"Doing it for the Family"
Educational Experiences of First-Generation Female Filipino Teens in Public Schools in Montreal

Stephanie June Pineda
Department of Integrated Studies in Education
McGill University, Montreal
February, 2010

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Masters of Arts in Culture and Values in Education

© Stephanie Pineda 2010

Library and Archives Canada

Published Heritage Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque et Archives Canada

Direction du Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-68380-4
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-68380-4

NOTICE:

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

Canada

Abstract

This qualitative study describes the educational experiences of five female Filipino students in public schools in Montreal. My goal is to understand why some female Filipino teens leave school prematurely, while others manage to persevere in their studies. I conducted open-ended interviews in English and Tagalog to examine the reasons and personal motives underlying their school disengagement. The participants described their difficulties in adjusting to the Quebec educational system and how their peers have influenced them to quit school. They also discussed how economic stress can push teens from the Philippines to abandon their studies for work. My analysis is shaped primarily by Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) concept of capital. The results suggest the importance of positive family relationships and caring educators in keeping female Filipino students in school.

Résumé

La présente étude qualitative décrit les expériences de cinq étudiantes philippines dans le système scolaire public montréalais. Mon objectif est de comprendre pourquoi certaines étudiantes philippines quittent l'école avant d'obtenir leur diplôme alors que d'autres parviennent à persévérer et compléter leurs études. Une série d'entrevues ouvertes en anglais et en tagal a été effectuée afin d'examiner les expériences scolaires de chaque femme. Les participantes ont décrit leurs difficultés d'adaptation au système scolaire québécois et comment leurs amis les ont influencées à laisser tomber leurs études. Elles ont aussi raconté comment le stress économique peut pousser des jeunes philippines à abandonner leurs études afin de travailler. Mon analyse est principalement basée sur le concept du capital par Pierre Bourdieu (1986). Les résultats indiquent également l'importante contribution amenée par des relations familiales positives et par des éducateurs compréhensifs à l'encouragement des étudiantes philippines à terminer leurs études.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, this thesis was made possible through the accounts of five brave and honest persons, who shared their lives and personal experiences with me. Thank you Tina, Adrianna, Ashley, Tweety and Jianna. I feel privileged to have met you and earnestly hope that you will attain all your aspirations and succeed in all your endeavours.

This thesis came to fruition through the help and support of many individuals. I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Mary Maguire, for all her assistance, encouragement, and insightful comments in editing my work. I sincerely appreciate the prompt feedback that she provided, even during her holidays.

I am grateful for the generosity and kindness of the members of the Filipino community who shared their time with me. Their personal accounts helped me understand the immigration history and trends of Filipinos in Quebec. Special thanks go to the leaders and active members of the *Kabataang Montreal*, especially Neil Castro, Roderick Carreon, Julie Nieto, Josie Caro, Joanne Vasquez, and Tracy and Krystle Alarcon.

I owe gratitude to friends who have encouraged and supported me all the way, particularly Elisa H. David, Alpha Gumboc, Cyd and May Virola, Dr. Joey Bonifacio, Marie Handinero, Shane Zubia, Paolo D'Agnillo, Dr. Amar Ozer Hassan Cournoyer and Geraldine Menzi. I also appreciate the help, time, and input of Allen Jacques and Dr. Eulalio R. Guieb III. Thank you to those who expressed interest in my study and offered their support.

I would also like to thank Dr. Maxime Hallé for his assistance throughout my graduate studies. His patience and support helped me get over many bumps in this research.

Last but not the least, I dedicate this thesis to my loving family my parents Tristan and Melba, as well as my siblings Joan Jacques, Jamila, Miguel, and Tristan Pineda. I am also thankful for my extended family in Montreal and Haverhill as well as relatives in California and the Philippines who gave me inspiration and provided me with the much needed distractions. Just like my informants, my hard work was 'done for my family'.

Maraming Salamat!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures, Photographs And Tables:

List of Appendixes:

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

> *Totoo na nasa huli ang pagsisi. Once na-realize mo ang lahat at nabuksan mo na mata mo, doon mo talaga mare-realize na, o kailangan ko talaga tong gawin. Hinde rin lang parasa sa akin eh. Para sa future ko at para sa pamilya ko.*
>
> It's true [the expression] that regret is insight that comes a day too late. Once you understand everything and open your eyes, this is when you realize, "Oh, I really need to do this". It's not just for me. It's for my future and my family (Tina, interview, October 14, 2009).

Tina is a nineteen year old Filipino student who participated in my qualitative inquiry about the educational experiences of first-generation teens in Montreal. In this passage, she describes her feelings about quitting school and then finding the motivation to continue her education. Research studies have examined the phenomenon of early school withdrawal. However, few have included voices from immigrant students, especially girls. While the majority of early school leavers are men, women also drop-out of school. In the academic year 2005-2006, 7% of female students in Canada between the ages of 20 to 24 quit high school before graduating (Human Resources and Social Development Canada, p. 243). I aim to shed light on school disengagement and motivation of first-generation immigrant female teens from the Philippines by focusing on the experiences of five young Filipino women in public schools in Montreal.

Dropping out of high school is considered the "eternal demon" of the Quebec's Minister of Education (Ballivy, 2005). Statistics from 2000 to 2007 show that the dropout rate of male and female students in the Quebec province has increased from 26% to 29% (Chung, 2009). These rates are even more striking when compared to the national average in Canada which has decreased significantly in the

last few years; in the school year 1990-1991, the dropout rate was 16.6% which decreased to 9.3% in 2006-2007 (Statistics Canada, 2009). However, statistics from the *Commission scolaire de Montréal* (CSDM) indicate that the dropout rate in the city of Montreal is higher still than the province rate and has been increasing for years: from 38.1% in 2004-2005 to 39% from 2005-2006 (2009). The numbers are even worse for a number of specific high schools in Montreal; for example, in the École Secondaire Monseigneur Richard, a high school in the borough of Verdun, the dropout rate in the academic year 2006-2007 was 49% (Branswell, 2009). Among those attending adult education, dropping out is prevalent as well. Longitudinal research conducted from 1996 to 2007 by Pierre Potvin, a professor at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, found that 27% of students drop out of regular high school while 40% leave adult high school before graduation (Méthé, 2008). Based on these numbers, dropping out of school appears to be an epidemic in Quebec that merits significant attention and research.

There are various reasons to explain the significant rate of school leaving in Montreal public schools. For instance, *Réseau réussite Montréal* has gathered five school boards in the city in order to examine this educational issue. Among their numerous findings, three distinct characteristics were proposed to explain the frequency of school leavers: the vast number of private schools in the city, which segregate high achieving students from the main stream; increasing number of immigrant students that have not fully integrated into the Canadian educational system; and the poverty that is concentrated in some parts of Montreal, such as Little Burgundy and Pointe Sainte-Charles (Sévigny, 2006). According to this report, the socio-cultural demographics also varied dramatically from neighbourhood to

neighbourhood. For example in Côte-des-Neiges, an urban borough located on the western slope of Mont Royal, 50.9% of students were born outside of Canada and 70.7% of students had a mother tongue that was neither English nor French.

Many government reports have tackled the issue of early school leaving. In 2009, a study commissioned by the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) found that dropping out has various negative effects on the individual and to the country. For instance, 42.7% of welfare recipients nationally were school dropouts; of those, 33.6% did not finish high school. Canada pays an average of $4,000 per year per high school leaver in social assistance cost. Those who leave school prematurely earn $3,000 less annually than those who graduate high school (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009). Correspondingly, the Canadian government has a vested interest in keeping teens in school. While various reports demonstrate the school dropout rate in the country, little research exists that probes the reasons why teens leave school prematurely.

A few trends in Canada and Quebec can be associated with school leaving. For example, boys are more likely to abandon their studies than girls. In 2000-2001, 25% of boys compared with 17.8% of girls experienced academic delays, a proportion that has not changed in the last 35 years (Sévigny, 2006). However, little information is available concerning immigrant youth who drop out of school. The last time Statistics Canada published a tabulated result comparing the educational activities of youth from different visible minority groups was in 2001. Unfortunately, the same analysis has not been conducted for the 2006 census. According to the Quebec Minister of Education, the number of immigrant students is higher in Montreal than in other municipalities in Quebec, and these students represent half of

the student population in the city (Provencher, 2006). Given that so many teens from Montreal are immigrants, among which a significant proportion experience academic delays, it is surprising that only a few studies have focused on this group. Questions remain unanswered as to why minority students leave school before graduating. Existing research has analyzed the dropout phenomenon among male students while females have been relatively neglected. Why do first-generation immigrant girls leave high school before acquiring their diploma? Are their reasons the same as those of their male cohorts?

Focus of study

In this qualitative inquiry located in the Filipino community of Montreal, I explore the educational experiences of four first-generation and one second-generation Filipinas in public high schools. My aim is to shed light on why female immigrant youth from the Philippines leave school before graduation, and why others decide to stay. In order to understand the issues that are affecting these teens, I discuss the broader context of immigration patterns and trends that have moulded their lives in Canada.

Historical Background and Research Context

Philippine immigration to Canada began between the 1930s and 1940s. During that period, there was a labour shortage in Canada, especially in the health sector, and many migrants from the Philippines were nurses (Chen, 1998). From 1946 to 1964, only 774 immigrants from the Philippines came to Canada (Laquian, 1973). Immigration Canada started reporting Filipino immigrants as a distinct category in 1965; before that they were included with other countries under “Asian”. The number of Filipinos immigrating to Canada grew exponentially. From 1963 to 1967, 7,558

Filipinos were granted access to this country (Chen, 1998). Those who first arrived were motivated by curiosity and a sense of adventure. In sharp contrast with the subsequent waves of Filipino immigrants, the goals and motivations of the earliest expatriates were not financial. In addition to those individuals emigrating directly from the Philippines in the late '60s, a number of these new pioneers came from the United States of America. When they could not renew their visas under the United States-Philippines Exchange Program and they were no longer allowed to stay in the US, many Filipinos headed north. Other Filipinos migrated to Canada from Europe, hoping to further their careers. Laquian (1973) explains that most immigrants from the Philippines at that time shared the same background: a) they tend to be "young and in their prime productive years; b) they tend to be females; c) they are mainly professionals; and d) they go to English-speaking parts of Canada, primarily the province of Ontario" (p.1). As a former colony of the United States, most Filipinos possess good English language skills, and as a result, not many immigrants choose to live in Quebec, where the spoken language is French.

In 1967, to help bolster its economic need for more professionals, Canada changed its immigration policy to the Point System (Laquian, 1973; Pratt, 2004). In the years that followed, several Canadian employers recruited workers directly from the Philippines. Filipino migrants who were lacking the necessary qualifications in Canada quickly went to school, graduated, and occupied the same professions as they did back home, such as teachers and medical technicians. Immigration laws and professional orders at the time were more flexible, allowing new immigrants to integrate quickly into the Canadian labour market. According to the Department of Manpower and Immigration Canada (1974), Filipino immigrants at the time began

working approximately four weeks after their arrival (as cited in Chen, 1998). The processing of immigration papers was generally quick and simple, and most immigrants came with their families. Even if parents were unable to move to Canada with their children, their separation did not last long because parents were able to sponsor their families with relative ease. During the late ‘60s and ‘70s, Chen (1998) highlights that almost 25% of nurses admitted to Canada were from the Philippines. In addition to the nursing sector, young professionals integrated into the Canadian work force as physicians, teachers engineers, and medical technologists (Laquian, 1973). Other immigrants arrived in the country as sponsored families. Since most of these immigrants arrived when they were young and single, they were able to invest more time and energy into their careers. A few had difficulty finding employment because: 1) they did not have “Canadian experience”, 2) there was a lack of recognition of their educational training and skills from the Philippines, and 3) there was a the lack of standardized accreditation tests resulting in overqualified workers (Laquian, 1973). However, the majority of Filipino immigrants benefited from the labour shortage and were able to quickly and successfully practice their professions. Many newly arrived Filipinos were very mobile and those who were undaunted quickly moved to warmer parts of Canada, such as British Columbia. Ontario has always been the preferred destination of most immigrants. Toronto, specifically, is a prominent immigration destination due to the increased availability of job opportunities. Though immigration to Canada from the Philippines has been widely successful in previous decades, the current situation is not as favourable.

The Filipino Community in the 21st century

From the mid-1980s to 2009, a change in the immigration policies of Canada shaped the Filipino community. The number of immigrant nurses dwindled as live-in domestic workers became more in demand. The rates of Filipino migrant workers who came through the Foreign Domestic Program, which was later modified to the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP), fluctuated between 28% and 46% from 1985 to 1998. Thus, Filipino immigration to Canada has become extremely gendered: most new arrivals that are granted a working visa are women. The LCP provides a temporary working visa to immigrants who wish work in the country. However, most Filipino workers apply with the intention of eventually immigrating to Canada permanently, and then sponsoring their families back in the Philippines. The skills and education of immigrants who come through the LCP are not always recognized in this country. Consequently, some individuals who complete the program and are granted a permanent resident status cannot work in their profession, which traps them in low-earning jobs as caregivers or nannies (Pratt, 2004). The program caused a shift on both the type of jobs Filipinos could occupy when they arrive, as well as their potential employment opportunities upon finishing the program. Since many are forced to work extended hours by their employers, it is difficult for them to find the time to get the necessary qualifications that would allow them to practice their professions in Canada (Pratt, 2004). As a result of this restrictive program, many immigrant workers from the Philippines are unable to attain social and economic mobility.

Noteworthy to this inquiry is the specific demographics of Filipinos who decide to immigrate to Canada. According to a study conducted by the Joint Centre of

Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement (CERIS), most of the Philippine migrants come through the "family-reunification" and "assisted relative" immigration programs (Kelly, 2006). These two programs facilitate and promote the immigration of families and children to Canada, following the successful immigration of adult Filipinos. Therefore it is not surprising that the results of the 2001 Census show that within the Filipino community, youths 15 years old and younger, and 15 to 24 years old account for 24% and 15% of the population respectively (Chui, Maheux, & Tran, 2007). As described above in the study by Laquian (1973), many newly arrived Filipinos are in their prime working years: 35% fall between 25 to 44 years of age, compared to 31% of the total Canadian population in this cohort (Chui, Tran & Maheux, 2007). In 2001, almost 328,000 people of Filipino origin lived in Canada, which represents 1.1% of the total Canadian population (Lindsay, 2001).

