CONTEXTUALIZING ETHNIC/RACIAL Identity: NATIONALIZED AND GENDERED EXPERIENCES OF SEGMENTED ASSIMILATION AMONG SECOND GENERATION KOREAN IMMIGRANTS IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

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CONTEXTUALIZING ETHNIC/RACIAL IDENTITY: NATIONALIZED AND GENDERED EXPERIENCES OF SEGMENTED ASSIMILATION AMONG SECOND GENERATION KOREAN IMMIGRANTS IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to contribute to the social constructionist study of relationships between assimilation experiences, gendered ethnicity and ethnic identity formation among second generation Korean Americans and Korean Canadians. As the presence of Korean immigrants in the U.S. and Canada is currently increasing at record high rates, the integration and adaptation of this new Asian immigrant group is an important concern for empirical assessment. For second generations, experiences of integration and adaptation influence ethnic identity formation, the socially constructed sense of self and belonging to ethnic groups and cultures. This study develops an understanding of segmented assimilation experiences, the internalization and resolution of racialized gender stereotypes and associated identity formations through content analysis of interview data. Thirty-one second generation Korean Americans and Korean Canadians participated in in-depth face-to-face interviews. The respondents shared their lived experiences of assimilation, gendered ethnicity and ethnic identity.

The results are a presentation of emergent themes. The interpretation of data employs a contextualization of the results in national and gendered settings. Presented are three major results. First, American and Canadian second generation Koreans encounter similar assimilative experiences of adaptation struggles, social exclusion and confrontations with the model minority stereotype. Second, the respondents expressed
the following distinct models of Americanness and Canadianness: the *ethnic American* model (Kibria 2002) and the *multicultural Canadian* model. Neither model, however, seemed to permit full integration of Asians into the mainstream. Third, racialized gender stereotypes were prominent sources of conflict for the respondents. In conclusion, I suggest and discuss a model of *dissonant identity formation*. Conversations with second generation Koreans have shown that the formation of ethnic identity is a challenging experience that requires ongoing resolutions of conflicting messages coming from mainstream and co-ethnic social settings.
DEDICATION

I dedicated this dissertation to a number of people who inspired the inception and completion of this project. To begin, I dedicate this to my dear friends spent many days and nights talking with me about the life of a second generation Korean. Julia Kim and Joy Yoon, your support and inquiry always gave me the confidence to move forward.

Next, I dedicate this to the participants of this study. Thank you for sharing with me your life stories for the purpose of social scientific research. I am grateful for the opportunity to meet with each one of you and to hear your accounts of the second gen experience.

Finally, I dedicate this document to my parents. You two are the most influential individuals in my life. Mom and dad, I am certain that I would not be here without you two as my models and my mentors. It is a great privilege for me to follow your examples. Thank you so much for following your hearts, even when others frowned on your decisions. There are many times that I benefited and learned from your actions. This project was clearly driven by our countless number of conversations and your inquiry into my life as your child and as a daughter of Korean immigrants. There are no words to express my gratitude for your unconditional protection, understanding and love. Mom and dad, nine years ago, who would have thought that I would be completing my doctoral studies today? Thank you a thousand times over.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Second generation Korean immigrants in the U.S. and Canada are often faced with a struggle to form a positive self-concept, particularly because they are native-born immigrants. They have mixed feelings of integration into, but also exclusion from, the dominant society. Feelings of confusion uniquely factor into the formation of a sense of belonging and identity for second generations because they are Americans and Canadians such that they are most familiar with and immersed in their home countries, but they are also immigrants and minorities ethnically, racially, and culturally and therefore marginalized from the mainstream society. I wanted to develop a better grasp of the struggle the second generation Korean immigrants experience in forming their ethnic identity.

For me, growing up a second generation Korean Canadian, I am familiar with the feelings of confusion, shame, and exclusion from being partial but not full members of both Canadian and Korean-ethnic communities. For example, in Canada I felt very Korean or second generation because my parents are immigrants, I attended a Korean church every Sunday, I ate Korean food at home, and I am not white so I did not feel like a Canadian. However, after moving to the U.S. for graduate school, I did feel Canadian. I knew the culture and the language and people would inquire about my expertise in these...
matters. I was an international student from Canada, not Korea. I could be Canadian and my national identity was less contested compared to when I lived in Canada. That experience was a little perplexing, but more importantly, it peaked my interest in the social constructionist perspective of identity, particularly the fluidity of identity. That led me to question, as it did for others, if identity is not stable and at times fleeting, what can we say about the implications of ethnic identity on health and well-being? For this study, I wanted to take a step back, inquire about how individuals form their sense of ethnic self, and observe what ethnic identity is and how it is expressed.

My perspective has been influenced by contemporary literature in cultural, critical race theory and third wave feminism. I find that this approach provides a lens on issues that legitimizes the views of those who are living the examined experiences. Rather than creating a survey or scale and imposing my instrument of measurement on my subjects, I wanted to discuss my research questions with other second generation Koreans and find out what their experiences are like and how they interpret them.

I also found that in this particular time in the U.S. and Canada, there is a need to empirically assess second generation Korean integration. The number of Asian immigrants, including Koreans, is rapidly growing. The number of second generation immigrants is also increasing. Therefore, a study of the assimilation experiences in this period of new immigration is especially crucial to identifying possible social issues and concerns for the future.

I chose to do a comparative analysis for two key reasons. One, studies on Asian Canadian ethnic identity are not well developed. Two, the findings among comparative U.S.-Canadian studies are inconsistent in regards to the degree of difference between
their immigrants’ integration. In this study, looking at assimilation experiences and identity in national context illustrates that the *ethnic American model*, developed by Kibria (2002), helps with the interpretation of the American participants but did not describe the assimilation-identity relationship for the Canadian respondents in this sample. Although their experiences of everyday racism and exclusion were similar, the Canadian respondents used more of a multicultural rhetoric. For the Korean Canadians with whom I spoke, I propose a *multicultural Canadian* model, which incorporates greater access to the variety of integration pathways or spheres, such as co-racial and multicultural assimilative experiences.

This difference is merely a stepping-stone in the development of ethnic identity formation in Canada and the comparative understandings of assimilation and identity. However, the results from this investigation add to the literature that consistently find that second and later generation Asian American immigrants experience difficulty forming conclusive feelings of an ethnic identity. This inability to form a sense of satisfactory ethnic self within the ethnic American model and the multicultural Canadian model are what I, and my advisor, have come to refer to as dissonant identity formation. These two models provide the discourse for immigrant and racial minority inclusion; however, the lived experience prevented the second generations in this study from feeling that they fully belonged.

The analysis of gendered ethnic identity in this study also provides examples of dissonant identity formation. Racialized gender stereotypes create barriers to belonging in mainstream society. These types of stereotypes prevented my participants from feeling they were fully American or Canadian. The influence of racialized gender stereotypes on
minors’ identities and their diminishing sense of membership are also well documented across various racial and demographic groups.

In particular, my analysis found a common tendency to talk about what I call the Asian male disadvantage, which is an internalized image of Asian men as effeminate, passive, smaller in physical stature as well as angry, controlling, and even violent. Mainstream views of Asian men and women appeared to be prominent influences on this sample’s self-concept, which is common for non-Asian minorities as well. The results here extend the second principle of the social constructionist perspective that typified meanings are highly dependent on ownership and power. Although the results here are not conclusive, they do offer suggestions for future research and present intriguing ideas that may illustrate determinants for dissonant identity formation among second generation Asian Americans and Asian Canadians.

The New Immigration Period

Canada and the U.S. are experiencing similarly a resurgence of immigration in what is now being referred to as the “new immigration” period. This is a distinct period beginning in the mid- to late-1960s due to the notable racial, regional, and ethnic differences between these new immigrants and their European predecessors (Barkan 1995). Partly due to the economic needs for inexpensive labor, immigration law reforms and the enactment of civil rights legislation, new immigrants are now migrating predominantly from Asian, Caribbean, and Latin American regions. In other words, the new North American immigrants are largely non-European and non-White (Kibria 2002). The notable ethnic/racial and cultural differences between the new immigrants and their predecessors created a new image of ‘the immigrant’ and introduced different patterns of
adaptation and integration into North American society. It is important to observe and investigate the processes and settlement of North American immigrants since their presence plays an essential role in the functioning and productivity of North American nations.

Immigration to Canada remained the main driving force in the growth of the Canadian population in 2006, accounting for roughly 66 percent of the annual increase. According to a Statistics Canada (2005) report, immigration plays a larger role in population growth for Canada than it does for the U.S. In 2004, for example, new immigrants accounted for two-thirds of Canada's population growth, compared to 38 percent in the U.S. Since the early 1980s, the proportion of visible minorities in Canada has been steadily increasing, growing from 4.7 percent (1.1 million) in 1981 to 11.2 percent (3.2 million) in 1996. In 2001, the visible minority population accounted for 13.4 percent, which are nearly 4 million Canadians.

The presence of second generation immigrants in the U.S. is also growing at rates that require recognition. In the 1980s and 1990s, U.S. immigrants accounted for 39 percent of the nation’s population growth (Rumbaut 1994). This group of U.S. immigrants also has high fertility rates, increasing the second generation immigrant population (Portes 1996). It is estimated that the second generation population will exceed 28 million, which is the peak that was formerly met by earlier European immigrants in the 1940s (Passel and Edmonston 1992).

Reitz and Somerville (2004) call for further research on the new second generations in Canada for two reasons. First, as the rate of new or first generation immigrants increases in Canada, the size of second generations will, in effect,
proportionately increase and become a significant group of immigrants impacting local and national functioning. Second, Reitz and Somerville suggest investigations of the well-being and integration of the second generation who are visible minorities since past theories of immigrant integration are not sufficient models due to their neglect of racial and ethnic minority statuses as factors in adaptation.

Pre-1960s immigration studies were mostly concerned with how well immigrants would adapt or assimilate into their new society. Indicators of assimilation were host society language and culture, middle class socio-economic status, and group membership or identification (Gans 1979). A question of considerable relevance today is to what extent new immigrants are able to follow the assimilation patterns of preceding White European immigrants. However, it is difficult to apply the findings from previous immigration studies to the adjustment of the new settlers since assimilation processes are confounded by issues of racism and race relations (see Barkan 1995; Portes and Zhou 1993). In racially stratified societies where race relations are highly political and contested, incorporating race in the adaptation process is an important factor. A significant difference between the new immigrants and those who have preceded them is the inability for new immigrants to ‘blend’ into their host society and gain group membership due to their non-White status.

\footnote{Until the mid-1960s, Canada used U.S. immigration laws and policies as a template for the creation of their own laws and policies (Agnew 1996). As such, the discussion here of immigration prior to the 1960s soundly refers to both Canada and U.S., unless specified.}

\footnote{Not all White ethnics, however, were able to blend in as White Americans pre-1930s (c.f. Omi and Winant 1994).}
As a result, Asian and Hispanic immigrants have yet to receive full acceptance in the U.S. This continues to impact the self-concept of American racial and ethnic minorities (McDonald 1999; Omi and Winant 1994; Tuan 1998). A number of edited books describe the Asian American experience, in which reflects the “struggle for ethnic identity” among Asian immigrants in the U.S. (Lee and Zhou 2004; Min and Kim 1999; Nam 2001). The cultural emphasis on physical characteristics, especially skin color and tone, continues to present difficulties for non-White groups.

Reitz (1988) and Model and Lin (2002) address Canada’s reputation for being an “attractive immigrant destination”. They suggest that the prevalence of Canadian racial and ethnic discrimination and its negative effects on Canadian immigrants counter the attractive image that has been popularized. Noh and Kaspar (2003) studied the effects of similar difficulties and experiences of everyday systemic racism for Korean Canadian immigrants under a social contextual explanation and found that ethnic social support is needed to help cope with discrimination experienced in Canada. A recent anthology written by working and middle class Korean Canadian women also marks the difficulty in establishing a sense of identity in Canadian society due to their cultural and racial differences from the mainstream society (The Korean Canadian Women’s Anthology Collective 2007).

The gendered experience for immigrants is also an important factor in the adaptation process of new immigrants into North American societies. However, the inclusion of gender in this work remains under-utilized. Currently the North American gender relations dialogue centers on third-wave feminist, post-structural, and post-modern interpretations of oppression, dominance and subordination; a significant move
away from the add-women-and-stir approach often used in quantitative methods (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003). Ethnicity and immigration studies that incorporate gendered contexts indicate that the integration process poses gender specific obstacles and barriers for both immigrant men and women. Immigrants and their children are active agents in changing their gender norms and roles to adjust to their new environment (c.f. Kurien 1999). However, gendered stereotyping attitudes towards immigrants imposed by host societies can also negatively affect the adaptation of new and later generation immigrants (Model 2002; Lopez 2004). Recent findings suggest that integration for immigrants is segmented and contextualized by multiple factors, namely gender, dominant group perceptions of immigrants and race relations.

Statement of Purpose

During the 1970s, social psychologists and micro-sociologists dominated identity research and generally defined identity as group membership, sameness, and an individual’s identification with a social status, classification, or category (Marshall 1994). Mead and Cooley theorized identity as static, stable, and for individuals to have a core, objective sense of self (Cerulo 1997). Indeed, such perceptions of identity swept and dominated social scientific investigations concerning the nature of self, self-identity, and individual subjectivity. Furthermore, the positivist notion of empirically measuring the intricate complexities of identity with simplistic instruments such as ethnic identity scales were developed, widely used, and quickly credited as comprehensive assessments of individual ethnic identity (see Phinney 1992 for a leading ethnic identity measurement scale). The use of the term identity in this way, however, is currently considered problematic for several reasons. First, the term ‘identity’ is used loosely, often assuming
that there is a universal understanding of what ‘identity’ is without actually accurately or completely defining its meaning. This classic understanding of identity has been widely criticized as essentialist (Cerulo 1997).

Individuals at different times and settings report different degrees of ethnic attachment, practices and pride. This and similar findings (Bulmer and Solomos 1998; Hall 1999; Solomos and Back 1995; Thorne, Orellana, Lam, and Chee 2003) are identifying gaps between the understanding of identity as static and the changing self-reports of identity strength and form. Developments in social constructionist investigations of identity are used to address this gap. Contemporary understandings of identity constructs focus on the subjectivity, complexity, fluidity, and the situational aspects of forming identity.

The social sciences, sociological studies in particular, are changing direction and beginning to acknowledge that identity is far from a static linear process that individuals experience in stages of development. In other words, social scientists are reconsidering the nature of self, self-identity, and individual subjectivity (Elliot 2001; c.f. Kiecolt 1994). Recent studies suggest an increasing individualization of social life, increasing role attainment, and an emergence of “identity projects.” Whereby, identity projects that refer to personal meaning and social location are becoming matters of effort and conscious “choice.” Cerulo (1997) suggests that contemporary views of identity are generally postmodern in orientation since reason and rationality have become less important or fashionable in today’s conceptualization of identity formation than during the height of symbolic interactionism.
The purpose of this study is to develop a social constructionist understanding of identity using the example of second generation Korean immigrants in Canada and the U.S. There are numerous factors involved in identity formation; however, this study pays particular attention to the fluidity and complexity of ethnic identity in national and gendered contexts of those involved in the study. Ethnicity, gender and nationality are significant status elements in constructing one’s identity largely because they are experienced as ascribed statuses. These are the statuses that individuals feel are in their blood often times (Kibria 2002).

Second Generation Korean Americans and Korean Canadians

The number of Korean immigrants in both the U.S. and in Canada is steadily growing. Currently, Korean immigrants are one of the largest Asian groups in both countries. In 2001, there were about one hundred thousand Korean-Canadians and just over one million Korean-Americans in 2000 (Statistics Canada 2001; Reeves and Bennett 2004). Second, Koreans represent the fourth largest Asian American group, after the Chinese, Filipino and Vietnamese, and represent the third largest Asian Canadian group, after the Chinese and Filipino. Third, approximately one third of all Asian American immigrants were second generation in 2004. Since there is a large and growing Korean population in both The U.S. and Canada, it is important the examine integration outcomes for the later generations of immigrants.

An investigation of ethnic identity formation for second generation Korean immigrants is important for five reasons. First, Koreans are not fully integrated into mainstream society on various accounts. Both the U.S. and Canadian governments share a history of discrimination against Asians by excluding them from immigration rights
Particular examples are the Asian exclusion acts, Japanese internment, and immigration systems that favor White Europeans. Stereotypes of Asians, such as those portraying Asians as model minorities, hide this form of discrimination by implying successful integration into mainstream society. It is important to investigate how these constructed notions of Asians living in North America affect second generation Koreans who experience discrimination and exclusion based on their race and ethnicity on a daily basis (Korean Canadian Women’s Anthology 2007; Nam 2001).

Second, while some Asians may identify themselves racially as ‘Asian’ (Kibria 2000b; Tuan 1998), for others, ethnic identity is based on a national identity (Lee 1996; Min 1999). Koreans, middle-class Korean Americans in particular, perceive themselves as ethnically different from other Asians and are more culturally homogenous than other Asian groups (Kibria 2002; Lee 1996). That is, their Koreanness, or what others have noted as Korean pride, supersedes the societal tendency to group together and treat all ‘Asians’ the same (Lee 1996; Lee 2004; Min 1999; Pyke 2004). Even among Koreans, there is a significant amount of differentiation that must be acknowledged and considered. Korean Americans vary across class and gender distinctions in their views on race relations, such as perceptions of the 1992 Los Angeles riots (Abelmann and Lie 1995) and matters of interracial marriage (Lee 2004). This study questions how Koreans, as an ethnic group within the Asian race, are constructing their ethnic identity based on their Asian ethnicity and their racial status.³

³ Although not mutually exclusive, race and ethnicity are different concepts (Cornell and Hartmann 1998). Ethnicity traditionally refers to primordial ties or roots (i.e. tribal,
Third, a cross-national investigation of second generation Korean immigrants in the U.S. and Canada extends previous studies of Koreans Americans. It is uncertain to what extent diaspora plays in the process of identity formation for U.S. and Canadian immigrants (Reitz and Breton 1994; Bloemraad 2006). While Korean immigrants in the U.S. and Canada share similar characteristics in their home country (White et al. 2003), their host societies currently hold different immigration policies and policies of tolerance and assimilation. Since pre-immigration characteristics are comparable, the differences in identity formation among second generation Americans and Canadians may be attributable to the recent structure of their host societies. This study questions whether Eurocentric notions of Asians, ranging from the exotic to the ‘honorary’ White and to sexual deviants, will be interpreted the same by Americans and Canadians.

Fourth, we are also entering what Hondagneu-Sotelo (2003) calls the third stage of gender and immigration studies, which examines gender as a key constitutive element of immigration rather than an add-women-and-stir model or a woman-only investigation. In this new stage, projects are looking at the extent to which gender permeates a variety of practices, identities, and institutions implicated in immigration. There also remains a need for more knowledge about gender relations among highly educated, professional, and entrepreneurial immigrants (Kurien 1999). This study sheds a light on the integration experiences of young adult second generation Korean Americans and Korean Canadians.

Race, however, often refers to physical characteristics distinguishing groups of people. Race status is largely a societal view of social status imposed on individuals based on assumed biological traits. Aside from their differences, ‘ethnicity’ is inherently related and overlapping with race, racialization, and racial identity because an ethnicity often implies a race and a race often implies an ethnicity. Please note that I will use ‘race’ when the work I am referring to uses ‘race’. Otherwise, discussion will remain focused on ethnicity and ethnic identity.
Through conversations with undergraduate university students, the study focuses on the themes relevant to assimilation and identity formation in national and gendered contexts.

Finally, a clearer understanding of the identity formation among these new second generation immigrants helps develop a more accurate projection of the long term prospects for the integration of racial minorities into their host societies. More so than looking only at the integration of first generation immigrants. The new second generation has a host of issues and problems that are clearly unique from the first generation’s experience as well as from those of earlier cohorts of second generation immigrants (Reitz and Somerville 2004). New second generation Korean immigrants are confronted with racism and social exclusion from within the country in which they are born and raised. For second generation immigrants, identity – senses of self or belonging – is the pressing issue for healthy adaptation.

The following chapter discussed the theoretical perspectives and the empirical findings utilized in this study. First, the social constructionist perspective on identity is covered. Second, the use of the model minority as a stereotype is reviewed. Third, I discuss classical and contemporary model of immigrant adaptation, with a particular focus on the segmented assimilation model and ethnic identity formation. Fourth, there is review of literature on gender and ethnic identity formation. This section of the chapter centers on the impact of racialized gender stereotypes on identity. All the concepts discussed in the following chapter were used in the development of methods design, results and interpretations for this study.
CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM, SEGMENTED ASSIMILATION, GENDERED ETHNICITY AND IDENTITY FORMATION

The current research on identity formation acknowledges that identity cannot be treated as static, isolated or untouched by other identities (Cerulo 1997; Conzen, Gerber, Morawska, Pozzetta, and Vecoli 1992; Glenn 1992; 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003; Messerschmidt 1993; Waters 2004). The social constructionist perspective provides a definition of identity that challenges conventional notions of self-concept. According to Glenn (2000), for example, there are four main components of identity as a social construction: 1) identity is an ongoing process of change and reformation; 2) identity is circumstantial; 3) identity is made of multiple sub-types of identities; and 4) identity is influenced by both agency and structural factors.

This study employs a social constructionist perspective of identity. In this discussion, the social construction of identity subscribes to two principles: 1) identity is constructed through continuous reflexive correspondence between the internal self and external discourse, and 2) the ‘success’ of constructed identities relies on factors of power or the ownership of definitions. Based on these two principles, this review of literature covers the influence of the model minority stereotype in the ways Asian Americans’ and
Asian Canadians’ construct their ethnic identity. Next, this chapter discusses how the
segmented assimilation model provides macro and micro factors of constructing
adaptation and ethnic identity. This section of the chapter will also address national
receptions of immigrants as a macro factor in the construction of integration and
associated identities. Finally, this chapter reviews the literature on the internalization of
racialized gender stereotypes and gendered ethnic identity formation among second
generation Korean men and women. This section of the chapter suggests that the
gendered context of identity is an essential component of the fluidity and complexity of
identity formation. Although other influences are also potentially important, interview
data collected for this study reveal that these three areas – the model minority stereotype,
segmented assimilation and gendered ethnicity – are imperative to the ethnic identity
formation of second generation Korean Americans and Korean Canadians.

The Social Construction of Identity

The social constructionist perspective is rooted in symbolic interactionism (SI),
which claims that social activity creates and re-creates social structure through
interaction, meaning and interpretation (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Holstein and Miller
1993; Spector and Kitsuse 1977). According to SI, the social world is ambiguously and
subjectively constructed rather than objectively existing external to human minds and
activities. Furthermore, SI emphasizes the importance of individual interactions as a
major influence and determining factor in the creation of a sense of the ‘real’ world.
Social constructionism differs from SI by acknowledging the influential role that
structure plays in the creation and interpretation of meaning and in an individual’s social
world. Structural factors such as history, spatial climate, political climate and language
are all concepts within the social construction dialogue and will be discussed in detail throughout this section of the chapter.

Berger and Luckmann (1966) introduced social constructionism as an attempt to move beyond the argument that an objective reality does not exist. A criticism of the SI argument is that it dismisses the consequential effects that social reality has on individuals and neglects the existence and outcomes of inequality (Liska and Messner 1999). To confront this existentialistic view, Berger and Luckmann (1966) proposed that society is both an objective reality and a human product, and that individuals simultaneously produce, and are produced by, society. Through interaction and communication, social structure is created, maintained and changed by individuals who are active agents in constructing their knowledge and understanding of their social world.

At the same time, social constructionists argue that language shapes individuals, thus making them products of their social structure. As such, individuals are both passive and active agents in their social worlds. This has become the popular perspective in recent academic literature and has become particularly persuasive in the writings of cultural theorists and third wave feminists. A part of language is the use of typifications (i.e. typificatory schemes, typologies, classifications, categories, pre-established notions, and stereotypes) to make sense of our experiences and our reality (Berger and Luckmann 1966). This is an interesting element of knowledge because it proposes that we may not be biologically disposed to use certain categorizations in the construction of knowledge.

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4 However, a problem that arises in testing these theories using survey data collection and statistical analysis is not successfully resolved and social constructionists often deem the methodology itself inappropriate. Moreover, this perspective and its theories have been slower to break through to the field of sociology.
This also challenges the current ways of knowing in which stratifications and stigmatizations occur. The method of typifying our knowledge, however, has become so embedded in our understanding that we seem to have typified either/or categories, in-group/out-group understandings, and dualism as human nature.

_Discourse and the Self_

The definition and the implications of identity remain topics of debate. Although the meaning of identity is unclear, there is a general consensus that identity plays an instrumental factor in the maintenance of mental and physical well-being (Lee 2005; Mossakowski 2003; Noh, Beiser, Kaspar, Hou and Rummens 1999; Noh and Kaspar 2003). A social constructionist analysis of identity, or the self, treats it as created and re-created through text. Our meaning, understanding, intention and action exist in communication. Social constructionism proposes that identity is highly dependent on societal definitions, which categorize groups of people, including racial minorities, as deviants or the ‘Other’. As such, the fluidity of identity formation is influenced by typifications or dominant ‘successful’ definitions that are contested and changed over time.

It is also important to consider that the social constructionist perspective proposes to account for shared experiences, understandings, and meanings (see Best 2003). Shared meanings provide the recognition that categorizations are practiced, whether voluntarily or involuntarily. As such, the processes and consequences of categorizing groups of individuals, such as labeling, stigmatizing and marginalizing, are often analyzed. While

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5 The results concerning the relationship between a strong ethnic identity and a mental well-being are contradictory (c.f. Hyun 2001). Also, see Yoo and Lee (2008) for a discussion of the various findings.
the extent of accuracy in interpretation of meaning cannot be evaluated due to ambiguity, discourse creates a certain context in which a pool of meanings and interpretations overlap. Thus, individuals can share meaning through discourse and have their definitions understood (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Best 2003).

