter provides a discussion and summary of the analysis of the portraits, highlighting links to previous research and implications for future studies in the area of diversity, youth and identities.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

This thesis presents the social and spatial experiences of six Muslim immigrant adolescents in Calgary through the use of video walkabouts in schools. The purpose is to explore how their use of school spaces is shaped and is shaped by their diverse identities, and contributes to a sense of liminality or belonging within the school. The social experiences of youth in and out of the classroom is significant for their academic performance and engagement and in the development of a sense of citizenship and place in Canadian society.

The questions raised in the first chapter of this thesis are the following:

- How does an immigrant adolescent situate him or herself in the physical spaces of the school?
- What places does an immigrant youth of Muslim origin claim in a school comprised of hundreds of students representing diverse backgrounds?
- What are the spaces of inclusion, exclusion or rejection and how does this relate to learning to belong?
- Why do spaces mark liminality or learning to belong?

In this chapter, the findings are summarized along with their relation to previous work done in the area of immigrant youth identities. The thesis concludes with recommendations for further research, including suggestions for the future analyses of the larger data collection in the *Identity Formation Project.*

Discussion of Findings

The video walkabouts were presented and analyzed to address the research questions as the data concentrates on the youth's experiences in the

'schoolyard', that is, in the spaces outside of the classroom and in the physical level of the school. The portraits presented in chapter four, detailing the walkabouts and profiles of each youth, show how multiple identities, associated with ethnocultural, racial, linguistic, religious and gender influences, as well as local and global connections are embodied in the use of school spaces.

As youth move through the school, they experience inclusion and exclusion while negotiating multiple identities and engaging in a reciprocal process of othering. The embodiment of multiple identities reveals spaces of belonging and of being liminal as the youth move through time-space paths marked by linguistic, gendered, racial and religious borders (Lesko, 1988; Phelan, Davidson & Yu, 1998; Yon, 1999).

The routes and routines followed on a daily basis are analyzed in terms of their relation to the official, informal and physical school levels. The Finnish study by Gordon & Lahelma (1996) found that students were more likely to avoid spaces associated with the official school in their free time throughout the day, with the exception of a few noted classrooms. The walkabouts in this thesis, however, reveal that the six Muslim youth preferred the classrooms, libraries and hallways close to the official spaces of the school which were narrated in terms of safety, relationships with particular teachers and languages of communication in the spaces.

All of the students in this study focus on friends and connecting to people in the school as a key strategy for developing a sense of place and belonging. Language and religion are found to play a significant role in their feelings of

belonging and liminality as well. Belonging, as conceptualized by Rose (1995), includes feeling comfortable to express oneself and being understood by others. The youth in this study reveal both spaces and feelings of liminality and belonging. The liminal spaces are generally represented by feelings of exclusion, undesirable behaviour, and the perception of being othered. This othering signifies a feeling of not being understood by other students. The youth believe that their religion, race, or ethnocultural backgrounds are generalized and misrepresented. In addition, feeling that they cannot use their first language in the school, because others believe they are being talked about, contributes to this exclusion and suggests that their language does not belong in the school spaces. On the other hand, religion, ethnicity and language are also found to contribute to a sense of belonging in specific places in the school as these identity markers influence friendship and group formations.

To position the youth as 'liminal' does not recognize the contextual and strategic aspects of identities and belonging that are evident in the portraits presented here. As other research has shown (Dwyer, 1998; Phelan, Davidson & Yu, 1998), the youth engage in strategies to belong in spaces that may conflict with their personal, cultural or religious values and beliefs. While they do confront spaces with linguistic, ethnic, and racial borders, where they may find themselves in-between home and school worlds, they also have succeeded in finding places of belonging, represented primarily by friends and where boundaries of culture, language and race are permeable. This leads to the conclusion that, like identities which are multiple, contextual and in process, liminality and belonging are

experiences marked by time and space. Thus, answering the questions of "Who am I?" and "Where do I belong?" depends on the answers to "Where am I?", "Who am I *not*?" and "Who am I with?".

Implications

It is important to understand the social experiences of youth inside and outside of the classroom. The interactions that take place in the schoolyard (i.e., in the hallways, cafeteria, sports fields), play a key role in identity formation and a youth's sense of belonging to a school and to a larger community. These have potential implications for engagement and performance in school and ultimately in the development of relations to and participation in society. Managing cultural, religious, linguistic, racial and gendered identities from the home country, from other countries where immigrant youth have lived, and from the new home and school contexts is complex. Newcomer youth bring multiple, local, global, and conflicting identities that must be understood by stakeholders in education. Future school policies determining student interaction and behaviour in and out of classrooms should take into account these multiple identifications. With increased emphasis on multicultural and anti-racist education in Canadian schools (May, 1999), there must also be an attempt to uncover the lived realities of being an immigrant or Canadian student at a multi-cultural, multi-linguistic, and multi-religious and multi-racial school. What are the perceived and lived borders? How can the official school begin to address these issues so that integration and cohesion are lived at the informal and physical levels of schooling? This thesis begins to explore these questions through the experiences of Muslim youth in

schools. By focusing on a religious group whose cultural, linguistic, and racial diversity are often over-generalized in research, this thesis provides insight into their unique and shared experiences.