Most research studies have shown that despite the high educational attainment of Filipinos in Canada, they earn less than other visible minority immigrants. For instance, Kelly's (2006) study found that immigrants from the Philippines generally possess certain positive characteristics that facilitate their integration into the Canadian labour force: most are highly educated and fluent in English. Since the country was colonized by the United States and the educational system largely has been built upon American institutional foundations, a significant proportion of Filipinos have been exposed to English prior to their arrival in Canada. Figure 1 illustrates the educational attainment of Filipinos compared to other immigrants, and the total population living in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA). According to the 2001 Census data, 57% of Filipino immigrants residing in the Toronto CMA have university qualifications, compared with only 33.1% of the total

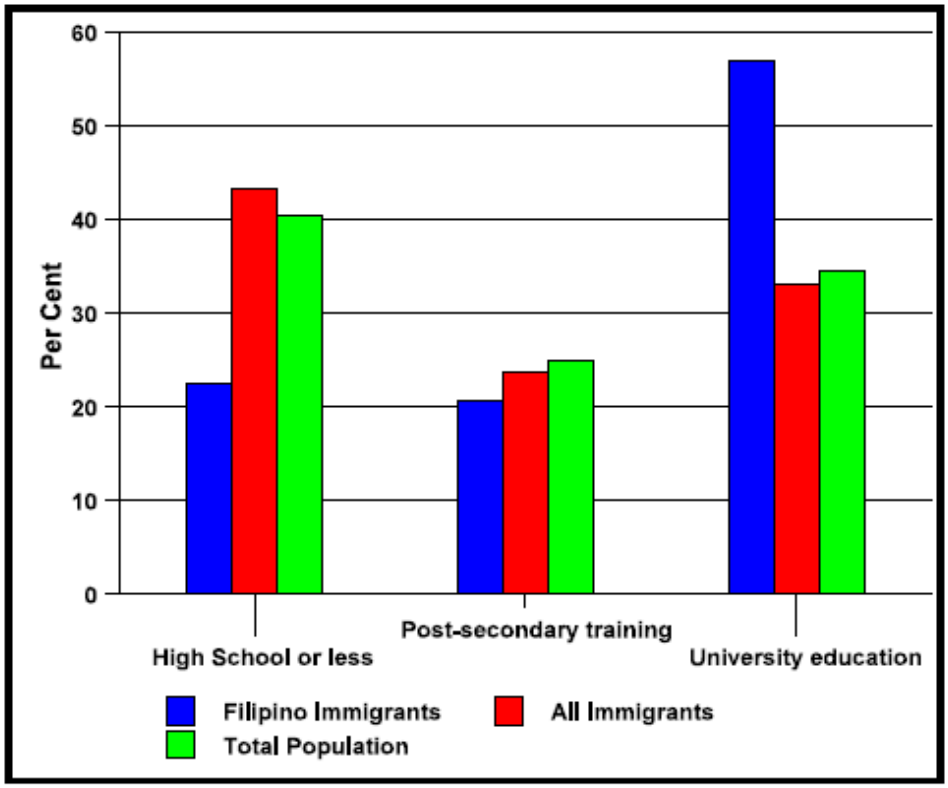


Figure 1: Population 15 years and over by highest level of schooling for Toronto CMA, 2001 (from Kelly 2006)

	Filipino Immigrants	All Visible Minority Immigrants	All Visible Minority Non-Immigrants	All Immigrants	All Non-Immigrants	Entire Population
Male Income	$39,295	$43,162	$46,746	$50, 748	$66,133	$58,789
Female Income	$31,846	$33,273	$39,088	$39,198	$45,395	$ 40,984

Table 1: Earnings (C$) of Filipinos and Others in the Toronto CMA, 2000 (from Kelly 2006)

immigrant and 34.6% of the total Canadian populations. Despite these successes, Kelly (2006) also found that Filipinos generally earn less than other immigrant groups. Table 1 shows that male Filipinos, on average, earned over $19,000 CAD a year less than the national average, while females earned approximately $9,000 CAD less. These findings demonstrate that even though Filipinos, in general, have high educational attainment, their degrees do not translate into higher remuneration.

In Montreal, the Filipino community has become increasingly prominent over the decades. In the early 1970s, there were no Filipino establishments in Montreal; now there are several Filipino businesses in the Côte-des-Neiges area including bakeries, restaurants, video rental stores, and parcel delivery companies. At the time of this research, there were three local newspapers that kept Filipinos up-to-date with events in Montreal and their native country: The Filipino Forum, The Filipino Star, and The Montreal Pinoy Post. Photo 1 illustrates the December 2009 issue of the North American Filipino Star, a monthly newspaper.

The heart of the Filipino community resides in Côte-des-Neiges and it is in this neighbourhood that most Filipino establishments can be found. As an example, Photo 2 depicts one of the Filipino restaurants that can be found on Victoria Street. Some of the photos illustrate cultural events that took place in Côte-des-Neiges in the summer of 2009. The first picture on the top left corner was taken in front of the Philippine Community Centre on Van Horne Street. The picture on the top right side shows a priest conducting mass during the Filipino Independence day celebration. Photo 3 is a picture of the bust of Dr. Jose Rizal, a national hero of the Philippines, which is standing at the Mackenzie-King Park. This park is located near the Côte-

THE NORTH AMERICAN
FILIPINO STAR
Volume XXVII, No. 12 December 2009 Montreal, Quebec, Canada www.filipinostar.org

Ethnic press council holds first training and development seminar for members

From left: Thomas Saras, president & CEO of the National Ethnic Press and Media Council of Canada. Mr. David Agnew, president of Seneca College presenting a plaque to the Rt. Honorable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, during the gala night, November 21, 2009.

Markham, Ontario - The Rt.. Honorable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, was the keynote speaker and guest of honor during the gala event on November 22, 2009 that highlighted the intensive training and development seminar of 150 journalists from different ethnic backgrounds. The National Ethnic Press and Media Council of Canada (NEPMCC) organized this 3-day seminar held on November 20-22, 2009. Certificates and awards were handed out by the Prime Minister to a selected number of members. Two Filipino Canadian newspapers, namely, the Philippine Reporter and the North American Filipino Star were among the recipients.

In his speech, the Prime Minister cited the important role played by the ethnic press and urged journalists " to pursue truth, shine light into dark corners and assist the process of holding governments accountable."

The Prime Minister was named

See Page 4 Ethnic Media

A Filipino wins 2009 CNN Hero of the Year title plus $100 000 prize

Efren Penaflorida receives his award from Hollywood Star Eva Mendes

MANILA – For bringing education to poor Filipino children through his "Kariton Klassroom," Filipino Efren Peñaflorida has been awarded the 2009 CNN Hero of the Year at the conclusion of "CNN Heroes: An All-Star Tribute" at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood on Saturday night.

According to CNN Web site, Peñaflorida has been selected after getting the highest number of online votes. More than 2.75 million votes were cast for 7 weeks.

He bested nine other contenders from different countries. Hollywood star Eva Mendes presented the award to him.

The Filipino received $100,000 to continue his work with his group, Dynamic Teen Company, according to CNN. The $100,000 cash prize is on top of the $25,000 he got after his name was included on the top 10 CNN Heroes.

In his acceptance speech delivered before 3,000 people, Peñaflorida encouraged the crowd to unleash the "hero in you."

"Our planet is filled with heroes, young and old, rich and poor, man, woman of different colors, shapes and sizes. We are one great tapestry," Peñaflorida said. "Each person has a hidden hero within, you just have to look inside you and search it in your heart, and be the hero to the next one in need."

He also urged them to "serve well, serve others above yourself and be happy to serve."

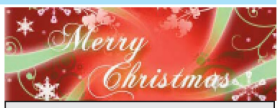
"As I always tell to my co-volunteers ... you are the change that you dream as I am the change that I dream and collectively we are the change that this world needs to be," he added.

During the gala night, the top 10 CNN Heroes, chosen by a blue-ribbon panel from an initial pool of more than 9,000 viewer nominations, were each honored with a documentary tribute and introduced by a celebrity presenter, according to the Web site. Each of the top 10 Heroes received $25,000.

CNN reported that presenters included Nicole Kidman, Kate Hudson, Neil Patrick Harris, Pierce Brosnan, Dwayne Johnson, Mendes, Randy Jackson, Greg Kinnear, George Lopez and Julia Louis-Dreyfus.

Grammy Award-winning artist Carrie Underwood, R&B crooner Maxwell and British pop sensation Leona Lewis performed during the gala event.

See Page 4 CNN Hero



Contents

Photo 1: The North American Filipino Star, a monthly newspaper in Montreal (Volume 27, Issue 12)

Photo 2: Pictures of the Filipino Community in Montreal

Photo 3: The bust of Dr. Jose Rizal at MacKenzie-King Park in Côte-des-Neiges

Sainte-Catherine metro station, as shown in Figure 2 and where the Philippine Independence Day celebration is often held. As a final statistic supporting the need For research into the aforementioned trends, in 2001, 11.6% of newly arrived immigrants who moved to the Côte-des-Neiges borough came from the Philippines, which is the highest among all immigrant groups (Fouron, 2007).

The community has great visibility around the intersection of Victoria and Van Horne Streets, near the Plamondon metro station, as seen in Figure 2; there are several Filipino restaurants and businesses located in this area. The Philippine Community Centre is located on Van Horne Street, just a few blocks from the metro station. It is in this building where many organizations hold their meetings, and where the Filipino embassy occasionally provides consulate services. The Centre is run by the Filipino Association of Montreal Area and the Suburbs (FAMAS); a group which was founded in the late ‘60s. The building was purchased in 1988 through the financing and hard work of FAMAS, as well as the members of the Federation of Filipino-Canadian Association of Quebec.

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact reason why the majority of Filipinos moving to Montreal have chosen to live in Côte-des-Neiges; however, several characteristics may have contributed to the increased concentration of Filipino immigrants in the area. There are currently three hospitals in Côte-des-Neiges, which might have attracted the new comers working in the health sector. The borough of Côte-des-Neiges-Notre-Dame-de-Grâce is the second most multi-ethnic neighbourhood in the city of Montreal (Ville de Montréal, 2009). According to the same report, the biggest group of immigrants who live in this borough are from the Philippines.

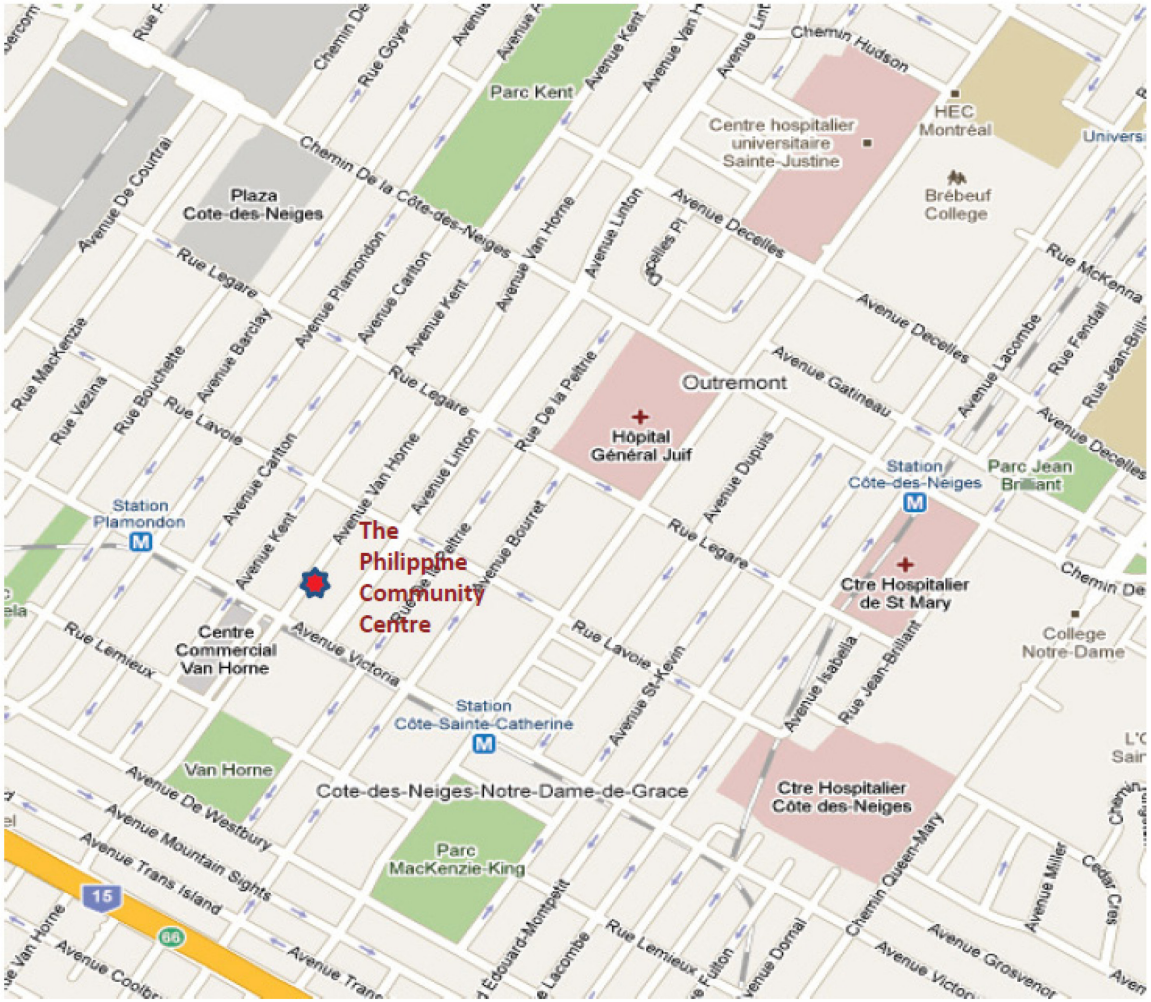


Figure 2: Map of Côte-des-Neiges (taken from Google Map)

In general, Filipinos like to participate in both cultural and religious groups in their communities. For instance, there are at least 33 registered groups under the umbrella of the Federation of Filipino-Canadian Association of Quebec, and some organizations have not joined the Federation. Thus, there are many immigrants from the Philippines who volunteer their time and efforts to help their social, religious and cultural associations. In Ang's (2006) study of Filipino youth, she found that 50% of the teens and parents who participated in her research were part of one or more community organizations. The majority of immigrants from the Philippines are practicing Catholics. In Montreal, Filipinos have established a few religious organizations. For example, the Filipino Catholic Mission of Montreal or FCMM, has purchased the St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Villeray, and has run a successful parish since its conception in 1989 (Veloso, 2007). In Côte-des-Neiges, many immigrants from the Philippines attend weekly mass at St. Kevin's parish. The Filipino community is also known for hosting beauty and popularity contests. While beauty pageants are frequently associated with negative stereotypes, a number of local Filipino organizations have used them as a vehicle to build infrastructure and maintain services for the Filipino community.

The activities organized at the Philippine Community Center encourage the integration of newly arrived Filipinos in Canada in addition to preserving the Filipino culture. For instance, there are French classes offered to adults, a class on Philippine heritage for the children (whose primary purpose is to teach Filipino or Tagalog), computer literacy class and mathematics coaching for students, and a few youth and physical activities courses. A wide array of workshops organized by FAMAS are held in the Center, including a legal information clinic, Neighbourhood Security program

which is organized in conjunction with the local police force, and Buying a Property 101. Most importantly, the Philippine Embassy visits the Center every few months to provide consular services (for passports, traveling visas, etc.). The Center therefore serves the dual role of providing visibility for the Filipino community in Côte-des-Neiges and facilitating the integration of newly arrived immigrants.

The various local groups in Montreal promote Filipino identity through their frequent activities and events. These include celebrating the Philippine Independence Day which is usually held in the month of June, and *Pista sa Nayon* (cultural feast), a celebration with parades, contests and picnics in a Côte-des-Neiges park. Photo 2 illustrates a cultural parade, and Filipino boys showcasing the traditional martial arts called *Eskrima*. These annual celebrations draw large crowds of locals and provide immigrants from the Philippines an opportunity to enjoy Filipino cuisine, partake in symbolic customs and rituals, and forge ties with people from their homeland. These events allow them to celebrate their identity and culture in Canada. There are also religious traditions, basketball tournaments (the most popular sport in the Philippines), Filipino or Tagalog (the official language) courses, concerts and contests that showcase dancing and singing in the traditional Filipino way, and Filipino martial arts courses. The majority of the community groups are financed through charity events and fundraising activities. Their active members and officers are the main driving force of these associations – without these volunteers the Filipino community in Montreal would not exist.

There are currently many youth organizations that help newly arrived immigrants feel more welcome and more socially integrated in Montreal. These groups are diverse and range from sports, religion, and cultural and social activism

foci. There are even local organizations that offer scholarships to Filipino students. The most prominent youth associations are comprised of the Christian groups, dance and choral groups, the Philippine Basketball Association (PBAM) and the *Kabataang Montreal* (KM). These organizations have existed for years, in some cases decades, and are committed to ensuring the wellbeing of Filipino youth.

These organizations contribute positively to the Filipino community in many important ways. For example, the Philippine Basketball Association of Montreal (PBAM) organizes tournaments throughout the year and has participated in international competitions since the 1970's (Maguigad, 2008). The association is managed by a passionate and dedicated Board of Directors which tirelessly organizes more than 300 games from November to April. Male and female players of all ages are encouraged to participate. Playing basketball, like any other sport, has physical and mental benefits for children. In addition, being part of the PBAM facilitates the integration of newly arrived Filipinos. Youth who have just emigrated from the Philippines play and mingle with those who were born in Canada. These interactions have positive effects on both parties, allowing them to transcend language barriers. For instance, adolescents from the Philippines are able to make friends and learn more about their new home. Their identities as new-comers are blurred as they adopt new roles and team alliances. For instance, when they compete in the international leagues, their primary identity shifts: they are representatives of Montreal first and foremost, before they are Filipinos, or even "newly arrived" immigrants.