According to the social constructionist perspective, typifications are created and defined by those in power at a given point in time (Becker 1963; Gusfield 1981; Miller and Holstein 1997; Spector and Kitsuse 1977). A meaning is deemed typified once it is a commonly shared explanation or definition of a behavior, action or happening. According to this view, characteristics are not inherent qualities of certain individuals or acts, but rather a label applied by those who take ownership in the defining of individuals. Stereotypes, for example, can be successfully shared meanings of groups of people. Stereotypes are also expected to be used to maintain a larger ideological viewpoint that benefits the dominant group. Case in point, the model minority stereotype is hypothesized to disprove empirical criticisms of racism and hostile immigrant reception in western societies while also maintaining the subordination of Asians to the dominant group through the notion that pure Americanness (and Canadianness) means Whiteness (Cho 1997; Lee 2004; Zhou 1997; Zhou and Lee 2004).

According to social constructionism, we have shared understandings of our own identity as well as the identity of others. This view contributes to our understanding of self-concept in the sense that identity is individualistic, but also conforming to shared meanings. The process of developing an identification of self and other is collective, imposed by the dominant group. Importantly, however, is to note that shared meanings are collectively unstable. For example, people tend to attribute gender inequality to
inherent qualities of men and women according to some ‘objective’ reality. Legally in the western societies, men are often essentialized as sexual predators and women as passive protectors of their sanctity and offspring (Crenshaw 1991). Individuals, depending on their history and location, use this gendered discourse in one manner or another, at various degrees, to construct their identification of others as well as their own identity.

There is strong evidence supporting the notion that ethnicity, nationality and gender are socially constructed (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Glenn 2000; Holstein and Gubrium 2000; Labelle 2004; Messerschmidt 1997; Omi and Winant 1994; Pyke and Johnson 2003; Waters 1999; 2004; West and Fenstermaker 1995; Mac Ghaill 1999; Yuval-Davis 1997). Societal notions and depictions of belonging and meaning to ethnicities, nationalities and gender are constructed not only by those who have the power to define and take ownership of these notions, but also by those who are being defined and confined within them. In effect, these social constructs are amplified into real consequences. An individual’s sense of self is largely based on sweeping generalizations or stereotypes of social groups of peoples (Abu-Ali and Reisen 1999; Barajas and Pierce 2001; Cerulo 1997; Cornell and Hartmann 1998; Glenn 2000; Kao 2000; Omi and Winant 1994; Pyke 2004; Pittinsky et al. 1999; Pyke and Johnson 2003; Williams et al. 2002). Social constructionist investigations often look at stereotypes, typifications, and other forms of typifying discourse to illustrate identity formation. The social constructionist perspective also conceives typifications as useful tools in developing and communicating the meaning of one’s social world and one’s self in various settings, expressions and experiences.
Another contribution of the social constructionist perspective of identity formation is that it is not exclusively an ethnicity theory or a gender theory (Cerulo 1997; Glenn 2000). Social constructionism focuses on discourse and ownership of definitions to explain societal and individual formations of multiple identities and their interdependences. Differential rhetoric for women of different ethnicities, or for men and women from the same ethnic background illustrates the multiple perceptions and treatment that men and women of various ethnicities and nationalities receive. From this perspective, a model of identity formation requires investigations of the way individuals form their ethnic identity in national and gendered contexts. Particularly for ethnic/racial minorities, one’s notion of ethnic identity is nationally or politically defined and interacts with gender roles and norms (Crenshaw 1994; Glenn 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003; Labelle 2004; Lopez 2004; Pyke and Johnson 2003; Waters 1999; West and Fenstermaker 1996; Mac Ghaill 1999; Yuval-Davis 1997).

Recent writings in ethnic and gender studies challenge conventional notions of identity as static, one-dimensional, and over-simplified (Cerulo 1997). From a social psychological standpoint, ethnic identity is a sense of ethnic pride, engaging in ethnic practices and a commitment to one’s culture (Phinney 1992). However, recent studies in ethnicity have found that ethnic identity is also largely a symbolic experience (Gans 1979; Gallagher 2003; Glenn 2000; Omi and Winant 1994) in that individuals develop or define their ethnic identity or multiple ethnic identities through practice and behavior, and more importantly, through interaction and discourse. This suggests that people may not need to actively commit their practices and behavior to an ethnic culture to construct an ethnic identity. The formation of ethnic identity through interaction and discourse also
reveals that multiple ethnic identities may be constructed for a single person. Current themes of ethnic identity development dispute social psychological explanations for decontextualizing identity formation and placing emphasis on quantitative measures of ethnic identity.

Typifying the Model Minority Stereotype and Ethnic Identity Formation

Contemporary theories of race and ethnicity (i.e. critical race theory) are also beginning to embrace the social constructionist perspective. For example, Hall (1999) illustrates the movement away from an essentialist view of identity, in particular racial identity, to an understanding of identity as complex, ambivalent and filled with a “doubleness” of discourse. Ethnicity as well is about the representation of difference. Contemporary race and ethnicity theorists also discuss difference as “sites of power, a power too whereby the dominated come to see and experience themselves as ‘Other’” (Bulmer and Solomos 1998). Based on how the difference between ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ are discussed, individuals who belong to a subordinated group are likely to form deviant identities, or perceive themselves as the ‘Other.’ What has increased in prominence is the increasing influence of race and ethnicity dialogue on citizenship and national identity. The use of culture and ethnicity to establish ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ has been brought to the fore in race and ethnicity studies. For example, the model minority stereotype construed mixed messages of ‘Self’ and ‘Other’.

To begin, the model minority stereotype refers to the widely accepted belief that Asian Americans live and behave as model citizens, contributing to and working within the dominant ways of the western society; they are portrayed as selves and not others. The most characteristic depictions of the model minority are that Asians are well-behaved
and high achievers (Qin, Way and Mukherjee 2008). There is a common misconception that second generation Asian immigrants are of privileged status and well-adjusted in North American society, lacking financial hardship, assimilative barriers, discrimination, racism, and associated identity issues. These images of Asians have much to do with the ever-present influence of the model minority stereotype (Kibria 2002; Lee 1996; 2006). According to the stereotype, Asians in North America are virtually fully assimilated, unaffected by racial or ethnic discrimination. They are perceived to be more successful than European Whites when rates of educational attainment and median household income at national levels are observed (Boyd 2008; Lee 2006). However, children of immigrants, regardless of racial background, are surpassing their parents’ level of education and occupational status at rates depicted by the model minority idea (Waldinger and Reichl 2007). While the median household incomes among Asians are higher than that of Whites, Asians are more likely to have multiple generations of family members with more income earners living under the same roof. As such, a per capita measure would likely yield a different result when comparing the two groups.  

Other socioeconomic factors disprove the stereotype that Asians have surpassed their White European counterparts. Asian Americans experience higher rates of poverty than European Whites: 11 percent and 10.5 percent, respectively, in 2003 (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, and Hill Lee 2005). Although Asians are perceived to be “taking over” more professional jobs, Asians in the U.S. and Canada hold less than ten percent of top managerial positions (Reeves and Bennette 2004; Statistics Canada 2005). In addition,  

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6 The U.S. Census Bureau provides 1993–2004 per capita income by race group statistics. Up to 2004, Asian per capita income was less than White per capita income.
Koreans represent less than two percent of the national population in both countries. Unlike what the model minority implies, the rates of socioeconomic success require contextualization to be fully understood. The success of Asian immigrants is variable across Asian ethnic groups and dependent on which socioeconomic indicators are considered. Finally, assuming Asian success according to the model minority underestimates the upward economic mobility that second generations of other ethnicities and racial backgrounds have achieved (Waldinger and Reichl 2007). Migration Information reports in the U.S. indicate that second generations overall are surpassing their parents’ socioeconomic status regardless of racial background and country of origin.

In addition to misrepresenting racial divides in socioeconomic status, the model minority provides conflicting images of Asian immigrants in the U.S. and Canada, which encompass both admirable and demeaning qualities (Zhou and Lee 2004). On one hand, the term is presented in a favorable light, framing Asians as insiders, ‘Selves’ and honorary Whites (Tuan 1998). The honorary White label depicts Asians as persistent and diligent workers with strong work ethics who were able to overcome discrimination and successfully assimilate. Stories of honorary Whites and model minorities were used to reaffirm the classic assimilation model and the idea that non native-born non-Whites could realize the “American dream”. Depicting Asians as model minorities results in two outcomes that benefit the dominant society. First, the model minority concept supports the claim that racism does not structure American society and therefore is not the cause of racial inequality. Second, the use of “minority” in the concept reinforces the idea that Asians are not fully American and are a leading example for non-Whites in western societies.
The implications of the model minority stereotype on Asian Americans’ identity are not yet well known. There are times when being perceived as compliant, intelligent, and emotionally stable is beneficial to Asian Americans legally and in workplaces (Pittinsky, Shih, and Ambady 1999; Wong 1990). However, the model minority stereotype also enforces restrictive boundaries on the behaviors and roles deemed appropriate for Asians in America. The notion that Asians are naturally quiet, shy and serious may serve to prevent Asians from being regarded as potential role models and leaders (Taylor and Stern 1997). Zhou and Lee (2004:18) present two significant consequences of the stereotype. First, it “serves to buttress the myth that the United States is a country devoid of racism, and one that accords equal opportunity for all who take the initiative to work hard to get ahead.” Second, suggested by Zhou and Lee as a more severe consequence, is that it creates feelings of “frustration and burden because others judge them by standards different from those of other American youth.”

Qin et al. (2008) interviewed 120 first and second generation Chinese American adolescents in two large U.S. cities. They find that Chinese adolescents struggle with the model minority myth imposed on them by both Chinese and non-Chinese peers. Those with high academic achievement found that they were a target for constant bullying as they were stereotyped as “too smart”. Among this sample of Asian Americans, the model minority stereotype negatively impacted their adjustment into their school culture. For these Chinese American high school students, there were no perceived benefits to the stereotype.

An important element of understanding ethnic identity formation for second generation Korean immigrants is the use of and discourse surrounding the model minority
stereotype that deems Asians in the U.S. and Canada as ‘Others’. The development of a deviant identity provides a conceptual tool for understanding ethnic identity formation for second generation Koreans. As a minority status inherently refers to a deviant status, racial/ethnic minorities are categorized and constructed as social deviants, non-group members, outsiders and non-citizens as they are constructed in opposition to White American able-bodied men and women. Omi and Winant (1994) note that race and sex are the first characteristics one notices and uses to assess, label, and contextualize an individual within a larger societal subgroup. For instance, stereotypes of racial/ethnic minorities and women that are perceived and treated as deviant in turn become internalized to create deviant self-identifications (Schur 1971). As ascribed and visible statuses, ethnicity and race are important social markers in that they imply citizenship and gendered norms and roles.

Among Lee’s (2001) sample of Hmong high school students, the model minority stereotype provides two opposing negative outcomes. The second generation Hmong students are depicted as delinquents; they are regarded as rebelling against the model minority image. The 1.5 generation students are described as model minorities, obedient, quiet and performing well in school. Although Lee finds these depictions to be typified distinctions made by 1.5 and second generation Hmong, these opposing images are based on the model minority stereotype presented by the dominant group. These second generations are changing their identity to rebel against the model minority image.

Tuan (1998) finds that the model minority stereotype implies contradictory honorary White and yet forever foreigner statuses. It is implied that Asians are non-American by race and ethnicity. The model minority also implies a set of behaviors and
practices for non-White American immigrants to endure in White America. That is, to follow the cultural practices of the dominant group while accepting a second class status to Whites. To understand the role of the model minority stereotype in identity formation from a social constructionist perspective, it is important to note that deviant identities are both imposed and chosen (Bulmer and Solomos 1998). The Hmong American students (Lee 2001) illustrate that the status of honorary White and simultaneously forever foreign results in both a restriction imposed by the dominant group and an enactment by Asians internalizing and utilizing the model minority image to construct their identity.

Segmented Assimilation and Identity Formation

Within the ethnic identity literature, there are three main streams of thought (Zhou and Lee 2004). One is the primordial explanation of ethnicity (see footnote 5 in this chapter). Because this is tied to a biological view, this description of ethnicity has little significance or relevance in the sociological explanation of ethnicity. In contrast to the primordial explanation of ethnicity, the assimilation and situational models deviate away from a biological explanation of ethnicity. To differing degrees, these two perspectives share the view that ethnicity and identity are socially constructed (Alba 1990; Alba and Nee 1997; Collins 1991; Messerschmidt 1997). While the assimilation model has been perhaps the most widely discussed model of ethnicity, the social constructionist argument, such as the segmented assimilation model, is the third and most recent perspective of ethnicity. The discussion here focuses on the usefulness of the segmented assimilation model in determining the factors for constructing integration and identity pathways (Zhou 1997).
Other than its focus on language, the social constructionist perspective is advantageous for its integration of agency and structure such that structural investigations are conducted under this perspective by delineating the processes involved in creating social problems (Best 2003; Holstein and Miller 1993). Social constructionism has also been used to illustrate the experiences and perspectives of individuals to understand the consequences of social categorizations (Espiritu 1997; Pyke 2004; Pyke and Johnson 2003). Whether looking at more structural- or more agency-level factors, a social constructionist perspective requires the inclusion of both macro and micro determinants of social identity. The segmented assimilation model proposes that the interaction of individual and structural factors construct various assimilations (Zhou 1997).

The writings of the classic assimilation model began with Robert E. Park’s (1950) description of race and culture. Assimilationists have traditionally dominated in the field of ethnicity. The most well known discussion of the assimilation model is Milton Gordon’s *Assimilation in American Life* (1977), which describes immigrants’ integration into the U.S. host society as a seven stage process beginning with cultural assimilation and ending in civic assimilation. The general consensus on Park’s (1926) and Gordon’s (1977) explanations of immigration and adaptation is that the assimilation model – often nicknamed Americanization (Glazer 1993) – is ethnocentric and deterministic (Alba and Nee 1997; Waters 1996). One principle of the assimilation model is the requirement that immigrants lose their ethnicity and become fully integrated into their host society’s culture in order to assimilate successfully (Gordon 1977), resulting in the immigrant’s development of a host society ethnic identity and acceptance by host society members. Both Park and Gordon imply that successful assimilation, namely to become American, is
a responsibility that rests on the immigrants. There are several problems with this argument; the most obvious and common criticism being the arguably offensive suggestion that American culture is superior to other cultures (Glazer 1993).

Furthermore, Gordon’s model of assimilation appears to apply specifically to the U.S. experience since the melting pot ideal is unlike the Canadian integration ideal of the cultural mosaic. The melting pot perspective argues for a unified homogeneous culture with shared values, practices and religion. On the other hand, the cultural mosaic values the equal treatment and preservation of ethnic boundaries where the process of integration suggests acculturation (exchange and learning of home and host society cultures) rather than assimilation (dismissal of home country culture and embracement of host county cultural ways). Davis (1996), for instance, states that such ideological assumptions of assimilation prevalent in the U.S. were not incorporated in the Canadian political view of ethnic diversity and multiculturalism. As such, notions of assimilation do not fit into the process of adaptation for immigrants of other societies and nationalities. However, the most obvious limitation is that the predictions of the classic assimilation theory imply a unilateral experience process for all newcomers. Integration outcomes do not occur similarly for all immigrant groups entering the U.S. Findings suggest that hostile race relations differentially influence the assimilation paths for groups of immigrants by racial background and not wholly by country or origin.

The contemporary understanding of assimilation, such as segmented assimilation, redefines assimilation as acculturation, and thus, uses the terms interchangeably (c.f. Portes and Zhou 1993). For this study, both acculturation and assimilation refer to the integration pathways that immigrants encounter through learning about, and exchanging with, host society culture.
socioeconomic background, and/or home country cultural differences from the U.S. (Dodoo and Takyi 2002; Glazer 1993; Portes and Zhou 1993; Zhou and Lee 2004).

Mac Ghaill (1999) provides an account of the ever-present intersectionality of race, ethnicity, religion and nationality in the United Kingdom. He attempts to theoretically integrate ‘old’ with ‘new’ (or what he calls ‘materialism’ with ‘differentialism’) explanations of race relations by arguing the case that race relations are more about ethnicity and citizenship in the recent U.K. than in the 1960s U.S. In this argument, he attempts to avoid a dualistic view of race relations as a Black-White relation. One method of addressing the dualism is to include nationality and ethnicity in race relations models. While racial discrimination is certainly an issue, especially in the 1960s U.S., Mac Ghaill suggests that such an explanation does not sufficiently explain contemporary racial and ethnic relations and issues of citizenship. As this is still a contested explanation, by investigating national identity formation cross-nationally, this study may provide innovative ways of understanding citizenship and identity in western societies.

In response to the failure of the traditional assimilation model to predict immigrant integration and adaptation, Portes and Zhou (1993) propose a segmented assimilation model. Rather than a unilateral adaptation process, segmented assimilation acknowledges various acculturation processes, dependent on such structural factors as the region of immigration (which impacts the degree of racism and racial diversity in the neighborhood), socioeconomic status and cultural values as well as micro factors such as individual practices (Portes and Rumbaut 1996). While some non-White immigrants attempt to assimilate along the classical unilateral assimilation line, structural and
individual forces of racism and discrimination prevent them from achieving a host society ethnic status (Glazer 1993; Gordon 1977; Waters 1999). Hostile U.S. race relations also serve as temporary obstacles in the process of assimilation. It is evident that racism and discrimination are not temporary, and immigrants are unable to prevent acts of racism from occurring (Collins 1999; Omi and Winant 1994).

There are three notable criteria that distinguish segmented assimilation from the traditional assimilation model. First, immigrant integration into American society is segmented in that individual immigrants may integrate “upwards” into the White middle class, move “downward” into working class or urban America (sometimes referred to as Black America), or integrate into a co-ethnic community (Portes and Rumbaut 1996; Portes and Zhou 1993; Waters 1999). In comparison to the traditional assimilationist model, the consideration of all these possibilities and factors present a more realistic view of immigrant adaptation and the effects of region, racism and culture on U.S. immigrants. Second, unlike the traditional model, segmented assimilation acknowledges that attachment to one’s ethnic culture, ethnic sub-economies and institutions does not prevent immigrant achievement of upward mobilization or successful adaptation (Zhou and Bankston 1996; Gibson 1988). In fact, Alba and Nee (2003: 6) argue that such connections can foster upward economic mobility and protection from the “hazards” of the inner city. Third, segmented assimilation may also be applied to Canadian immigrants since the determinants of assimilation can be applied to multiple host societies (c.f. Boyd 2002; Halli and Vedanand 2007).

Portes and Zhou (1993) propose that immigrant assimilation and ethnic identity are interrelated. As both assimilation and identity formation are measured or indicated by
group integration, individuals of a group will likely have similar assimilation experiences and identity formation. Thus, integration provides a shared indicator variable. However, the relationship or interrelatedness between the two in structural and individual contexts is not well developed. An examination of the structural influences on second generation immigrant adaptation is instrumental in revealing constructions of ethnic identity.

Waters (2004), for example, sheds light on the assimilation-identity relationship for second generation Caribbean New Yorkers. Her sample illustrates the complexity between ethnic/racial identity and integration since three different paths of identity development were being constructed among her sample. The ethnically identified adolescents came from middle class backgrounds. The American identified and the immigrant identified adolescents came from working class or poor backgrounds. Waters’ results indicated that an ethnic identity may associate with higher socioeconomic status and upward assimilation. It is not apparent; however, whether the middle class ethnically identified second generation Caribbean are feeling more “American” than the working class racially and immigrant identified.

Kibria (2002) finds that middle class Asian Americans who are ethnically identified cannot form a full American identity because they attempt to align themselves with the ethnic American model, “a nod to their ethnic roots but their feet planted in the mainstream” (also quoted Kibria 2002, Onishi 1996). “The Asian American experience of the ethnic American model is centrally marked by a confrontation with its largely hidden and unstated racial character” (Kibria 2002:4). Kibria’s sample of second generation Chinese and Korean Americans simultaneously felt aligned with the ethnic American model and that their ethnic self and their American self could co-exist in
accord. Yet they also felt marginalized in American society because of their racial minority status, which prevented them from being fully accepted as American.

Kibria notes that the ethnic American model applies exclusively to White Americans who feel an obligation or responsibility to practice and celebrate their ethnicity. Rather than a model formally implemented by the dominant society through government policies, the ethnic American framework is driven by individual White Americans practicing symbolic ethnicity. The experience of upward mobilization into mainstream America through educational attainment and enhanced occupational status help Asian Americans feel as though they are honorary Whites. However, their everyday experiences of marginalization and social exclusion conflict with their sense of being able to be fully American, which reinforce feelings of the forever foreigner.

Boyd (2008) identifies a second generation mosaic integration, which aligns with the predictions of the segmented assimilation model. Second generation immigrants in Canada show heterogeneous socioeconomic outcomes across racial categorizations. The assimilation of Canadian immigrants regarding ethnic identification, however, is not well established. Labelle (2004) finds that policies of citizenship in Canada and the province of Quebec provide two identity issues for Haitian and Jamaican Canadians. Although there are citizenship appeals that entail civic inclusion, experiences of racial exclusion prevent the Haitians and Jamaicans from feeling completely Canadian.

*The United States and Canada Compared*

There are few U.S.-Canada comparisons of the social construction of ethnic identity. Cultural studies and third wave feminism have recently brought this type of identity, as a social construction, to the forefront. According to segmented assimilation,
identity is contextualized by government level reception of immigrants (Portes and Zhou 1993). The construction and meaning of ethnic identity is partly dependent on matters of polity, more specifically the way in which different governments attempt to define nationality and ethnicity as either a single entity or two separate entities. National context is also dependent on ethnic and racial differences in conceptions of nationality. A national identity tends to imply a common set of values, ideas and history for the entire nation’s citizens, when in fact there are consequential differences in the way politicians define nationality in terms of ethnicity. Since there are also stark differences in the views and histories of ethnic groups within a nation, it is also imperative to investigate the social construction of national identity through lived experience and personal accounts.

Although the U.S. and Canada vary in their histories of immigration and race/ethnicity relations, their differences are often underemphasized and the two countries are often considered more similar than different in these matters (Reitz and Breton 1994). The two nations, for example, share a similar negative history of racist policies such as Asian exclusion acts, Japanese internment and immigration systems in favor of White Europeans. However, comparative analyses challenge the notion that the two governments’ immigrant integration policies are unimportant particularly in light of the views and values of immigrants, their socioeconomic outcomes and their adaptation (Bloemraad 2006; Model 2002; Portes and Zhou 1993; White, Fong and Cai 2003). A recent distinction between the two nation states is their governmental stance on

8 For the purpose of simplicity, this study groups and discusses national identity and ethnic identity as one.
multiculturalism – the celebration of cultural and ethnic difference.\textsuperscript{9} Canadian government formally values multiculturalism and tolerance for cultural difference. The government’s practice and celebration of multiculturalism that began in the 1970s became an official national policy in 1988 known as the Canadian Multiculturalism Act. Although there is a popular understanding of the U.S. as a multicultural nation that values diversity and pluralism, the federal government does not have an official policy of multiculturalism.

Bloemraad’s (2006) comparative analysis of U.S. and Canadian political incorporation finds that the differences between U.S. and Canadian government policies impact immigrant assimilation and identity experiences by way of immigrant political integration and sense of citizenship. Through 151 in-depth interviews with first and second generation Portuguese immigrants and Vietnamese refugees who are involved in political citizenship, immigrant communities and who can speak of their immigration experiences, Bloemraad focuses on the views of citizenship and the processes of naturalization and participation. She finds that “even the modest U.S.-Canada difference carries significant consequences for immigrant citizenship” (2006:237). Bloemraad finds that Canadian multicultural citizenship symbolically and materially offers greater assistance to refugees and new immigrants than does U.S. race-based economic citizenship. Immigrants and refugees in Canada, Bloemraad finds, form a stronger sense of citizenship and belonging than in the U.S. because of their larger political

\textsuperscript{9} The meaning of multiculturalism is debatable as well as contextual. In this study, I used the political definition of the term, which is the celebration of cultural and ethnic difference, to compare the contexts of U.S. and Canadian political stances on multiculturalism.
representation and participation of ethnic and racial minorities in local, provincial and federal governments.

Another notable distinction between the U.S. and Canada is in their patterns of racial and ethnic segregation. White, Fong and Cai (2003) examine Asian-origin segregation patterns for both countries and find that the extent to which segregation exists is greater in the U.S. than in Canada. They also identify that the level of segregation among Asian ethnic groups differs between the two nation states. For example, Koreans in Canada have the second highest level of segregation among five Asian ethnic groups. However, Koreans in the U.S. are the least segregated of the five.

White et al. (2003) also find that although the Asian immigrants to both countries share similar socioeconomic backgrounds upon arrival and encounter similar adaptation and assimilation experiences, their residential segregation patterns are influenced by different social determinants. For example, the economic status of minority groups helps to reduce racial and ethnic segregation in the U.S. but not in Canada. The authors suggest that Canada’s longer history of government involvement in the housing market may account for the non-influence of economic status for minorities on their levels of segregation. For many decades, Canadian government has been implementing “socially mixed” housing, which may account for the differential degrees, patterns and factors for segregation between the two countries.

Contextualizing the relationship between assimilation experiences and identity formation is also supported under the segmented assimilation model, which includes modes of incorporation as a determinant for paths of assimilation. “There are three features of the social contexts encountered by today’s newcomers that create
vulnerability to downward assimilation. The first is color, the second is location, and the third is the absence of mobility ladders” (Portes and Zhou 1993:83). The segmented assimilation model provides a cross-national comparison of the directions in which the factors for assimilation lead pathways of integration for second generation immigrants in different host societies (c.f. Bloemraad 2006; Halli and Vedanand 2007; White et al. 2003). Based on comparative U.S. and Canada analyses of immigrant incorporation and adaptation, the interpretation of results for this study will consider the distinction in official views and the implementation of multiculturalism in Canada but not the U.S.

Racialized Gender Stereotypes and Gendered Ethnic Identity Formation

The current literature in the social construction of ethnic identity finds that a “gendering of ethnicity” is also being produced (Espiritu 1997, p. 88). For both Asian American men and women, there are stereotypes that both feminize and masculinize their Asian ethnicity. Through the complacent model minority image, Asian American men are stereotyped as effeminate, lacking masculine traits such as aggressiveness and assertiveness. Asian American women, however, are hyper-feminized through stereotypes of the “China Doll”. This differentiates Asian women from women of European descent by emphasizing difference in physical features, and framing Asian American women as sexually exotic (King 2001). Both Asian American men and women are also, contrary to the feminizing stereotypes, portrayed as the “Yellow Peril”, threatening the occupations and civilizations of the White male society. According to Espiritu (1997), these opposing sexualized stereotypes are used to maintain White male domination and subjugate Asians living in the U.S.
Since gender is a social construct and has become a typification used to justify gender inequality, contemporary feminism has also embraced the social constructionist perspective. Third wave feminism, in particular, has generated several influential conceptions of the multiplicity of identity and the “interlocking system of oppression” (Collins 1990). By placing respondents at the center of their research and theory, third wave feminists have identified significant findings on identity formation. Notable social constructionist accounts in contemporary feminism come from Glenn (1992; 2000), who examines individuals’ identities in structural and historical contexts.