Recommendations for Further Research

The literature review and the study conducted for this thesis point to further work that is needed in exploring minority students' experiences in Canadian schools and the impact of these experiences on identity formation and academic engagement.

The larger data set collected through the *Identity Formation Research Project* provides a rich base from which to further the exploration started by this thesis. Comparative analyses with other ethnocultural groups in the study could be accomplished through a similar use of portraits.

In addition, future studies should seek to gain insight into the experiences and perceptions of second generation Canadian youth to discover their identifications and use of school spaces to make comparisons with newcomer youth. The larger collection in the *Identity Formation* project contains data from second generation youth mainly of Vietnamese backgrounds which could be explored to uncover routes to identity formation in the school.

The multi-media methodology could be employed with youth beyond the school grounds. The studies by Cohen et al., and by Rathzel and Hoerder, employ this method with youth in neighbourhoods in London and Hamburg, along with other innovative research activities. The use of videorecordings and cameras in Canadian neighbourhoods would allow youth to depict their experiences outside of

the school and contribute to an exploration of multiple identifications across home, community and regional areas, thus exploring relationships between place, identity and belonging at different scales.

The attitudes of host societies should be studied to further deepen our understanding of identity formation and the two-way process of immigration and integration. The video walkabouts could prove to be an interesting method for conducting comparative research with Canadian youth and ethnic minority youth in schools. Further comparative study should explore regional, racial, religious and cultural differences in terms of school experiences and use of school spaces.

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APPENDIX A

INFORMATION SHEET

NAME: _____

GENDER: Male / Female

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ **POSTAL CODE:** _____

TELEPHONE: (___) _____ **E-MAIL:** _____

SCHOOL: _____ **GRADE:** _____

- **INFORMATION PROVIDED IS CONFIDENTIAL AND WILL BE USED FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS RESEARCH PROJECT ONLY.** (YOUR PERSONAL VITAE WILL NOT APPEAR IN ANY FORMAL DOCUMENTATION.)

RELIGION: _____

ETHNICITY/TRIBE: _____

LANGUAGE(S): Please list from most fluent to least, and circle the first language learned at home.

1. _____ (Fluent)
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____ (Least Fluent)

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN (CITY/COUNTRY): _____
COUNTRY/COUNTRIES LIVED IN BEFORE SETTLING IN CANADA: _____
_____
ARRIVAL IN CANADA (YEAR): _____
LEGAL STATUS (Please circle one):
REFUGEE LANDED IMMIGRANTBUSINESS CANADIAN CITIZEN

APPENDIX B

Participant Consent Form

Research Project:	*Identity Formation: The Strategic Competence of Immigrant Adolescents*
Principal Investigator:	Dr. Yvonne Hébert (University of Calgary)
Collaborators:	Christoph Kodron (Deutsches Institut für Internationale Pädagogische, Frankfurt am Main) and Alain Moreau (Faculté des sciences humaines, Université de Marseille II)
Funding Agencies:	Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada; Multiculturalism Directorate, Canadian Heritage
Research Assistants (98-99):	Christine Racicot, M.A. student at the U of Calgary; Rani Murji, returning home to Calgary with an M.A. (Cambridge).

1999-01-18

Dear Student,

You are cordially invited to participate in a three-year study of your process of identity formation in order to understand your strategic competence of immigrant adolescents as you re-construct yourself in a new society.

You have been chosen because of your experience with immigration to Canada and your background. We wish to focus upon youth of central and southern Africa, of Middle-eastern and Isma'ili Muslims, and of Chinese-Vietnamese origins. If you wish to participate, you will be asked to be involved in a range of activities in a number of sessions, each of which is expected to take about 30 minutes.

In 1998-1999, you would participate in at least five sessions which focus on space and associations:

- talking about yourself in a focus group, about what it means to hang out at school and elsewhere and filling out a form providing basic information about yourself;
- the creation of maps or graphic representations of social clustering of students within your school and in other settings, making use of multi-media labs with technical assistance or other graphic materials;
- walking about these spaces while being interviewed on what these spaces mean to you and how you express yourself within them, on audio-tape or video-tape;
- making drawings of your choice of friends and associates, as well as drawings of your family;
- telling us the stories relating to your choice of friends and associates, choice of schools and family history, in a variety of formats of your choice (orally, in writing, graphic or multi-media format).

In 1999-2000, you would participate in at least three separate sessions which focus on language and learning:

- thinking aloud while reading selected passages from school textbooks so as to reveal your reading strategies;

- recording your language use in a variety of social settings including the social clusterings and spaces identified in the previous year;
- telling of your story about learning, in a variety of formats of your choice (orally, in writing, graphic or multi-media format).