Another important youth organization is the *Kabataang Montreal*, commonly referred to as KM by the locals. The group, created in 2000, was a response to the problem of gang formation and violence among Filipino teens in Côte-des-Neiges in

the late 80's and 90's. During this time, there were several known gangs active around this area whose members fought with each other. There were both Filipino gangs and other street gangs, comprised mostly of Asian and South-Asian boys; the biggest of these gangs were the Red Bloods and Blue Crips, both of which were involved in crime and drugs (Lejtenyi, 2003). Many immigrant parents felt powerless to stop their children from dropping out of high school and joining these and other anti-social groups, and so they sought the help of a young labour activist to create a youth group and mediate between themselves and their troubled children. Today, the KM can be credited with changing the lives of their members, and of raising awareness of the racial profiling as well as other forms of discrimination facing Filipino youth in Montreal. Through their participation with the KM, teens learn that their economic and social marginalization stem from the Live-in Caregiver Program. KM members often meet every week, organize educational workshops and a weekly radio show, and discuss various social issues, including teenage pregnancy, police harassment, and labour laws (Largo, 2007). Members of the KM have grown and diversified; active participants include university students and second-generation teens who participate in local demonstrations and protests. To empower their members, KM has united with other Filipino youth organizations based out of Toronto and Vancouver. In May 2009, the KM, along with SIKLAB-Quebec, *Kapit Bisig* Center and the Philippine Women Centre of Quebec, a number of other Montreal-based Filipino organizations hosted a conference for youth that dealt with topics such as young women's issues, education, racism, family separation, and reunification (Kapit Bisig Centre, n.d.). Nowadays, there are fewer problems of gangs in Côte-des-Neiges; however, some Filipino teens who live in this neighbourhood

still feel harassed by the police (Block, 2007). The conference allowed youth from the Philippines to share their feelings of powerlessness, marginalization and discrimination. It also helped reinforce Filipino identity by teaching youth their past history.

The socio-demographics of newly arrived immigrants are important factors that should be considered when examining the situation of first generation Filipino students in this country. According to the Statistics Canada census conducted in 2001, the Filipino community is among the fastest growing groups of non-European immigrants; specifically, the survey found that Canadians of Philippine origin were the third largest non-European group in Canada (Chui, et al., 2007; Kelly, 2006). As a result of the influx over the last twenty years, 70% of the Filipino community is born outside of Canada (Lindsay, 2001). If past trends continue, even greater numbers of children from the Philippines will immigrate to Canada in future years, and it is thus important to ensure their successful integration into society. One way that this can be achieved is by encouraging them to stay in school. As Maguire & Curdt-Christiansen (2007) pointed out, schools are key socializing places and can aid significantly in the smooth transition of newly arrived immigrant children in their new home.

Rationale for the Study

In this inquiry, I identify distinct reasons as to why four first-generation Filipinas decided to leave or stay in school. I contrast their experiences with one second-generation Filipino student who attended a private school and also examine the contextual factors that influence the teens' decisions to abandon their studies. I focus particularly on whether the socio-economic background of first-generation females has an impact on their educational goals and accomplishments. Overall, the

objective of this research is to understand what makes girls of this specific background persist in their studies, and why some fail to do so. While it is equally important to recognize that boys also leave school prematurely, the focus of this study is on teenage girls due to the lack of knowledge and research into this demographic.

It is my hope that this research can contribute to the literature on school leaving in Canada, specifically in terms of information on female immigrant youths, an area currently lacking in documented research and study. I wish to create awareness and raise consciousness within the Filipino community about this social issue among first-generation Filipino children. Since Canada will be accepting increasing numbers of foreign workers from the Philippines, it is important to examine whether this staggered migration has any impact on their lives and futures of their children.

Personal Positioning

I was born and raised near Manila, the capital of Philippines. I studied in private Catholic schools where the textbooks were all in English. Following his employment in several countries for most of my childhood and after living in Quebec City for four years, my father decided to sponsor my family to come to Canada. In 1993, when I was fifteen years old, my mother, my four siblings and I immigrated to Canada. In Quebec City, I studied in a French public school and as a result became fluent in Tagalog, English and French. However, upon my arrival to Canada, my previous educational background was not taken into consideration, and I was placed in beginners English courses. Only after two years did the administration realize that I was ahead of my class and moved me into an advance English program. When I graduated from high school, I decided to continue my studies at an English CEGEP

(college), and I enrolled in Pure and Applied Science. I have always excelled in Humanities, and therefore I decided to change programs from science to social science in university. I decided to pursue a Bachelors degree at McGill University where I completed a double major in Cultural Studies and Sociology.

Adjusting to a French school was not easy for me, but I persevered in my studies because receiving a good education was something that my parents inspired in me from a very young age. I used to hate going to school, and I was teased a lot for my accent and for being different. I felt that most of the Quebec students could not get past my skin color or ethnicity: to put it bluntly, my 'otherness'. As a result of my loneliness and marginalization, I made a decision to befriend only immigrants. My best friend in high school came from the Ivory Coast, and we helped each other get good grades by studying together. I was also fortunate to come from a big family – I have two sisters and two brothers – such that my siblings and I became very close because we did not have many friends in the beginning. The Filipino community in Quebec City at the time was relatively small and we did not have any relatives living in the province. In college, and later when I moved to Montreal, I gained more confidence when I started studying again in English.

Different aspects helped me get through the hurdles of learning a new language and finishing high school. The major factors that contributed to my personal adjustment in Canada were the fact that I grew up with my mother and had teachers who encouraged me to do well in school. I also spoke fluent Tagalog which allowed me to communicate with other Filipinos quite easily. Unlike most Filipino families where it is the mothers who immigrate to foreign countries, pursuing careers as nannies and nurses, it was my father, an architect by trade, who lived and worked

abroad for many years during my childhood. My siblings and I were very lucky to have our mother stay with us, raise us, and supervise our studies. As a direct result, our family relationships were very strong and did not deteriorate like other families in the Philippines, where parents had to leave their children for long periods of time in pursuit of employment in foreign countries. Despite the fact that some of my teachers in high school were close minded and culturally insensitive, a few were more open and patient with me, and these teachers, especially in science, encouraged me. As a result, I worked very hard to get good grades and tried to excel in all of my studies. My mother tongue was Tagalog, which facilitated communications between myself and other Filipinos in Canada. Knowing how to speak Tagalog has strengthened my ethnic identity and support system, and has perhaps also provided a stress buffer, which Mossakowski (2003) argues is very important for immigrants. There are around one hundred seventy-one languages in the Philippines, but Filipinos who immigrate to other countries use Filipino or Tagalog most commonly when speaking to each other.

Even though my background and ethnicity were similar to those of my respondents, and also helped me overcome some of the hurdles of this research, I did not have the same childhood experiences as many first-generation Filipino children. I experienced alienation and angst when I first arrived in Canada, and grew up with the absence of one of my parents. However, my family did not migrate to Canada through the Live-in Caregiver Program, and therefore my parents were able to spend time with me and supervise my studies. In addition, I was born to a middle-class family who placed a high importance on education. In spite of undergoing a financial step-back when we moved to Canada, my parents encouraged our studies and took

the time to try to help us with our assignments. I had early ambitions of attending university, which helped me to overcome the tediousness of high school life. These are several of the factors that made a difference in my educational outcome, and helped me to succeed in an area where other first-generation immigrant teens have not.

In 1999, while I was living in Montreal on my own and in the middle of completing my undergraduate degree, a friend invited me to participate in a youth conference organized by a Filipino youth group called the Kabataang Montreal. It is through this event, as well as my subsequent visits to the Immigrant Workers' Centre, that I became involved in community activism. I also began volunteering for PINAY, a Filipino Women's organization that fights for the rights of Live-in Caregivers in Quebec. Through my involvement with these groups, I have become more aware of the struggles of Filipino immigrants and their children in Canada. Although I am not currently as active in such activities as I have been previously, I still attend events organized by these groups and try to help their cause whenever I can.

I am mindful of the challenges of conducting research in my own community. One of the dangers associated with such intimate research is research bias. While I have great ease empathizing and interacting with my research participants, I might have missed some information during the course of my interviews due to my similarity to them. Since I am also an 'insider', some things might seem self-explanatory to me while they may be completely foreign to others. As Mueller, Tilleczek, Rummens, & Boydell (2008) argue, "understanding sense-making of another person is not possible from an outside position, since the interpreter has his/her own way of making sense, shaped by a specific social and historical context,

which is subjective" (2008, p. 49). A researcher's task therefore is to be aware of her subjectivity and limitations when examining and writing about her own community. My personal experiences have definitely guided my interest in this topic, and my identity has positively impacted this study by providing certain advantages during this research: my sex and ethnicity helped facilitate dialogue and establish trust, which allowed teens to share information with me that they might have otherwise concealed from outsiders. For instance, the respondents felt at ease in divulging information about their personal experiences with their parents and ex-boyfriends.

Definition of key terms

For this inquiry, the terms drop-out, early school leaving, and school quitting are used alternately. The word 'drop-out' is used when a student stops attending school for a certain period of time before acquiring their diploma. Three students who participated in this study transferred from regular high school to adult school; however, only two are considered to have dropped out because they have stopped attending classes. One withdrew for a year while the other did not attend school for two years. Both girls are back in adult school and are trying to finish their studies.

In order to understand social stratification and inequality, I use the following concepts: capital, discourse, ethnicity and identity. For Pierre Bourdieu (1986), capital can come in many forms; it can be an object, ownership, knowledge, relationship, or attributes that can be exchanged for goods or services. Discourse refers to a distinct way of speaking about some aspect of reality (Fleras & Elliott, 1999). Bourdieu (1977) describes discourse as language that is structured by social and cultural conditions, one that is used to construct and underpin social class. Ethnicity is defined as a "principle by which people are defined, differentiated,

organized, and rewarded on the basis of commonly shared physical or cultural characteristics" (Fleras & Elliott, 1999, p. 435). Ethnicity also includes characteristics and traits that reinforce a shared system of beliefs and customs. The Collins English dictionary defines 'identity' as the "individual characteristics by which a person or thing is recognized" ("Identity.," n.d.). For Bourdieu (1977), social identity is associated with class and capital: those who possess capital confer power to their children through socialization, and create their realities, subjectivities, and world view as a direct consequence. For this inquiry, the concept of "Filipino family ideology" signifies the centrality of family in the lives of Filipinos. Wolfe (2002) uses it to refer to a set of ideas and emotional statements "about family as the center of what it means to be Filipino"(p. 261).

Summary

In this chapter, I describe the ongoing issue of elevated dropout rates in Quebec, specifically of immigrant students. Although many reports exist describing the phenomenon of early school leaving, little information is known about the educational experiences of minority teens in public high schools. I also explain the immigration history of Filipinos in Canada and the Filipino community in Montreal. In Chapter 2, I explore the literature review on early school leaving and use Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical concept of capital to understand the sociological dynamics of dropping out of school from the perspective of first-generation immigrants. In Chapter 3, I explain the methodology and methods used during this research. The five female Filipino teens whose experiences and opinions form the practical basis of this research are introduced in Chapter 4, and their self reports are presented and

described. Finally, in Chapter 5, I examine the issues raised by the participants and propose several implications of this study.

CHAPTER 2

Literature review and theoretical framework

Literature Review

In this chapter, I explore the findings of research on early school leaving and what motivates students to stay in school. I use academic and government reports to assess this phenomenon in Quebec. I also include studies that focus on the education of immigrant youth, particularly girls. The experiences of four first-generation and one second-generation Filipinas in high school will be analyzed using Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) concept of capital. Three factors have considerable influence on a teen's educational attainment: the family, school and peers.

School Disengagement

Many studies have dealt with the topic of school leaving and most of these studies agree on certain points: boys are more likely to experience academic delays (Pelletier & Rheault, 2005; Statistics Canada, 2009) and are more likely to drop out of school than girls (Pelletier & Rheault, 2005). Leaving school prematurely stems from a myriad of factors but the most common reasons are: a lack of parental support or presence; negative influence from peers and insensitive school personnel (Delgado-Gaitan, 1988; Rummens, Tilleczek, Boydell, & Ferguson, 2008; Terry, 2008); the effect of socio-economic status of youth on their educational trajectory (Buchmann, DiPrete, & McDaniel, 2008; Corcoran, 1995; Pelletier & Rheault, 2005); and the fact that newly arrived immigrants experience academic delays (Provencher, 2006). There are also numerous studies that have dealt with school motivation and engagement (Rummens et al., 2008; Tenenbaum, Porche, Snow, Tabors, & Ross,

2007) and others which list ways to keep students in school (Rummens et al., 2008;Morris, Pawlovich, & McCall, 1991). These findings will be further examined in the present chapter.

Other studies have focused on the disengagement that working-class male students experience in school. For example, Paul Willis' (1977) influential book *Learning to Labour,* which is an ethnographic study, is still cited in discussions of the underachievement of boys in school. Madeleine Arnot's 2006 research lists a number of reasons why boys usually experience difficulties in school. She points out that working-class boys view the curriculum as irrelevant to their interests and needs. Boys appeared to "be the least able to communicate with teachers and received the least help" (Arnot, 2006, p. 66). The boys did not feel trusted by their teachers which translated into reduced learning motivation. Boys also tend to have lower grades than girls (Buchmann et al. 2008; Pelletier & Rheault, 2005). Differences between sexes manifest themselves very early during the children's development. Buchmann et al. (2008) describe that, "twice as many boys as girls have difficulty paying attention in kindergarten, and girls more often demonstrate persistence in completing tasks and eagerness to learn" (p. 322). Lacking in literature is why girls leave school, specifically those of foreign origins.

Another important factor influencing early school leaving is a child's family. However, there is no consensus in the literature on the link, if any, between economic constraints and poor academic performance. Most studies argue that a student's socio-economic status in the form of "financial capital; social capital; access to role models, mentors, and information; individual attitudes especially aspirations; and prior academic performance" have an effect on a student's educational attainment

(Buchmann et al., 2008). However, in Rummens et al.'s (2008) study of immigrants and refugees, they argued that lower socio-economic status "in and of itself did not necessarily represent a risk factor for newcomer youth populations" (p. 86). There are also contradictory findings when it comes to studies aimed at linking parental educational attainment and their children's success. Tenenbaum et al. (2007) found that there was no relationship between maternal education and their children's performance in school.

A study published by the Quebec Minister of Education in 2006 demonstrated that children of foreign origin had a higher likelihood than the total student population to fall behind: 19.9% immigrant students compared with 16.7% of all students in the academic year of 2003-2004 (Provencher, 2006). The paragraph below describes the reasons accredited to the academic delay of immigrant children:

> These students may already have been in this position before immigrating; they may also have been behind when they first entered the Quebec school system as a result of differences in the evaluation criteria used to determine the level of schooling in the country of origin; certain immigrant students with limited knowledge of French may also have been experiencing more difficulties at school and hence academic delay in a system where the instruction is provided in French (p.25).

While this study included important findings concerning immigrant families in the province of Quebec, it still lacked details about specific ethnic groups. For example, immigrants from the Philippines were grouped by either mother tongue (Indonesian category) or by region of birth (South-East Asia category) clusters. This reductionist method neglects the different historical and cultural backgrounds of minority students, specifically Asian immigrants. Statistics from this study show that minorities from both linguistic and geographical categories experienced significant academic delays when compared to the total number of student population. The same

study reveals that 53.3% of Montreal students come from immigrant families. Taken together, these results are therefore quite problematic when one realizes that up to half of the student population in Montreal – those who were born outside of Canada – will experience academic delay.

School motivation

There are many reasons why girls perform better in high school than boys. Buchmann, et al. (2008) hypothesized that more girls aspire to attend college, which explains why they work harder to get good grades. In Canada, male and female students have different educational trends; the majority of women apply to colleges while most Canadian men opt for trade certificates (Hébert, Crew, Delisle, Ferguson, & McMullen, 2008).