Unlike ethnicity, which stems from cultural distinctions, the notion of gender is closely tied to the understanding of sex or biological distinctions. Feminist studies are increasingly social constructionist in nature (Cerulo 1997; Glenn 2000), including the investigations of language and discourse to expose gender ideologies and identities (Cho 1997; Messner 1990; 1997; Pyke 2004; West and Fenstermaker 1995) and the discussion of symbolic interaction between race, ethnicity, nationalism and sexuality (Nagel 2001).

The development of the sociology of gender and the emergence of examining gender as a social construction in the social sciences began with the second wave of the Women’s Movement in the 1960s when women’s issues took political force (Ashenden 1997). The sociology of gender has undergone a number of changes in its theoretical arguments and areas of interest over time. Recently, gender sociologists have been incorporating cultural studies and postmodernist theories into their analyses, contributing to the social constructionist understanding of gender and gender identity. This approach attempts to overcome the failure of the concept “gender” to capture women’s racial and
class-based heterogeneity. In doing so, gender sociologists treat the concept of gender (like race and deviance) as historical and contextual (Ashenden 1997; Glenn 2000).

With the emergence of third wave feminism, numerous writings have critiqued the tendency of previous feminist theorists to isolate social statuses and classifications in the analysis of identity formation. Entire research fields have isolated themselves from one another (Crenshaw 1991). For example, theories and research on race and ethnicity often fail to incorporate the interaction with gender. Omi and Winant’s (1994) theory of racial formation, for example, presents race as the central issue of injustice without considering other oppressed identities.

Third wave feminism confronts the limitations of additive regression models that neglect the simultaneous formation of ethnic, gender and class identities. Black feminist theory, in particular, has begun a discussion on the heterogeneity of women (Collins 1990; hooks 2000) and a feminism of intersectionalities taking the lead (West and Fenstermaker 1995). The add-women-and-stir approach, which the quantitative approach is critiqued for utilizing, overlooks the complexity of masculinity and femininity as issues, roles and identities (Hondagneu and Sotelo 2003). It is suggested that this “add and stir” comparative method undermines the fundamental issue behind gender, which is power. An in-depth analysis of immigrant life allows for the examination of gendered experiences. For example, Lopez’s (2003) interviews of Dominicans, West Indians and Haitians in the U.S. showed that demeaning racialized gender stereotypes played a role in the functioning of their employment, albeit differently for men and women. Caribbean men perceived a barrier in attaining employment while women were finding jobs but perceived little mobility in their positions.
Cultural approaches to gendered ethnicity focus on the practices and stereotypes that are constructing ethnicity. Structural approaches, on the other hand, look at how societies are structured to impose social values and norms on their members and therefore ignore the role individuals have in developing their gendered practices of identity. The social construction of identity is both cultural and structural because it attempts to incorporate the role of larger hegemonic ideals in identity formation on an everyday basis. Other studies have examined everyday practices in institutions and how these practices produce new and old categories, ideals and identities (Barajas and Pierce 2001; Espiritu 1997; Kibria 2002; 2000a; Thorne, Orellana, Lam, and Chee 2003; Williams et al. 2002).

Some studies contextualize identity formation in structural factors. Kurien (2003) and Barajas and Pierce (2001) find that immigrant parents give their daughters more responsibility to maintain and practice ethnic traditions and values. Unlike sons, daughters are taught that their responsibility to the family is to uphold and pass on the traditions of family practices, which the authors also find are inherently ethnic cultural practices. Messner (1997) takes a cultural approach by illustrating the various gendered identities male professional athletes experience and act out based on other social constructions, such as class and race. In these findings, cultural imperatives are applied outward to the larger structure, which in turn builds on our understanding of where and how gender identities are formed and practiced.

To further understand the construction of gender, Glenn (1992) conducts a historical analysis of the attitudes of both upper class White women and poor working women of color towards paid and unpaid household labor. Upper class White women
believe that household labor is not a woman’s responsibility and taking a reproductive labor position is demeaning. Minority women, however, do not likely share such strong views because working in the domestic labor force for generations provides a stable source of income. The analysis reveals that upper class White women’s gender identities typified women’s issues in the U.S., which works in opposition to working class minority women. Feminist concerns and ideals were constructed to serve the interest of White middle class women while framing minority working class women as deviating from “feminist” goals (see also Collins 1990).

A method of creating deviant identities, other than through typifying stereotypes, is through the medicalization of groups of people. Through the use of stereotypes, such as the model minority, images of Asians are further belittling by creating physical or biological deficiencies. For example, Kaw’s (1993) analysis of medical documents, research articles and interviews with physicians reveals how Asian physical features are medicalized or constructed as features deviating from normative physical appearance. In this way, physical features of Asians are used to construct them as a racial ‘Other’, justified and rationalized by a scientific and institutionalized discourse of fact and logic. Although the effects of medicalizing physical Asian features on individuals have not yet been documented, there is evidence that Asian-Americans struggle with body image ideals of ‘Whiteness’ (Chung 2001; Kaw 1993; Mckee 2001). Cho’s (1997) theory of racialized sexual harassment emphasizes the “urgency” of race and gender subjugating Asian women in school and work places. An analysis of three sexual harassment cases

10 See also Schur (1971) and Heckert and Best (1997) for discussions on the normalization and stigmatization of physical appearance.
illustrates that racialized gender stereotypes are used to harass Asian American women in their everyday lives. Cho’s article also indicates that there are negative material outcomes for receivers of racialized gender stereotypes.

A number of studies examine Asian American women’s experiences and accounts of gendered ethnicity (Cho 2000; Espiritu 2003; Gibson 1988; Lee 2007; Williams et al. 2002; Zhou and Bankston 1998). Pyke (2004) spoke with Korean American and Vietnamese American women about their views on Asian and White masculinities. It appears that Asian women internalize racialized gender stereotypes of masculinity, which characterize Asian men (Korean men especially) as sexist, angry and overbearing. White men, in turn, are idealized as “angelic liberators” with egalitarian, caring and sensitive characteristics. In groups, Pyke’s respondents repeatedly juxtapose Asian men to White men, presenting them as opposites. Although there are Asian men that embody liberating qualities and White men that are sexist, angry and overbearing, such qualities are omitted and masked by typified images through the use of racialized gender stereotypes. While this and other studies that spoke with Asian women exclusively provide useful insights on the internalization of gendered racial stereotypes and identity formation, how Asian men internalize and resolve demeaning stereotypical messages is less examined.

Some studies examine Asian males’ experiences and accounts of gendered ethnicity (Barajas and Pierce 2001; Kurien 1999; Lopez 2003; Maira 2002). In Qin et al.’s (2008) study, Chinese American males face the challenge of having to resolve conflicting notions of masculinity. A Chinese idiom “strong limbs, simple minds” contradicts western views of masculinity, which values athleticism and physical strength. The male youth work to find a balance between their ethnic cultural values and the values
upheld and practiced in their school culture. Conflicting masculinities also serve as a source of distress for young Chinese American males as their stereotyped smaller stature and physical weakness are constant sources for bullying victimization.

Summary

These studies expand beyond a narrow analysis of gender to examine its interaction with class, race, ethnicity, nationality and how multiple identities are continuously in reflexive relationships with each other. From a constructionist perspective, it is necessary to consider multiple identities together rather than examine the complexities of diverse identities as separate and isolated. A review of the literature suggests that second generation Asian immigrants are narrowly defined as second class citizens; honorary Whites and yet forever foreigner. The stereotypes about Asian men and women appear to play significant factors in everyday life functioning, such as in family, school and work settings.

The segmented assimilation model appears to provide a useful set of determinants of assimilation. However, the applicability of the model to Canadian immigrant integration is underdeveloped. As proposed by segmented assimilation, the government-level reception of immigrants is a key factor in integration experiences and directions. Henceforth, this study considers the implementation of multiculturalism by the Canadian government and the “color factor” in the U.S. This study also considers gendered experiences of integration and identity formation. These particular factors should contribute to the understanding of assimilation experiences, gendered racial stereotypes and ethnic identity formation.
The next chapter discusses the methodological approach utilized for this study. In the chapter, the justification and the process taken in conducting interviews is presented. Also included, is the analysis and interpretation of the methods employed. The final section of the chapter provides descriptive information on the study sample. All the sections in this chapter illustrate the design of the study and the methods used during the conduction and execution of the study.
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This chapter discusses the data collection and analysis techniques and strategies I used to address the major research questions. The following are the three major research questions: 1) what role does the model minority stereotype play in the construction of identity?; 2) what are some identifiable macro resources (i.e. societal reception of immigrants) and micro strategies (i.e. interpretations of everyday experiences) respondents use to construct their identity?; and 3) how do second generation Korean American and Korean Canadian immigrants ethnically identify themselves in nationalized and gendered contexts? This section discusses the advantage in conducting qualitative methods in scientific research and the appropriateness of such methods for this study. Also discussed in this section are the sampling, data collection, ethical issues, data organization, data analysis and sample descriptions for this study. This study received exemption from the University of Akron Internal Review Board (IRB) in 2005. Please see Appendix A for a copy of the IRB approval. All respondents were made aware of the purpose and conditions of the investigation. Please refer to Appendix B for a copy of the informed consent form. Further discussion of the informed consent form is in the ethical issues section of this chapter.
Defining and Accessing Respondents

I conducted 31 interviews for this project. Consistent with the appropriate standards of qualitative research, I considered the sample size sufficient for the reason that theoretical saturation concerning the research questions was achieved (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Theoretical saturation is used to determine the sufficiency of a sample size and the validity of the analysis conducted (Maxwell 1994; Strauss 1987). Rudestam and Newton (1992) explain that saturation is reached when newly collected interviews cease to generate new themes, when consistent patterns are developed, and when comparisons between characteristics appear. After a preliminary analysis of the sample of interviews, I identified recurring statements and patterns in terms of experiences, terminologies and concepts that deemed further data collection unnecessary for the scope of this investigation. Further collection of interviews would provide little added value to the results of this study.

With the conditioned resources of time and money that were made available for this project, the research focused on the apparent themes and patterns that had emerged among the 31 interviews. The data collection and interpretation of results for this study extends previous studies on the multi-faceted issue: identity formation. Considering the restrictions on the scope and resources made available to this project the research question and methods utilized provisioned the collection of appropriate data size and quality. The analysis of interview data focused on thick descriptions. The development of a coding scheme was driven by the data. Finally, previous findings and perspectives were used to interpret the results and enhance validity.
In order to recruit interviewees, I contacted the leaders of two on-campus Korean ethnic student organizations. The American campus had two Korean student organizations; Korean International Student Association (KISA), which had mostly Korean international student members and Korean Student Association (KSA), which was “geared towards Korean American interests” and had mostly second generation Korean student members. An email address list was obtained through the president of KSA and members were called to participate through mass email. The Canadian campus also had two student organizations. Their KSA’s membership was predominantly Korean international students. The mostly second generation Korean membership belonged to Korean Christian Fellowship (KCF). Through the KCF president, emails were sent to their member list-serves. Interested prospective participants contacted me through email.\footnote{In this study, I compensated the participants with a monetary incentive of $20 (USD and CDN). However, I did not compensate 2005 interviewees for their time. I approached and recruited them during a second generation Korean Canadian student conference held in Toronto, Ontario, June 2005. The researcher attended the conference to gather information on the particular and current issues for second generation Korean Canadian young adults and to contact interviewees.} In the last section of this chapter, there is a discussion of the two universities and their city demographics.

Had the sample included members only, there could be a bias to the respondents’ views and experiences. Patterned and emergent themes could be caused from the commonality of group membership of the sample rather than the larger attribute of being second generation Korean. Another concern I had was the use of a Christian organization to recruit respondents. The Canadian school’s second generation Korean group was Christian based, which raised serious concerns about sampling bias. Throughout the
recruitment and data generation, I asked for non-Christian, uninvolved referrals. The referrals turned out to be Christian as well. Out of the entire sample, only one American and one Canadian respondent was non-Christian. The American respondent practiced Buddhism on occasion and the Canadian respondent was not religious, although the latter had a Catholic upbringing and was a member of KCF for networking purposes. The benefit of using organization leaders to reach perspective participants was the provision of access to a large list of second generation Korean students. The method of recruitment was also similar for the two schools. Overall, I addressed the concerns of sampling bias by utilizing snowball and purposeful sampling to expand the sample to include non-members, non-religious and non-conventional majors.

As Maxwell (1996) suggests, having the leaders’ support for the study appeared to help me gain entry to, or access, group members. For in-depth interviewing, it is important that the interviewer gain the trust of respondents for open and honest expressions of experiences, feelings and opinions (Sprague and Zimmerman 2004). Having the support and sponsorship from the presidents of the student organizations, I built a status of trust among the respondents within a short period of time (each campus required less than a month of dialogue with group leaders).

The process that led to establishing the two sites for this study was faced with a few challenges. First, I establish pairs of schools (one in the U.S. and Canada) that shared similar characteristics in student body size, prestige and second generation Korean student presence. After investigating school demographics online and their distance from me, a few pairs were created. I proceeded to make phone calls and emails to various student organizations, professors with Korean names, as well as Asian American studies
departments. One school had a Korean student organization but very few second
generation student members. Most emails and phone calls were not returned.

After four months, I heard about a large second generation Korean student
organization at a university in the Midwest, close enough for me to drive to. I emailed
the organization leader and after a few phone conversations, the leader became a
resourceful agent in participant recruitment and providing interview space. Once the visit
to the American school was scheduled, I contacted a Canadian school in southwestern
Ontario that could be paired with the American school. It also took a few phone calls
before members were contacted and the visit was scheduled. I spent one week on each
campus for interviews.\textsuperscript{12}

It was important for me as the interviewer to quickly establish a friendly and
professional rapport with participants as the only face-to-face interaction occurred at the
time of the interviews. Most of the respondents in this study were likely to have thought
about their assimilation experiences and ethnic identity prior to the interview; their
membership in an ethnically-based formal organization implies a personal interest in, and
a concern for, Korean heritage, on-campus community, socialization with other Korean
ethnics, and professional networking (Kibria 2002). Possibly due to this involvement, it
appeared that the participants were eager and prepared to talk about their experiences and
issues growing up as a second generation immigrant. My status as a second generation
Korean immigrant seemed to facilitate the respondents’ feelings of comfort (see for
example Gallagher 2004). For example, interviewees would often use Korean words

\textsuperscript{12} I personally covered all costs associated with this study. In 2006, I received a $2000
scholarship, which helped fund this research.
while talking with the assumption that I understood and could empathize with the respondent.

The interviews took place in settings chosen by the participants. Interviews were held in the respondents’ dormitories, library study rooms and on-campus conference rooms, which were reserved by the organization leaders. Most respondents preferred to meet in the on-campus conference rooms. It appeared to build a sense of professionalism and validation to the study for the respondents. Private rooms also gave privacy, enhancing the sense of safety in being open and honest. For example, library study rooms were sometimes distracting. On a couple occasions, the friends of participants walked in during the interview, thinking the participant was studying and not being interviewed.

Five interviews in Canada and one in the U.S. were conducted in 2005. In February and March of 2008, 15 interviews were held on the U.S. university campus and 11 interviews were held on the Canadian campus. All 26 interviews were included in the sample. The interviews were administered, transcribed and analyzed by myself, the researcher.\(^\text{13}\) Purposeful sampling is a method of selecting sites, individuals and/or events that would provide informative value to the study (Maxwell 1996). Through purposeful sampling, the recruitment focused on full-time undergraduate second generation Korean American and Korean Canadian students with a consideration for an even distribution of men and women, majors, and affiliation with Korean ethnic student

\(^{13}\) Three undergraduate student volunteers from the University of Toronto transcribed four of the interviews. By word of mouth, I informally contacted and recruited the students who expressed interest in the study. I versed the three on the confidentiality of interviews and signed a contract of confidentiality. I also removed information linking the interview to the respondents’ identity.
organizations. I excluded non-English speaking second generation Koreans because I was not able to converse in the Korean language. However, there were no prospective participants that were denied participation due to lack of English language proficiency. For this study, second generation referred to individuals with at least one first generation immigrant parent from Korea, and who is either native-born or who immigrated before the age of 9 (for details on determining immigrant generational status, see Rumbaut 1994 who uses pre-adolescence immigration as qualifying for second generation immigrant status).14

By using purposeful sampling, four goals were accomplished. First, the representativeness, or typicality, of the respondents was enhanced by seeking out different types of second generations by criterion factors, membership, religiosity and major. The sample was also a manageable size for deliberate respondent selection (Kibria 2002; Maxwell 1996). Second, purposeful selection provided variation in sampling. A major factor for variance in this study was to recruit second generation Koreans that were either uninvolved in or distant from their Korean communities. Interviewees uninvolved in Korean student organizations were more difficult to reach. Three American participants that received a list-serve email identified themselves as uninvolved members. Three Canadian participants identified themselves as uninvolved group members to the Korean-ethnic student organizations on their campuses. The researcher also utilized snowball sampling methods to access four (two American and two Canadian) non-members. Third, two small populations of university students were

14 One respondent moved to Canada at the age of eight and identified himself as a second generation although he did not have Canadian citizenship.
accessed through purposeful selection. Random sampling methods would not be useful for this particular group of individuals. Fourth, purposeful selection allowed for the collection of extensive and context-rich data on the formation of identities in various cultural domains and experiences for a highly specific group of individuals.

Data Collection and Interview Questions

The data collection for this study consisted of in-depth face-to-face semi-structured interviews that I conducted. The interviews averaged 1.5 hours of interview time, ranging from one hour fifteen minutes to two hours. I structured the questions based on the perspectives of social constructionism, segmented assimilation, identity formation and gendered ethnicity (please refer to Appendix C for the interview guide). The conversations focused on issues of ethnic identity formation in national and gendered contexts and the role of mainstream model minority stereotypes in constructing identities. I informed the respondents of the purpose of the interview and probed for more information on ethnicity, nationality and gender as respondents brought up the topics.

I conducted the Canadian interviews in February of 2008 and the U.S. interviews were done in March of 2008. The rapport building section of the interview prompted respondents to discuss their life stories. This portion of the interview provided information on the respondents’ struggles, stressful life events and views of the unique situation in which second generation Koreans are situated.

The first section of questions, identity formation, was derived from Waters’ (1999) study on second generation Caribbean American ethnic identity. The questions were intended to have respondents self-label their racial status, ethnic identity, nationality and gender. They were also intended to assist respondents to focus on the topics, which
would be repeatedly addressed throughout the interview. The second section, social settings and cultural domains, sought out information on the fluidity of identity formation. These questions were also intended to focus on nationalized and gendered contexts of identity formation. The third section inquired about the internalization of the model minority stereotype. Most respondents had not heard of the stereotype and were provided with the definition, which was stated in the guide (see Appendix C). The idea of the model minority was well known among the respondents and thus they were able discuss their opinions and personal experiences relevant to feelings of the stereotype once they were given its definition. The fourth section, which was adapted from Waters (1999), asked about the level of the respondents’ integration into mainstream society.

Ethical Issues – The content of interview questions did not ask for incriminating or stigmatizing information about the respondents. Each interviewee completed their interview and did not express long lasting emotional discomfort. The respondents were informed of the option to terminate the interview at any time for any reason without facing any adverse consequences such as non-reception of compensation (please see the informed consent form in Appendix B). The interview was structured to allow the interviewees some control over shaping and guiding the course of their interviews. Finally, the identities of respondents were kept confidential, minimizing the potential of harm to them.

15 The question “Have you ever felt like you were expected to behave like a model minority?” was officially added to the guide after reviewing the Canadian respondents response to feeling like a model minority as they would tend to make a distinction between feeling like a model minority and feeling like they were expected to behave according to the stereotype.
Data Storage and Organization

The initial data were comprised of verbatim transcripts of the interviews. The researcher and voluntary transcribers edited some verbatim quotes to clarify, but not alter, the meaning of statements and legibility. The interviews were organized by nationality and a random number assignment. Once the interviews were completed, each participant was given a pseudonym; Korean names were given Korean pseudonyms and English names were given English pseudonyms. The use of pseudonyms was employed to protect the participants’ identities. Folders with contact information, interview notes, memos, a hard copy of the interview and a signed consent form were made for each respondent and filed in a locked cabinet. The data expanded with case summaries for each respondent, coding reports, and coding matrices in Nvivo8 and Microsoft Excel. The summaries focused on the final results for this study: identity formation, the relationship between assimilation and identity and gendered ethnic identity. A respondent information spreadsheet was created, using Microsoft Excel, to record contact information, demographics and memos. Coding matrices were also created in Microsoft Excel. Tables derived from coding matrices are presented in the results chapters five and six.

The data was organized and stored in NVivo8, Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word. The interviews were transcribed in Microsoft Word for backup purposes and then exported as a single rich text format document into NVivo8. Four random interviews (one male and female from each country) were hand coded, in which I utilized open coding – the coding for possible patterns and themes - to develop the preliminary ideas.
for a coding scheme. Well-organized and detailed data storage allows for large amounts of data to be tracked, flexibly accessed as well as systematically analyzed and documented (Berg 2006; Lofland and Lofland 1995).

As data analysis and management are fundamentally related, NVivo8 facilitates complex analysis while allowing the researcher to efficiently managing the data, as well as providing reliable and fast access to the data. NVivo8 also documents, retains and protects data analyses (Lofland and Lofland 1995). Like all software programs, NVivo8 provides electronic storage, which facilitates making backup copies, and protects data and analyses from misfiling and unintentionally destroying documents, which may occur with hardcopy filing. Finally, NVivo8 allows the researcher to engage in analyses that enhances the organization and comprehensiveness of the overall analysis process.

Data Analysis and Interpretation: Coding, Reliability and Validity

A second investigator, a professor of sociology and the chair of the dissertation committee for this study, coded the four randomly selected interviews for internal reliability. The second investigator open coded for emergent themes and statements related to the broader research questions: identity formation in nationalized and gendered contexts. The primary researcher and second investigator then determined the central themes and patterns relevant to ethnic identity formation in national and gendered contexts. First, it became clear that it was important to first identify what it meant to be a second generation Korean immigrant in the U.S. and Canada before developing an

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16 Lofland and Lofland (1995) provide a discussion comparing filing and PC databasing analyses. While the use of PC databasing is quite advantageous, they warn that researchers may lose focus and interest in their data without periodic hand coding.
understanding of identity formation. Second, mixed messages from the model minority stereotype of Asians as the forever foreigner and the honorary White seemed to play a role in identity formation. Third, it appeared that the respondents related certain pressures to contemplation and even changing ethnic identity. After a dialogue with the second investigator, we concluded that Portes and Zhou’s (1993) segmented assimilation model most helpfully contextualized the emergent findings. The findings emphasized the relationship between types of assimilation and identity formations. Fourth, there are repeated references to internalized racialized gender stereotypes. It was certain, however, that personal views of gender norms and roles interacted with ethnic identity formation, more so in specific social settings. The data speak to other potential issues, but these four themes emerged as the focus for the analysis in this study because of their prominence and theoretical importance.

The coding scheme provides a definition of each concept and coding guides for each code (please refer to the coding scheme in Appendix D). The results for this study are not exact reflections of the coding scheme as the interpretation and the finalization of findings had been an ongoing dialectical process; this interactive process continued on into the write-up of the results chapter (c.f. Charmez 2004 for directions on focused coding). The first section of codes, pressures and identity change, was developed from Kiecolt’s (1994) stress and the decision to change oneself model. The second section of codes is based on the segmented assimilation model (Portes and Zhou 1993), which emphasizes three main directions of immigrant mobilization. The third section was derived from feminist social constructionist accounts of gendered ethnicity (Kurien 1999; Pyke and Johnson 2003). The possibility of different ethnic identities influencing
personal gender norms and roles was originally proposed but became an intriguing yet difficult process to examine.\textsuperscript{17} Therefore, the current analysis focuses instead on
gendered ethnicity.

The Contributions of Qualitative Methods

While there are numerous sources for referencing, this section is based on Hesse-Biber and Leavy’s (2004) edited text. The notable strengths associated with utilizing qualitative methodology deem such a method to be more appropriate for this investigation. In-depth interviewing and content analysis removes the add-women-and-stir method that overlooks the complexity and multiplicities of masculinity and femininity as issues, roles and identities (Hondagneu and Sotelo 2003). In contrast to survey research, in-depth interviewing acknowledges gender as highly contextualized and a fundamental issue concerning social inequality. Such methods allow for the investigation of internalized gendered constraints, such as the internalization of gendered racial stereotypes that have been found to affect men and women’s identity formation (i.e. Cho 2000; Pyke 2004).

Essentially, qualitative methodology provides a thick descriptive analysis of how second generation immigrants socially construct their identities that are unlikely to be made available with choice surveys. Quantitative methods may overlook the nuances that are needed in a description of the social construction of identities. Such complexity and multiplicity are not sufficiently illustrated with survey and experimental designs. In-

\textsuperscript{17} The researcher suggests that a larger sample size would draw out differences between ethnic identification and gender preferences and provide sufficient findings. In addition, a greater amount of time speaking to respondents about the interaction between gender and ethnicity would provide more textual data for in-depth analysis.
depth and content-rich data collection reveals conflicts and negotiations that would not be discovered in survey research (Kurien 1999; Pessar 2003). With qualitative in-depth data collection, themes among highly individual experiences emerged. The analysis of individual life stories and observations revealed previously less visible relationships between assimilation experiences, gendered racial stereotypes and processes in the social construction of identity.