In 2000-2001, you would participate in at least three sessions which focus on personal development:

- filling in a questionnaire about problems and value conflicts typically facing immigrant youth;
- talking in an in-depth interview following up the questionnaire;
- telling of your lifestory, again in a variety of formats of your choice.

The researchers will normally take notes during or after participating in the sessions. In order to assure the accuracy of descriptions, analyses and understandings, we will be checking our perceptions with you, cross-checking and double-checking before completing each year's activities and before finalizing the study. This may mean that we will come back to you to check on some information or perceptions.

Participation is not expected to involve any financial costs to you. Nor does it involve any remuneration for your participation. We do not intended to deceive, manipulate, coerce, constrain or otherwise upset participants. Instead we seek to understand the processes and strategies of identity formation of immigrant youth by means of active and sensitive involvement.

Your participation will be both confidential and anonymous. This means that your name will not be used, but that instead you would be described very generally, in research reports and presentations in academic settings, and that your information would be coded by a number or name other than your own. All data collected will be stored on diskette, audio- and video-tape and on paper, for a period of eight years, to allow for further analysis and preparation of research reports and publications, as well as the production of a CD-ROM intended for use in schools and by immigrant serving agencies.

This research is part of an international project which involves comparing data across middle-sized cities in three countries with different immigration policies. As such, your data will be used for comparative purposes. Access to this data is limited to the researchers involved in the international project (i.e., the principal investigator, collaborators and research assistants under their direction and supervision). All have been carefully selected and have specific research assignments within the overall project and agree to conform to our ethical considerations. Summaries of research reports and publications are available to you, upon request on the attached consent form. Verbal updates may be obtained by contacting the principal investigator, Dr. Yvonne Hébert, at the University of Calgary.

Your signature and that of your parent or guardian on the attached consent form means that you agree to participate in this research project and have parental consent to do so. It also means that you have understood and are satisfied with the nature of your participation. Your consent does not waive your legal rights nor does it release the researchers, sponsors and institutions involved from their legal and professional responsibilities. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time, orally or in writing, without prejudice to yourself or to the researchers. Your continued participation is important and you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. If you move to another school during the duration of the study, you are asked to keep us informed. If you have any further questions about this research project, please contact Dr. Yvonne Hébert, principal investigator, at 220-7361; or Dr. Michael Pyryt, chair, Faculty of Ethics Committee, at 220.6485, during office hours.

Sincerely yours,

Yvonne Hébert, Ph.D.
Full Professor
Attachment: 2 copies

I, _____, have read the cover letter to all participants and agree to
(STUDENT: PLEASE PRINT YOUR NAME HERE.)
participate in the research project, *Identity Formation: Strategic Competence of Adolescent Immigrants*, conducted by Dr. Yvonne Hébert and research team, from the University of Calgary. I have been informed, to an appropriate level of understanding, about the purpose and methodology of this research project, its benefits, the nature of my involvement, and any possible risks by virtue of my participation.

I agree to participate by doing the following:
in 1998-1999:

_____ by participating in the focus group and providing any relevant information;
_____ by participating in the creation of maps or graphic representations of the space I occupy with others, at school and in other settings;
_____ by participating in a taped walk-about, with my choice of audio or video-taping;
_____ by making drawings of my choice of friends and associations, as well as drawings of my family;
_____ by telling the stories relating to my associations, choice of schools, family history, in my choice of format (orally, in writing, graphic or multi-media format);

in 1999-2000:

_____ by thinking aloud while reading selected passages from school textbooks so as to reveal my reading strategies;
_____ by recording my language use in a variety of social settings, including the social clusterings and spaces identified in 1998-1999;
_____ by telling my story of learning, in a variety of formats of my choice (orally, in writing, graphic or multi-media format);

and in 2000-2001:

_____ by filling out a questionnaire about the problems and value conflicts typically facing immigrant youth;
_____ by participating in an in-depth interview following up the questionnaire;
_____ by telling my lifestory, again in a variety of formats of my choice.

I understand and agree that my participation is voluntary, that I may withdraw at any time from this study without penalty and that the researcher has the right to terminate my participation in this research at any time. All data will be kept in a secure place accessible only to the research team.

I am satisfied with the guarantees of privacy, confidentiality and anonymity given in the cover letter to all participants. I also understand that the data from this research will be used fro comparative purposes within an international project involving other middle-sized cities and that the use of my data will conform to the parameters outlined in the cover letter.

I understand that the results of this research will be used for presentations and publications in academic and policy settings, including a CD-ROM for school and immigrant serving agency use, and my signature also gives my permission for my data to be included. An extra copy of the signed copy of this consent form is being provided for my records.
Student's Name:_____ Contact points:_____

Student's Signature:_____ Date: _____

Parent's Signature:_____ Date: _____