Academic success is not based on cognitive abilities alone. In the literature, the role of motivation as it relates to student achievement has also been examined. More often, the brightest students do not have the highest confidence or achievement motivation (Dweck 1986, as cited in Tenenbaum et al. 2007). Phelan, Davidson, & Cao (1991) believe that working toward future educational aspirations can help youth overcome the hurdles that they experience in high school. Lessard, et al. (2009) termed students who persevere in school and graduate despite significant challenges in their lives as "resilient". Their longitudinal study in Quebec found that resilient students had three characteristics: 1) While support from parents and peers was beneficial, resilient students received less encouragement from their parents than others; 2) resilient students possessed positive self-esteem and self-efficacy, believed in their abilities, and worked harder when they are faced with difficulties; 3) resilient

students demonstrated the ability to seek help from others, whether friends, teachers, or psychologists. The logical question formulated upon reviewing such research is whether an immigrant child's resiliency is enough to keep this individual in school.

There are several factors that specifically motivate minority students to graduate. For instance, Rummens et al. (2008) point to the positive effects of "extended familial involvement in school and the general life of youth; parents' desire to ensure better future for their children through education; religious faith and/or community social support; and positive inclusive school ethos" (p.91). They also underline the importance of supportive school administrators and a welcoming school environment.

Other research studies which focus on the psychological health of immigrants suggest the importance of maintaining ethnic identity in the host country. In Mossakowski's (2003) epidemiological study of Filipino Americans, she found that having strong ethnic identity may help Filipinos in the US to cope with perceived discrimination. This study also found that girls in general are more prone to depression. Ethnic pride – which can take the form of involvement in ethnic practices, being committed to one's group by learning cultural heritage, and partaking in traditional customs and cultural practices – is directly beneficial to the mental health of Filipino teens. However, this study lacked information on other activities that Filipino youth engage in, such as involvement in religious groups or community activism.

Filipinos and education

Data from the 2001 Census indicate that Filipinos between 15 and 24 years old have one of the highest non-attendance rates in school compared to other minority groups in Canada (Statistics Canada). Of the 44,490 Filipino youths in the 15 to 24 age bracket almost 35% did not attend school, compared to 26% from the total number of visible minority population as indicated in Table 2. In the same year, only 57% of Filipino youths were full-time students, although in this case the same proportion applied to the overall Canadian population (Lindsay, 2001). Since education plays an invaluable role in the integration of new immigrants, this trend becomes problematic if we look at the number of teens who are not in school. Rousseau et al. (2009) found that Quebec institutions "such as school boards, the police force, and social service agencies also perceive Filipino youth as having difficulties although studies have not been performed to investigate this view" (p.752).

The most recent data on the educational trajectories of immigrant children are sourced from the 2002 Statistics Canada Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS). This survey reported that most immigrant children attained a higher percentage of university education than their parents (Abada, Feng, & Ram, 2009) and in general, immigrant parents who were highly educated had a positive impact on their children's educational attainment. However, the same upward trend did not apply to Filipino children. Even though Filipino mothers and fathers had the highest proportion of university completion (41.4% and 42.7%, respectively), only 39.9% of their offspring achieved the same level of education. As the authors argue, "when selected sociodemographic and family background variables are accounted for, immigrant

Selected Educational Characteristics	Visible Minority Groups													
	Total - Total population by visible minority groups	Total visible minority population	Chinese	South Asian	Black	Filipino	Latin American	Southeast Asian	Arab	West Asian	Korean	Japanese	Visible minority, n.i.e.	All others
Total population 15 years and over by school attendance	3,988,200	634,685	157,730	139,810	110,610	44,490	38,550	32,775	30,830	20,010	21,110	10,980	14,890	3,353,515
Not attending school	1,472,465	166,960	27,740	39,305	34,035	15,410	13,050	10,075	7,905	4,460	3,635	3,075	4,885	1,305,510
Attending school full time	2,276,000	423,745	120,105	90,765	68,910	25,155	22,325	20,470	21,090	13,985	16,210	7,250	8,900	1,852,255
Attending school part time	239,730	43,980	9,885	9,745	7,665	3,920	3,175	2,230	1,845	1,570	1,265	655	1,105	195,750
Total population 15 years and over by highest level of schooling	3,988,200	634,685	157,730	139,810	110,610	44,490	38,550	32,775	30,830	20,010	21,105	10,980	14,890	3,353,515
Less than high school graduation certificate	1,701,900	243,230	54,620	51,330	48,930	15,535	16,915	14,300	10,635	8,520	8,000	3,660	5,985	1,458,665
High school graduation certificate only	618,030	96,770	16,565	23,330	19,470	8,040	7,805	5,275	4,555	3,705	2,055	1,405	2,780	521,260
Some postsecondary education	828,375	169,180	53,300	35,325	23,840	11,480	8,000	7,255	7,895	4,740	7,240	3,230	3,360	659,195
Trades certificate or diploma	183,645	15,765	2,415	3,455	3,415	1,535	1,335	885	960	415	275	260	470	167,885
College certificate or diploma	389,815	45,895	8,935	9,390	9,435	4,155	3,005	2,580	2,995	935	900	1,020	1,410	343,920
University certificate or diploma below bachelor's degree	48,845	13,525	3,890	3,695	1,240	925	340	615	800	580	665	320	220	35,320
University degree	217,595	50,325	17,995	13,280	4,285	2,815	1,145	1,860	2,990	1,115	1,980	1,085	665	167,270
Bachelor's degree	194,030	44,965	16,575	11,535	3,895	2,500	900	1,725	2,615	1,000	1,615	990	625	149,065
University certificate above bachelor's degree	15,235	3,125	800	855	205	270	175	70	205	85	290	65	30	12,110
Master's degree	8,000	2,130	600	855	180	45	55	65	150	25	75	25	10	5,865
Earned doctorate	335	105	25	30	0	0	10	0	20	15	0	10	0	225

Table 2: Educational Characteristics of Selected Ethnic Groups (15 to 24 yrs. Old), taken from the 2001 Census

youth from the Philippines show disadvantages relative to children of Canadian-born parents" (p. 20). This study points to other factors that may be negatively affecting the academic performance of Filipino children.

The findings of Yen Le Espiritu (2001) and Diane L. Wolfe's (2002) studies on immigrant Filipino teens in the United States are important in the present inquiry. Both authors observed that female immigrants from the Philippines suffered loneliness and despair more than other immigrant students. A 1995 random survey of San Diego public schools found that, in comparison with other ethnic groups, Filipinas "had the highest rate of seriously considering suicide (45.6 percent) as well as the highest rates of actually attempting suicide (23 percent)" (Espiritu, 2001, p. 435). Both studies highlight the family as being central to the lives of teens from the Philippines. Wolfe (2002) described the Filipino family as the "locus of contradictions" due to its dual function as a source of both identity and daily encouragement in youth and a source of their problems. For many Filipinos, family is "the center of what it means to be Filipino" (Wolfe, 2002, p. 261). Espiritu (2001) argued that in Filipino families, the process of parenting is gendered and most parents pushed their daughters to achieve academically in school while restricting their autonomy, mobility, and personal decision making more than they did with their sons. Espiritu maintains that daughters are expected to dedicate themselves to the family. For Wolfe, since Filipino ideology dictates that problems should be kept within the family, Filipino girls could not confide in their parents and were reluctant to seek counselling. Thus, Filipinas cope with intense pressure by internalizing their problems. These studies explain how a Filipino girl's motivation to quit or stay in school may depend on her values and socialization. While they focus on the psycho-

social struggles of Filipino teens, the findings of Espiritu and Wolfe may point to the underlying factors that push Filipinas to quit school prematurely.

Theoretical Framework

Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) sociological theory of capital has guided my understanding of the phenomenon of school leaving and motivation. In this section, I examine Bourdieu's concept of capital to understand how social inequalities shape the way students experience schooling, and how these institutions maintain power relations within society. According to Bourdieu, while schools are meritocratic and grant equal opportunities to students, they reproduce social inequalities by maintaining hegemony and serving the interest of dominant groups (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002).

For Bourdieu, the motivations that govern people's actions are shaped by the ongoing struggles over scarce goods and resources. These resources, referred to by him as 'capital', come in four different forms: economic, cultural, social, and symbolic. Capital takes time to accumulate, has the capacity to produce profits, can reproduce itself, and can determine the chances of success in practices (Bourdieu, 1986). Economic capital is simply ownership of financial wealth and money. Cultural capital can exist in three forms: *embodied* state, in the form of culture or cultivation which implies labour of inculcation and assimilation by the investor; *objectified* state, in the form of cultural goods (i.e. books and paintings) which can be easily transferred; and *institutionalized* state, in the form of academic qualifications or certificates. Social capital is resources that could be acquired through membership in a certain group or network. Symbolic capital represents the status and honour that is acquired through the possession of one or more forms of capital. Formal education is

increasingly valued because of its ability to confer capital, specifically cultural capital, and is becoming "the condition for legitimate access to a growing number of positions, particularly the dominant ones" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 55). Therefore, cultural capital is one way for privileged parents to transmit and maintain their economic capital and preserve their dominant status in society.

There are many means by which a student's capital can have an impact on her educational attainment. While education is known for its role in alleviating social disadvantages by providing equal opportunities to students, it also reinforces stratification by maintaining the social class hierarchy found in the wider context of society. Teachers and policy makers tend to come from fairly privileged backgrounds and are, as a result, "disposed to favour students who share their values and attitudes" (Webb, et al., 2002, p. 113). The type of language (discourse) used in schools tends to favour students who have already been exposed to this language at home, or which has been reinforced in the books these students read. In other words, majority students have already mastered the "language of power" due to their socialization (Levinson, 2003). Minority students may need to "shift their grammar, vocabulary, and narrative or expository form, as well as their cultural, political and experiential referents in order to be understood and respected" by the majority group (Levinson, 2003, p.36). For Bourdieu, a student's chances of success are shaped from the onset; wealthy parents are able to socialize their children and endow them with cultural capital that accumulates over time, which maintains their class privilege and status. Similarly, a child who comes from a poor family might find the school system alienating and unwelcoming, due to the difference in social class and privileges established externally and prior to entering the school system. In examining the

education of immigrant children from the Philippines, it is important to look at the "push" and "pull" factors that may be at play in their varying school disengagement and motivation.

Since, according to Bourdieu (1986), capital takes time to accumulate it is easy to understand how many first-generation Filipino immigrants have difficulty adjusting to Canadian public schools. Firstly, most families from the Philippines immigrate to Canada with the desire to improve their standard of living, and as a result, one might infer that Filipino families who arrive in Montreal tend to lack in economic and cultural capital. These deficiencies will in turn shape the education of their children. For instance, instead of attending a private school where classes are smaller and individual attention is more prominent, most children of immigrant parents will attend public schools, where they will receive less attention and help from teachers than students in private institutions. Most Filipino teens will be provided with little information on how to navigate the educational system in Quebec. First-generation Filipino students will also lack social capital due mainly to the limited time they have in adjusting to their new environment and creating social networks prior to being sent to school. Over time, teens who do not possess all three capitals – economic, cultural and social – will not acquire symbolic capital, trapping them within a marginalized status of society.

Family

Anane N. Olatunji's (2005) study demonstrates how capital plays a role in the schooling of Mexican children in the United States. Olatunji found that among students of Mexican-origin, the odds of girls dropping out of school were three and a

half times greater than boys of similar background and circumstance. He found that the "female status was the most powerful predictor of tenth-grade dropout status among Mexican-origin adolescents" (Olatunji, 2005, p. 302). This finding contrasts starkly with the dropout problem described in the literature, which appears to be male-dominated. Olatunji (2005) attributes this phenomenon to teenage employment, which deters female youth from completing high school. He argues that traditional Mexican values dictate that teens find jobs at an early age in order to fulfill the cultural expectation of mutual family support. In this case, the lack of economic capital of the Mexican students is an obstacle in their acquisition of cultural and symbolic capital, which could be obtained through academic achievement.

Parental supervision and encouragement have a significant impact on the academic performance of their children. Delgado-Gaitan's (1988) study found that Chicano students in Colorado who received consistent and systematic support from their parents tended to stay in school. She argued that their home support systems instilled in them "a strong value of the self above all and provided in the family a safe place for the students to retreat in the face of conflict" (p. 376). Having a supportive network of family members can help youth stay motivated in school.

The research on Filipino youth is consistent with studies that repeatedly demonstrate the importance of family influence in keeping teens in school. For example, Rousseau et al.'s (2009) transcultural study of 254 Caribbean and Filipino students in Quebec found that the higher the degree of family cohesion in the Filipino families, the more positive the mindset their children had towards school. It is important to note that this research only involved youth who were still in school, a weakness which is identified and presented by the authors in the study. Nevertheless,

their findings are important and add to the body of literature regarding immigration and youth that is severely lacking in Quebec. As with Espiritu's (2001) study, female participants reported more internalization symptoms than boys, such as anxiety and depression. Contrary to expectations, the authors' findings suggest that family separation *per se* did not affect the children as much as discrimination that they experienced in the host country. Finally, the authors argue that positive family relationships and general feeling of belonging may help youth overcome obstacles and act as a buffer to disillusionment and hopelessness, allowing "Filipino youth to invest in school with the belief that beyond the present prejudices surrounding their community change is possible" (Rousseau et al., 2009, p. 758).

It is hard to ignore the numerous trends in school leaving that relate to poverty and financial struggles. The Canadian Centre for Adolescent Research found that 22% of teens do leave school prematurely because of work ("Stats: High School Dropouts," 2000). In the province of Quebec, the Minister of Education discovered that there is a clear link, between economic capital and school completion, citing that "the more favourable the socioeconomic environment, the lower the number of students experiencing academic delay" (Pelletier & Rheault, 2005, p. 3). Those students who are at an economic disadvantage are more likely to leave school without a diploma (Buchmann et al., 2008; Pelletier & Rheault, 2005).

Research studies show that Filipinos who live in Canada generally do not have economic capital. For example, a study conducted by Zenaida et al. (2005) revealed that immigrants from the Philippines were more spatially concentrated in poorer sections of large metropolitan cities, including Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. The greatest disparity was observed in Montreal, where the average income

in 2000 was $64,461. In contrast, for the neighbourhoods with a high density of Filipinos, the average annual income was $41,819. In addition, a third of Filipinos in Montreal live in the Cote-des-Neiges district, where the rate of home-ownership is very low. Zenaida et al.'s (2005) study has negative implications on the education of Filipino teens: research conducted by the Government of Quebec reveals that the socioeconomic status of students is directly related to their performance at school. These studies support Bourdieu's argument that economic and cultural capitals play a role in school achievement, and might explain the high proportion of Filipinos not attending school.

Another disadvantage that Filipino youth have is rooted in the Canadian immigration practice of deskilling. 'Deskilling' is defined by the Collins English Dictionary as "to cause (skilled persons or labour force) to work at a job that does not utilize their skills" ("Deskill," n.d.). Most migrant workers suffer from deskilling when they enter into the Canadian work force. As Kelly (2006) argued, they "tend to be channelled to jobs that do not match their level of education and training" (p. 21). As a result, despite the high levels of education that immigrants from the Philippines possess, they are concentrated in low-income jobs that do not reflect their skill or professional training. As explained previously, the socio-economic status of students can have a significant effect on their performance in school. However, another adverse effect of the deskilling of Filipino migrants is the lack of role models in the community as a result of this barrier. Children from the Philippines may also question the purpose of education towards economic mobility when examining the relationship between education and economic status amongst adult members of their community: since their parents were not successful in securing well-paying jobs despite their

impressive educational backgrounds, youths from the Philippines may dismiss the value of acquiring a good education.

School

For Bourdieu, the educational system contributes to the reproduction of social structure by "sanctioning the hereditary transmission of cultural capital" (1986, p. 48). Parents are able to transmit cultural capital to their children through socialization. He argues that schools are inclined to serve the interest of students who already possess the cultivation and values that schools promote. Based on this theory, teens that experience difficulties in coping with the Canadian educational system may get discouraged and drop-out. For instance, in Clara C. Park's (1997) study on the learning preferences of Asian-American youths, she observed certain characteristics that are distinctive of Filipino students. According to Park (1997), Filipinos, just like most Asian students, respect their elders and those in authority, and have a strong dependence on social hierarchy. Since most Asian children are accustomed to strongly structured classes involving hardly any small group activity, Filipino students have to learn how to cope with a livelier and more fluid learning environment in North America. Due to this difference and learning environment, she recommends that teachers should incorporate a more visual and kinaesthetic approach when teaching children from the Philippines.