The Sample

The groups from which recruitment of participants took place had memberships of approximately 200-225 students in KSA and 120 in KCF. Most of the members were second generation Koreans. The two schools are located in middle to upper middle class cities, both of which are considered university towns. Both cities have lower levels of racial/ethnic diversity compared to large metropolitan cities such as Los Angeles or Toronto. The American university is located in the Midwest. Over 70 percent of the population was White in 2000 and two percent was Korean (U.S. Census Bureau 2006). The Canadian school is located in south-western Ontario. Over 80 percent of the population was White in 2006 and 0.6 percent was Korean (Statistics Canada 2006). The schools are also similar in national prestige, with both ranking in the top 10 percent for overall (public) undergraduate programs. The American school, however, holds a higher ranking nationally and internationally (Times Higher Education 2007).

Both universities attract Korean international students. The development of separate Korean ethnic student organizations appears to be a growing trend across campuses in the U.S. and Canada. This development spurred my interest to better understand the formation of a community and identity exclusive to second generation
Koreans and separate from first generation Korean immigrants. At the same time, the study was not intended to focus only on students who were members of the two organizations. Therefore the students who were recruited through memberships lists were asked to refer other second generation Koreans who were not members of the organization.

All except one of the American respondents were not from the university town. Most had grown up in cities with high concentrations of Korean Americans, such as New York and Chicago. The Canadian respondents were also likely to have come in from other cities and provinces. Most of the Canadian participants grew up in the Greater Toronto Area. Five of the 18 respondents were from the city in which the university was located. A higher number of the American respondents, compared to the Canadians, had parents in professional occupations with graduate degrees. Small business ownership was clearly the dominant occupation of the parents within the sample.

Table 1 provides a summary of the respondents, which includes their pseudonyms, places of birth, ages, and majors. Most of the informants were native-born immigrants. Only one American was foreign born and five Canadians were born outside of Canada. Of the 31 participants, 15 were American with a mean age of 20 years, ranging from 18 to 26 years. The mean age for the 16 Canadian respondents was also 20 years, ranging from 18 to 23 years.

The most frequent major among the sample was business (or business and management). Both universities have highly ranked business schools, which may explain the high frequency of business majors. Ten of the 18 male respondents were majoring in business whereas only one of the 13 female respondents was majoring in business and
management. The female informants were more commonly majoring in the social sciences followed by basic sciences. The researcher sought referrals for non-business, engineering, and science majors through the interview process although non-members of the organizations were held in priority over students in uncommon majors for recruitment. Overall, there was a wide range of majors held in the sample, from the arts to social work to basic sciences.

The sample reflects a variety of life experiences by social class, region of upbringing and views and attitudes towards ethnicity/race and gender. However, the respondent information did not reveal significant national and gender differences. Aside from Americans (six Americans and three Canadians) having more parents with professional occupations and post-undergraduate education and more Canadians than Americans being foreign born, there did not appear to be any significant descriptive differences between the American and Canadian respondents. Comparing the male to female respondents, there was a difference in their majors. Another gender difference was that five males, compared to one female, were foreign born second generations. The following results chapter discusses the common themes that emerged for the entire sample.

Chapter 5 discusses the different patterns of ethnic identity formation for Americans and Canadians. The final results chapter, chapter 6, presents the gender differences in ethnic identity formation. In-depth analyses of these interviews shed light on the common experiences and accounts among the entire sample as well as grouped differences in assimilation experiences and gendered ethnic identity formation. The
results shed light on the micro and macro factors relevant to integration pathways and identity formation.

Table 1: Respondent Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Foreign Born</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Males</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Political Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dennis</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doug</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edwin</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joel</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sean</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>American Females</th>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Foreign Born</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carrie</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Undecided (Sociology, Biopsychology)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Pobae</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Arts</td>
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<td>Suzy</td>
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<td>Yoona</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Foreign Born</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albert</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Business and Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edan</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Ethan</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Eugene</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Biology, Physiology, Anthropology</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Jeffrey</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Josh</td>
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CHAPTER IV

RESULTS I: INTERNALIZING THE MODEL MINORITY AND TYPIFYING THE “SECOND GEN”

This chapter is a discussion of two major themes that emerged from the interviews. These themes were those that were found common among the entire sample of participants. First, *Unmasking Lived Experiences behind the Model Minority Stereotype* is a discussion of the complex impact of the model minority stereotype on assimilation experiences and associated identity issues. Listening to the participants revealed a tendency to construct confusing notions of the model minority stereotype such as simultaneous feelings of being an honorary White and a forever foreigner. The confusion over the meaning of model minority presented empowering yet belittling feelings for their sense of belonging to mainstream society and also their sense of ethnic pride. Second, *The “Hard” Life Experiences of “Second Gens”: Factors for Mobility* discusses the common stressful life events that the participants had experienced. Although these particular lived experiences were stressful, they were also presented as factors that influenced, motivated, and sometimes led to academic achievement and upward family and individual economic mobility. These common stressful life events were also regarded as typical Korean family experiences as well as elements that define or typify second generation Koreans.
The themes that emerged from this analysis of interviews expand on previous findings of second generation American immigrants. This analysis extends on the literature through a presentation of findings on a particular sample of Asian ethnics, as well as a particular cohort and age demographic that is not extensively studied to date. Previous findings and theoretical concepts will be used throughout the chapter to clarify and validate the interpretation of experiences. The results of this study describe theoretically important similarities and differences in the narratives of thirty-one second generation Korean Americans and Korean Canadians tied to structural- and individual-level influences on assimilation and on identity (please refer to Appendix E for selected summaries of cases).

Unmasking Lived Experiences behind the Model Minority Stereotype

An important outcome of the model minority stereotype is the internalization by Asian immigrants of the model minority. Many Asian Americans and Canadians utilize their insider knowledge to align themselves with their personal views of what model minority means.\textsuperscript{18} One Korean American respondent believed that genetics played a part in the academic superiority of Asians. She also alluded to the framework of the model minority by describing Asians as “culturally programmed for economic success” (Kibria 2002: 11).

\textsuperscript{18} Throughout the discussions of results, I will refer to quantifying terms such as few, some, many, and most to describe my sample. In this and the following two results chapters these terms will refer to the following: few means two to five respondents, some means six to nine respondents, many means ten to 15 respondents, and most means 16 and more. For my discussion of sub-samples (e.g., Canadians only), some refers to approximately a quarter of the respondents, many refers to approximately a third of the respondents, and most refers to more than half of the respondents.
I think we’re kind of trained. I know Asian schools are crazy. My parents talk to me about how much they studied and they’d go home in the night. They’d never sleep. And like, they’d get hit if they don’t study. So they can only - I mean if they were raised like that I’m pretty sure they’ll pass on [the same] work ethics to their kids. And Asians always think, ‘My parents worked so hard. The least I can do is do good in school.’ and ‘My parents didn’t come all the way to America for me to fail.’ Carrie, Korean American, 19 years old

Congratulatory yet culturally alien portraits of the model minority mask and tangle the reality of many Asians living in the U.S. and Canada. The model minority also provides a depiction of Asian immigrants as Asian ethnic groups integrating and adapting in the same way. Contrary to the narrow depiction of Asians as model minorities, Asians vary significantly across socioeconomic statuses and integration pathways. The respondents in this study talked about the differences among second generation Koreans, especially those who grew up in large Korean communities. Dennis is a Korean American who experienced both inner city and middle class suburban schooling and lifestyles. He witnessed large numbers of Korean American youth that mobilized downward.

In the following quote, he talks about the various individual, cultural and structural restrictions that youth living in inner cities experience across ethnic/racial groups. He also brought up factors for adaptation for second generations, such as parents being unaware of SATs. Dennis challenged the stereotypical view that Asians are culturally programmed or biologically endowed to behave as a model minority.

All my kids in the inner city, or all my friends in the inner city, I think about 30 percent of them go to college. Most of them went to the military. They don’t turn out right. I’ll tell you why. There’s no incentive to go to school. Parents don’t give a crap. Parents that do care send them to hagwan [tutoring]. … Kids at public high schools in suburbs and stuff, if you cut class where are you going to go? Seriously. In the city, you cut class you can do anything. I remember once when I was young all my
friends were always going, ‘Oh yeah, we’re running from the Ds. We’re going to go to PC Bung [internet café]. We’re going to smoke up.’

… It is a bunch of kids just like you. Struggling. You know, you got – they probably got a single parent or two parents working 24-7, minimal wage job. They can barely look after you. You’re out all the time doing god knows what and you don’t go to school. Parents don’t even know what the SATs are. They don’t know about grades or school. How the school system works. All they’re concerned about is having you live even like 1 percent better life in America than in Korea. And these kids are like – they just dig themselves deeper. They build up juvey [juvenile] records, criminal records. They go to jail. They murder people. They stab people, you know. It just gets ridiculous. And by the time they hit college age they’re screwed. They’re screwed. I can say that a lot about my friends. They’re screwed. And it’s just sad to see that cause at that time they had no option. Like even if I was in that position at that age, I wouldn’t have found the self-motivation to study and like keep straight. That’s so hard to do. It’s really hard. *Dennis, Korean American, 19 years old*

Dennis’ quote suggests that social and economic circumstances affect Korean and Asian youth in the same ways and to the same extent that it would affect youth of other ethnic and racial backgrounds. He talks about Korean Americans unlike those illustrated by the model minority stereotype, which narrowly defines and therefore masks the various lived experiences, assimilation paths, and identity issues of Asians in The U.S. and Canada.

Conflicting images of the model minority also present hardships and issues for supposed “model minorities” -- those who feel that they fit the model minority stereotype by entering college and aspiring towards a career in the professional fields. Many of the participants felt that the model minority accurately described them although they did not want to take part in reinforcing the stereotype. Others felt that the stereotype was positive and better than other racial stereotypes but also felt frustrated for being stereotyped or being regarded as a stereotype.

Similar to the results of Tuan’s (1998) study, the perception and the self-identification of either an honorary White or a forever foreigner were neither
dichotomous nor distinct images for the participants. The second generation Koreans of this study expressed feeling like both an honorary White and a forever foreigner at different times as well as within a single occasion. The model minority stereotype seemed to create confusion and dissatisfaction in the way these second generation Koreans, American and Canadian, perceived themselves. Jane, for example, had a hard time understanding herself although she seemed to be well integrated into the dominant U.S. structure and culture.

In college, like I said before, my friends say I’m the most un-Asian person they know because I don’t hang out with a single Korean person or Asian person here. All of my friends are White. Yeah. Hundred percent of them.

… It’s weird walking around campus and seeing a group, a flock of Asian people; a flock of Korean people. Especially if they’re speaking Korean because I’m bilingual and I do speak Korean fluently. So I understand what they’re saying but I’m so out of place. So it’s like, it’s like a double hit I’m always having to face and always having to like work with. And that’s one of the biggest issues.

… Internally, I feel very very Korean… You know, I’m into the [Korean] culture and everything but on the outside to some people or even to myself sometimes I feel like I’m fooling myself sometimes. I’m like living a double life because everything I do is so immersed in like the American culture. Um, it’s kind of like I ask myself, ‘Who are you?’ you know.

Jane, Korean American, 21 years old

Jane felt that she did not belong with Korean American students on campus and she “naturally” integrated into a group of all-White friends. In university, away from her Korean family and her Korean church, she started to forget that she was Korean and started to think that she was White, “just like them”. Jane was starting to feel like an honorary White and felt accepted by her White friends. They regarded her as White or “un-Asian”. Another friend told her that he perceived Asians to be White, which made her feel “accepted, I guess”. At the same time, Jane stated she was proud to be Korean
and identified herself as a ‘Korean American’, although in her recent experience she felt that she was acting White.

Jane’s experience of identity confusion was a common experience for most participants at some point in their lives. For Jane, she was struggling with her sense of self and belonging in her early adulthood. Most respondents struggled through their Who am I? identity crisis in their adolescence. They also interpreted their confused identity as a developmental “stage”. It was common for the respondents to explain their feelings as immaturity and that a lack of identity was a regular part of adolescence. However, Jane’s quote illustrates the fluidity of identity and its relationship to assimilation experiences. Changing senses of ethnic pride, shame, and belonging across social settings were frequent experiences for all the respondents in adolescence and recent adulthood.

As university students, the participants acknowledged that they were well on their way to achieving economic stability, surpassing their parents’ socioeconomic status and moving closer to honorary White status. At the same time, they were continuously struggling with the idea that American and Canadian means Whiteness. They felt that they were American/Canadian but also recognized that they were not White. As a result, they were unable to escape the sense of feeling like a forever foreigner. Each participant addressed and dealt with their struggle in their own way. Most expressions of confusion came from experiences of subtle or covert racism.

Peter talked about one of his recent experiences at an internship he had shortly before the interview:

I think for them [White interns and employers] it’s easier to deal with someone who they can relate to. Or they have different stereotypes about different people in mind. I guess it’s my opportunity to use my job to break those stereotypes. I guess I could have been more forceful at the
meeting and have my opinions heard. But I just didn’t feel comfortable enough. Just didn’t feel it was time to do that. So I just sat back and relaxed and pretended to be the quiet Asian guy who just got [into] accounting and finances. Just sat there with like a blank look on my face. … Was it them being racist towards me? I don’t know for sure, but it kind of felt that way. Not racist but them just being comfortable with themselves and being able to speak to someone they can relate to because I guess I would do the same thing sometimes. Peter, Korean Canadian, 22 years old

Peter’s example illustrates a confusion and frustration over the inability to avoid and dismantle the model minority stereotype. The majority of the respondents made plans to work in a mainstream occupational sector where such situations would draw attention to the sense of exclusion and being a forever foreigner. For the second generation Koreans of this study, the messages and the impressions imprinted on their racial status created confusion not only for their implications or implied meanings but also for their own self-concept.

Through in-depth interviewing, the findings of this study give voice to 31 second generation Korean university students by unmasking the barriers and issues faced by these adult children of immigrants. Listening to the lived experiences of second generation Koreans revealed their macro-level factors, which were interpreted as resources leading to success, and their micro-level factors, which were their ways of coping with specific pressures (some shared and some unique). This chapter discusses the themes that emerged among the entire sample. There were commonly experienced and recognized life events, and although they were structural stressors, they were reconciled through individualized re-interpretations of the events as motivating factors for upward economic mobility. The following three main macro stressors yet micro
motivators are discussed here: family hardships, problems integrating at school, and coming to finding comfort with other second generation Koreans.

The “Hard” Life Experiences of Second Gens: Factors for Mobility

While there were unique elements and features in each participant’s experience of assimilation, there were also three “hard” life events that were commonly brought up. These life events were expressed as not only hardships but also as resources or motivators for economic achievement. Witnessing their parents’ struggles, having difficulty integrating at school, and the complexities in finding comfort from a shared lived experience with other second generation immigrants (although not necessarily Korean) provided the respondents a typology for the second generation Korean American/Canadian. The second generation Koreans in this sample often referred to themselves and other second generation Koreans as second gen.

Not every factor was experienced by every participant; however, they were presented as commonly lived experiences and motivations for upward economic mobility. These three factors seemed to function as key influences on self-concept, especially in planning for future upward socioeconomic mobility and ethnic identity formation. Whether they were experienced or not, the respondents perceived these factors

\[19\] In this document, I use the term mobility to refer to upward economic movement. The immigration literature also uses the term mobility to refer to assimilative movements, which includes determinants unique to the immigrant experience (c.f. Portes and Zhou 1993). For simplicity, I will use assimilation to refer to assimilative movements, pathways and experiences. For example, upward assimilation indicates integration into middle to upper-middle class social class status, and also the White American culture and practice. Co-ethnic assimilation also includes middle to upper-middle mobilization however, not included is integration into the White American mainstream setting.
as important roles in economic and psychological development. The three difficult life events were described as typical second gen experiences.

**Witnessing Parents’ Struggles: “You know, your typical Korean parents”**

There was a period of time when there was just a lot of moving around. So I never stayed in one place for more than a year or two... By [my eighth grade] my parents had gotten a stable gageh or convenience store, but it was in [town]; my parents wanted us to move out there but my dad felt that the education system wasn’t challenging us. So he moved me and my brothers back to [the city].

… It wasn’t too bad, I guess, because, I don’t know. Like I missed my friends or whatever but I understood my parents. They made it easy for us or whatever. And I guess me and my brothers got used to it. We used to always joke around and be like, ‘Oh, when’s the next time we’re going to move?’ But um, we didn’t take it too hard… and we knew the reason why we were in [the city]. Why our parents moved us out there, right? So we did study and we made sure our [school] marks were up there. *Hena, Korean Canadian, 20 years old*

More than half of the sample (18 respondents) recounted economic struggles and hardships. Some experienced family unemployment, poverty and bankruptcy. A common childhood experience associated with financial difficulties was frequent moving across countries, states/provinces, cities and neighborhoods. Among the participants who witnessed their parents’ financial hardships, there were two major reasons for the frequent moves. First, families would move to better school districts or neighborhoods that were more affluent. Ten respondents moved with their families from urban underclass neighborhoods to White middle class suburban neighborhoods. Others recalled that their neighborhood was affluent enough but their parents wanted them to attend a higher ranked school. The second reason was due to failing businesses or unemployment. Others recalled moving because their parents were trying to settle down with a business or job opportunity. The participants that cited the former reason for moving were “grateful” to their parents at the time of interview even if they felt
resentment at the time of the move. When I asked how it felt to keep moving because of their parents’ work, the common response was that of respect for their parents. These children of immigrants felt that their parents were “diligent” and “sacrificial”, instilling in them a “good work ethic”.

Although financial hardships and frequent moves are stressful life events, the participants who endured these events often referred to their experiences as motivation for upward economic mobility. For these second generation Koreans, seeing their parents “struggle” and “sacrifice” for them made them feel that they should also sacrifice for their parents by achieving academic success and making sure to surpass their parents’ occupational status. Some recounted verbal messages from their parents that they should strive for a better occupation with higher status, pay and stability.

When participants talked about growing up in a struggling, financially unstable family, they also referred to their experience as a typical Korean family experience. Participants often stated that a common bond between second generations is a shared lived experience of growing up through difficult economic times. Those whose parents did not experience economic hardship would state that their “comfortable” life was unusual and different from the typical Korean family experience in the U.S. and Canada. For example, Pobae, a Korean American, found her parents were “a lot more Americanized than other Korean parents”. In other words, her parents did not own a small business like most Korean parents. Her father was a pastor and her mother was not employed.

20 Kibira (2002) also found that small business ownership was a common parent occupation among her second generation Korean American interviewees.
Participants whose parents attained a professional career in Canada (one Canadian respondent) and the U.S. (seven American respondents) talked about their parents’ “struggle” in terms of difficulties acculturating and assimilating. Part of being second gen meant that their parents faced the challenges of immigrating to a new country such as learning a new language and adapting to a new culture. It appeared that a common second gen characteristic is to endure difficult times as an immigrant family and to use their struggle as a motivating factor to improve their socioeconomic situation.

_Crazy Korean Parents: The Conception of Extreme Pressure for Academic Achievement_

You know how there’s that stereotype: all Asian kids have those crazy parents that make you study all the time. _Jessica, Korean American, 18 years old_

Having “crazy” or “strict” parents that enforce extreme academic achievement was a typical depiction of Korean and Asian American/Canadian parents. For example, Jane had perfect attendance all throughout her elementary school years because of her parents’ strict views on education. Despite only about one-third (10 respondents) feeling that their parents fit this typification, nearly all thirty-one participants mentioned that their parents’ emphasized to them the value of education. For the few that did not experience any pressure from their parents, they would clarify that their parents were exceptions.

Having _crazy_ parents was referred to as the norm in Korean immigrant households and presented as part of second gen Korean immigrant identity. This was a key element of being second gen and was also regarded as a motivating factor for upward economic mobility. Parents’ extreme pressure on their children’s academic achievement was portrayed as a dedication to better the lives of their families. Alison’s mother used
her situation, which entailed long hours of work seven days a week without benefits, to motivate Alison to focus on her studies. Alison’s mother did not have a university degree and felt that Alison’s future depended on high education attainment.

*Everyday Experiences with Race and Ethnicity: Difficulties Integrating at School*

The [elementary school] student body, I did feel a little discriminated between the older kids picking on me because I was different from the rest. That hasn’t really impacted my mentality or anything like that. It just made me aware that this world sometimes is not fair but like, you can’t really change much. *Bruce, Korean Canadian, 20 years old*

The male participants recognized that it was typical for second generation Koreans to experience ethnic and racially based difficulties integrating into the classroom or school environment. Especially for those enrolled in predominantly White middle class schools with little ethnic/racial diversity, which was the case for Bruce, becoming like everyone else was not easy and the barriers to integration were presented by students, teachers, and administrators.

Many of the male respondents recalled being victims of bullying, engaging in physical fights and not being able to integrate well with their peers. These incidents were seen as racially based as they were mostly instigated by racial slurs being projected at them. Jack, a Korean Canadian, had an especially difficult time adjusting as he was drawing disturbing pictures, getting into physical fights on a daily basis with his peers, and isolating himself from his peers and family during his early years in elementary school. Dennis said that he would engage in physical fights on a daily basis because of racial conflicts between peers. Bruce experienced racism at his school until he moved to a different school in a new city with greater racial/ethnic diversity in the eighth grade. In his first elementary school, Bruce recalls being chased by his peers while being called
racist slurs. Edan and Dennis told me that Asian boys had to stick together as they were the only friends they could make in elementary school.

The experiences of the participants in this sample are far from subtle forms of racism. However, they have come to interpret their stressful life events as caused by immaturity. Bruce believed that his bullies from that school were not racists but merely children who were acting immaturely. None of the respondents felt that they were permanently damaged or negatively affected by their experiences of everyday racism and they did not give their past much thought. Most of the male respondents found that participating in sports helped them to gain acceptance and to develop a network of either all-White or ethnically/racially diverse peers at school. Some integrated with other Asian students at school and coped with their exclusion from mainstream schooling by developing a co-ethnic or co-racial network of friends at school. For all, the early experiences of peer racism were regarded as factors in their integration paths. Early experiences with everyday racial stigmatization cautioned how they made friends and with whom they developed friendships.

Unlike the male respondents, the women in this study more frequently recounted difficulty with their level of sociability in their early years of schooling. A few native-born female respondents brought up in their interviews that they were enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes or held back a grade due to administrative evaluations determining that they lacked proficiency in the English language. They were, however, fluent in the English language. Helen, a 20 year-old Korean Canadian, said “[the school] actually put me in ESL classes because they thought I couldn’t speak English. I knew I was fluent in English it’s just that I was really [shy]. I didn’t talk.”
The female respondents often found that entering school was intimidating and they became quiet and shy in the classroom. The women who referenced their sociability explained they only became less sociable in school.

According to the female participants, the schools misinterpreted their quietness as an inability to speak the language and thus placed them in ESL. It was a common tendency to recount their experience as a positive factor that helped them become more sociable. Statements such as “chatterbox”, “opened up”, and “learned to be more outgoing” were used. These experiences were not considered disturbing or upsetting; nor were they regarded as acts of discrimination. Rather, the experiences were interpreted as misunderstandings of their shyness.

Distinct and Cumulative Gender-Race Experiences

A number of studies on second generation immigrants document everyday experiences with racial stigmatization and discrimination (Lee 2004; Lopez 2004; Qin, Way and Mukherjee 2008; Waters 1996). Lopez (2003) identifies gendered experiences of everyday racism in the workplace for second generation Caribbean Americans. Her sample illustrates gender differences in the way education as a factor towards upward economic mobility is perceived. Caribbean American men observe, based on their experiences, a “job ceiling” by which racial stereotyping prevents them from moving up in their occupations. A perceived job ceiling also formed “doubts that education would protect them from the virulent racial discrimination they encountered even when looking for entry-level work.” Caribbean women, however, found entry into sectors of employment that provided potential for mobility easier than Caribbean men did. As such, 21

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21 This subheading title quotes Lopez (2003:188).
women were more likely to perceive education as an avenue for social mobility. For the Caribbean women, but not the men in Lopez’s study, education is a motivating factor for upward social and economic mobility.

Similar to Lopez, the dissimilar male and female factors for integration at school related to the “distinct and cumulative race-gender experiences” that they were exposed to in their early everyday lived experiences at school. In this study, the males were more likely to recount physical troubles integrating at school through peer conflict. Their method of mainstream integration entailed an enactment of athleticism and sportsmanship. Many of the male respondents identified that their engagement in sports facilitated peer integration and a sense of belonging. Some participants said that they felt more White, American and Canadian after becoming involved in sports at school. For the male respondents, experiences at school were physical and focused on peer conflict and integration.

For the female respondents, there were more recollections about communication troubles such as student-teacher conflicts and difficulties integrating in classroom settings. Females were more likely to recall that their integration at school included either administrative or informal teacher-student interactions to address their shyness and quietness. Although these were recounted as troublesome experiences, they were also regarded as factors that helped their sociability and integration in the classroom. Macro and micro factors for integration at school among the second gens were gendered and racialized ethnic experiences. There are exceptions to the gendered experiences that need discussing. Three female respondents found that their engagement in sports helped them gain entry into the
were perceived to be a common experience at school for second generation Korean immigrants.

**Finding Comfort with Other Second Gens**

The participants in this study often talked about the feeling of comfort when interacting with other second gens because there was an “unspoken” understanding of the lived experiences that typify the second generation Korean immigrant. Understanding or acknowledging experiences of financial hardship, working in a gageh (store), Korean forms of corporal punishment, serving as a translator to parents, and “crazy” strict parents were presented as important knowledge to have in developing bonds with other second generation Koreans. With non-Korean school friends (elementary through high school), participants felt ashamed of their parents and home life. With other second gens, participants felt that they could speak freely about their experiences, and “even be proud” of their parents and their Koreanness.

**Church and Christianity: Subculture Formation**

All participants except one (Caroline, a Korean Canadian) grew up attending a Korean church. Many told me that the friends they made in church were those that have remained throughout the years while school friends have dissipated within short time periods. Many expressed that part of their understanding of what it means to be second gen came from growing up in a Korean church. Although the churches did not give mainstream. For these women, however, they did not encounter physical forms of exclusion and racism. There was also one male respondent who was enrolled into an ESL program although he knew the English language at the time of his enrollment. He recounted his experience as a form of racial discrimination against the Asian students in his school rather than a trouble with his level of sociability.

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23 A common method of integration may have been to Americanize or Canadianize oneself and thus feel ashamed of their ethnic and racial background.
organized or formal lessons on what it means to be Korean American/Canadian, they felt comfortable because they could discuss their lived experiences with others who understood them. They found that their network of church peers provided a sense of membership that was not accessible elsewhere. It was not the religion but rather the informal friendship networks that were formed in Korean churches that provided resources for constructing the second gen identity.

