A critical reflection on social identity

" Patterns of social relations affect your innermost thoughts and feelings, influence your actions, and help shape who you are; sociologists call stable patterns of social relations [as] social structures." (Brym & Lie, 2018, p. 4). Matters regarding equality, inclusion, and diversity are essential in being inductive in nature. In my perspective, every individual can relate themselves to a member of several social identities from microstructures to macrostructures'. Through the process of analysis and observation, one can initiate in developing skills and be cognizant in seeing the connection of sociological imagination through lived experiences.

As an educator in practice, it is significant for me to grasp on how my social identities construct the foundation on which I face issues with and how in return I enact roles in part of being accepted in the society's normative expectations. In this critical reflection, I will use the framework of 3 major research strategies: (1) two scholarly sources, (2) one educational documentary, and (3) one academic publication as they reflect my personal and professional development.

Examination on Social Identities

" Identity is a socially constructed, fluid concept that is an increasingly complex phenomenon for the children and youth of immigrants, especially when they are raised in a mainstream environment such as the Canadian milieu." (Gill, 2007, p. 13) With this in mind, I have chosen two specific identities to examine that have significantly contributed to my identification thus far. I will analyze the connection between how sexism and gender inequality play a role in the standards of Spanish culture, and how racialized

Sikh youths are doubly stigmatized through conflicted identity and morale through the context of relevant literature and theories.

Mass Media and Gender

In the summer of 2017, I had completed my aboard internship in Madrid, Spain for the duration of 3 months. Over the course of the period, I was assigned as a teacher to adolescents and taught about the environmental science field. Every week we would have field trips to Alcalá de Henares, a city filled with cathedrals and rich archaeology. My experience had provided such great insights and learning yet a shocking cultural exposure.

" Spain has a longstanding tradition of sexist gender roles. *Machismo* describes the concept of hegemonic masculinity or the cultural notion that males should be dominant, aggressive, powerful, and sexual. In contrast, *marianismo* emphasizes female passivity, purity, and obedience." (Gallagher, 2014). Though these terms are more commonly associated with Latin American cultures; however, this phenomenon originated in Spain. In fact, I experienced this first hand as my own supervisor was a sexist male who carried himself as a superior individual suppressing any opinions the female employees would voice out. Every day would bring out new obstacles and challenges regarding my emergent and enquiry-based curriculum framework. Not just that, I faced a hostile work environment through sexual harassment. It seemed oblivious for those around me as making sexual jokes and constant touching is natural. " Men still tend to command substantially more power and authority than women. Many aspects of our culture legitimize male dominance, making it seem valid and proper." (Brym & Lie,

2018, pp. 174-175). One day, I had enough and raised my voice, unfortunately, it costed me as I was fired the very next day.

Patriarchy is one of the factors which influences the macrostructure. It is a system highly based on power relations and customary practices that help to ensure male dominance is situated in economic, political, and other larger spheres of social life. (Brym & Lie, 2018, p. 7). The Feminist Theory corresponds to this social structure as it concludes that male domination is rooted much more in the patriarchal authority relations, patterns of socialization and culture that still today exist in most societies. (Brym & Lie, 2018, p. 160). Such examples can be seen in Spain where " University-educated women are twice as likely to be unemployed as their male counterparts. Women make 27. 2% less than men do for the same job. Additionally, women only make up 29% of political representation in Spain." (Gallagher, 2014). This demonstrates that sexism persists in Spain thanks to gender role stereotypes. Another epistemic concept for this issue would be *the glass ceiling* phenomenon which is a metaphor used to represent attitude-based bias that prohibits qualified women and minorities from advancing further in an organization to upper-level positions.

Antonio Gramsci a Marxist theorist, argued that theory of cultural hegemony (control of a culture) exist when ruling classes establish their dominance partly by controlling jobs, using the force, and the like to the point where their values become so deeply entrenched that the great majority of people universally accept them as common sense. (Brym & Lie, 2018, p. 13). Both hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity sociologic concepts are examples of this theory. Hegemonic masculinity perpetuates the dominant

social position of men, and the subordinate social position of women. It establishes the idea that any individual who doesn't align with the notions of masculinity is inferior. It aims for men to be exclusive and hierarchically differentiated. On the opposite side, emphasized femininity is the idea that women must conform to the notion of men needs and desires as a ultimate reason for survival. (Arie, 2016). As of this year March, 5. 3 million women in Spain had participated in a unprecedented strike in an effort to end the " macho culture," that 80 percent of Spaniards feel pervades Spanish society. The strike targeted gender inequality and sexual discrimination that occurs as a result of this culture. (Michanie, 2018). This women empowerment has directly challenged the status quo of hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity. The much deserved freedom and elevation of social status of women has been instrumental in dismantling masculinity and femininity norms.

Ethnicity and Culture massacre

My father had immigrated to London, England, whereas my mother had immigrated to Toronto, Canada in the mid 1990's with their families. Both of my parents were born in Punjab, India and raised as Sikhs, a monotheistic religion that originated in the 15th century by Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism. As teenagers, they immigrated abroad for a better chance of survival and lifestyle due to the genocide of Sikhs in 1984 as an aftermath of India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi assassination, led by her two Sikh bodyguards in retaliation to military attack she ordered on the Golden Temple. (Singh, 2014). Less than a decade later, the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001 in the U. S. led by the Islamic terrorist group triggered

hate crimes against Sikh people. The aftermath of this attack led cases of mistaken identity as Sikh men grow long beards and wear turbans as a commitment to their faith. (Basu, 2016). 17 years later, the violence and discrimination still continues on younger generations.

" Racism today in Canada is not as evident, or overt and visible as it was twenty years ago. Hidden racism, however, is just as dangerous in terms of its implications. In other words, while overt or blatant racism can be damaging to a group or individual, covert or hidden racism is just as detrimental since it is masked and not easily identifiable." (Gill, 2007). Gill

Institutional racism, policies, and practices that maintain the status quo, is one form of covert racism. argued that racism in Canadian society is built into institutional structures, and manifests itself though social practices. It can be seen as a result of colonialism and the practices of imperialism

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