Although this study was conducted in the United States it has implications in examining the learning styles of students from the Philippines. In Park's research, the majority of Filipino students were more motivated than their American counterparts, and also preferred traditional education, that is, a teacher-centered style of learning.

Thus, while the student-centered approach that is commonly used in Canada might be considered more diplomatic and egalitarian, if we take Park's observations into consideration, we can assume that such a style will result in many Filipino students experiencing difficulties in adjusting to the Canadian school system. Filipino students who lack cultural capital will have to learn, not only the literal "language of power", which in Quebec is French, but also the discursive way of expressing themselves that is valued in the Canadian school system.

Students are more engaged in school if they feel that the teachers and administrators care for them and their well being. In Cassidy & Bates (2005) study of a school for at-risk youth they found that children responded positively to the caring approach adopted by the staff. Central to this "ethic of care" were teachers who respected the students, listened to them, who became their friends, took a personal interest in them, helped them to succeed, and showed care (Cassidy & Bates, 2005). In addition, the study underlined the importance of "building respectful, responsive, and supportive relationships and, through these relationships, meeting the needs of children in flexible and insightful ways" (p. 95). For this inquiry, it is important to examine whether school personnel treated the female immigrant students with cultural sensitivity, and whether the teachers played a role in their academic performance.

Peers

The lack of social capital can also increase a student's school disengagement. Peers and social networks can influence a student to either leave prematurely or excel in school. For instance, studies have found that a negative school climate, where

newcomers feel alienated and discriminated against can influence their disengagement from school (Rummens et al., 2008; Terry, 2008). For example, in a 2008 study conducted by Marion Terry, many participants who dropped out of school reported unsatisfactory relations with their school peers, "ranging from emotional discomfort in class, to physical abuse in the school yard" (p.32). Since statistics demonstrate that at-risk school leavers are often older than their school peers due to having failed at least one year (Terry, 2008), this placed students in a precarious situation where they could be vulnerable to alienation and isolation in school.

The findings of Ellenbogen & Chamberland's (1997) comparative study of at-risk and non at-risks youths have significant implications in this research. The authors found that male and female students experience different processes of school disengagement. At-risk females tended to have more dropout friends, which may be related to their early maturation. Even though females were "more attached to their friends, less open to negative influence, and less likely to be rejected by their classmates" (p. 365), their dropout friends could still act as negative influences and persuade them into quitting school prematurely. The authors argue that the girls' justification for leaving may stem from their experiences of stronger marginalization at this grade level. This study highlights the danger of schools focusing on disruptive boys while neglecting at-risk girls whose departure is done quietly and without fanfare. The findings of Ellenbogen & Chamberland are very useful when considering the differences between at-risk boys and girls' school disengagement. It also highlights the need for more studies that focus on voices of at-risk females.

Summary

In this chapter, I describe the relevant studies that deal with school disengagement and motivation and include research about the educational experiences of minority students. I illustrate how Pierre Bourdieu's different forms of capital have an impact on the schooling of first-generation Filipino students. As with previous studies, positive family relations can contribute to the overall wellbeing of Filipino teens and encourage them to persevere in school. In the next chapter, I discuss the methodology, methods and recruitment processes used for the practical element of this study.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Methods

In this chapter, I discuss my methodological framework, the specific methods used to gather data for this inquiry, and the research questions that have guided this study. I interviewed eight Filipinos who immigrated to Canada during the late 1960's and 1970's in order to understand their perceptions of starting a new life in this country. To understand how the Filipino community has developed in Montreal, I compare the narratives of these individuals with information taken from published articles and documents. Lastly, I describe the recruiting and interviewing process of the five young female informants focused on in this study, and explain the data collection process.

Methodology

In this qualitative case study, I compare the experiences of four first-generation female Filipino teens and, for further research, describe the experience of one second-generation Filipina student who was born in Canada but attended a private high school in the United States. I employ a qualitative case study in the ethnographic tradition and apply the individual interview methodology. By way of these interviews, I am able to explore the factors that drive Filipino girls to quit school, and conversely those factors that motivate them to stay in school. There are quite a few statistics that point to the high dropout rate of minorities in public schools in Quebec; however, specific details, gleaned from the point of view of newly arrived female immigrants and describing the "push" and "pull" factors that influence the decisions of immigrant early school leavers, are sadly absent. Since most studies on

school leaving have focused on male students, the voices of women have been largely ignored or unheard.

For my analysis of these female perceptions, I drew on sociological theory and Bourdieu's (1986) concept of capital. His conceptual framework seeks to explain the class inequality and power dynamics in society. For Bourdieu, people's behaviours are fuelled by the desire to increase their economic and social status. He focuses specifically on the stratifications within higher education, and on its role in reproducing social inequality. The struggles of first-generation female students from the Philippines in the Quebec educational system can be best understood by applying Bourdieu's theoretical framework. The educational experiences of the five female Filipino students in this inquiry were influenced by their economic, social, and cultural capital. Their success depended on the economic capital of their families, which resulted primarily from the occupations of their parents in Canada, on their cultural capital, focused heavily on learning the French language and adapting to the Canadian school system, and on social capital, through the existence and maintenance of positive support networks.

As a result of my personal life experiences, I am acutely aware of the difficulties of migrating to a new country and integrating into a French language high school system. My identity as a first-generation Filipina who attended a French language high school at the age of 15 provided me with an insider status and facilitated the participants' willingness to share their feelings of frustration, oppression, and hopelessness. In addition, my ability to speak Tagalog fluently also made my informants feel more comfortable expressing themselves and some were relieved that communication would not be an issue. Due to the fact that I gained

access to my respondents as a community volunteer, there appears to be no apparent power-imbalance between myself and the participants. Still, similar to many minority scholars, my insider status occasionally changed to that of an outsider depending on the context of our interactions. For instance, when I interviewed these women, they viewed me as an academic researcher, somebody who has not only graduated high school but also pursued higher education. On the other hand, they regarded me as another first-generation Filipina when we interacted on various occasions: some of the participants started calling me *'ate'* which translates as older sister in Tagalog, when they saw me at fundraising events or cultural celebrations. As a Filipino researcher conducting a study in my own community, it is equally important for me to acknowledge my position in knowledge production and to be aware of my social subjectivities and multiple roles during these processes.

The participants in this research are female youth from the Philippines who have immigrated to Montreal. Three of the informants moved to Canada within the last seven years. Due to my long time involvement in the Montreal Filipino community, and in particular with the group *Kabataang Montreal* (KM), I was able to recruit the majority of my study informants with the help of KM. However, I was introduced to one informant by a friend of my brother's. Since I often participated in activities organized by KM, and attended other cultural events in the community, it was easy for me to gain the participants' trust, a necessity in conducting accurate, honest, and detailed interviews on such a personal subject.

Research Methods

Collection of data presented in this study took place over several months and was two-fold in nature. First, I interviewed a few individuals from the older

generations, who immigrated to Canada in the 1970s, and then I began recruiting the students. I began in April 2009 by interviewing Filipino seniors who are still active in the community, to get a sense of how it had evolved in Montreal over the last decades. I interviewed individuals who have been involved in Filipino organizations, such as past presidents and officers of FAMAS, the officers of the Philippine Basketball Association of Montreal, past members of the Quebec Association of Canadian-Filipino Teachers, and other individuals who immigrated to Canada during the 1960s and 70s; I also interviewed the priest presiding over the Filipino Catholic Mission of Montreal. Upon completing these interviews and taking notes, I cross-checked their stories with articles published in literature, in order to understand the commonalities of Filipinos who have immigrated to Canada during that period. I compared their experiences and highlighted the major themes, which I discuss in Chapter 1. All interviews were recorded using a Sony USB digital voice recorder, and they took place in various locations: at the McGill University library, a gymnasium in Côte-des-Neiges, the FAMAS office, in churches, and in the homes of the participants. The interview sessions lasted between thirty minutes and two hours, depending on the informant's availability. I also attended cultural and political events in the community, and took pictures using a Cannon PowerShot digital camera, as illustrated in Photo 2. In order to understand the phenomenon of high school leaving, I conducted research using various sources: academic journals and literary database, the internet, as well as publications from government agencies, the city of Montreal as well as scholastic institutions.

In the summer of 2009, I began actively seeking youth participants through a wide network of friends and family. My inclusion criteria were Filipinos between the

ages of 18 to 22, and who have attended public high school in Montreal. I had not planned on exclusively choosing female informants; nevertheless, I am pleased with the outcome of my recruitment given the absence of female voices in the school leaving literature. Given my gender, it was easier for me to engage in conversations and share personal information with participants of the same sex. Therefore, my femininity and experience as a first-generation immigrant were commonalities that facilitated interactions with my participants. My first interviews, conducted with Tina and Adrianna, took place in October of 2009. I finished conducting fieldwork in November 2009, but continued to participate in community events.

I collected data through semi-structured and audio-recorded interviews which were conducted in places where the youth felt most comfortable. Two informants agreed to meet me at the house of the leader (or secretary general at the time of the study) of KM, two met me at coffee shops in Côte-des-Neiges and downtown and the last interview was carried out in the apartment of the informant because she had just given birth just a few weeks earlier. At the beginning of each session, I asked the participant for permission to use a voice-recorder and explained to them that access to the data was limited exclusively to myself, and that their real names would be omitted from the final reports. After obtaining their verbal consent and ensuring that they understood the purpose of the research, I asked them to sign a consent form, shown in Appendix B. I also stressed to all informants that their participation was voluntary and that they could end the interviews at any time. All interviews were recorded using a Sony USB digital voice recorder and were conducted in both in English and Tagalog, depending on which language the participant felt most comfortable speaking. The duration of the interviews was typically between forty-five minutes

and an hour. I transcribed them as soon as they were over and analyzed them according to common themes. Table 3 provides a brief description of the participants, using the aliases that they have chosen, and in the chronological order of the interviews.

Participants	Background	Interview Time
Tina, 19 years old	Moved to Canada in 2003	1 hour
Adrianna, 18 years old	Moved to Canada in 1996	46 minutes
Ashley, 19 years old	Born in Canada	42 minutes
Tweety, 18 years old	Moved to Canada in 2006	53 minutes
Jianna, 20 years old	Moved to Canada in 2003	35 minutes

Table 3: list of participants

Since some interviews were of personal nature, I made sure the informants felt at ease in refusing to disclose any information they did not want to share. Before the first interview with each participant, the women were asked to adopt a pseudonym. The majority of the questions were open-ended and at the end of each session the participant was encouraged to discuss any topic that she preferred. In the first part of the interview, I asked the teens questions regarding their immigration and initial adjustment period in Canada. For example, I inquired about what year they moved to the country, with whom they moved and what their first impressions were. I asked them what jobs their parent(s) occupied directly following the move, and what they do for a living now. In the second part of the interview, I asked the participants about their experiences in school. The final part of the interview focused on future aspirations of these women and their thoughts about early school leaving among

Filipino youth. Most of the participants were very candid during our discussions, even when discussing negative life experiences.

At the end of each interview, I asked the participants if they would like to edit their responses once the interviews were transcribed. This process was to ensure the accuracy of the report and was also my attempt to empower the young women by allowing them to choose what information about their lives they wanted to reveal. Curdt-Christiansen and Maguire (2007) refer to this as the "self as author", or the participant's voice "as revealed in stance, opinions, and beliefs" (p. 521). Only two of the five respondents asked for a copy of their transcripts and neither made any changes. It was important to integrate the perspectives of the participants in making sense of their experiences because as Corbett and Wilson (1995) argue, "the voices of students are rarely heard in the debates about school failure and success, and the perspectives of students from disempowered and dominated communities are even more invisible" (as cited in Cassidy & Bates, 2005). Therefore it was important to examine and understand the educational experiences of female first-generation Filipino students from their own perspectives.

Research Questions

In this qualitative research, I aim to address the following questions:

I. Are adolescents from the Philippines dropping out of public high school?
    a. If so, why are they abandoning their studies?
    b. Do girls have different reasons for school disengagement than boys?

2. For those who have decided to stay in school, what are their motivations?
    a. What kinds of interventions are necessary to target at-risk youths so they choose stay in school?

3. How has migration and family separation impacted the lives of first-generation girls and do these experiences have any bearing on academic performance?

4. What can schools and policy makers do in order to encourage first-generation Filipino girls to graduate?

Data Collection and Recruitment Process

In order to recruit participants, I started disseminating information about my research to groups in the community that I was involved in, such as the KM and PINAY. I also used my social network of friends and family to find potential participants. I attended various events in the community in order to get acquainted with first-generation teens in Montreal. I met a few youth during the summer of 2009 but these individuals did not show particular interest, so I was unable to establish concrete arrangements with them.

Five Filipino participants agreed to be interviewed for this research in the fall of 2009. They were all young women between the ages of eighteen and twenty. Four of these individuals were first-generation immigrants and the fifth one was born in Montreal. Four respondents started out in regular French high schools but of these, three ended up transferring to English adult school. The second-generation teen graduated from a private high school in the United States, where her family moved, and then returned to Canada to continue her studies. To be eligible for application to CEGEP (college), she had to study for one year in a public English school in Montreal, and then complete her missing credits in an adult school. At the time of this study, two of the participants were pursuing their studies in adult school, one had

graduated from adult school, one was in her last year of regular high school, and the second-generation informant was studying in college. All of the first-generation immigrant teens attended a French public high school in Montreal because Bill 101, a Bill passed in 1977, restricts immigrants' access to English public schools. Most of the parents of the participants occupied blue-collar positions, such as caregivers, factory workers and cleaning personnel; only the second-generation Filipina had a parent who worked in her profession as a medical technologist. As a final demographic, two participants came from single-parent households while three had parents who were still married.

At the end of September 2009, I met Tina and Adrianna at a community consultation forum organized by the KM. The group had organized a meeting in order to discuss a fight that had broken out between Filipino and South Asian youth at the Coronation Elementary School basketball court. This area, most commonly known as the 'Shaad basketball court', is a popular place for Filipino teens to hang out, especially during the summer. However, a confrontation arose when a group of South Asian teens attempted to vie for the use of the court (Solyom, 2009). In addition to Filipino and South Asian participants, other minority groups and several police officers attended the meeting to discuss the specific event, as well as the wider context of teen violence in the area. A few days after the meeting, I contacted Tina and Adrianna, and they agreed to participate in the study. The interviews were conducted separately but they both took place during one of the KM meetings.

I met two other participants Tweety and Ashley, through friends, who are also members of the Kabataang Montreal. I was already acquainted with Tweety, having met her during the Consultative Youth Forum organized by KM in July 2009, but it

was only in September that I asked to interview her because she spent most of her summer in the Philippines. I told my friend to explain my research to Tweety, and after a few weeks, she agreed to do the interview in a coffee shop downtown. As with Tweety, I met Ashley through another friend, also an active member of the KM. Ashley and I were introduced for the first time at the Filipino Independence Day celebration at Kent Park in Côte-des-Neiges in the summer of 2009. In September, during one of the KM workshops, I spoke to Ashley's sister, explained my research, and asked her if she would give my phone number to Ashley in case she was willing to participate in my research. A few weeks later, my friend informed me that Ashley had agreed to be interviewed and we finally met in October.

I met Jianna through my brother's friend, who introduced us after she heard about my study. Like Tina, Jianna also moved to Canada in 2003, and, because Montreal is a relatively small city, the girls already knew each other. Since Jianna gave birth in October 2009, I did not want to intrude on her time with her newborn baby. However, she assured me that she was willing to do the interview and so I visited her in her apartment and conducted the interview there. My brother's friend, who was Jianna's sister, was present that day, although she was not in the same room during the interview with Jianna.

Summary

In this chapter, I present the methodology framework and specific practical methods that were used to carry out this inquiry. I attended cultural events and celebrations to describe the Filipino community in Montreal and the majority of participants were recruited through the youth group Kabataang Montreal. I conducted open-ended interviews in October and November 2009 with the five female

participants. Only one participant was interviewed in her apartment due to the recent birth of her child. In the next chapter, I describe the perceptions and experiences of female Filipino teens in public high schools in Montreal.