This, however, does not imply that church attendance for second generation Koreans is mainly for social and not religious purposes. The attendance of Protestant and Catholic churches by second generation Korean Americans and Korean Canadians is decreasing and a growing concern according to Korean religious leaders. The “silent exodus” is a catch phrase that describes the perceived decline in adult second generation Korean church membership. Min and Kim (2005) examined second generation Korean church affiliation and attendance in the New York-New Jersey area of the U.S. They reported a decline of approximately 33 percent (although religious leaders estimate a 90 percent decline). While the majority of second generation Korean Americans attends church, Min and Kim’s results indicate that Korean churches are not effectively passing on Korean traditions and cultural ways. These second generation Korean Americans are attending churches predominantly for religious purposes. They also report that attending church for social purposes is less important to them than it is for their parents. The respondents in this study recognized the importance of attending a Korean church in developing a second gen community and culture.

For 28 out of 31 participants, finding comfort through built connections with other second gens seemed to enhance their sense of ethnic pride and their plans for
upward economic mobility. Building connections with other Korean Americans seemed to reinforce motivating factors for upward economic mobility. For example, second gens would meet in the library and “study” together. This was considered a typical second gen behavior that differentiated them from White Americans/Canadians and from “Korean Koreans” (Korean international students or first generation Koreans).

Consequence of Upward Assimilation

Those who did not integrate into a Korean American/Canadian or pan-Asian group expressed a personal struggle in understanding who they were because they had strong Korean family ties but lacked network ties to second generation Korean American/Canadian friends with whom to share their experiences. This seemed to be a negative consequence of assimilating upward. Three participants, Caroline, Jane and Jessica, had all-White friends and no Korean American/Canadian friends. They felt that they were losing their Koreanness and it worried them. The three stated that they grew out of feeling “ashamed” of their Korean ethnic status and felt that they could be “proud” of being Korean. At the same time, however, they felt that they lacked a sense of authenticity since they did not have a group of Korean or Asian friends. They expressed that their feelings of loss had to do with not being able to feel fully comfortable with their all-White friends. Through Korean or pan-Asian membership, they felt that they would be able to develop stronger connections than they could with their White friends. Caroline told me that although her friends were “good” about it, they “could not understand” the experience of growing up in a Korean household.

While Caroline, Jane and Jessica’s economic and social adjustment appeared structurally ideal in comparison to co-ethnically adapted second gens, their self-concept
and sense of belonging seemed more recent and more problematic than the other twenty-eight participants who were members of co-ethnic groups (formal and informal). For Caroline, Jane and Jessica, upward assimilation seemed to be negatively affecting their ethnic self-concept. They told me that being out of their parents’ homes gave them the freedom to engage in more American pastimes such as staying out late, drinking and going to house parties. Although Korean Americans on their campuses were engaging in the same leisure behaviors, they were regarded as a group of people who spent a lot of time studying in the library. The three worried that their deep integration into the dominant mainstream culture was taking away from their academic rigorousness and the work ethic their parents had instilled in them.

These sentiments expressed a significant consequence of upward assimilation that the classic assimilation model overlooks. Their high average and median educational attainment, employment, occupation, income, English language use and low crime rates imply that Korean Americans and Korean Canadians have integrated successfully. However, socioeconomic measures neglect the dynamic ethnic identity/self-concept outcome differences among new second generation Koreans (c.f. Lopez 2003). This sample revealed that a sense of belonging to a subculture of second generation Koreans was an important anchor for an ethnic self-concept.

Summary

The results presented in this chapter extend on the findings of previous studies on second generation immigrants. Ethnographic illustrations of everyday family, school and work experiences for children, adolescents, and adults reveal similar experiences of hardships that appear within themes of financial struggle, parental/generational conflict,
racial stigmatization at school, and everyday experiences of racism at work. In addition to these recurring difficulties, the respondents in this study regarded and discussed their stressful life events in two ways. First were the participants’ reconstructions of difficult and stressful past experiences into positive motivating factors for successful integration, academic achievement and upward economic mobility. Second was the tendency to typify their experiences and define them as “typical” second generation Korean experiences. A subculture understanding of what it means to be second gen seemed to be present for both Korean Americans and Korean Canadians. These defining characteristics were regarded as uniquely difficult experiences, which factored in their and their parents’ diligence to succeed.

This next chapter presents national differences in experiences of assimilation and identity. The emerged theme discussed is the American-Canadian differences in the ways adaptation and integration were experienced and the ways in which identities were forming. These results will identify and interpret a grouped difference in the experiences of assimilation and associated ethnic and racial identifications. In addition to structural conditions, this analysis gives regard to the individual pressures that were key decision-making experiences that led to changes in mobility and identity.
CHAPTER V
RESULTS II: NATIONAL CONTEXTS

The results presented in this chapter discuss the relationships drawn between experiences of assimilation and identity formation by the participants. This section presents descriptive summaries of the respondents’ constructed accounts of lived experiences, views, and interpretations. The relationships discussed here reflect how the Korean Americans and Korean Canadians who participated in this study constructed their paths of assimilation and ethnic/racial identity formation. There were similarities between the American and Canadian respondents in their experiences of assimilation and associated identities. However, discussing the Americans and Canadians separately illustrates the differences that appeared between the two samples.

Both Korean Americans and Korean Canadians experienced clash and conflict between mainstream society and the family institutional practice of Korean culture. However, Korean Americans were more likely to discuss their experiences as Koreans in America hence a hyphenated Korean American identity formation. The Canadians were more diversified in their ethnic identity formation and utilized more multicultural rhetoric to explain their experiences of adaptation, integration and ethnic identity formation. After coding for the experiences of assimilation and associated identities, I found strong
evidence of national differences in the way experiences of assimilation and identity formation were being conceived.

These differences are worth examining and contextualizing within national structures, as they seem to help develop an understanding of the different interpretations of similar assimilation experiences. The results from this study present the distinct national differences in the experiences and constructions of assimilation and related identity formation. Although the experiences of stigmatization, financial hardship, and family ethnic relations did not reveal distinct country differences, the constructions, interpretations, and formations of identity related to the respondents’ experiences resulted in different assimilation-identity relationship typologies.

Table 2 provides the frequencies and proportions of participants’ self-labeled ethnic identity at the time of interview. Nearly all American respondents (13 out of 15) identified themselves as ‘Korean American’. The two alternative American ethnic identities were ‘American Korean’ and ‘Korean’. Please refer to the case summaries in Appendix D for a more detailed description of Taesuk’s identity formation. She identified herself as ‘American Korean’.

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24 For the remaining discussion of results, I talk about Taesuk as a self-identified ‘Korean American’. Although Taesuk’s perspective on her recent ethnic identity as an ‘American Korean’ provided an identity formation different from ‘Korean Americans’, she shared a similar integration path with ‘Korean Americans’ who were well-connected to a co-ethnic network of friends. This decision is further rationalized by Taesuk’s similar use of an ethnic and not racial identity label. The use of ethnic and not racial labels emerged as a major distinction between the two typologies examined in this section of the chapter.
Table 2: Recent Ethnic Identity by Nationality and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>% of Total (n=15)</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>% of Total (n=16)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Korean Am/Cdn</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am/Cdn Korean</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Am/Cdn</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Korean</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar to the American respondents, most of the Canadian participants (11 out of 16) identified themselves with a hyphenated ethnic identity label. However, in contrast to the predominant tendency to self-identify as ‘Korean American’ and not ‘American Korean’, there was a more even distribution for the Canadians. Five Canadian respondents identified themselves as ‘Korean Canadian’. Thirty-eight percent of the Canadian respondents, the largest Canadian proportion, identified themselves as Canadian Korean. All sixteen Canadians in this study were more dispersed than the Americans across identity labels. Among the Canadian participants, two additional racial identity labels were presented. Whereas none of the American participants mentioned a racial identity, two from the Canadian sample identified themselves as ‘Asian Korean’/’Korean Asian’ and one felt ‘Asian Canadian’. Please refer to Appendix D for Eugene’s case summary. He self-identified as ‘Asian Canadian’.

Table 3 summarizes the participants’ most recent experiences of assimilation and ethnic/racial identifications. Categorization necessarily limits the depth of diversity and complexity in participants’ lived experiences. However, by categorizing each participant’s integration and self-concept, I can clearly illustrate an important analytical difference between the American and the Canadian respondents.
Although there were variations in ‘Korean American’ experiences of assimilation, most discussed recent upward and/or co-ethnic mobility. Fourteen out of the fifteen American respondents identified themselves as either ‘Korean American’ or ‘American Korean.’ Seven of these expressed their mobilization towards co-ethnic communities. Two respondents who identified themselves as ‘Korean American’ were experiencing upward assimilation around the time of interview. Three ‘Korean Americans’ talked about experiencing both upward and co-ethnic mobility. Each of these twelve Korean Americans had diverse lives with unique life events that were regarded as factors in their assimilation paths and identity. However, they also shared a common understanding of their relationship between assimilation experiences and identity formation. They perceived and interpreted their integration into either upward or co-ethnic communities or both as a struggle or a culture clash that could be reconciled by forming a hyphenated ethnic identity.
While only two Korean Americans expressed co-racial (or pan-Asian) mobility, most (10 out of 16) of the Korean Canadian respondents did so. Among the ten co-racial mobilizes, three identified themselves as ‘Korean Canadian’, three identified as ‘Canadian Korean’, and one identified himself as ‘Korean’. The three Canadians who self-identified with a racial and ethnic identity were also experiencing co-racial mobility at the time of their interviews. For the Canadian respondents it seemed more appropriate to analyze and discuss their assimilation and identity relationships by their common mobility into co-racial or pan-Asian groups and not their identity labels. The experiences for these 10 Korean Canadians presented a common struggle with developing a clear meaning of what it means to be Canadian and what implications it had for their ethnic identification and sense of belonging in mainstream Canada. Another theme that emerged among those that mobilized co-racially was a tendency to regard their identity as racial and ethnic rather than ethnic and national, which was the case for the American respondents. The next section of results will explore this concept further by utilizing a selection of respondents’ assimilation and identity formation as illustrations of the American and Canadian second gen experiences.

25 The ‘Korean’ respondent did not identify with being Canadian because although he spent most of his life in Canada, his parents were transnational, moving between Korea and Canada, and he did not have a Canadian citizenship. Although he distinguished himself from first generation immigrants and Korean international students, he still felt that he was Korean and second generation, but not Canadian.
Ethnic Korean American Identity and Assimilation: “It’s almost as if I have to decide between the two”

All thirteen ‘Korean Americans’ regarded upward and co-ethnic mobility as distinct and opposing integrations. It appeared that assimilation factors lead to either upward or co-ethnic paths for those who shared the same ethnic identity label, ‘Korean American’. Although three respondents expressed recent experiences of both upwards and co-ethnic integration, they also talked about their struggles fitting in with both the White American community and the Korean American community, which they described as distinct and separate. For ‘Korean Americans’, White American and Korean American communities were perceived as “two worlds”. The factor relating ethnic/racial identity formation to assimilation seemed to be the participants’ focus on living with two distinct groups of friends and social settings. The experience of integrating into both White American and Korean American communities was presented as having lived two lives. Jacob explained his experience growing up as having two sides, his American side and his Korean side: “I think in high school I probably thought of it as two cultures. Like two different sides of Jacob, kind of thing. Like Korean Jacob and American Jacob.”

For the ‘Korean Americans’ that were experiencing co-ethnic assimilation around the time of their interviews, there were two general life experiences. The first, and more common, experience was a shift from upward (middle Class White) to co-ethnic integration. It appeared typical to have only White or “American” friends throughout their elementary and high school years and to self-identify as an American more than a Korean. After enrolling in university, they had integrated into Korean-only groups. Some had separate groups of friends within which they were less integrated. This type of
experience was also documented by Kibria (2002) among her sample of second
generation Korean American university students who became exposed to more Korean
Americans in their school setting. As Joel put it, when the racial/ethnic make up of his
school’s student body and his friends changed, so did his ethnic identity:

I think like in middle school time, I kind of wanted to deny the fact that
maybe I was a little different. So, I wanted, I was more, I even went
through this in my head too, like I wanted to think of myself more as
American when I was younger. But then I kind of identified myself and
even with constant dialogue and this understanding [of] what it is to be
like I guess Korean, or understanding the Korean culture as well. And
knowing that there’s other people like me it kind of reaffirmed like, ‘OK,
it’s OK to be Korean American.’ So I think more towards high school and
definitely in college I had more of like a love for Koreans and identifying
myself as a Korean American. So I don’t think I always thought of myself
as that but I kind of developed that actually.

... towards my tail end of my senior year, I identified myself more as
Korean American and then I think I was still kind of on the fence but I was
just leaning more towards it and then college just very solidified it. Just
totally put me on that side. Joel, Korean American, 20 years old

The second experience for co-ethnic ‘Korean Americans’ was that of unchanged
assimilation paths. Carrie said that she never had White European American friends and
felt she could not talk about what they were like since she did not have any opportunities
to interact with them. Carrie grew up in a large Korean community where her friends
were always Korean American. She explained that her ethnic identity never changed
because she “never had to think outside the box”. By “outside the box”, she referred to
imagining being White.

Once she entered university, Carrie actively searched for a group of co-ethnic
friends. She first interacted with Korean international students but class differences
prevented her from feeling comfortable and integrated. Subsequently, she started
attending a Korean church but found the congregation too serious (“cultish”) and hence
changed churches. There, she gradually formed a group of Korean American friends. Her recent community of Korean American friends did not share a connection based on similar interests or views. Rather, a connection was formed based on ethnic identification. Her university experience exposed her to Korean Americans from different regions of the country with different interests and values. She was surprised to find that some did not know how to speak Korean, did not listen to Korean music, nor did they have other Korean American friends, all of which for her were significant Korean American ethnic markers.

In contrast to Carrie’s experience, Jessica integrated into a group of White American friends. She joined KSA in her freshman year seeking to make social ties with Korean Americans. She believed that she would integrate into the co-ethnic community on campus because in high school she was made aware that it was a common occurrence for second gens. Her lack of co-ethnic integration became confusing and worrisome. Jessica talked to her parents about her upward integration and lack of co-ethnic integration. She felt that it was an issue for her although she did not know why or what it meant.

Jessica did not feel that she fully belonged in her group of White American friends and her sorority. To her, Americans were White, which denied her full access to an American identity. However, Jessica also felt excluded from Korean Americans for being “too White”. In middle school and high school, Korean American students would call her “banana,” “White washed,” and “Twinkie.” Jessica felt the dualism between White American and Korean American. She felt that she belonged to both but not entirely to either. She expressed feelings of confusion, shame and frustration over the
dualism. Without a group of Korean friends while attending university and exclusive upward integration, Jessica was not completely comfortable with her racialized ethnic status. The salience of her racial status can be described by what Kibria (2002:4) identified as “the challenges of race to the ethnic American model”.

It wasn’t, like what I said earlier, at home I had my Korean church so I had like a lot of Korean friends. And I also had my group of White friends. But here it’s like I almost forget that I’m Korean because like I look around and none of my friends are Korean. And I don’t look in the mirror all the time, you know. When I’m out with my friends I just kind of like blend in with them. And so I guess as of now, referring to my freshman year, the only reason that I know that I’m Korean is because my parents are Korean. But everything else has been Americanized, I guess. … I’ve just actually recently been thinking about it because I’d be at a frat [party] or something like that and like I’d like look around, I can’t even describe it because it’s never really happened to me before and like I realize that I’m the only Asian person that I’ve seen all night and there’s been numerous times that’s happened. And if I like see another Asian person, I’m like ‘whoa, that’s weird’. You know? It’s ’cause, like I guess the Korean, or Asian people don’t really dominate the Greek life here.

Jessica, Korean American, 18 years old

In university, Jessica was starting to rethink her racial status. She found herself in social situations dominated by White Americans. She felt as though she could blend in with her surroundings, which reflect the concept of the honorary White. These times were fluid, however, as she would be interrupted with reminders of her racial status. Jessica talked about maintaining her Korean identity while following the path of upward assimilation. She was open to marrying and dating a non-Korean man. She had dated a Korean American for a few years and found him to be overly controlling and difficult.

Although the respondents lived different lives with unique assimilation pathways, they commonly recognized their lived experiences as a struggle to reconcile boundaries between the “two worlds”. All except two struggled with choosing between the two. Those that felt they resolved their dilemma through exclusive and full integration into the
Korean American community appeared more comfortable with their current ethnic status. They, however, felt they were not part of mainstream settings and recognized that their networks were based on co-ethnic ties and not individually chosen characteristics such as interests, values, and attitudes. White American integration seemed to generate feelings of exclusion from both Korean and mainstream communities. Relating this finding to Phinney’s (1990) ethnic identity development model, the American respondents seemed to resolve the clash between the dominant and non-dominant groups by treating them as separate and exclusive communities.

Kibria’s (2002) sample of second generation Chinese American and Korean American adults expressed similar experiences of clashes between the ethnic and the American. She also found that although their identity struggle involved ethnic identity issues on the surface, their influences in identity formation were laced with experiences of racial marginalization or segregation that prevented them from obtaining an American identity. Similar to Kibria’s respondents, the participants in this study expressed hardships in developing and maintaining an ethnic American status. Although most identified themselves as ‘Korean American’, they still had trouble in maintaining a complimentary and harmonious integration between the two worlds.

Unlike Kibria’s respondents, however, the Korean Americans in this study were in the midst of struggling with integration into these two worlds. For the second gens that were recently experiencing co-ethnic integration, their common expression was a larger sense of comfort with their new groups of friends. What may be different for this sample of second generation Korean Americans born in the 1980s, compared to Kibria’s older cohort, is an access to a larger network of Korean Americans in which to integrate.
A larger second gen network may offer strategies for coping with exclusion from American and Korean communities.

Benjamin, a 22 year-old Korean American, speaks of his development of the ethnic American model through his involvement and leadership in his second generation student organization on campus.

So I realized that, coming to this university, that there’s so many different like, there’s Chinese American student association, Taiwanese, Indian American. But why is it unique for you to be Korean American and I think I was able to coalesce the different issues that are going on in Korea, such as the North Korean incident and stuff like that. … And so being Korean American gives you the ability not to just to say, ‘oh we’re Korean. We serve the interests for our community.’ But we have the ability to change because we’re American. So being American gives you that hook to participate in society but being Korean gives you individualized interests that you can work towards, I think. Benjamin, Korean American, 22 years old

Kibria suggests that a thick ethnicity for second generation Korean Americans of the third wave of immigration may be forming. A thick ethnicity refers to an institutionally and culturally denser co-ethnic community within schools, churches and neighborhoods. A deep integration into a thick second gen Korean American community can form a sub-culture in which members feel more comfortable and confident living as minorities in the U.S. The Korean Americans that had not fully integrated into the Korean community had an alternative option, which was to mobilize upward in the White American community. These two common patterns of integration and identity formation reinforce the dualism between White and Korean American integration and the sense that respondents felt they must choose between the two mobilization paths since they did not perceived integration into both permissible.
Racialized Korean Canadian Identities and Assimilation Experiences: “It’s really hard to say what makes you Canadian, eh?”

Unlike the experiences of the Korean American respondents, the Canadian second gens provided multiple labels for ethnic self-identification. The Canadians tended to define themselves in different ways, both ethnically and racially, while also having more alternative paths of assimilation than the American respondents. For example, some Canadian respondents (but none of the American respondents) formed racial identities and had integrated into co-racial communities rather than a Korean-only co-ethnic community. While the majority of Korean American respondents (60 percent) were experiencing co-ethnic assimilation around the time of interview, most of the Korean Canadian participants (63 percent) appeared to be following a path of co-racial assimilation. Most of the Canadians in this study’s sample expressed recent experiences of assimilation into a Chinese-born Canadian (CBC) community or an ethically and racially diverse group of second generation immigrants that were predominantly Asian. I categorized this as co-racial (or pan-Asian) rather than co-ethnic assimilation as the latter pertains to Korean ethnic friends only.

Helen, for example, was experiencing a multicultural assimilation and identified herself as a ‘Canadian Korean’. Most of her friends were second generation immigrants like herself, many of which were Asian but not necessarily Korean. Growing up as the daughter of 1.5 generation Korean immigrants, speaking mostly English and engaging in mostly Canadian everyday activities, Helen found herself quite comfortable being Canadian. Until one year prior to the interview, Helen would always tell others she was Canadian. She was often confronted with the response, ‘where are you really from?’,
which she found frustrating. Helen maintained the belief that race was not important and that “people are just people” although others would still make her race and ethnicity a prominent status marker. Helen was open to dating men of any ethnic/racial background but also sympathized and considered her parents’ desire for her to marry a Korean man. It had been difficult for Helen to deny her ethnic background and in her second year in university, she was actively seeking out her Koreanness.

Jeffrey always thought of himself as Korean and stated that he never really felt Canadian. At the time of the interview, he had recently expanded his ethnic identity from a ‘Korean’ to a ‘Korean and Asian’ identity label. Jeffrey did not make friends with “Canadians”. His friends, even at the time of interview, were always second generation immigrants like himself but not necessarily Korean. His closest friends at the time of interview were non-Korean second generations (Polish and Vietnamese). His recent change in ethnic identity came mostly from his lack of comfort interacting with first generation Korean immigrants (or Korean international students). For Jeffrey, he found that his membership with second generation Canadian immigrants came from having the same “struggles and stresses” from growing up in an immigrant family.

Jeffrey never fully integrated himself into his Korean church. Nor did he develop a close group of second generation Korean Canadian friends. At the same time, he did not integrate into Canadian culture with Canadian friends. He told me that he acculturated into a second generation immigrant culture. Jeffrey seemed to be mobilizing co-racially and related his experiences to the formation of a racialized ethnic identity. He framed it as an expansion of his Korean/ethnic identity:

I don’t think now it’s like I was Korean [and] now I’m Asian. It’s more like I’m still Korean but it’s just like… expanded.
… I feel like I can relate better to other Asian cultures better than some of these, some of the first generation Koreans I would say. … I think no matter what kind of Asian you are, or like another European, it doesn’t matter, you’re coming to a foreign country, right. So your parents, it’s just like how you were brought up. The different stresses your family has. It’s all similar. You’re all working up from a lower class. You don’t know much English. It’s just like a lot of hard work. But I think I relate better to second generations than like first generation Koreans. Jeffrey, Korean Canadian, 18 years old

On campus, Jeffrey was experiencing greater success integrating with other second generation non-Korean immigrants than with first generation Koreans. “Expanding” his identity from ‘Korean’ to ‘Korean Asian’ was a response to his assimilation experiences. Forming a racialized ethnic identity symbolized his similarities and sense of closeness to other second generation immigrants, which was influenced and validated by his sense of distance from first generation Koreans. His identity formation reflected the lack of a sense of belonging with first generation Koreans and his feelings of detachment from Canadians as well. Jeffrey’s identity transcended racialized notions of pan-Asian identity to encompass all second generation immigrants. An ethnic and racial identification signified his new self-concept.

Eugene also identified himself with a racialized ethnic label, Asian Canadian. He seemed to recount his integration pathway clearly, including some deliberate decisions he made about the groups in which he chose to integrate. During his elementary school years, he remembered integrating with mostly Black Canadians. In middle school, he started to notice that he was “distinctly Asian”. He and his sisters were known as the “Chinese people” at school and although it was light-hearted labeling, his Asianness felt ever-present. He and his sisters were “always the others”.

94
Once he entered high school, which was an affluent, prestigious and predominantly White secondary school, he was exposed to more Korean students (second, 1.5, and first generations). He decided to develop close ties with the Korean students while at the same time maintain popularity among the high profile White students to further his career opportunities in the future. He maintained friendships with non-Korean (White, Black and other Asian ethnics) friends throughout high school. However, he felt most comfortable with his close-knit group of second generation Korean friends. In university, nearly all his friends were second gens.

For Eugene, it was important to maintain a balance and separation between his White professional self and his Korean personal self. He found that for a successful career, he needed to be well integrated into the White/Canadian work domain. However, to be a successful person, he felt that he also needed to know his heritage and embrace it. He felt uneasy about keeping his professional and personal sides separate; however, he strongly believed that a successful career in his future profession meant acting White and not “shoving [your ethnicity] in his face”. It was also important to him that after he had achieved his career goals, he would seek out his Korean side by learning the language and history by visiting South Korea. Eugene was dating a Chinese woman at the time of interview and had mostly dated White or Chinese women. However, he wanted to marry a Korean woman to maintain membership in the Korean Canadian community. Although he was experiencing co-racial assimilation at the time of the interview, he was also constructing a path towards co-ethnic assimilation.

Canadian respondents shared similar experiences to those of the American respondents in terms of exclusion from mainstream settings and struggling to belong with
non-Korean friends. However, they seemed to be utilizing a model of multiculturalism, which in its definition includes the recognition and tolerance of diversity. This is unlike the ethnic American model in the U.S. where racial relations seem to entail greater stigmatization of racial status and identification. While experiences of racial marginalization and segregation are still persistent in both countries, Canadian respondents seemed to use multicultural Canadian rhetoric to interpret their experiences and to form their identity.

Summary

The variable and individual characteristics of the relationship between assimilation and identity are essential factors for understanding paths of integration and identity formation. Figures 1a and 1b are illustrations of the social settings and communities in which the participants of this study experienced integration and identification. The American respondents discussed a strong understanding of a second generation community, which implied a development of a thick second generation ethnic community. The two opposing worlds, White and Korean, are located on opposite sides of the second generation setting. They were the focus of integration and exclusion for the respondents, which seemed to lead to a larger and thicker formation of a second generation hyphenated ‘Korean American’ identity. Only a couple respondents discussed multicultural and Asian integration, which are located beneath second generation settings. The overlapping of circles indicates the fluidity and sense of simultaneous inclusion in multiple communities.
For Canadian respondents, the social settings are closer together with more fluidity and sense of inclusion in multiple settings. The Asian social setting is larger than the second generation as it was the main focus of integration and identity formation for the Canadian respondents. A strong sense of second generation identity was maintained; however, integration was more pan-Asian and diverse for Canadians than it was for...
Americans. The White and Korean social settings are also located on opposing ends as the Canadian experience also projected the notions of “two worlds”. However, reconciliation of dominant and minority integration was more commonly resolved through methods of co-racial and multicultural integration rather than a thick second generation co-ethnic community development.

The Canadian respondents were more open to racial identification, thus exposing, practicing and celebrating more of their non-dominant values in “mainstream” Canadian society. Asians in Canada have greater political and economic presence compared to Asians in the U.S. (Bloemraad 2006), which may provide looser and possibly less stigmatizing identity classifications. Racial minorities in Canada may feel that their racial status does not impede on their national membership as much as it does for racial minorities in the U.S. Canadian respondents appeared to reveal stronger national identity through the use of multicultural rhetoric, which implies tolerance and diversity. However, Canadian experiences included exclusion, racism and discrimination from and within mainstream social settings, similar to American experiences, which prevented the second gens from fully integrating with Canadians even with the use of the multicultural model rhetoric. Because they were not fully permitted to participate in the multicultural model, similar to the way American respondents could not fully utilize the ethnic American model because of the racialized feature of Americanness, Canadians felt unable to fully belong to multicultural Canada. This helps to explain the greater tendency towards co-racial rather than multicultural integration for the Canadian respondents.

Both Canadian and American respondents utilized the rhetoric of models that provided the greatest amount of inclusion into mainstream society: the ethnic American
model and multicultural Canada. However, their experiences of racialized social exclusion clashed with the ideals of the models. It appeared that the inability to wholly coalesce experience with definition created an obstacle in the formation of an ethnic identity. The dissonance between experience and rhetoric also resulted in feelings of confusion and frustration for the respondents.\textsuperscript{26} It appeared that neither U.S. nor Canadian rhetoric was openly receiving of second generation Koreans from the new wave of immigrants.

The next chapter discusses the respondents’ experiences of gendered ethnicity. The relationship between assimilation and ethnic identity formation cannot be fully understood without the consideration of gender constructs in dominant and minority settings. The conditions of gendered ethnicity align with the social constructionist model in which one’s gendered and ethnicized self-concept are fluid and circumstantial. In the final chapter of results, I present and interpret the gender differences in ethnic identity formation for second generation Koreans.

\textsuperscript{26} This finding is similar to the preliminary findings of Zhou and Lee (2007) of Chinese Americans.
CHAPTER VI
RESULTS III: GENDERED CONTEXTS

Ethnic identity formation for men and women are experienced differently because gendered norms and roles interact with ethnic and racial perceptions of self. Interpretations of experiences are influenced by perceptions of gender norms, roles and stereotypes. For second generation ethnic and racial minorities, the formation of identity is significantly involved with resolving degrading racialized gender stereotypes (Cho 2000; Toro-Morn and Alicea 2003). Dominant views of Asians as quiet and obedient are transferred onto gender stereotypes of Asian men and women. Asian men are stereotyped as emasculate, weak and physically less endowed compared to the average man. Racialized gender stereotypes of Asian women depict them as hyperfeminine - untouched by feminism and sexually and domestically subservient to men. Asian men and women in North America, such as second gens, are frequently confronted with the challenge to resolve the clash between their family experiences and the degrading perceptions of their ethnic/racial and gender status.

In order to assess the respondents’ perceptions of femininity and masculinity, they were asked to define what it means to be a wo/man. Similar to the experiences of Puerto-Rican (Toro-Morn and Alicea 2003), Caribbean (Waters 1996), and other Asian ethnic second generations (Espiritu 2003; Kurien 1999), the second generation Koreans in this
sample presented messages of masculinity and femininity that came from their ethnic communities that provided counter definitions to the negative and demeaning stereotypes held by the dominant White American society. The counter values were regarded as their Korean ethnic values, which they viewed as superior to the dominant values of gender equality. These counter values were also conservative and restrictive patriarchal values that were regarded as more responsible than egalitarianism.

When asked to define what it means to be a wo/man the respondents positively viewed the traditional notions of gender that their parents and Korean churches had “ingrained” in them. Many of the participants were Christians and described their notions of gender in biblical terms, which presented a way of constructing their views as superior to the gender practices of other White Americans (similar to Espiritu 2003). Alison suggested that traditional femininity aligned with Christian morals and was preferable and “God given”. For example, women that behaved aggressively were seen as going against nature.

I think that men and women have different characteristics that God posses and together we compliment each other and are able to show the world… are able to represent God, sort of thing. So, for women I think that women are God’s way of showing his tender, more warm, kind of caring side. And something that I’ve always – my views on feminism and women’s rights and stuff I think it’s good that women should have rights and stuff and equal opportunities as men, but for me I don’t think there’s anything wrong with women staying at home with their kids and you know there’s so many people who sacrifice their education their careers and stuff because they feel like they’re called or more comfortable or they need to be at home for the kids to provide that like support. So I don’t know – I think that’s like a God given ability for women to be the caregivers, like the more nurturing aspect of humans. {laughing} Even though guys – even though women can be aggressive and like that kind of thing I think their overall nature is to be like that warm kind of role, I guess. Alison, Korean Canadian, 21 years old
Scott also used Christian messages of gender to explain that a woman’s role is to support men. He also implied that aggressiveness in women is not a desirable trait.

… man is the head but women are the neck. Not to demean men or anything but I think behind a great man there’s a great woman. You know so like someone who really is able to see things that guys can’t, that men can’t. Who can really provide like a different perspective and to be gentle about it too. I think a woman really knows to work around man’s pride.

Scott, Korean American, 20 years old

Within this sample, femininity was perceived as passivity and conservativeness. These characteristics were also important factors in describing the difference between western and Korean women. Western women were described as aggressive and loud while Korean women were depicted as quiet and submissive, which was considered an important feminine quality. Masculinity was defined as taking responsibility for the family. Western men were depicted as lazy, selfish and less interested in caring for their families. Korean men were described as family-oriented, stoic and responsible decision makers.

These beliefs, however, were not a central part of their identity formation at the time of interview; rather, it seemed that the definitions and stereotypes of wo/men and Asians held by the dominant group were more important factors in their recent identity formation. For example, respondents would also describe westerners as more independent and laidback than Koreans. They were also likely to express internalizations of racialized gender stereotypes of Asian men and women throughout their interviews. It appeared that the negative categorizations of western women and men were used to present perceived Korean gendered ethnicity in a light that was superior to western gender practices. In this particular period in their lives, however, they had to find ways to cope with negative racialized gender stereotypes that felt more prominent after having
moved away from the family. The second gens in this study created their definitions of
gender by taking pieces from the dominant mainstream and their understanding of their
ethnic background, which consisted of contemporary Korean society and their parents’
generation of gender practices. While family and Korean community messages were
factors in their gendered ethnicity, messages from the dominant society were also
significant elements that challenged the respondents. Both types of messages provided
positive and negative notions of their gendered ethnic status from which they had to
contemplate and resolve as part of their ethnic identity formation.

Most of the men referenced the *Asian male disadvantage* – the stereotype that
Asian men are weaker, less attractive and less desirable than the average man. However,
American and Canadian males differed in the way they interpreted the stereotype.
American males viewed their position in a more positive light than the Canadian males.
All the men identified with Korean values of patriarchy as it seemed to promote their
gender status when otherwise they were disadvantaged to men of other races. The
women were more likely to think about both their gender and ethnic statuses when they
were in family settings and when they were interacting with men. Whereas the American
females discussed their gendered ethnicity in the family setting in regards to their
mothers’ ultra-conservativeness, the Canadian women’s accounts were of their
experiences receiving harsher treatment because of their parents “traditional” views of
gender. While there were other experiences of gender salience that the participants spoke
of, this discussion of results focuses on the times when the respondents felt that the
interaction between gender and ethnicity was prominent. This chapter of results focuses
on the social settings that reflect gendered ethnic identification.
Resolving Stereotypes of Asian Masculinity and Femininity

It was difficult to simplify and identify grouped patterns of gendered ethnicity because all the participants talked about these experiences at some point in their interviews. By focusing on the segments of interviews where the respondents emphasized the interaction between gender and ethnicity, I found notable differences between Americans and Canadians. National differences were observed in the way respondents were interpreting their experiences and identity in similar types of social settings. The American respondents seemed to project less negativity towards their gendered ethnic experiences while the Canadian respondents recounted the same types of situations, but with greater focus on the stigmatization and marginalization of their experiences.

Second Generation Korean Men’s Account of Asian and White Masculinities

Among the entire male sample, engagement in team sports seemed to enhance their access to mainstream society. Similar to the findings of Barajas and Pierce (2001), the respondents who participated in sports found that they made more American/Canadian friends. The respondents in this study felt that they integrated with Americans and Canadians the most in sport settings. For the American male respondents, however, they spoke particularly about the salience of their masculinity and their American identity when engaging in sports. The American males appeared to internalize White masculinity by identifying as American when engaging in American sports. To describe the times they felt masculine they used words such as “athletic”, “powerful”, and “active”.
In sports, American men felt that their masculinity benefited them by providing access into a popular mainstream cultural pastime. Basketball and football were emphasized as highly masculine American sports. Doug, a 25 year-old Korean American, was a member of his high school’s football team. In the following quote, he talked about his sense of masculinity and American status when interacting with his team members. He also felt that others perceived him as an American man when he was seen with his teammates, unlike when he was with his Korean friends.

When I hang out with the Koreans [friends] obviously I speak Korean. There’s my pride. So whenever I go like, even if I were at school, in the dorm, cafeteria, even malls, whatever we do. So when either my American friends see me, or like other people see me, they think of me as an international student at that point. Not as a guy, girl, whatever. They see me as a foreigner. But when I’m with my football player friends I’m obviously using a lot of rough words. Being like [a] masculine guy football player. And obviously I’m speaking English to them, right. So, whenever people see me hanging out with them. They think I’m like the out-going guy. Who’s the good football player. Who’s got cheerleaders [who] wanna date him or something like that. So, I feel more like a male when I’m with my American friends, obviously. Doug, Korean American, 25 years old

Doug was especially aware of the fluidity of his ethnic identity as he grew up in a transnational family and spent time living in both the U.S. and Korea. When he spoke about being masculine in Korea, he mentioned being a provider and protector of his sister, mother and female friends. Masculinity was still an important gender marker in Korea; however, being a provider and protector of women, rather than being tough, rude and athletic, made his masculinity salient in Korean settings. Doug conceived the latter set of characteristics to define masculinity in American settings.

Doug also characterized his identity based on the perceptions of the dominant group. In his U.S. high school, his identity was formed based on his perception of how
he was perceived by other American students and not necessarily his Korean friends. It seemed that playing sports provided him a way to maintain high status and acceptance in mainstream settings while also maintaining a Korean pride and social ties to his Korean community on school grounds.

For the Canadian male respondents as well, playing team sports was seen as an avenue into the mainstream Canadian setting. However, they did not regard their experiences in sports as heightening their masculinity or sense of Canadian identity. The Canadian males saw sports mostly as access to multicultural Canadian friends, which was made up of diverse races and ethnicities. Physicality was not equated to White Canadian men only, and thus, engagement in sports did not seem to make the Canadian male respondents feel more Canadian. Bruce recognized that once he started participating in sports, he gained access to mainstream and ethnic settings that helped him feel comfortable interacting at school and at church. Engagement into sports, for the Canadian males, was not a prominent White status marker as it was for the American males respondents.

I started playing basketball in grade 8. That’s when I started to enjoy basketball more. That’s where I met other friends as well. I would never meet these people unless I did play basketball. And they’re great people, right. So I’m really happy that I actually got involved playing basketball, volleyball, and soccer and meeting these people. Bruce, Korean Canadian, 20 years old

For Canadian male participants, a prominent example of gendered ethnicity was the notion of the Asian male disadvantage. This notion refers to a stereotypical view that hyper-feminizes or emasculates Asian men. While this concept was well known to both the Americans and Canadians, the Canadian males were much more likely to perceive their interaction in mainstream settings as accentuating their disadvantaged situation of
being an Asian male. The respondents often referred to dominant views of themselves as passive, undesirable to White women, and weaker or smaller in physical build compared to the average man. These stereotypes were internalized by most of the respondents who provided these views about Asian men as factual information rather than as gendered racial stereotypes. The Asian male disadvantage was salient for the Canadian men in dating, body building, and workplace settings. The Canadian males, compared to the American males, appeared to express a greater frustration over the gendered racial stereotypes held by the dominant society.

The interaction of gender and ethnicity was highlighted for the Canadian males when demeaning stereotypes of Asian men were salient. Ethan, a 19 year-old Korean Canadian, talked about his experiences in the gym. He focused on his racial and gender status when he exercised because he compared himself to other men around him who were larger and non-Asian, mostly White. He felt pressured to become larger and more muscular to compete with other non-Asian males who are perceived to be larger than Asian men.

Yeah, I always think like, ‘Dang why do I got to be Korean? I got like no genes in me. It’s going to be so hard to get jacked.’ And like, ‘Look at these Caucasian guys. They’re huge!’ Yeah, I feel really small in the gym. A lot of when I think about that, I relate it to being you know, Asian. Asian people and Asian guys in general are smaller. And then I just feel like I got to work that much harder to be like him. And like I feel like even in the gym like I, I’m kind of like, ‘Whoa, he’s big’ right? To them… but at the same time I think that they think, when they look at me, they’re just like, ‘Oh look how small he is.’ Yeah so I just want to prove a point and just workout everyday and get big and like ‘I can be like you.’ {laughs} Ethan, Korean Canadian, 19 years old

Another common setting that was brought up by Korean Canadian males was the Asian male disadvantage in dating. The Canadian males were much more likely to bring
up the stereotype of Asian men being less desirable dating partners compared to men of other races and ethnicities such as White, Black, Hispanic, Persian and European. There exist ideas that Asian men are over-controlling and ultra-conservative (c.f. Pyke 2004). The respondents also mentioned that in addition to the gendered racial stereotypes, Korean men are known to be angry and thus less in control of their emotions. These ideas heavily influenced the respondents into thinking that their dating pools were limited to include only Asian women. Although the male respondents, both American and Canadian, reported that they had dated non-Asian women, they felt that “it didn’t count” or that they were an exception to the norm. The Canadian males framed their disadvantage in the heterosexual dating world as the realities of racial stratification.

Albert, a 22 year-old Korean Canadian, refers to a “hierarchy of races” in dating and points to the disadvantaged status of Asian males within this hierarchy:

> I have this one other friend, he’s a frat and he’s a Chinese kid. And this frat’s like all White and he just made the comment a couple of weeks ago. My friend is interesting but I mean, we were in a sorority/frat [party]. He just made a comment out of the blue and said, ‘if I was White I could clean up’.
> 
> … Alright, so – girls usually have like a hierarchy of races. You might find this interesting. But they usually have a hierarchy of races, even like the Asian girls here. And so usually at the top it’s White guys, and then low levels is like Asians. This is for the Asian girls. Asians then like say like browns, same thing with - black is, black is like if you want to rebel. Like my cousin, she goes out with black guys but I mean she’s really, she’s really out there. She, she dealt drugs and yada yada yada but. So it's like if you go out with black guys you’re more rebellious right? So that’s the hierarchy he was just saying, ‘If I was White I could clean up.’ And with White girls it’s kinda like the same thing. *Albert, Korean Canadian, 22 years old*

In addition to the Asian male disadvantage, the male respondents also commonly understood the ranked status of female dating partners by race. White women were most desirable because they were seen as the most difficult to date and conceived as least
desiring of Asian men compared to all other races. Next, the male respondents framed East Asian as most or second most desirable. Other races and Asian ethnics followed and were considered the least desirable dating partners. For the Canadian males, racially and ethnically stratified perceptions of desirable dating partners played a significant role in their identity. Many of the men spoke freely about this issue with their friends, who were often from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. They were also likely to change themselves in order to counter the negative stereotypes placed on them as undesirable partners. Eugene’s female friends told him that Korean men are perceived as angrier than the average man. To challenge the angry Korean man stereotype, he watched his anger and made sure not to ‘fit the stereotype’.

It seemed that both the American and Canadian males internalized the demeaning stereotypes of Asian men. Racialized gender stereotypes were obligatory components of their sense of masculinity. For the American males, the times they felt like a man coinced with the times they felt more American or were engaged in mainstream settings, such as participating in sports or sports related activities. For the Canadian males, the times they thought about their masculinity and their ethnicity was when negative stereotypes of Asian men were made salient in mainstream social settings, such as in body building, dating and the workplace. The engagement in sports and the Asian male disadvantage illustrate the image of masculinity as aggressive, easy going, physically large, and White. The American male respondents expressed less frustration with the negative stereotypes and utilized their participation in mainstream settings as access into White America. The Canadian males, however, found that their disadvantaged status was made salient in mainstream Canadian settings, forming
frustration and adding to their sense of confusion over their national identity and the meaning of Canadian.

Patriarchy and Masculinity in the Home

While it seemed that the American male respondents seemed more comfortable and less frustrated in mainstream settings, they shared common views with the Canadian males to prefer patriarchal rules and ideology, especially in the home. Among all the male respondents, the gender norms and roles in the home were “responsible” and fit well with Christian values and definitions of men and women. Patriarchal roles (i.e. male breadwinners and female homemakers) did not seem to be the practice in mainstream settings to these second gen men. Among the entire sample, a key distinction between Korean-ethnic and mainstream households was the extent of patriarchy and gender inequality being practiced. The men regarded greater conservative patriarchal values and gender inequality in the home to be more responsible and functional practices of gender norms and roles. For example, Eugene felt that men should be given greater provider and protector responsibilities. He viewed women who aspire for career success as irresponsible and their focus should be on supporting the family. Eugene felt that Canadian gender practices were less responsible because he saw men and women being treated equally in mainstream society. He believed Korean practices to be more responsible uses of gender norms and roles.

[The] Canadian side… I think this side is a lot more equal, egalitarian. I think it’s sometimes very irresponsible - the lack of difference between men and women.

… There’s a distinct difference between men and women and then you just treat them the same it just…

Like the tall tale male-female difference, like man being assertive and women being reserved, I think that’s a universal trait. I don’t know if it’s genetic or if it’s culture or whatever it is. Like it hasn’t even been
answered in anthropology but it’s just there is a difference between the way men and women act and psychology and everything.

… Women are just born more emotional or more irrational. I’m not going to say irrational because that’s not true but in a more like intuitive metaphysical sense, men are just like straight, direct, right? What you see is what’s there. What you don’t see isn’t necessarily there. I guess in that way I recognize that difference that Koreans, Canadians, anyone, like this whole world recognizes the difference.

… I think a median between both choosing between Korean and the way Koreans and Canadians treat men is – they’re both sort of extremes to me and I sort of choose the middle ground of that. *Eugene, Korean Canadian, 23 years old*

All the respondents commonly shared the perceived ethnic differences in gender norms that were expressed by Eugene. It was often stated by the entire sample that American and Canadian women are louder and more aggressive than Korean women. The male respondents felt that American/Canadian women are as capable, driven and motivated as men to succeed in the paid labor force. This, however, was conceived as an irresponsible and selfish desire for women to aspire towards. They felt that the sacrifice their mothers gave to their family and their husbands was responsible and complementary with feminine norms and roles.

It also seemed that the men experienced and benefited from a privileged gender status in the family unlike the racialized disadvantage they experienced in mainstream settings. Rather than constructing notions of gender based on ethnic identification, the respondents constructed their ethnic identity as “more Korean” based on their constructions of gender. While there was a tendency for the male respondents to feel “somewhere in between” Korean and American/Canadian views on gender, most of the men felt closer to the “Korean” side of the continuum of patriarchy.

The men seemed to construct a preference for patriarchal notions of gender due to their advantageous situation in the home. Having relatively more conservative notions of
gender constructed from within family practices, the male respondents seemed to conceive their ethnic identification as more Korean. Although American or Canadian settings are not egalitarian, the male respondents (and female) overwhelmingly felt that American/Canadian families were fully equal, or even “too equal” as one respondent stated.

The second generation men described first generation Korean men their own age as wimpy, spoiled, uptight, and bad tempered. However, they would often use their image of their father - older first generations - to describe masculinity. The second gen men felt that masculinity meant responsibility, consistency, persistence as well as being a protector and a leader. In their families, the male respondents were given more responsibilities, decision-making power and privileges over their mothers and sisters. Upper status and preferential treatment in the home was considered advantageous for the male respondents. In relation to the Asian male disadvantage, the men felt they attained more power, status and privilege in Korean society and in Korean ethnic settings. Benjamin recalled the feeling of respect for his father, which was set up within the culture of their family. He planned to carry on the same family practice in his family of procreation:

I think men should also have an aspect of leadership within them. This is not like sexist… you know in a family when you think about it – I don’t even think it’s like gender stereotypes but it’s just like a natural… in my head where like when they say ‘man of the household’ it’s just truly man of household. When a man enters the room, when a husband or a father enters a room, he sets the tone. I would always remember growing up, if my dad didn’t have a good day at work and he entered the house, the mood would go down, you know? It’s just really important to have that leadership to make sure that your family is like in a good environment and your children and your wife are responding positively to the mood that you sent. I think that leadership entails a higher sense of responsibility
that you're going to have to move and act to higher standards to lead your family. *Benjamin, Korean American, 21 years old*

The women respondents also perceived patriarchal practices in the home to be responsibly gendered and functional for the well-being of the family. Their experiences, however, were not one of privilege and power in the family. The female respondents found their gender and their Korean status salient when interacting in ultra-conservative gender roles or when comparing their values to that of their mothers.

*Second Generation Korean women’s Accounts of Conservatism and Femininity in the Home*

The female respondents in this study also felt the salience of gendered ethnicity in their family settings. Second generation Korean men received privileged status and treatment in the home. Second generation Korean women, on the other hand, focused on their parents’ ultra-conservatism and strict treatment of daughters. The American women focused on mainstream-Korean differences in gender when they thought about their mothers’ attitudes and behaviors. The Canadian women, however, focused more on the restrictive treatment they received from their parents because of gender inequality.

The women raised in the U.S. did not express a perception of stricter treatment from their parents due to their gender, but they recognized this as common practice in the Korean family. The American female respondents identified the interaction between gender and ethnicity in their family settings through the conservative values held by their mothers and Korean women in general. The female respondents commonly depicted Korean women as ultra-conservative, which was a major distinction from their own and Americans’ values and attitudes. In this sense, nearly all the U.S. women identified themselves as more American because they viewed women’s roles as extending beyond
the homemaker. However, they distinguished themselves from “American American” women by describing them as overly aggressive (a perceived masculine trait) and lacking in family values. As was the common pattern for all respondents, the American female respondents identified themselves somewhere in between American and Korean in terms of gender conservatism. Their description of an ideal woman was one who assumed financial responsibility with an emphasis on caring for her family – children and husband. Taesuk describes below:

… When I think of a Korean woman, the image that pops into my mind is really like a housewife. Someone who really really attends only to family needs. And then when I think of an American woman I think of, you know, corporate America. Like a woman in a suit, taking over Wall Street.  
… A woman can set goals for herself just as well as men. They have the freedom to be ambitious but then I feel like they also have an obligation to really hold the family together. Whether it be the mother or even the head of the household. I feel that they have that strong, or the big responsibility of keeping family together and connected all the time.

_Taesuk, Korean American, 19 years old_

Unlike the American respondents, the Canadian women commonly described their parental discipline as sexist. The daughters were described as being restricted from having freedom and the same opportunities that Canadian daughters were given by their parents. While both the Canadian and American respondents identified the same distinctions between Korean women and Canadian women, the Canadian sample focused on the unfair treatment they received from their parents due to their gender. The concept of gendered ethnicity to them was about their experience of growing up in a Korean household rather than forming a balance between achieving occupational success and caring for the family, which was the central concern for the American women.
Lucy, a second generation Korean Canadian, expressed a greater desire for independence from men and the freedom to experience life outside of the home. The Canadian women seemed to view greater diversity in women’s roles and thus fell further from the traditional notion of gender, which was conceived as the Korean way. In the quote below, Lucy explained her understanding of what it means to be a woman and expressed that her opinion deviates from the views held by her parents and from what was practiced in her home. At the same time, she found that she continued to maintain more traditional practices of gender, which, for her, added to the difficulty of internally resolving culturally different views of gender. As the multicultural Canadian model represents ambiguity in the meaning of Canadian, so does the model present difficulty in determining preferable gender norms and roles.

What it means to be a woman? I guess nowadays being strong and confident about yourself is important. I guess back then, I guess in the Korean society, I don’t know if it’s still like this or not, even in my household, just cause my parents are traditional still and like it's almost as if females are – it’s a stereotypical thing – having to stay home, cook and clean, take care of the kids or whatever. But I think nowadays it’s more important to get out there and experience things for yourself and not be so dependent on a guy, I guess. So I guess being a woman is being independent, being able to do things for yourself now and not always having to rely on someone else. {laughing} Lucy, Korean Canadian, 20 years old

Alison is a second generation Korean Canadian woman who found that growing up in a Korean household strongly affected the way she perceived the intersection of gender and ethnicity. A resolution between the practices of gender in her dominant and minority settings was developed by coming to an understanding of Korean gender conservatism by way of the Asian culture of shame. Rather than a gender issue, Alison concluded her parents’ strictness as instilling in her honor.
I know for me growing up being the oldest [and] being a girl in a Korean household I was not given opportunities. My parents would stop me from doing things I would see my other friends doing. Even sleepovers and stuff like that they wouldn’t want me to do that. I really didn’t understand that when I younger but I feel like that Korean women/girls are more sheltered or protected or something. Restricted? I think it’s more like a negative kind of thing like we aren’t given, allowed to be as free as my White friends, or something.

… Cause Korean culture is basically or Asian culture is shame culture so they’re talking about the desire or the requirement to save face or have dignity and that kind of thing. I think it puts more pressure on us but it could also be a good thing. Alison, Korean Canadian, 21 years old

Although Alison’s feelings toward her upbringing were not fully resolved, it appeared that she had attempted to understand her parents throughout the early years of her adulthood. Rather than resenting the way they viewed femininity and thus parented her, she was beginning to perceive the value and benefit of the Korean parenting style. The conservative views of femininity were simultaneously perceived as unfair sexist treatment to daughters and as understandable parenting that prevent daughters from becoming overly aggressive and lacking in family values. However, the Canadian females emphasized that they did not agree with the way they were raised and believed they were able to become responsible women without the strict parenting.