CHAPTER 4

Perceptions of Educational Experiences of Five Female Filipino Teens

In this chapter, I present the narratives that I collected from the five Filipinas who agreed to share their personal lives. All excerpts in Tagalog are direct transcripts from the interviews, are italicized, and precede the English translation. I asked participants questions about their experiences relocating to Montreal, adjusting to new schools, and being reunited with a parent. The five informants shared their thoughts and feelings about learning a new language, adjusting to a foreign environment, and their difficulties at school. They also described their relationship with their parents and peers. Despite all the challenges they have encountered, all the participants aspired to continue their studies and make their parents proud.

One participant, Ashley, is a second-generation teen who attended a private school in the United States, but also studied in an English public school and an adult school in Montreal. She was born in Canada, grew up in the Philippines, and later lived in the United States. Her family moved to the Philippines when she was very young, and when parents divorced, she moved with her mother to the United States. Even though Ashley attended a private high school in the US, it is still valuable to analyze the experiences of the first-generation teens in comparison to hers. She provides an outsider's point of view into the youth culture of Filipino students in Montreal. In spite of sharing a few commonalities with the other participants, she was able to graduate high school in Montreal.

Table 4, below, illustrates a comparison of all participants according to the occupation of their parents, their educational trajectory and factors that influenced their educational experiences. Both Tina and Ashley were raised by single mothers.

Tina and Adrianna both left adult school but have returned to continue their studies. Ashley is in her first year in college (CEGEP). Tweety is in her last year in regular high school and plans to apply for college in September of 2010. Jianna has graduated from adult school but presently cannot go back to start a technical degree because she has just given birth to a baby boy.

Name	Occupation of Parent(s)	Educational Trajectory	School-related Factors	Non-school related Factors
Tina, 19	Single mother works as a caregiver	Left regular school. Dropped out of adult school. Presently continuing studies in adult school	Humiliated by teacher and beaten up in regular school	Lack of parental supervision; financial difficulties; peers
Adrianna, 18	Parents work in a factory	Was transferred from regular school. Dropped out of adult school. Presently continuing studies in adult school	Failed a year in regular high school	Lack of parental supervision; manipulative boyfriend; peers
Tweety, 18	Mother works as a caregiver and father used to work in a factory	Currently in last year of regular high school	Encouraged by teachers; the educational reform	Supportive parents; ambition
Jianna, 20	Mother works as a caregiver and father works as a janitor	Dropped out of regular high school but graduated from adult school	Academic delay	Shyness; peers; unplanned pregnancy
Ashley, 19	Single mother works as a medical technologist	Graduated from private high school in the US. Did a year in regular and adult school in Montreal. Currently in CEGEP	United States; Private school system	Supportive mother; ambition

Table 4: a Summary of all Participants

Tina

Tina moved to Canada with her siblings in 2003, when she was thirteen years old. Like most Filipino teens, she grew up without her mother and was raised by her grandmother and aunts: Tina's father died when she was three years old. Her mother worked as a caregiver and left the Philippines to work in the Middle-East when Tina and her siblings were very young. Her mother was only able to visit them occasionally, which caused an estrangement between her and her mother. Tina describes:

> *Ang pinaka sad pa nun, nung umuuwi siya sa Pilipinas, hinde ko siya kilala as my mother..So nung medyo matanda nako, nung nasa high school nako dun ko lang na-realize na "o, nanay ko siya", na ganun. Kasi kamag-anak ko lang talaga ang nag-alaga samin.*
>
> The saddest part was that every time she would visit us, I didn't know that she was my mother... It was only when I was in high school that I realized that she was my mother. It was really my relatives who took care of us.

In 1994, Tina's mother started working in Montreal as a caregiver. She waited a few years before sponsoring Tina, Tina's younger sister, and two of her younger brothers to come to Canada. According to Tina, her mother wanted to wait until they were old enough to be left at home unsupervised by an adult. Tina has an older sister who, at the time, was already of legal age, and therefore was not permitted to come with them to Canada. When their papers were approved, Tina and her siblings left the Philippines immediately, and as a result, they never said any formal or proper farewells to their families and friends.

In Montreal, Tina's mother had to adapt quickly to raising four children on her meagre salary as a caregiver. Initially, Tina and her family moved into a bachelor apartment because they had to wait until a larger apartment became available in their

building. After a month, they were able to move into a two-bedroom apartment. Since Tina and her siblings were minors, her mother was able to benefit from some financial aid from the provincial government. This money not only helped her mother pay for their expenses in Canada, but also allowed Tina's mother to send money to her oldest daughter in the Philippines. However, as Tina and her siblings grew up and no longer qualified for financial aid, her mother had to cope with their mounting expenditures in the face of reduced funds; she worked seven days a week just to make ends meet. Even today, Tina's mother continues to send money to the Philippines.

Tina was very excited to move to Canada and get to know her mother. In the beginning, she and her siblings were in awe of everything they saw in Montreal. For example, they appreciated the fact that there were many parks in their neighbourhood and that the buses were not so full that they were often able to take a seat. Most importantly, Tina could not wait to fulfill her dream of becoming closer to her mother. She says:

> *Finally, ma-kakasama ko na Mama ko. At yung na-eexpect ko na mararamdaman namin, especially yung wala siya sa tabi namin, anong feeling na may nanay. Sabi ko mararamdaman ko na. Pero... it takes time eh, before maramdaman mo yun eh. It takes time*
>
> Finally, I will be with my mother, feel what and how it is to have a mother when she wasn't with us growing up. Now I can say I know how it feels but it still takes time.

As evidenced, Tina's move to Canada came during an emotional and disruptive period of her life.

Like most immigrant students who have just arrived in Canada, Tina's adjustment to school, which began only the week after her arrival in Canada, was

difficult, and she faced many obstacles. Immediately, she needed to learn how to navigate Montreal's socio-linguistic as well as geographic terrain. She says:

> *Of course, nung first day of school... kinakabahan. Umiyak pa nga ako nun nung bago ako pumasok. Sabi ko, "ayaw kong pumasok. Natatakot ako". Yung ginawa ng nanay ko, hinatid niya kami sa school. Yung brother ko sa ibang school, kami sa high school. Sa NDG kami nakatira kaya nag-metro kami para pumunta sa school. Nung pagkatapos , pauwi kami nalang mag-isa. Ano yun samin... challenge na umuwi kaming mag-isa. Isang beses lang niya samin tinuro kung paano. Nagkamali pa nga kami ate ng train na dinaanan. We took the wrong train going home. Sabi lang ng Mama ko, basta tandaan niyo yung 'snow' at bumaba kayo sa Metro Snowdon. Paglabas naming ng metro kunin daw naming yung bus at bumaba daw kami sa tapat ng pinaka-malaking park. Hanggang naka-uwi na rin kami successfully.*
>
> I remember on my first day of school, I was nervous. I even cried before going to school. I said, "I don't want to go to school. I'm scared". My mom took us to school that morning. My youngest brother had to go to primary school, while we went to high school. We lived in NDG [Notre-Dame-de-Grâce] so we took the subway with her for the first time. She came to show us the way going there and going home, we had to do it on our own. It was a challenge. We even got lost and took the train going on the wrong direction. My mom told us just to remember 'snow' and go down on Metro Snowdon. Then we had to take the bus and get off in front of the biggest park. It was hard but we finally made it home successfully.

Tina was placed in a welcoming class *(classe d'acceuil)* whose curriculum involved intensive French classes. Tina's mother had learned to speak a bit of French and explained to her children the importance of learning French in Quebec. Back in the Philippines, Tina had attended a private school in the Philippines and as a result, she was able to speak English fluently. It was this familiarity with English that helped her get by in classes when she was unable to understand her teachers. Tina had to pass three levels of French in the welcoming class before she was transferred in regular classes. When she completed the welcoming classes, the administrators placed her in secondary two (or Grade eight) at the age of sixteen. In Quebec, teens typically

finish secondary five and graduate at the age of sixteen or seventeen. This means, that Tina was placed with students who were three years her junior.

Tina experienced school disengagement when she was in regular school and again when she transferred to adult education later on. Two important events acted as catalysts to her decision to leave regular high school: she was constantly humiliated by her French teacher in secondary two, and she was beaten up by a group of Asian girls in school. Tina's encounter with an insensitive French teacher impacted her significantly – so much so that she emphasized this particular experience twice during the course of the interview. Ironically, Tina's first French teacher in regular class was also a visible minority, but she was not very compassionate towards Tina. Sometimes, when Tina asked her questions, her teacher became impatient or irritated in answering. Tina cried on a few occasions out of humiliation and sheer frustration. Tina could not understand her teacher's inability to empathize with her, especially given her teacher's own immigrant background. She was also not used to Canadian way of teaching: according to Tina, her teachers in the Philippines treated her like a second daughter, and in response she treated her teachers there with the utmost respect. One day Tina had a confrontation with her French teacher, the end of which resulted in her humiliating Tina in front of the class. She asked Tina why she was only in secondary-two level when she was already sixteen. Tina responded that she was a newly arrived immigrant, and that being placed in that level was not her decision. She felt frustrated by her teacher's unfair treatment of her. She explains:

> She should understand. *Bakit ganyan siya? Dapat siya pa nga ang unang maka-unawa sayo. Dapat mabuti siyang mag-explain dahil dun din siya nanggaling diba? Pero hinde eh… Naturingan na siyang French teacher, eh racist pa siya.... so dun nako nag-decide na, siguro, parang ano, nawala nako*

ng chance para sa sarili ko. Nawalan nako ng gana. Sa isip ko, pare-parehas lang lahat ng mga teachers dito. Kaya nag-decide nakong mag-adult school

> She should understand. Why was she like that? She should be the first to understand, know the need to explain because she's been there. But no, despite [where she came from and] being a French teacher, she was a racist... so that's when I decided that... it's like, I lost confidence with myself. I lost motivation. In my head, all my teachers were the same so I decided to go to adult school.

Instead of asking for help from another educator, Tina felt helpless and decided to take matters into her own hands.

Another traumatizing event which occurred while Tina was in regular school was when she was beaten up by a group of Asian girls. One morning, when Tina was running to school because she was late, she encountered a group of girls who were loitering outside the building. When they saw her they started to punch and kick her. Tina's mother had told her to be a good person and not to pick fights with other kids; she also warned her children that they would not get their permanent residency card if they had a police record. Consequently, Tina did not defend herself and just covered her face during the attack. Luckily for her a Filipino woman who was passing by saw the girls and stopped the fight. Tina went to her teachers and reported the incident, and the girls who had beaten her up were suspended from the school. Nevertheless, the damage was done, and after the incident Tina became sincerely frightened and paranoid about going to school. Tina believes that the girls attacked her because one of them was jealous of Tina who, at the time, was dating a boy that one of the girls liked.

Tina's studies were interrupted again a few years after this incident. After spending two years in welcoming class and a year taking regular courses, Tina decided to transfer from regular to adult school. She enrolled with her mother because

she was only sixteen years old. In 2006, she started school at an English institution and was placed in secondary three. Tina liked being in an English environment, went to school every day, and tried to participate in class whenever she could. Nonetheless, her motivation in class dwindled when she started working. When Tina was fifteen years old, she only worked during the summer, and as a result her studies were unaffected by her job. However, when she turned seventeen, she began really noticing the fact that her mother was struggling to pay for their bills, and so decided to work more frequently to become more financially independent. Tina applied for a job at a fast-food restaurant and worked shifts after school. She started losing interest in her studies when she began earning more money, and she met other Filipino teens who convinced her to work in the factory. In 2008, she finally dropped out of school when she turned eighteen, which is the age of majority in Quebec.

When Tina dropped out of school, she immersed herself in work, juggling shifts at both a fast-food restaurant and a factory. She maintained this schedule until she became too exhausted and made the decision to work in the factory full-time. She says:

> *Yung mga kaibigan ko sa factory, drop-out students din sila. Dun mo nga masasabi na, hinde mo maiiwasan na ma-influence ka. Talagang nasa tao. 'Tas dun din ko na-realize na, shit, nagtatrabaho nako, bat ko pa kailangang mag-aral? Parang tumatak na sa isipan ko na kumikita nako, kaya bat pako mag-aaral diba? Pero yun ang pagkakamali ko... Dapat habang bata ako, sinamantala ko. Kaya tuloy ngayon, naghahabol ako at 19 nako.... Parang hinde ko pa na re-realize nun eh nung teenager pako. Nung nagagalit nanay ko, sabi ko, bahala na, lilipas din yan. Pero hinde ko na-iisip na nasasaktan ko nanay ko.*
>
> My friends in the factory were also drop-outs. That's when you can say that, it's hard to avoid being influenced. It's really in the person. And that's when I realized that, shit, I'm working already, why do I need to go to school? It stuck in my head that since I was earning, why should I bother with school, right? While I was young, I should have taken advantage of it. So now I'm

> playing catch-up at 19... It's like I didn't realize that when I was a teenager. When my mom would get mad, I told myself that her anger would pass. I didn't think I was hurting her.

Tina, like so many teens who first start earning money, felt that pursuing her studies was a useless endeavour. In the summer of 2009, Tina quit her job to visit her sister and relatives in the Philippines. She stayed there for three months and was reminded of the importance of a high school diploma. When she returned to Canada, she enrolled again in adult school, but this time did not apply for any jobs: she does not want to be exposed to the same temptations and negative influences that she had before. However, she still feels the urge to work when she sees how her mother struggles financially. Tina's mother told her that she would try her best to provide for her family, so that Tina would not feel the need to seek employment while finishing her studies. It is for this reason that Tina now studies full-time and is an active member of the Kabataang Montreal. She also currently speaks to other Filipino youth in the hope that they will stay in school.

Tina aspires to be a nursing assistant. She has started to look into vocational programs that she can apply to upon graduation from high school. Her mother has encouraged her to pursue whatever career that she wants. Tina has thought of working as a dental hygienist, but would prefer to work in a hospital because, according to her, there will always be jobs in the healthcare sector. At the time of the study, Tina's mother had also begun taking courses to become certified in geriatric care. She works as a caregiver for a family during the week and in a nursing home on the weekends. Still, Tina insists that she sees her mother despite her busy schedule.

Adrianna

Adrianna was born in the Philippines, but she is what most Filipino youth call 'Can-Flip'. She moved to Canada when she was only five years old and therefore has the mentality and culture of a native-born. Adrianna is now eighteen years old. Unlike most Filipino teens, however, it was her father and not her mother who moved to a different country to work. Adrianna's father used to work in the Saudi Arabia, and he was only able to move to Canada with the help of his sister, who helped him immigrate to Canada. When he became a permanent resident, he sponsored Adrianna and her mother.

Adrianna used to love going to school. She grew up in the north-west part of Montreal and began attending a French school when she was six years old. Growing up she did not have Filipino friends. When Adrianna finished grade school, she did not have high grades so in high school, she was placed on the CPFT *(Cheminement particulier de formation temporaire)* track, which gives students with learning difficulties the chance to improve their grades. Students in CPFT are placed in smaller classrooms and consequently receive more one-on-one interaction with the teachers. Adrianna got along really well with her teachers because, according to her, they "knew how to handle teenagers". For Adrianna, the best teacher she ever had still calls her to this day and occasionally meets with her and other former students. Despite these positive experiences, however, Adrianna often experienced difficulties in school. She explains:

> *Maybe because of shyness, I was really shy. My teachers told my parents in my bulletin [report card] that if I don't understand anything, I don't raise my hand. I don't! I was shy. But I could keep up. I liked being at the CPFT because there were less students, and more help from my teachers...*

Unfortunately, Adrianna was placed in a regular program in secondary two, where she failed most of her courses. Her inability to keep up, along with her desire to spend time with her new friends, only furthered her loss of motivation in school. She says:

> *Secondary two, that's when I needed someone to help me and push me. It was in secondary three that they moved me to adult school. I don't know... they said I didn't pass.... and maybe because I always chilled outside...*

Adrianna started spending time with older Filipino students in secondary one, but it was not until in secondary two that she started cutting classes. In secondary one, though she liked hanging out with her friends and they spent a lot of time together, her friends were dedicated to their studies. In secondary two, Adrianna met another group of Filipino students who often played hooky. They spent most of their time either hanging out in Côte-des-Neiges, at the mall, at a friend's place, or downtown.