Lucy shared many of her parents’ Korean values but did not agree with their views on gender, which she described as sexist. Like Alison, Lucy was the eldest sibling in her family. She found that being the oldest child in combination with being a daughter brought on severe restrictions by Korean parents. The treatment of girls and women, under the Korean way, was commonly conceived as undesirable and unnecessary, albeit understandable.

So being Asian on top of that I think it makes it harder just… like a little more in every sense. Being Korean and female, I think it can be confusing because if you, like in my family it’s really confusing because if your
family’s really traditional and they’re really Korean and then you’re born in Canada and you grew up with Canadian society and stuff, the way you’re thinking in society it can clash with what your parents are used to. So it confuses people that way and then because if your parents are traditional they have a role, they have their minds of how a female should be or what they should shouldn’t do, and then that could clash with the way that you think and stuff like that.

… Cause my dad, he’s traditional. So sexist. So he’s a bit sexist as well. So then some of the things that he says, I don’t really agree with. Because sometimes if we get into an argument about something, even my mom, she’ll say, like they’ll often say oh, it’s because I’m a girl. And then they don’t say anything. They’re just like, ya. And then it’s just ended up being like that’s the answer now and I’m like it’s not fair. Or in high school I always thought because I’m the oldest maybe like small things like I should always be out later than my brother, stuff like that, because he’s younger than but then he would be allowed later than I was. My parents weren’t as strict with him about stuff like that whereas, with me if I was 10 minutes [late] they would flip out on me and stuff. So it’s just that way. And then sleeping over and everything too. I was never allowed to [go to] sleep over[s] cause they found it weird that a girl would sleep over at someone else’s house. So that was hard because a lot of my friends they’d be like sleepover, slumber parties, stuff like that! And as a girl you want to do stuff like that with your friends but… my brother was allowed to call at like midnight and be like, come on dad, I’m sleeping over.’ ‘I don’t care about it. Just as long…’ Ya, that was stressful but… you get used to it too. Lucy, Korean Canadian, 20 years old

The American and Canadian female respondents held clearly opposing views on the matter of parenting daughters, as the American women did not recall or mention sexist treatment by their parents. There can be multiple reasons for this difference; however, in light of the two models of assimilation and identity formation, the multicultural Canadian model may be more tolerant yet blurred in comparison to the American ethnic model, which may provide clearer notions of American parenting styles. For example, with the conception of Canadian to include immigrants and their cultural ways, it may be that varied styles of parenting may be tolerated more than in the U.S. The American immigrants may also feel greater pressure to assimilate to White American styles, which, compared to Korean parenting styles, are more restrictive of corporal
punishment, are less controlling and encourage closer parent-child relationships. Many of the American respondents indicated that their parents deviated from the typical Korean parent who strictly enforced high academic achievement.

For the entire female sample, having ultraconservative parents in a dominant society that valued and encouraged progressive gender norms and roles lead to a deviation from the Korean way to a more Americanized value system of gender. It appeared that the American women’s parents were also more Americanized in their messages of gender than the Canadians’ parents. However, all the female respondents indicated less progressive notions of what it means to be a woman. At the same time, the women felt that their more westernized gender notions did not impede on their identifications as Korean. Most of the women felt comfortable interacting in Korean ethnic settings and even preferred such settings over mainstream social settings. This finding is dissimilar to one found in Pyke and Johnson’s (2003) investigation of Korean American women.

*Gendered Ethnic Experiences Interacting with Men*

A commonality found among the American and Canadian women was the salience of gender and ethnicity/race in social settings that entailed flirting, dating, and casual interactions with men. It was a recurrent theme for the second gen women to experience the intersection of gender and ethnicity while their sexuality and attractiveness were being addressed. There was a common knowledge of the “Asian fetish” and the tendency for others to perceive Asian women as hyper feminine and, especially, sexually subservient. Interacting with men became not only a gender issue but also an ethnic/racial concern as their racial status imparted racialized gender
stereotypes, which invoked distrust towards men’s intentions. Most of the women in this study did not find the “attention” upsetting although the type of attention they would receive was disliked. They were aware of the existence of stereotypes about Asian women and clearly understood what these stereotypes were. The female respondents were mostly introduced to stereotypes through discussions with men in mainstream settings.

Jane felt that men assumed that she would hold “typical Asian woman” qualities. She explained that she always felt like an Asian woman yet neither an Asian nor a woman exclusively. This un-detachable relationship between gender and race, as Jane explained, was due to the perceptions of others and the stereotypes that others held about Asian women. Jane also found that much of her development of self was based on breaking these stereotypes, which became a frustrating everyday experience.

I think for me if I’m not with a group of girls I generally get hit on by like White guys with Asian fetishes or like black men. Nothing against that but like they’re like pin-pointing you. You’re Asian, and clearly everyone is not. Most people are White. So once again I’m being called out. I don’t mind being center of attention at all. But that’s a different kind of attention that you don’t want. You know. Then that, you think like ‘Oh I’m being hit on because I’m Asian.’ Because I’m Korean. Well they don’t know that I’m Korean. How does that make you feel?

A lot of girls would say maybe it’s like degrading almost. I wouldn’t be that harsh but it kind of – it definitely turns me off. I don’t find myself attracted to guys who have fetishes for Asian people. Because they’re judging you then on the stereotype of that Asian like submissive passive person, which I would never use to describe myself.

… I think in America it goes hand in hand for me. Not just being a woman but like being an Asian woman.

… the only other thing I can think of is like again with you know the stereotype attached not just to Asian people but Asian women. You know, they’re supposed to be submissive. They’re supposed to be quiet. You know, do what they’re told and they don’t really have a say. Like I said it doesn’t bother me that people think that way but I like to show that I’m not what they think. So then like people say to me a lot, like my friends
they’re like, first thing they say to me is ‘you’re the most non-Asian person I’ve met’. And then like ‘you’re just a crazy Asian girl’. Cause like I do everything that’s against the stereotype of both being a woman and being like [Asian]. Jane, Korean American, 21 years old

These women did not interact with many Korean men and found this type of gendered ethnic experience to be with mostly White American men or Canadian men of various racial and ethnic backgrounds other than Korean. Most women in this study, however, found that interacting with Korean men, regardless of their immigrant generational status, also revealed stereotypical views of Asian women. Second generation Korean women perceived Korean men as more sexist compared to the norm or American men. Carrie, for example, noted that her male friends, who were all Korean, tended to eroticize Asian women and often referred to them as bitches and whores in their casual conversations. Although this practice may be common among men of all races and ethnicities, the female respondents conceived Asian men’s actions to be more sexist, especially against Asian women, in comparison to White men’s actions. Lena talked about the extreme sexism among Korean men in this following quote:

I think it’s really easy for guys to do that. Shoot down a person’s comment just [be]cause it’s coming from like a woman. … Yeah definitely second gen friends but like you just made me think about like Korean guys, oh my gosh, they’re just another story like they’re so sexist it’s not even funny. Like when I’m talking to them I’m like, like little things, like you know the girl has to work in the kitchen, things like that, they actually believe it, like truthfully and I’m just like, why are… like I don’t understand. And like they’ll just like take you as ‘one of those girls’ kind of thing, so I don’t know what’s up with that. I don’t know why Korean guys are like that. Yeah that’s why I kind of want to marry a Chinese guy. {laughs} Lena, Korean Canadian, 21 years old

It was often described during the interviews that Korean men’s ultraconservative views about gender created uncomfortable settings for the women. The female respondents also mentioned that their family experiences, especially observing their
fathers’ views of women, deterred them from entering intimate relationships with Korean men. For example, a common belief that Chinese men are preferred dating and marriage partners over Korean men was mentioned in several interviews. The belief describes Chinese men as more feminine than Korean men. Meaning, Chinese men are said to share household chores, be more attentive and caring of their spouses and be gentler and kinder partners. It appeared that the preference for patriarchal ways that the male respondents expressed was understood by second generation Korean women and commonly perceived as a negative trait unique to Korean men.

This, however, did not prevent the women from feeling less Korean. Their sense of Koreanness was not greatly affected while their identification with being American or Canadian increased. It seemed that, for the women, access to mainstream views of gender was beneficial to their gender status, which in their families’, views of gender were restricting. Although it did not appear to override their sense of comfort in Korean ethnic settings, the women recognized that their perceptions of gender were less patriarchal and traditional than their parents’ and second generation men.

Summary

Unlike the experience documented by Pyke and Johnson (2003), the women I spoke with regarded their experiences in “ethnic settings” as comfortable and even preferable to interactions in mainstream settings such as in classes. However, their understanding of what it means to be a second generation Korean woman appeared to provide an expanded definition of Korean women. The male and female respondents defined second generation Korean men more narrowly than American men and Korean men. It appeared that for second generation Koreans, the experience of living as Asian
minorities in the U.S. and Canada expanded the opportunities for women, while confining and belittling the gender status of men.

When interpreting their parents’ gender lessons, the male respondents had a clearer understanding of patriarchy and described the positive aspects of patriarchy. The female respondents, however, had a difficult time finding the sensibility in their parents’ views on women, although they accepted their upbringing and even found it preferable to the way western parents raise their girls.

A presentation of concluding interpretations and explanations is in the following chapter. The next chapter provides a synthesis of the three major results from the study. Also discussed are the limitations and contributions of this investigation. I also give suggestions and plans for future research to extend this development of the understanding of ethnic identity formation.
CHAPTER VII
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS:
CONTEXTUALIZING IDENTITY FORMATION: LIVING AND LEARNING TO RESOLVE STEREOTYPE, STRUGGLE AND EXCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to further the understanding of the social construction of identity in national and gendered contexts. Contemporary perspectives of ethnic identity address the limitations of classical social psychological explanations of identity development. That is, SI models such as Mead’s and Cooley’s suggest that identity is a psychological process where identity progresses in a linear manner and develops along with age and psychological maturity. More recent perspectives and empirical investigations have shown that individuals change their identification to multiple statuses over daily to yearly durations. The identities that individuals possess, practice and project are dependent on their social settings and conditions. Ethnic identity for second generation immigrants presents a unique set of factors that are introduced in the segmented assimilation model, which I find is a social constructionist interpretation of adaptation and identity formation.

Ethnic identity, for second generation immigrants in particular, is in a constant state of change. These changing states consist of varying degrees of feeling ‘ethnic’ or ‘mainstream’ in different situations. For racial minorities in general, the inability to fully
integrate into the U.S. and Canadian mainstream, despite having been exposed to the dominant culture throughout their development (e.g. in school), creates dissonant senses of belonging and self-concept. Although born Korean, the respondents in my sample were not born and raised according to Korean practices in a Korean society. As such, second generation Koreans, as is the case for second generation immigrants in general, must personally resolve conflicting cultural norms and values as well as demeaning stereotypes conceived in both dominant and subordinate cultural settings.

The purpose of this study was to describe the relationship between assimilation and ethnic identity and gendered ethnic identity for my sample. When talking about these associations, my participants revealed that their identity formation was dependent on assimilative struggles, racially based exclusion and on contemplation outcomes of demeaning racialized gender stereotypes. All the respondents shared experiences of struggle and exclusion growing up in an immigrant family and commonly fit the description of a typified second gen. They also expressed a difficulty in forming a solidified hyphenated ethnic identity, which seemed to result from exclusive messages of Americanness and Canadianness as Whiteness.

Americans and Canadians, however, are struggling with exclusionary messages from two different models of adaptation and membership. One factor presented by the segmented assimilation model is the positive reception of immigrants by government and the implementation of receptive policies. The American and Canadian respondents in this study revealed differing identity labels although their imposed struggles, exclusions and stereotypes were similar. One likely factor in the national difference is the informal message of Americanness that Kibria (2002) identifies as the ethnic American model.
while in Canada there is a formalized message of multiculturalism, which creates an idea of the *multicultural Canadian*. Although they are two different messages, both mainstream depictions of the American and the Canadian are exclusive images of Whiteness, preventing the respondents from feeling fully American or Canadian. Second gens are unable to come to an agreement on their sense of ethnic identity. They experience social exclusion in their country of origin – the U.S. or Canada – while having little knowledge of nor significant ties to South Korea, their ethnicized country of origin. As such, a *dissonant identity formation* appears as common practice for those who cannot find a nation or a culture to which they fully belong.

In addition to the models of national membership, the sample was split by gendered experiences of identity formation. Second generation men and women talked about the gender overlay of ethnicity and how these experiences influenced their identity formation and self-identification. These experiences also added to their challenge in resolving dominant-subordinate conflict and in resolving incomplete feelings in their ethnic identity. In order to understand dissonant identity formation, racialized gender stereotypes are equally important social conditions. The three findings in this study signify the social construction of a dissonant identity among second generation Korean Americans and Korean Canadians. Following the broader conclusions of the three findings in this study, the chapter will present suggestions for future research. This chapter will then conclude with the significance for studying second generation Koreans’ ethnic identity in national and gendered contexts as dissonant identity formation is a possible social problem for children of immigrant parents in both the U.S. and Canada.
Typified Second Gens and Attempted Resolution of the Model Minority Stereotype

An internalization of the model minority stereotype can produce conflicting notions of self as “honorary White” and “forever foreigner,” creating conflicting feelings of wanting to rebel against the stereotype but also to conform to it. The stereotype is used to belittle Asians in the U.S. and Canada who succeed or achieve middle class status in their host society. It also creates sweeping generalizations about Asians that narrowly define them as socially inept in Western culture. Second gens in The U.S. and Canada internalize a description of their race and ethnicity that mockingly caricatures the struggle and social exclusion, as for one, it provides a more positive stereotype than for other racial minorities.

Second gens tend to hold even more demeaning stereotypes about their own race and ethnicity than the model minority stereotype does while they glorify White Americans and Canadians. The positive view of qualities in Whites, such as being easy going, free, and independent, is used to uphold Whiteness while degrading Koreanness and Asianness in general. These qualities are also perceived to be inherent or culturally prescribed in Whites and not in Asians (Pyke 2004). This view feeds into the model minority stereotype that depicts Asians as serious and obedient. Second gens continue to find themselves in a bind. They see that embracing the model minority image offers a gateway to economic and partial assimilative success while also placing themselves into a limited status as the typified Asian who is socially inept and culturally inferior to Whites.
Dissonant Identity Formation: Non-Inclusive Americanness and Canadianness Models

More so than Americans, the Canadians in the sample are expressing a greater sense of belonging to Canadianness such that the Canadian national identity proclaims multiculturalism and an immigrant, diverse, and multiethnic society. At the same time, they experience frustration over the ambiguity in the meaning of being Canadian because dominant group messages of Whiteness and Anglo Saxon ideals as purely Canadian are still prominent. Although there was a common tendency to perceive Canadianness to mean Whiteness, there were also explicit and conscious messages that Canadian referred to tolerance for diversity. Canadian respondents appeared to reveal stronger national identity through the use of multicultural rhetoric, which implies a tolerance for diversity. However, Canadian experiences included exclusion, racism and discrimination from and within mainstream social settings, similar to American experiences, which prevented second gens from fully integrating into the multicultural Canadian model. Similar to how the American respondents could not fully utilize the ethnic American model due to the racialized feature of the U.S., the Canadians were not fully permitted to participate in the multicultural model. Consequently, they felt unable to fully belong to multicultural Canada, which explained the greater tendency towards co-racial integration than multicultural.

Americans expressed a lesser sense of belonging to the American identity; however, they in turn provided a clearer understanding of the meaning of Americanness, which is racially based and defined by Whiteness. Americans appeared to adhere more to the ideals of the straight-line assimilation process. It was assumed that later generations of Korean descendents in the U.S. will become more American and less Korean and so
their identity will also shift to a more American identity. There also seemed to be greater resources or pressures to practice American ways in Korean-ethnic settings, such as the home. In Korean American homes, the focus on traditionally Korean strict parenting practices was less pronounced than what the second generation Canadian respondents’ emphasized.

This could be related to a longer Korean immigration history and a larger Korean population in the U.S. than in Canada. It could also be related to the clearer messages of Whiteness and Anglo Saxon values and practices such as the “American way”, versus tolerance of difference and ethnic preservation as prescribed by the Canadian “cultural mosaic” (Statistics Canada 2003). Asians in Canada have a larger political and economic presence than Asians in the U.S. have, which may foster looser and possibly less stigmatizing identity classifications. Racial minorities in Canada may feel that their racial status does not impede on their national membership as much as racial minorities in the U.S. feel.

With socially diversified housing, even among Korean Canadians (the highest level of segregation among Asian ethnic groups), their assimilation pathways were commonly experienced as integration into Asian or multicultural communities, which allowed for senses of being partially but not entirely ethnic, racial, and Canadian. While ethnic Americanism is not formally implemented by the dominant group, the Canadian government has implemented policies of multiculturalism such as socially diversified housing. The multiculturalism policy, however, does not appear to greatly reduce experiences of racism and marginalization but may form racial communities and co-racial integration and racialized ethnic identity.
Resolving Racialized Gender Stereotypes: Gendered Ethnic Identity Formation

The male Canadian respondents may find that racially specific views of Asians are a commonly shared struggle among Asian males, providing them group membership to a wider network of individuals who have dealt with negative views of their racial and gender status. Identification to a group with larger numbers of members can increase positive self-concept because there are greater variations within the group, providing justifications to dismantle demeaning stereotypes of the group. Witnessing the positive life outcomes of Asians in Canada, especially of the Chinese who have developed large, economically advantageous, and politically active communities, may provide second generation Korean males with positive notions of their racial status to which they can form higher levels of self-esteem and positive self-concept.

The formation of a Korean ethnic identity seemed to serve as a coping strategy for the male respondents to protect them and intercept the negative views and stereotypes of Asian men produced in mainstream settings. The formation or acceptance of a Korean-ethnic identity also seemed to serve as a method of coping with negative gendered stereotypes of Asian women for the female respondents. It appeared that in this sample of second generation Koreans, incomplete acceptance into mainstream society drives both second gen men and women to “embrace” their Koreanness, find comfort and enhance self-esteem by accepting their ethnic status. Although they all expressed a better knowledge of western culture, they could not “deny” their Korean heritage, mostly because it was their minority ethnic status that prevented them from fully assimilating into mainstream U.S. and Canadian society.
Racialized gender stereotypes added to the conflicting messages of what it means to be American and Canadian, which can then become part of the dissonant ethnic identity model. All the respondents felt their notion of gender fell between Korean-ethnic and mainstream gender norms. Their gendered experiences and their conception of gender were highly influenced by the interaction of their ethnic/racial status. The Asian male disadvantage was a significant factor, especially so for Canadian males, in the formation of masculinity and the uplifting of Whiteness or White hegemonic masculinity. The second gen men were well aware of the stereotypes held about Asian men and formed a greater sense of belonging to Korean ethnic practices, which were described as more responsible gender norms and roles. For second gen Korean men, the patriarchal practices in the home were personally gratifying, giving them a sense of male privilege that they were not receiving in mainstream society.

The second gen women felt that western gender practices provided more opportunities for women and thus found they were a little more American or Canadian “in that way”. However, the women were also well aware of the racialized gender stereotypes of Asian women and found it difficult for them to feel fully comfortable in mainstream settings, especially when interacting with men. For second gen women, the identity formation of a second generation Korean woman was a key aspect in accessing greater responsibilities and privileges than other Korean women. Racialized gender stereotypes of Asian women were also internalized by the second gen women, which called for a hyphenated identity to provide the most personally gratifying sense of self.

Canadian male respondents are more receptive of racial inequality and discrimination and Canadian female respondents identify their family life as more
traditionally Korean or more Korean than the second generation Korean American women. Although all respondents were well aware of the racialized gender stereotypes of Asian men and women, the interpretations and internalizations of the stereotypes differed slightly between Americans and Canadians. For young adults it appears that stereotypical views held by the mainstream are more prominent than parent-child conflicts over gender practices, which are found to be of importance for adolescents (Baraja and Pierce 2001; Espiritu 2003; Gibson 1988).

The relationship between assimilation and ethnic/racial identity formation cannot be fully understood without the consideration of gender constructs in dominant and minority settings. The conditions of gendered ethnicity employ the social constructionist model in which one’s gendered and ethnicized self-concept are fluid and circumstantial. Ethnic/racial identity formation for men and women are experienced differently because gendered norms and roles interact with ethnic/racial perceptions of self and others. Lived experiences and interpretations of experiences are influenced by perceptions of gender norms, roles and stereotypes.

For racial minorities, identity formation is heavily consumed with degrading racialized gender stereotypes (Cho 2000; Espiritu 1997; Pyke 2004; Toro-Morn and Alicea 2003). Dominant mainstream views of Asians as quiet and obedient are transferred onto gender stereotypes of Asian men and women. Asian men are stereotyped as emasculate, weak, and less endowed than the average man. Racialized gender stereotypes of Asian women depict them as untouched by feminism and sexually and domestically subservient to men. Asian men and women in the U.S. and Canada, such as second gens, are constantly confronted with the challenge to resolve the clash between
their family experiences and the degrading perceptions of their ethnic/racial and gender status.

The resulting gendered ethnicity for the second generation men and women in this study illustrates the complexity and interacting relationship between gender and ethnicity in identity formation. An additive model would insufficiently interpret or predict a gender difference in ethnic identity formation. According to the ‘add women and stir’ model, Asian men should experience and witness an advantage over Asian women due to their upper gender status. The lived experiences, however, illustrate that living as an Asian man in the U.S. and Canada provides racialized gender barriers and stereotypes that are unique to second generation Korean males.

Suggestions for Investigations: Study Limitations and Contributions

The significant limitation to conducting qualitative methods is the inability to generalize the findings to any larger population. The results of this study are not generalizable to the larger second generation North American population due to the small sample size and the non-random sampling methods that were utilized. Also due to the small sample size, the analysis and interpretation from this study cannot provide predictive power that the comparisons in analysis are actually due to group factor differences. However, the analysis of data for this study achieves validation through the systematic application of theoretical perspectives and themes that emerged from previous empirical investigations (Maxwell 1996). In addition, qualitative studies can have face validity to the extent that the quoted interview material corresponds to the concepts discussed. The reader can make this determination to greater extents than with quantitative research.
Given the small sample size used in this study, emergent patterns in the data are theoretically important but not generalizable to a larger population. These findings may not represent the relationships between assimilation, gendered ethnicity and identity formation for second generation Koreans that are not attending highly ranked universities or that are not pursuing a university degree. This sample also largely represents members of Korean-ethnic student organizations, which could present patterns of ethnic identification dissimilar to second generation Koreans who are non-members. Further investigation is needed to provide some answers to whether and to what extent university students differ from non-students, and members differ from non-members, as well as the larger question of representation.

Whether or not racial or ethnic identity formations have any significant consequential effects on the well-being of second gens cannot be identified in the scope of this study. Future investigations into this matter would provide information on the direction of identity politics for Asians in the U.S. and Canada. Kibria (2000b), for example, suggests that Asian Americans should move towards developing a pan-Asian identity rather than disconnected Asian-ethnic identities. A singular and collaborative pan-Asian identity and agenda, hypothesized by Kibria, would enhance and strengthen resources, political influence and minority self-esteem. Because the results from this study indicate that more second generation Korean Canadians than Americans are forming a racialized ethnic identity, cross-border comparisons may provide more empirical background for the development and direction of such race relations agendas.

However, based on the findings in this study, it is likely that different U.S. and Canadian standards and variables are required to enhance the acceptance and inclusion of
diversity for citizens. As such, a comparison between these two countries is complicated by different factors such as government level reception of immigrants and diversity. Recent variation in their histories of race relations also complicate the matter in predicting and suggesting ethnic and race politics. Although their implications need further investigation, this study provides an illustration of some differences between American and Canadian second generation Koreans.

Future studies should also consider the gendered contexts in ethnic identity formation. This study provided somewhat limited results on gendered ethnicity as it would require more extensive conversations with respondents to tease out the various fluid conditions and circumstances influencing shifts in the salience of identities. The findings here, however, were not short of examples of changing identifications between social settings. Although not well versed in terms of gendered ethnicity or the interaction of gender and ethnicity, the respondents were aware of racialized gender stereotypes and used the stereotypes to form their views on gender and ethnic identity. The consequences of internalizing such stereotypes for Asians living in the U.S. and Canada should be examined further as the gender differences that emerged here suggest discordance between second gen Korean men and women. Most of the respondents desire a co-ethnic marriage, however, internalized racialized gender stereotypes may inhibit second gens from engaging in such relationships.

A follow-up project on Asian male disadvantage could also enhance the well being of Asian communities in the U.S. and Canada. Korean men are stereotyped as ultra-conservative, controlling and sexist. In addition, mostly by Korean American/Canadian women hold these views (Pyke 2004). The second gen men in this
study appeared to choose a more conservative view of gender since mainstream “egalitarian” practices was the source of demeaning messages of Asian men. This particular construction, however, could become problematic as second gen women enjoy the expanded definition of women, which they perceive to be coming from the mainstream. These differences in views on gender could possibly play a role in family and community conflicts for Korean Americans and Korean Canadians.

One future direction from this study will entail an examination of the effect of divergent gender ideology on intermarriage patterns for second generation Asian immigrants. I plan to use mixed methods analysis, using interview data from this investigation and census data. The approach will analyze intermarriage patterns among Asian-ethnic groups. The purpose is to test for significant difference in the rates of intermarriage between Asian-ethnics. For example, are rates of intermarriage among second generation Chinese men higher than the rates for second generation Korean men? Are second gen women more likely to marry non-Koreans than second gen men? Also, do rates of intermarriage differ across generational immigrant statuses?

This study has illustrated the importance of analysis of contextualized ethnic identity formation. Through this investigation, I find that the barriers to assimilation relate to the challenges in forming a complete sense of belonging for second generation Korean Americans and Canadians. More studies are needed to validate and contribute to the models of assimilation and identity formation presented in this study. The results also suggest that further investigation into the validity, impact and consequence of internalizing stereotypes and formation of dissonant ethnic identity is needed. The
findings here, however, provide substantial evidence of dissonant identity formation due to experiences of struggle, exclusion and challenging racialized gender stereotypes.

Contextualizing Ethnic/Racial Identity: Dissonant Identity Formation in Second Gens

Examining the formation of ethnic identity in national and gendered contexts reveals a model of dissonant identity formation that appears to be a prominent challenge for second generation Koreans living in the U.S. and Canada. As the ethnic American model is not applicable to the Asian minority experience in Canada, the Canadian policy of multiculturalism provides a different understanding of acceptance although the factors of exclusion are similar. As such, a multicultural Canadian model depicts an image of diversity while informally maintaining Whiteness as the standard for Canadianness.

The acknowledgement and internalization of racialized gender stereotypes also present a set of challenges to second gen identity formation. Demeaning images of Asian men and women, some unique to Korean men, require second generation Koreans to contemplate and attempt to resolve conflicting messages internally and externally by challenging stereotypical notions of their gendered and ethnic statuses. Forming identities based on what is most personally gratifying at the time may result in the maintenance of subordination or feelings of disadvantage for Asian men and feelings of restriction for Asian women.

Although there were different societal models of the reception of immigrants and diversity, the lived experiences of struggle, exclusion and racialized gendered stereotypes were similar for second generation Korean Americans and Canadians. Conversations with second gens have shown that the formation of ethnic identity is a challenging quest that requires a resolution of conflicting demeaning messages. Utilizing the social
constructionist perspective, I suggest that an ongoing dissonance prevents individuals from developing an integrated sense of self. This was the case for the second generation Korean American and Canadian participants in this study. Their accounts of their lived experiences reveal that second gens make continuous attempts to form a harmonious sense of ethnic self and belonging as a racial minority in their country of origin.
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the Effects of Frequent Racial Discrimination on Situational Well-Being of Asian


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL FOR THE PROTECTION OF
HUMAN SUBJECTS
Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Akron, OH 44325-2102
(330) 972-7666 Office
(330) 972-6281 Fax

June 20, 2005

Marianne Noh
1323 Weathervane Lane, 3B
Akron, Ohio 44313

Ms. Noh:

The University of Akron’s Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB) completed a review of the protocol entitled “Exploring Korean-Canadian and Korean-American Ethnic and Gender Identities”. The IRB application number assigned to this project is 20050608.

The protocol was reviewed on June 20, 2005 and qualified for exemption from continuing IRB review. The protocol represents minimal risk to subjects and matches the following federal category for exemption:

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) Information is recorded in such a manner that subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to subjects; AND (ii) any disclosure of responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of civil or criminal liability or be damaging to subjects’ financial standing, employability or reputation

Enclosed is a copy of the informed consent document, which the IRB has approved for your use in this research.

Annual continuation applications are not required for exempt projects. If you make any changes or modifications to the study’s design or procedures that either increase the risk to subjects or include activities that do not fall within one of the categories exempted from the regulations, please contact the IRB first, to discuss whether or not a request for change must be submitted. Any such changes or modifications must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to their implementation.

Please retain this letter for your files. If the research is being conducted for a master’s thesis or doctoral dissertation, the student must file a copy of this letter with the thesis or dissertation.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Sharon McWhorter
Associate Director

Cc: John Zipp, Department Chair
Matthew Lee, Advisor
Phil Allen, IRB Chair

The University of Akron is an Equal Education and Employment Institution
APPENDIX B

U.S. INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT

Living and Learning: An Examination of the Life Experiences of Second Generation Koreans in Canada and the United States

You are invited to participate in a study being conducted by Marianne Noh, a doctoral level student from the Buchtel College of Arts and Science, Department of Sociology, The University of Akron, Akron, OH.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to understand the life experiences and self-perceptions of Korean Canadian and Korean American undergraduate students. In order to examine life experience and self-perception this study is designed to collect the narratives of Korean Canadian and Korean American men and women through their own words.

Procedures: If you decide to participate, you will be asked to take part in two short exercises, which will take about 25 minutes, and one face-to-face interview, which will take about 1 hour. The exercises and interview questions will inquire on your views, attitudes, and thoughts about yourself and your life experiences.

Exclusion: If you are not a second generation Korean American, a full-time undergraduate student at the University of Michigan or you are not between the ages 18 and 24, you are not eligible to participate in this study. Please notify the researcher if you do not fulfill the criteria for eligibility.

Risks and Discomforts: You, the participant, are not obligated to answer questions that make you feel uncomfortable. You may also stop the interview at any time you begin to feel discomfort. With this in mind, there is very little risk to you, the participant.

Benefits: You will receive no direct benefit from your participation in this study, but your participation may help extend the understanding of second generation immigrant life. The findings from this study are intended to be used for publication to add to the scientific literature in immigration, adaptation, ethnicity, and gender.

Payments to Participants: For taking part in this study you will receive a payment of twenty dollars cash at the end of the interview. Payment will be given to you even if you decide to withdraw from the interview or need to stop the interview before it has been completed.

Right to refuse or withdraw: Taking part in this project is completely voluntary and there is no penalty for not answering the questions(s) or for changing your mind about participating.
**Confidential Data Collection:** Please be aware that your identity will remain **confidential** in the following ways.

1) Your real name and university will not be disclosed; pseudonyms, genders, and ages will be used.

2) Any information obtained through the interview (e.g., notes, recorded and transcribed interviews, informed consent forms) will be securely locked and then destroyed as soon as this project is completed.

**Audio Taping**

I request that you allow me to audio-record your interview in order for I and my supervisor to be able to analyze the interview carefully after the actual interview. The recorded interview will be used for research in this study and for no other purpose. The recording will be erased after the completion of the study.

This project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at The University of Akron. If you want to know more about this research project, please contact me (my contact information is provided below) or my faculty advisor, Dr. Matthew T. Lee at 330-972-5357.

**Sincerely,**

Marianne Noh, ABD
PhD Candidate
Department of Sociology
The University of Akron
Akron, OH 44325-1905
mnn1@uakron.edu

I have read the information provided above and all of my questions have been answered. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I will receive a copy of this consent form for my information.

________________________________________  ________________________
Participant Signature              Date
APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW:
Thank you so much for taking the time to participate in my study. As you may know, I am interested in second generation Korean Americans/Canadians from a sociological perspective. The questions I have today are based on 4 theoretical models so there are may be times where it seems as though the questions are somewhat unrelated, that I may be asking you to repeat yourself or answer the same or similar questions. So please bear with me. Ok, let’s get started.

Building Rapport
R.1) Let’s begin by you telling me a little about yourself. Where are you from, what do you do, what are you like? Can you tell me about your family?

1. Identity Formation:
1) How do Second generation Korean immigrants identify themselves in terms of ethnicity, nationality, and gender?
1.1) If someone asks you what your (race, ethnicity, gender, nationality) is what do you say?

1a) Gender Interacting with Ethnic and National Identities
1A.1) Describe for me what it means to be a…
- Wo/man, Korean, Canadian
- Are there any differences between Korean wo/men and Canadian wo/men?

1b) Ethnic Identities (Second generation Korean Canadian = someone who was born in Canada or immigrated at an early age (before 9 yrs old) and whose parents (usually both) immigrated from Korea)
1B.1) What are the traits of 2nd generation Korean Canadians?
1B.2) Do you perceive any differences between (2nd generation Koreans, 1st, 1.5s, and non-immigrant Canadians)?
- Are there any images of 2nd gens that come to mind?
- Any characteristics that come to mind?

1c) National Identity
1C.1) Do you consider yourself a (Korean, Canadian)?
1C.2) Do you think 1st generation Korean immigrants, like your parents and others your own age, are Canadian?

2. Social Settings and Cultural Domains Influencing Identity Formation
2) What are the resources and strategies respondents use to construct their ethnic, national and gender identities? **fill in identity (ID) after expressed in second question
2.1) Please tell me a little bit about where your understanding of what it means to be a (ID) comes from.

2a) In which structural and cultural domains does identity construction take place?
2A.1) Are there times or situations when you really feel (ID) or are thinking about being a (ID)?
2A.2) Are there times or situations when you really feel like a wo/man or are thinking about being wo/man?

3) Internalization of the Model Minority (MM) Stereotype
3) What role does the MM stereotype play in the construction of ethnic, national and gender identities?
3.1) Have you ever heard of the term ‘model minority’?
{if no:} The term MM refers to the idea that Asians are the ideal immigrant group in North America. This generally refers to the common view of Asians as quite, obedient and hard working.
{for both yes and no answers:}
- What do you think about this term?

3A) How does MM influence identity formation?
3A.1) Have you ever felt like a MM?
3A.2) Have you ever felt like you were expected to behave like a MM?
3A.3) How accurate do you think the term, MM, is in describing you?

3b) What are other ways of stereotyping, stigmatizing, marginalizing Korean Canadians?
3B.1) Are there any other terms or sayings that you know of that are used to describe Asians or Koreans living in Canada?
3B.2) Are there any for 2nd generation Korean wo/men?

4) Segmented Assimilation
4) What are 2nd generation Korean immigrants’ attitudes towards intermarriage? (as a test of assimilation – psychological acceptance and close day-to-day contact that’s necessary for romance)
4.1) Can you see yourself marrying or dating someone of a different (race or ethnicity, religion, social class)?
4.2) Would your parents be upset if you married or dated someone of another race/ethnicity?
4.3) How would you react if a child or yours dated or married someone of another race/ethnicity?
END OF INTERVIEW:
We are now at the end of the study. Thank you so much for participating. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.
APPENDIX D
CODING SCHEME

Scheme 1: Stress and the Decision to Change Oneself (Kiecolt 1994)
Definition:
Based on stress and on self and identity research, “in this model, the impetus for intentional self-change can be provided by a stressor-chronic role strain, a life event, or both” (Kiecolt 1994). If one finds him/herself in unfavorable social conditions (i.e. exclusion, demeaning status, lack of authenticity, distress, lack or structural and material resources, etc.) s/he can decide to change identities and thus change groups of integration, attitudes and roles.

Specifically, a respondent may have found integration into mainstream society meant the inability to fully integrate (due to race), a minority status, acting White, and on-going conflict with parents. If these negative conditions are considered to outweigh the benefits of an American/Canadian identity, they would decide to seek out and embrace their Korean identity or an amalgamation of both Korean and American/Canadian identity. On the other hand, a respondent may have found integration into a co-ethnic community meant lack of resources for academic and economic success, lack freedom to enjoy their youth, social exclusion and a subordinate status on school grounds. A respondent may find integration into mainstream society provides greater benefits such as, upward economic mobility, higher status due to acceptance from the dominant society, and freedom to make decisions for self.

1i) Pressures and Identity Change – relationship node
Code for specific statements that express a relationship between pressures/strains and change for the respondent. I.e. “Things are better now…”, “I’m more comfortable now because…”, “It was a struggle for me then…”, “It was hard before… when I was…”, etc.
   1a) Exclusion
   1b) Parents
   1c) Comfort
1ii) No Change made evident – tree node
1d) Pressures – tree node
Code statements where respondents express pressures or strains they have experienced (in the recent or in the past), such as conflict with their parents or other family members, not fitting in with others (at school, church, etc), being shy or uncomfortable at a point in time, being unhappy with a situation or encounter, being frustrated by an event, etc. and when an outcome/change due to the pressure is not made evident.
1e) Identity Change – tree node
Code statements where respondents express a change or difference in the way they are currently to the way they used to be; especially (but not exclusively) in terms of identification (Korean, male/female, Canadian/American). I.e. “I used to be like…”, “Now I’m more like…”, “I guess I’ve changed/matured…”, “I’m/it’s different now…”, etc. and when a reason for change is not made evident.

Scheme 2: Segmented Assimilation (Portes and Zhou 1993)
Definition:
This is a contemporary theory of immigrant adaptation. The main argument here is that, unlike classical assimilation, we cannot assume that North American societies (i.e. the United States) have unified cores (i.e. nonethnic or “middle” America). At the same time, immigrants are not completely free of structural constraints and free to construct their own ethnicity and Americaness (according to the multiculturalists view). Segmented Assimilation argues that there are (at least) three possible process of immigrant adaptation, which entails two factors. Immigrant adaptation, under this theory, is measured by economic integration into the mainstream middle class and acculturation (exchange or learning of cultural features). The first process is upward assimilation into normative structures of the (predominantly White) middle class. Second is downward assimilation into the urban (mainly racial minority) underclass. Third is co-ethnic assimilation into economic integration of the middle class but with “lagged acculturation and deliberate preservation of the immigrant community’s values and solidarity” (Zhou 1997: 984).

Another element of Segmented Assimilation (my proposition and also see Taun 1993) is how Korean/Asian Americans are perceived and accepted socially in North America as model minorities. Asian Americans in the United States are commonly perceived as either honorary Whites or forever foreigners. Honorary Whites refers to the idea that Asians are just like White Americans/Canadians. That is, they adapt well to American culture and society thus, just like Whites. This is often used to explain their rapid success as a minority group, outpacing other older American minority groups such as African Americans. Honorary White, however, also implies that Asians are White in every way – culturally and structurally/economically - except that they look Asian. Forever foreigners refers to the idea that Asians are not and never will be (fully) American/Canadian. By this, Asian Americans/Canadians are perceived as minorities (outsiders), Eastern (not Western), and culturally inferior.

2i) Portes and Zhou’s (1993) Segmented Assimilation
2a) Downward Assimilation – tree node
Code statements implying downward economic mobility into the underclass (inner city or unemployment). Parents may have experienced a substantial decrease in economic/occupational status since immigrating, have recently faced unemployment, etc. It is unlikely that the respondent him/herself will have experienced personal downward economic integration because they are all university students. However, they may talk of other second generation Koreans they know who have experienced this. Examples of
such statements may be expressions of acting Black, gang membership, dropping out of school, not attending university, etc.

2b) Upward Assimilation – tree node
Code the statements that imply upward economic mobility. Respondents may have experienced moving out of an urban into a suburban area. Respondents may also have had their parents move upward in their jobs. Finally, respondents may express projections of upward assimilation through their schooling, hoping to get a good job or a better job than what their parents have.

2c) Co-Ethnic Assimilation – tree node
Remember to code statements where respondents talk about growing up in Korean neighborhoods (predominantly Korean residents). Respondents may also have moved into a co-ethnic area. Finally, respondents may talk about their parents being part of a Korean co-op or organization that helped them open their own business, find a job, etc.

* The final coding for these three processes will likely occur after having read the entire transcript. I suggest to first code all statements that reflect up/down economic integration and up/down/co-ethnic acculturation. Then review all these codes and decide into which process of assimilation the respondent fits.

2ii) Model Minority

2d) Honorary White – tree node
Code for the statements where Koreans/Asians are just like, or similar to, Whites. This also includes statements where respondents feel that the model minority term is a good term and a true term for Koreans/Asians.

2e) Forever Foreigner – tree node
Code for specific statements where the respondents express feelings of not belonging to the US/Can. This could also be when respondents have felt that they were expected to behave as model minorities or felt that they were behaving like model minorities.

**Scheme 3: Gendered Ethnicity (Kurien 1999; Pyke and Johnson 2003)**

**Definition:**
Gender differences in the way ethnic identity is formed or constructed. Specifically for coding however, an individual’s notion of gender (social roles and norms) influences the perception of their ethnicity and formation of ethnic identity. An example would be if someone does not hold traditional notions of gender s/he may then not form a strong identification to their Korean identity, thinking that Korean men and women practice more traditional gender roles and norms.

There can also be ethnic differences in the way gender identity is formed or constructed (ethnicized gender). In this case, one’s notion of ethnicity and their ethnic identity influences their perception of gender (social roles and norms) and formation of gender identity. An example would be if someone believes that being Korean is very important to them and wants to reproduce their parents’ cultural ways and family practices they may form a stronger identification with traditional gender roles and norms, thinking that American men and women are not traditional enough and their gender norms are not in line with Korean practices and beliefs.

3i) Gender and Ethnic Identity Formations

3a) Gendered Ethnicity – relationship node
Code for specific statements where the respondent talks about their ideas or beliefs about women influencing or directing their ethnic identification. This could be in the form of “Well, American women are like... so/but I’m more Korean”, “I think I’m very... because Korean women are like...”, etc.

3b) Ethnicized Gender – relationship node
Code for specific statements where the respondent talks about their ethnicity influencing or directing their notions of gender. This could be in the form of “Well, I’m more Korean in the way I think women should be”, “here in America I can be... (implications to gender)”, “I feel lucky to be born and raised here because Koreans are...”, etc.

3ii) Situational Identities
3c) Gender not a prominent identity/status marker - tree node
Code for statements where respondents express that they do not think about being a woman. Such statements may include “I never think about that” or “that’s just not important to me” or “I don’t know. I’ve never thought about it before.”

3d) Ethnic or national identity not present - tree node
Code for statements where respondents do recall situations where they are thinking about being a woman but do not feel that any ethnic or national is present in the situation.

3e) Korean identity present - tree node
Code for statements where respondents recall situations where both being a woman and being Korean are thought about or are felt by the respondent.

3f) American/Canadian identity present - tree node
Code for statements where respondents recall situations where both being a woman and being Am/Cdn are thought about or are felt by the respondent.

3g) Korean American/Canadian identity present - tree node
Code for statements where respondents recall situations where both being a woman and being Korean Am/Cdn are thought about or are felt by the respondent.
APPENDIX E

SELECTED CASE SUMMARIES

Sean: American, Male, 21 years old

**Ethnic Identity:** Korean American  
**Recent Assimilation Experience:** Upward and Co-Ethnic  
**Gendered Ethnicity Experience:** Fluidity

**Identity Formation:** At the time of interview, Sean was not in a “comfortable” stage with his ethnic identity and felt that he needed to be more Korean. He respected his parents’ work ethic and felt obligated to make them proud by succeeding, academically and economically. However, Sean was dating a non-Korean woman, which made him question the meaning and importance of being Korean American. Before his current partner, Sean wanted to marry a Korean woman and was worried about the consequences of inter-racial marriage (i.e. social exclusion from family and co-ethnic community). For Sean, entering an inter-racial dating relationship and seriously considering marriage was a current stressor to which outcome had yet to be determined. He was shifting his view towards inter-marriages as acceptable as long as Korean culture and values are passed on to the children.

**Segmented Assimilation:** At the time of interview, Sean was showing signs of both upward assimilation and co-ethnic assimilation. Not only was he “proud” of being Korean American, he wanted to remain engaged and involved in the Korean community. At the same time, he was dating a non-Korean which strained his relationships with his parents and co-ethnic friends. Sean explained to me that inter-marriage was not accepted in the Korean community. He sympathized with his friends and family’s reasons for exclusion as he viewed the reasons as ethnic pride and preservation issues. He expressed his efforts in maintaining a prideful Korean American image to his girlfriend and her parents. It seemed that Sean was working towards a co-ethnic assimilation while dating and possibly marrying a non-Korean.

**Gendered Ethnicity:** In an American mainstream setting, such as listening to the national anthem at a football game, he felt like an American man. Listening to the American national anthem made him feel proud to be American and also tough and strong. He also felt that developing a strong sense of pride over being a Korean American man was important and when he performed spoken word on stage, he felt like a Korean American man. Many of his poems focused on the struggle to find pride and identity for Korean American men.
Taesuk: American, Female, 19 years old

Ethnic Identity: American Korean
Recent Assimilation Experience: Co-Ethnic Assimilation
Gendered Ethnicity Experience: Conservative Asian Women

Identity Formation: Taesuk did not express any stressors or pressures with her ethnicity although she has had many discussions with friends and her mother about being a second generation Korean American. She identified herself as American Korean because she felt a little more American than Korean, thus placing the stronger and more prominent ethnicity at the beginning. Mainly through discussions with her mother, Taesuk came to a realization that the ethnicity of offspring will become more American and less Korean with later generations.

Recently, Taesuk’s close friends were second generation Korean Americans. In this group she felt more comfortable, than with her group of friends from her home region which was made up of diverse ethnic backgrounds. Although she did not find the “Korean” activities that she and her Korean American friends did (i.e. going to nora-bang [karaoke room] and hanging out in large Korean-only groups) enjoyable, she still had a heightened level of comfort. Shared ethnic status superseded shared interests.

Segmented Assimilation: Taesuk’s parents settled into the middle class. Her father attained further education in the U.S. and her mother had immigrated during her adolescent years. With resources from education and family members her parents had established social and economic capital prior to having children. Taesuk seemed to be constructing for herself the path of co-ethnic assimilation, following the path of her parents’ assimilation. She was looking for a career in a professional field while making co-ethnic friends and planning to marry a Korean man.

Gendered Ethnicity: Taesuk expressed a couple developments of gendered ethnicity. First, she held a mixture of untraditional and traditional notions of femininity that she used to construct an American Korean ethnicity. Taesuk felt that gender roles are traditional in both American and Korean households; husbands are heads of households and wives are supporters and caretakers of households. American women, however, also have professional careers while Korean women are strictly homemakers, not advancing a career in the paid labor force. For Taesuk, she saw herself being more of an American woman in the future but hoped to maintain some Korean ways in the home.

Taesuk found gender to be prominent in co-ethnic situations, such as in large family gatherings. She noticed that women cooked and cleaned, while men watched television. Taesuk felt that she “instinctually” helped her mother and felt the prominence of her female status in those situations. She also assumed this was a Korean cultural practice of gender that did not occur in American family gatherings.
Eugene: Canadian, Male, 23 years old

Ethnic Identity: Asian Canadian
Recent Assimilation Experience: Co-Ethnic and Co-Racial Assimilation
Gendered Ethnicity Experience: Angry Korean Man, Fluidity

Identity Formation: Eugene remembered well his integration pattern and some conscious decisions he made about which groups he chose to integrate into. During his elementary school years, he and his family (a mother and two sisters) moved around quite a bit because each neighborhood they tried to settle into turned out to be uncomfortable or unsafe. Throughout those years he found himself integrating with mostly black Canadians. In middle school he started to notice that he was “distinctly Asian.” He and his sisters were known as the “Chinese people” and although it was lighthearted labeling, his Asianness was constantly salient. He and his sisters were “always the others.”

Once he entered high school – an affluent, prestigious, predominantly White high school – he was exposed to more Korean students (second, 1.5, and first generations). He told me that he decided that he would be closer to the Korean people but at the same time, maintain popularity and status among the active White students to further his career opportunities in the future. He maintained friendships with non-Korean (White and Black) friends throughout high school. However, he felt most comfortable with his close knit group of second generation Korean friends. In university, he told me that nearly all his friends were Korean, mostly second generation. At the time of the interview, he identified himself as Asian Canadian.

Segmented Assimilation: For Eugene, it is very important for him to maintain a balance or separation between his “White” working self and his “Korean” personal self. He found that for a successful career, he needed to be well integrated into the White/Canadian work domain. However, to be a successful person, he felt that he also needed to know his heritage and embrace it. He mentioned to me that he felt “bad” about keeping his professional and his personal sides separate however, he strongly believed that a successful career in basic sciences meant acting White and not “shoving” his ethnicity onto others. It was also important to him that after he had achieved his career goals, he would seek out his Korean side by learning the language, visiting Korea, and learning the history. Although he was dating a Chinese woman at the time of interview (and had mostly dated White or Chinese women), he also told me that he wanted to marry a Korean woman because otherwise, he would be cutting ties with the Korean Canadian community. He seemed to be following the path of co-ethnic assimilation.

Gendered Ethnicity: Eugene spoke of two examples of gender and ethnic interaction. The first is the way he formed his own notion of gender (masculinity and femininity). He saw in his own experiences growing up that he was favored and more emphasis was put on him than his sisters because he was the only boy in the family and he preferred the favoritism (freedom, family decisions based on his schooling), although it came with more responsibility (academic achievement, protector). He told me that he leaned more towards conservative, Korean views of gender because the natural differences between
men (protector, aggressive, leader) and women (emotional, weak) were still acknowledged.

Whereas in Canada, he felt it was “irresponsible to give girls as much freedom as guys.” And “I think this [Canadian] side is a lot more equal, egalitarian. I think it’s sometimes very irresponsible; the lack of difference between men and women.” He felt that Canada and Korea were on the extremes of gender equality and patriarchy, and he chose the middle ground of that. He told me that he tries to pick the best aspects of both Korean men and Canadian (White) men and be those things. For example, being angry, which many feel Korean men are, is a bad thing so Eugene has decided not to be like that.

The second aspect of gendered ethnicity that he spoke of was the fluidity of his identity as a man across different social settings. He felt that when he was with relatives, he had to play the part of a Korean man, which he understood from watching Korean movies. In the work setting, he also plays the part of a White man, which means changing the way he speaks, to be professional, and to work hard. Both settings emphasize his masculine side but in different ways, because they are ethnically distinct and emphasize ethnic norms to him as well.

Lucy: Canadian, Female, 20 years old

*Ethnic Identity*: Korean
*Recent Assimilation Experience*: Co-Ethnic Assimilation
*Gendered Ethnicity Experience*: Parent-Child Conflict

**Identity Formation**: Lucy experienced quite a bit of conflict between her and her parents growing up. Even upon choosing a university major, she argued with her parents even though their decision was final. At the time of the interviews, she said that her parents were probably right. In elementary school, Lucy’s friends were all White. She was comfortable interacting with them and did not recall any issues of exclusion. Once she entered high school, however, there was a large number of Korean and second generation Asian students. With them, she felt more comfortable. She could not really explain it but she talked about the similarity in foods, language, and interests (Nora bang, Asian cuisine, Korean dramas). During and after high school, her proficiency in language improved and she developed a greater pride in being Korean. She told me that she could then communicate better with her parents and understand them more. At the time of the interview she identified herself as Korean. She knew that she was Canadian but did not feel Canadian or identify with Canadians (Whites).

**Segmented Assimilation**: Lucy seemed to following a path towards co-ethnic assimilation. While her parents also mobilized in a co-ethnic community (owning small businesses), as a second generation immigrant Lucy planned to enter a professional occupation while remaining acculturated in the Korean community. All her friends were Korean, mostly second generation. She enjoyed Korean food and popular culture (Korean dramas and Nora bang). While she planned on marrying a second generation Korean Canadian man, she was open to dating non-Koreans and non-Asians.
Gendered Ethnicity: For Lucy, being female had always been important to her and she felt that she was always proud of being female. She grew up in a traditional family, where she was restricted from certain liberties because she was a girl. She told me that she followed and respected everything that she used to fight with her parents about (mainly cultural clashes), except when it came to notions of gender. In her earlier years, she remembered being independent and taking care of her brother. She felt that this also contributed to her notions of what it means to be a woman; that women are independent, strong, and capable. Gender and ethnicity were interacting well in Lucy’s identity formation, however, she was clear that her parents, especially her father, did not influence her notions of gender. Her ideas of gender overrode her parents’ messages, which were always linked to being Korean. However, her notions of gender did not seem to influence her identification with being Korean.