Initially, Adrianna's parents were unaware of her school truancy due to their long hours at the factory. According to Adrianna, whenever the administrators called her parents to report that she missed class, she would erase the phone messages when she got home. In addition, her and her friends would forge their parents' signatures on absentee notes. Her parents work in the same factory, and their shifts partially overlap; her mother works from 3:00 pm to 11:00 pm and her father works from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. As an only child, she was often left alone and unsupervised from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Adrianna usually became bored at home, and so she spent a lot of time with her friends.

Like most teens her age, especially females, Adrianna went through a phase of feeling alienated from her parents. When she was seventeen years old, she began having arguments with them because of a boy she started dating. She says:

> At first when I started coming home late, my parents and I had small fights. And then... I guess they got used to it... they slowly accepted it as part of growing-up. Then we didn't fight anymore. I knew my Mom was really scared... especially because I'm an only child and I'm a girl. Last year was the worst time for us because me and my parents really fought a lot because of this guy I was dating. My ex-boyfriend didn't want me to go home because he had his own apartment. I was only 17. That was the worst part of my life. My parents almost separated for that. My head became too big and I always argued with my parents. I didn't obey them anymore. I know I had really hurt them a lot. I made my Mom cry.

Her relationship with her first boyfriend only exacerbated her tense relationship with her parents. This period of her life was very stressful, not only because of the fights that she had with her parents, but also because she was dealing with first love.

Adrianna's first boyfriend contributed to her decision to drop-out of school. She lacked a role model whom she could confide in during times of distress: consequently, her only source of support was her boyfriend at the time. Adrianna revealed that she quit school for two years mostly as a result of pressure from her controlling ex-boyfriend. She was friends with him first before they started dating, and at one point during the interview, Adrianna came close to admitting that her ex-boyfriend was physically abusive:

> Maybe because it was the first time I felt really in love with someone. I knew my ex for a long time. Also because maybe I loved him so much I wanted to obey him all the time and be with him. I met him in 2005. I was 15 and he was 19. Before I met him, I already started missing some days in school. Then when we started going out, sometimes he would pick me up at school. Then he started changing... maybe when he realized that I couldn't live without him. He got more strict. **Maybe he got the guts to hit me.** And that's when I stopped going to school.

When they were dating, Adrianna's ex-boyfriend was jealous of her male friends and became angry when she spent time with them. Adrianna still saw her parents, but she spent so much time at her ex-boyfriend's apartment that it was as if they had already moved in together. Adrianna's ex-boyfriend started convincing her to quit school and

work in the factory with him, and would become upset with Adrianna every time she arrived late to his apartment from school. Ironically, when Adrianna did quit school, she worked in the same factory as her mother.

Adrianna started to lose feelings for ex-boyfriend but she did not know how to leave him because she was scared of him. It took a lot of encouragement both from her parents and her friends for her to work up the courage to leave him. She describes:

> The thing is... I didn't have feelings for him anymore, for months... and I was ready to let go of him... but maybe I was scared, or maybe I took pity on him... because, well, he was taking drugs. And I was, like, God, if I stay with him, I might start also. So yeah, maybe I just smoked... I smoked cigarettes... maybe some herbs sometimes, because of my friends. Him, he's addict to that. So I'm like, Oh my God, if I stay with him, already I don't go to school, I don't even work right now... and plus, I'm going to be using that thing... I don't know what will happen to my life. So I just let go. So now, I just smoke cigarettes. I'm happy.

Many of her peers pushed her to finish her studies. The encouragement that Adrianna received prompted her to end her relationship with her first boyfriend, and after cutting ties with him, she went back to adult school.

At the time of the study, Adrianna was in the process of finishing her studies to become a medical secretary. She has become closer to her parents. From time to time her mother still reminds her not to return to her first boyfriend. At times like this, she feels remorse and sometimes cries when she remembers what she did to her parents in the past. She has vowed to get a degree and follow her parents' advice. She says:

> I love traveling so I would like to do that in the future. When I was young, my parents wanted me to be a doctor. Then I changed because I love designing. From grade 6, I have wanted to become an interior designer. I still want to do that... but I know that getting a job as an interior designer is kind of hard. So I thought after finishing my courses in medical secretary, I could take courses

> to do what I want to do. My parents want me to get a job in the hospital... anything as long as it's in the hospital! So, ok sure. I made many mistakes and caused my parents a lot of pain. So now I want them to be happy also, and be proud of me.

Tweety

Tweety is eighteen years old and is in her last year in regular high school. She arrived in Canada in 2006, and only just completed her welcoming classes last year. Tweety immigrated to Montreal with her father: her mother has been working in Quebec as a caregiver since 2001.She moved quite close to the Christmas holidays, and as a result her separation from family and friends in the Philippines was more difficult. She recounts:

> *Nung pagdating ko, Christmas, so parang masaya na parang malungkot, syempre... parang masakit sa loob. Marami akong pinagdaanan na nag-away kami ng Mama ko. Ilang years kaming hinde nagsama... After nun, masaya ako... tapos bigla na lang iiyak. Pero hinde ko alam kung bakit hinde ko nasabi na... gusto kong umuwi. Hinde ko talaga gustong umuwi. Gusto ko dito pero malungkot ako, ganun. Hinde ko talaga gusto umuwi.*
>
> When I arrived, [it was] Christmas, so it's like happy and sad of course... it's sort of like hurts. My mom and I argued a lot. It's been years that we haven't been together. After that, I was happy.... then all of a sudden I would cry. But I don't know why I never said... that I wanted to go back [to the Philippines]. I don't really want to return. I like it here but I'm sad. I don't really want to return.

In this passage, Tweety describes her ambivalence towards what most people consider to be good fortune – the ability to immigrate to Canada – because of what she had to sacrifice for it. Moreover, since Tweety is an only child, she did not have anybody in Montreal to confide in.

Tweety's experience is similar to other Filipinos who immigrate to Canada during their teens. Like Tina, she had to adjust to living with her mother again while at the same time try to assimilate into her new surroundings. Early in January of

2007, Tweety began attending a French high school in the southwest part of Montreal. When her teacher met her for the first time in the welcoming class, she said that Tweety was the first Filipino student she had ever taught. Tweety went to a private school in the Philippines so she was already fluent in English, and her teacher in the welcoming class spoke to her in English, so she felt at ease right away.

Despite facilitated communication, Tweety's integration to her new school was not easy for her. She started school in the winter semester, a time when most students have already established their cliques and group of friends, and this only added to the stress of fitting in. Reading other students' body language and mannerisms was quite challenging for Tweety. She had a hard time knowing other people's feelings for her because "they didn't smile a lot". Often she did not know how to react to social cues and situations, which made her even shier. Tweety even felt intimidated speaking to other students in English. She recounts:

> *Syempre pag kumakain ako sa cafeteria, takot akong mag-isa kasi baka may bully. One time nung kumain ako, bale third day ko sa school, nandun yung mga Quebecois kaya parang natatakot ako sa kanila. So tinanong ko "can I sit here?" Tapos tinignan nila mula ulo hanggang paa, tapos, "no!" Tapos talagang umiyak talaga ako! Umuwi ako sa bahay tapos umiyak talaga ako. Sabi ni tatay, "ok lang yan. Natural lang yan. Kasi siyempre yung first impression nila sayo, unang una, nag-eenglish ka. Tapos hinde ka marunong mag-French. Kailangan ma-expect mo na madi-discriminate ka talaga. Pero natural lang yan. Kahit nga tayong mga Pilipino nagdi-discriminate sa isat-isa. Kaya, kayanin mo".*

> Of course, when I would eat in the cafeteria, I was afraid to be alone because there might be bullies. One time, while I was eating, well it was my 3rd day in school, there were Quebeckers there so I was kind of scared of them. So I asked, "can I sit here?" Then they looked at me from head to toe and said, "no!" Then I really cried! I went home and I really cried. My father said, "That's ok. That's only natural. Because of course, their first impression of you, first of all, you spoke in English. Then you don't know how to speak in French. You should expect to be discriminated against. But that's only natural. Even us Filipinos, we discriminate against each other. So, just bear it".

Tweety quickly learned that speaking in English was negatively stereotyped by some Quebeckers. For instance, she was publicly humiliated by a man selling tickets at the metro (subway) station because she asked him questions in English.

Tweety's inherent perseverance helped her to surmount the difficulties she encountered in school. Initially, Tweety was angry for being mistreated, and she understood that her inability to speak in French was a major reason explaining why she received negative reactions from some Quebeckers. Consequently, she vowed to become more fluent in French and immersed herself in her studies in school. Nevertheless, Tweety failed most of her first exams in the welcoming class. In one situation, she was so frustrated after an exam that she cried in front of her teacher. Fortunately, her teacher was very sympathetic, and encouraged her even more following the incident, providing her with positive feedback and attention. As a result, Tweety's attitude and interest in her education improved: she felt that that she mattered to somebody, and her teacher became her inspiration. She redoubled her efforts to learn French and spent most of her time in the library. Her work finally paid off when, at the end of the school year, her teacher asked the administrators to place Tweety in an advanced French class.

Another individual who helped Tweety overcome her loneliness was her father. Since Tweety's mother spent years working outside of the Philippines, Tweety was raised almost exclusively by her father, a high school professor in the Philippines. However, at the time of this research, Tweety's father had just quit his job in the factory because he wanted to take courses to enable him to teach in Canada. Tweety has a tight bond with her father and she looks to him for advice. On one

occasion, Tweety was feeling morose because she was jealous of her friends in the Philippines, and she told her father that she felt left behind. While her friends in the Philippines were already in college, she was still stuck in high school. Her father reassured her, telling her that she would actually receive a superior education in Canada than her peers would back home. Her father pointed out that while so many Filipinos are trying to seek a better life outside of the country, Tweety was fortunate enough to have that chance in Canada. She also has an advantage because, unlike most Filipino teens in Montreal, her parents mostly worked mostly during the day; therefore, they were able to supervise her studies and spend time with her on weekends, a positive adult influence that not all immigrant children are lucky enough to have.

Tweety also arrived in Quebec at an opportune time: beginning in 2000, the Quebec school system started implementing an educational reform to combat the school drop-out rates in the province. This new and controversial system is meant to favour children from impoverished backgrounds and increase a student's chance to succeed in high school. Under the reform, students' competencies during the last three years in secondary school are evaluated and represented by scaled symbols (i.e. a letter). This system provides the majority of students an increased likelihood of achieving passing grades. Tweety had a particularly hard time in her History and French classes. The educational reform, however, makes it easier for her to graduate with her class.

Boredom is one of the important drawbacks of this newly instated program. Tweety admits that while she is often bored in her English class, she does not skip any. Unfortunately, there are no advanced courses in her school, and she has to take

the same class as everybody else even though she is already fluent in English. She says:

> *Bale last year, binigyan nila ako ng award sa Honeré Merite nanaman sa English, kasi 100% sa communication, understanding 100%, kasi, kasi... I mean, sino ba naman ang hinde makakapasa sa English diba? Napaka-basic, so parang minsan pag nasa likod ka, kahit naman natutulog ka masasagot mo naman diba? So parang madali lang. Pero ngayon hinde pa rin ako masaya. Ok sana kung French pero... yun talagang masaya sana pero dahil English parang... ok.*
>
> Well last year, I got another Honorary Merit award in English, because [I got] 100% in communication, 100% in understanding, because,.... I mean, who wouldn't pass English, right? It's very basic, so like sometimes you're in the back, even if you're sleeping you can still answer [the teacher's question], right? So it's quite easy. But now, I'm still not happy. It would have been better if it was in French... I would have been very happy but since it was English, it was just... ok.

Tweety tries to entertain herself during dull periods, and like most students, frequently uses this time to chat with her peers.

Tweety wants to graduate from high school and pursue a career in journalism. She is driven by her ambition and the desire to make her parents proud. Now that Tweety has become more proficient in French she has made many more friends and enjoys school. She receives a lot of encouragement from her parents as well as from the teachers of her former welcoming class, with whom she has kept in touch. She describes what motivates her below:

> *Stephanie:* What motivates you?
> *Tweety: Yung future ko yun... at yung pamilya ko. Kasi yung sacrifice ng pamilya ko,... kailangan kong maipakita sa kanila na kaya ko. Hinde naman na kailangan ko pero gusto kong maipakita sa kanila na kaya ko. At saka ayoko naman siyempre na... personally, na magaya sa ibang mga drop-outs na nag-eend up sa factory. Ayoko ng ganon. Gusto ko na maging professional. Gusto ko na makita nila akong kumukuha ng diploma sa university... yung maganda ba yung buhay? Kasi chance mo na to eh. Tapos pag na-fail mo yung sarili mo, na-fail mo rin ang pamilya mo.*
>
> Stephanie: What motivates you?

> Tweety: my future, that... and my family. The sacrifice of my family... I have to show them that that I can do it. It's not that I need to, but I want to show them that I can do it. And of course, personally, I don't want to be like other drop-outs who end up in the factory. I don't want that. I want to be a professional. I want them to see me get a university diploma... have a good life? Because this is your chance. If I fail myself, I also fail my family.

Like Tina and Adrianna, Tweety wants to succeed in school because she is aware of the sacrifices that her parents have made for her. She wants to make them proud as well as improve their – and her own – standard of living.

Jianna

Jianna's mother used to work as a caregiver and, as a result, like most Filipino teens in Canada, Jianna was raised by her father. She moved to Montreal with her father, her older sister, and two older brothers in 2003. Like other Filipinos in Canada, she also has an older sibling who was unable to migrate to Canada with them. Jianna was only in grade two when her mother immigrated to Canada as a caregiver in 1996. Jianna's aunt, who was already living in Montreal at the time, referred Jianna's mother to an employer who recruited her through the Live-in Caregiver Program. During Jianna's childhood in the Philippines, her mother only came to visit her and her siblings once, and correspondingly, Jianna experienced a certain alienation from her mother. Currently, her mother works in a seniors' home while her father works as a building janitor.

Jianna had a hard time adjusting to Montreal. She attended a local public high school with her older sister, whereas her brothers decided they were old enough to work. She describes:

Nung una excited pero pagdating ko dito gusto ko nang umuwi. Excited kasi makikita mo yung Mama mo, diba? So masaya ka. Tapos pagtagal-tagal na parang nami-miss mo na yung Pilipinas... parang gusto mo ng umuwi...

First I was excited but when I got here, I wanted to go home. [You're] excited because you get to see your mother, right? So it's happy. Then after a while, it's like you start to miss the Philippines... like you want to go home.

Jianna's anxiety stemmed from her difficulty to fit in at regular school. On her first day, she was placed in the advanced level in welcoming class. Jianna noticed the error immediately because she could not follow the teacher's instructions and most of the students were already capable of speaking in French. Jianna felt really intimidated, and yet she did not say anything. The administrators realized their mistake after the third day and placed Jianna in the beginner's level.

Jianna's apprehension towards school and speaking up did not disappear, even after being transferred to an easier level. The teaching style in the welcoming class did not meet her expectations: Jianna studied in the public school in the Philippines and assumed her teacher would first start with basic pronunciation. Instead, the teacher focused on grammar, and she felt that was unable to keep up with the pace of the class and the teacher. She says:

Akala ko tuturuan kaming mag-French... yung word by word? Tapos yung pagpasok ko pala, hinde. So parang na-disappoint ako... na parang, nawalan ako ng gana na mag-aral mag-French. Kasi ganun talaga akala ko... pero pagpasok ko, nagbasa na kami. So parang yung inaasahan ko na pagtuturo nila, iba yung na-experience ko.

I thought they would teach us French... word by word? Then when I went, it wasn't [like that]. So it's like I got disappointed... like I lost interest learning to speak in French. Because that's what I really expected... but when I arrived in school, we started reading right away. So how I expected them to teach, what I experienced was actually different.

The most challenging exercise for Jianna was being asked to speak out loud in class. She is very shy, and so she felt humiliated every time the teacher would ask her to

speak in front of her classmates. According to Jianna, she was always afraid of saying the wrong thing or having the wrong answer. And yet, the teachers and the students alike were very nice to her. Nevertheless, Jianna spent her time at school exclusively with Filipinos, whom she met in the welcoming class, and in hindsight, believes that this is the reason why she did not learn to speak French fluently.

Jianna's school disengagement continued as she progressed in the welcoming class and when she was later placed in regular classes. According to Jianna, she was able to progress in the beginners and advanced levels along with other students who had started at the same time as her. She never asked for help from her parents to do her assignments although her ex-boyfriend would help her out from time to time. So, when Jianna finished the welcoming classes, she was shocked and humiliated when she was placed in secondary-two level. At sixteen years old, Jianna was the oldest student in all her classes, similar to what happened to Tina. This influenced her decision to enrol in adult school when the school year ended.

Jianna felt much happier attending adult school and her biggest struggle during this time was boredom. She felt that she had been placed in the right level in her classes – they were neither too hard nor too easy for her. Moreover, she felt more at ease attending an English institution. At adult school, Jianna took English, basic French, history, biology, chemistry and math courses. Jianna dropped only one course, and it was an elective English course, when at one point during the semester her teacher asked all the students to give oral presentations. Jianna felt too intimidated to speak publicly and decided to drop the class. While some of Jianna's friends studied part-time, she attended full-time classes. When Jianna became bored in school she would often cut class with her friends, an occurrence that began taking

place every week. She and her friends would go downtown, eat, and go to the cinema, or, at times, buy food and hang–out in a friend's home. Since she was already in adult school, Jianna's absenteeism was never reported to her parents. Her friends' therefore had a significant impact on her school motivation. She explains on the subject of school truancy:

> *Minsan gusto ko... Minsan nabo-bored ka diba? Minsan sila ang nag-aaya. Kasi alam mo naman pag nai-influence ng mga barkada diba? Minsan pag tinatamad kang pumasok, alis ka nalang dun.*
>
> Sometimes, I want to... when you get bored, right? Sometimes, they were the ones who invited [me]. Because you know when you get influenced by your friends, right? Sometimes, when you're lazy to go to class, you just leave.

Jianna finally graduated from adult school last year; but continued taking math courses. When she graduated from adult school, a secondary-three level in mathematics was all that was required. However, the rules have since changed, and Jianna cannot apply to college or vocational school without a secondary-four level in math. Upon graduation, she started working part-time as a cashier at a fast-food restaurant while working towards completing her math class. However, she had to stop school when she was told by a doctor that she was five months pregnant. Jianna did not find out that she was pregnant sooner because her menstrual cycle was often irregular; however, after she had missed her period for several months, she finally went to see a doctor. According to Jianna, she did not consider abortion as an option but this was irrelevant since the doctor informed her that it was too late for that choice anyway. When she told her parents, her mother cried while her father remained passive: later, they finally accepted Jianna's situation and have since forgiven her for her indiscretion.

Jianna wants to go back to school but now has a baby boy to take care of. At the time of the study, she had moved in with her boyfriend and they all live with his family. When Jianna became pregnant, she had only been dating her boyfriend for a year. He did not finish high school and cleans buildings, just like his father. When asked what advice she would give to other Filipino youth, she responds that she would tell them to stay in school. According to Jianna, she wants to go back to school desperately but at the same time she knows that she cannot – at least not at the present. She also feels unready to go back to school because she is undecided on what program and career she wants to pursue. Jianna describes her ambivalence:

> *Masarap mag-aral na nakakatamad. Pero ok lang naman eh. Gustong-gusto ko ngang mag-aral eh. Pero hinde naman sa gustong-gusto... parang yun. Pero pagnandun ka, parang gusto mo nang umuwi. Pero kung gusto mo talagang mag-aral, makakaya mo yun... Nasa tao naman yun eh, kahit anong gawin ng teacher, kung ayaw talagang mag-aral ng estudyante, wala talagang magagawa yung teacher. Talagang iba-iba ang gusto ng tao.*
>
> It's fun to study but it's dreary. But it's ok. I really really want to study. But not that I really want to... However when you're already [in school], it's like you'd rather go home. But if you really want to study, you can do it.... It depends on the person, whatever the teacher does, if the student doesn't want to study, then there's nothing the teacher can do. People truly want different things in life.

Perhaps Jianna's uncertainty is exacerbated by her new status as mother. She adds that perhaps her pregnancy was a good thing, in a way, since currently she does not know which career she wants to pursue. Still, Jianna wants to persevere in her education because "I know that... I disappointed my parents. It's like I want to study for them, for my child and also for myself" *(Alam ko na... na-disappoint ko nga yung parents ko. Parang gusto ko na mag-aral para sa kanila, para rin sa anak ko, at para rin sa sarili ko, ayun).* Like the other young women who were interviewed for this research, her family is her inspiration and motivation to succeed in life.

Ashley

Ashley is unlike many Filipino teens in that she has lived in many different countries. Ashley's aunt, who already resided in Montreal, helped her mother to immigrate to Canada. Ashley was born in Montreal but her family moved back to the Philippines when she was very young. At the age of six, her parents divorced, and her mother returned to Canada for two years before making the decision to relocate to the US, bringing her two youngest daughters with her. Ashley's two older sisters were of legal age and chose to remain in Montreal. When Ashley graduated from high school in the US, she decided to return to Montreal because, according to her, "school is cheaper" in Canada. At the time of this research, she was nineteen years old and was in her first year in college (CEGEP). Ashley lives on her own and supports herself by working part-time at a call centre.

Ashley is fortunate to have attended a private all-girls high school in the United States and she gives her mom credit for instilling in her the value of a good education. In the United States, Ashley and her family lived in a poor neighbourhood, and her mother supported her family as a medical technologist. Despite her financial burdens, Ashley's mother did not want to send her daughters to attend the local public high school because, according to Ashley, student fights and violence were common there. Since her mother worked constantly, Ashley and her younger sister were often always left unsupervised at home, and as a result became quite self-sufficient. Growing up in a rough area has had a lasting effect on Ashley, and has motivated her to take criminology in university. She explains:

> I think [living in the States] made me interested in that... and more or less the violence that surrounded us in our neighbourhood. We lived in a tough neighbourhood in Jersey City... tougher than here in Cote-des-Neiges. When I

> moved here, I thought everyone was so nice... I guess you can say that we had a tough childhood.

According to Ashley, she saw some of her friends "go down the wrong path" and several local friends in Jersey City became pregnant at fifteen and sixteen years old. She vowed not to follow their example. Ashley is the person she is now because of her mother: her exposure to experiences in the United States, both good and bad, affected her and motivated her to aspire to a better life.

Attending a private school provided a buffer against some of the negative effects of living in an impoverished neighbourhood. Ashley excelled in private high school because it was very competitive; she had to work very hard in school. She was a member of various clubs, including the yearbook club, and the basketball and volleyball teams. There were very few Filipinos in Ashley's American school, and so when she moved back to Canada, was a bit surprised by the number of Filipinos who lived in Côte-des-Neiges. She says:

> In the States, I went to school with Filipinos, not a lot, maybe 5 or 6 in the whole school. We were perhaps among the smartest students in school. We had the highest grades; most of us played sports. Some of us went to really good colleges, like Yale and stuff like that.

Ashley really enjoyed high school and preferred to stay at home on the weekends with her mother and sister. After graduation, she moved back to Montreal.

Since she was lacking a few credits, Ashley could not enrol in college right away. Instead, she spent a year in regular high school, acquiring credits, and then took a few additional missing courses in adult school in Montreal. Due to the fact that Ashley had already studied in an English school in North America, she was not required to attend a French school under Bill 101 unlike other immigrant children from the Philippines. Upon enrolling in a public English school on the east side of the

island of Montreal, Ashley noticed the difference between her American and Canadian as well as private and public educational experiences right away. She says:

> Education wise, I thought that high school here wasn't very challenging. But the students here are also less motivated. They just kind of... want to hang out in school, and skip classes. Like I never really skipped classes in my whole life up until when I moved here you know? I started skipping a little. But yeah, students here are less motivated.

However, Ashley was unable to determine whether the lack of school engagement demonstrated by her peers was due to the public school system or the fact that schools in Canada are in general different than those in the United States. Nevertheless, the educational content of most of her courses was more advanced in the US. She describes:

> I think everything that I learned in high school, I learned in the States, not over here. For example, things that I learn now at CEGEP are things that I already learned there, in my 9th grade. Like the MLA format? I learned it in my first year of high school there. Students in my class are learning it now for the first time. Like they didn't even teach it to us in when I was in secondary 5 here. There are things that I find a bit late here.

When Ashley finished high school in Montreal, she still had to complete mandatory French and history courses in adult school. Once again, Ashley passed all of her courses. According to her, most of the students in her class were serious about their studies because they were mature students who were either missing credits or had failed and were retaking the courses. As a result, she found the atmosphere and engagement in adult school different than at her English public school. Ashley wants to get a university degree, and she is determined to overcome any obstacles to get there. She explains:

> I think it's also the friends who also influence you to either do good or bad, you know? And I think the student himself too, like... if you want to finish school, you will finish school, whether somebody else tell you to or not. It's just really how you grew up, your morals and what your dreams are. People

> don't have the same dreams. For others, it's ok not to finish school and just have a normal job. But I guess if you come from a good home, from an educated family, you'd want to finish school.

Summary

In this chapter, I describe the perceptions of five female Filipino teens in regards to their educational experiences. Even though their trajectories differed significantly, from regular to adult school, and public to private education, common themes emerged when comparing their accounts. First and foremost, as evidenced by the transcripts of these interviews, the influence of family and parents on the academic performance of youth cannot be underestimated and was a major factor contributing to the educational achievement of these Filipinas. School administrators also played a role in the disengagement of these youths, due to actions including class placement with improper cohort (i.e. younger or more advanced) and through causing them to feel humiliated and alienated from their peers in the classroom. Teachers who were supportive helped immigrant teens to stay motivated in school, while those who were critical contributed to the students' disengagement. Some of the participants had peers, such as friends and boyfriends, who convinced them to drop-out. In Chapter 5, I provide a critical analysis of their accounts and discuss further strategies to prevent teens from dropping out of school.

CHAPTER 5

Critical Discussion, Reflection and Research Implications

In this chapter, I reflect on the narratives shared by the five female participants of this study. I compare and contrast their personal school experiences with findings in the literature concerning school disengagement and motivation. I also examine their educational experiences using Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) sociological concept of capital. I discuss the implications of school disengagement for first-generation Filipinas and various prevention strategies to help keep minority students motivated in their studies.

The five female participants shared their personal experiences about family separation, moving to Canada, and adjusting to a new environment. They also described how they coped in a different educational system and their own reasons for school disengagement and motivation. Though the responses of the young women varied substantially, several common themes emerged. Consistent with the findings of previous research, the participants' engagement in their studies was highly influenced by three main factors: family, school and peers. However, a fourth factor was identified through this research, and that is the impact of the Philippine immigration trend to Canada. By examining this last piece, it is easier to understand and contextualize the socio-economic problems that influenced the educational trajectories of these five Filipinas.

Dropping-Out

This inquiry supports the findings of previous studies on trends in high school drop-out and delinquency. Firstly, it was apparent in all interviews that dropping out of school was a long process that began with school disengagement. Most

participants did not make the decision to leave school hastily; rather, they considered it as a last recourse when their reasons to leave school outnumbered their justifications to stay. Although both school leavers, Tina and Adrianna, were highly influenced by their peers, their decision to finally quit adult school stemmed from a multitude of other factors as well. For Tina, the desire to contribute to the family income acted as a primary motivator, whereas Adrianna stopped attending class due to the negative influence of her boyfriend at the time. Noteworthy is that the girls who decided to leave regular school in favour of adult school did not do so because of a lack of interest in their studies; rather, their transfer to a different educational institution signalled their desire to complete their degree. This decision was influenced differently amongst the women. Some left regular school because they did not feel welcomed by the school staff and administrators, as was the case of Jianna and Tina. For Adrianna, the decision to transfer to adult school was made for her. She was unaware of how badly she was doing in her studies until her school administration informed her that she had to start the new term in an adult school.

Family

Most of the literature dealing with school leaving describes the family contexts, specifically parents, as being the most important factors affecting the educational attainment of teens. The same trend emerged in this inquiry. The five female participants frequently discussed family ideology and the influence of their parents on their motivation and goals. For example, after confiding in her father, Tweety was encouraged by him to overcome her feelings of inadequacy and homesickness, as well as appreciate the educational and lifelong opportunities she

was being provided instead. Interesting is that while most of the teens rebelled against parental control and pressure in one way or another, all five of them at some point during the course of the interviews expressed a desire to make their parents proud and strive for a better life for themselves and their families. Such findings support the research of Wolfe (2002) and Espiritu (2001) on the effect of Filipino family ideology on teenage educational attainment. The family, therefore, appears to play a significant role in educational achievement of immigrant females from the Philippines. As numerous studies have shown, the more invested their parents were in their children, the greater the apparent school motivation and engagement of these youths.

For first-generation teens that arrived in Canada under the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP), being separated from their mothers during their earlier childhood had a tremendous impact on their adjustment to Canada. Three participants whose mothers work as caregivers suffered migration stresses due to years of being separated from their mothers. Family reunification occurred when the girls were already in their teens, and the resulting tension at home was exacerbated by other problems the teens faced in adjusting to their new environments. Nevertheless, as with the findings of Rousseau et al. (2009), despite the pain they experienced, the girls accept their parents' justifications for leaving them behind and categorize this separation as a part of life. The teens never blamed their mothers for immigrating to another country, leaving them to be raised by other people. For instance, Tina described growing up without her mother as the "saddest part" of her years before moving to Canada, and yet she was still excited to get to know her mother and looked forward to living with her upon immigrating in Canada.

Two participants come from single-parent families, although only one left regular school prematurely. Tina's father passed away when she was three years old, leaving her mother to raise five children on her own. Consequently, Tina's mother had to work long and frequent hours in order to support the family, and Tina and her siblings were often left unsupervised at home. According to government reports and surveys, being raised by a single-mother increases the chances of early school leaving considerably. A study carried out by Corcoran in 1995 maintains that when income and poverty are held constant, children "raised in families headed by a woman have higher rates of high school dropout, teen pregnancy and joblessness" (p. 243). Perhaps this is due to the fact that women in general are paid less than men; to adjust for this inequality, they need to work more hours in order to support their families, and are consequently unable to spend as much time with their children. Still, the lack of parental supervision was not the catalyst for Tina's departure from adult school, since Tina's mother instilled the value of good education in her children. The reason why Tina left school was primarily financial; Tina saw her mother struggle to pay their bills, and decided that earning money as well as financial independence was more important than pursing education. While there is research showing that working part-time has positive effects on students, in Tina's case, working after school only encouraged her to drop-out. Olatunji's (2005) study observed the same trend showing that youth who worked around eight hours a week were 27 percent more likely to quit during their first two years of high school. Olatunji argued that in the case of students who worked twice that amount "their odds of dropping out of school by tenth grade increased by about 60 percent" (p. 298), regardless of the student's ethnicity. This was the case for Tina – working part-time was detrimental to her studies. Ashley also

grew up without a parent, ever since her parents divorced when she was young. However, she was close to her mother like Tina, and her attendance at a private school seems to have acted as a buffer against quitting school. Ashley also did not work during high school which gave her more time and energy to focus on her studies.

It is easy to see how Bourdieu's concept of capital is at play in the educational experiences and decisions of these five women. Tina, Jianna and Adrianna's families lacked economic capital, and all three displayed poor academic performance. A lack of economic capital meant that their parents had to work harder in order to make ends meet, and had less time to supervise their children's studies. Tweety had cultural capital passed on to her by an educated father. He was a high-school teacher in the Philippines and became a positive role model for Tweety, motivating her to work hard in her studies and aspire to a better future. Ashley had a parent, her mother, who held a technical job and was therefore able to send her to a private school. This allowed Ashley to gain cultural capital, which protected her from some of the negative effects of living in an impoverished neighbourhood. Adrianna possessed cultural and social capital through her ability to speak fluent French and by acquiring many friends at school. Among all the first-generation participants, she has spent the longest time in Canada, and has thus had more time to accumulate these capitals. Despite these positive aspects, her parents were mainly absent in her life, which resulted in Adrianna turning to her peers for support, companionship and advice. It therefore seems that although the acquisition of social, cultural, and economic capital played a large role in the schooling of these teens, other factors also contributed to their educational trajectories.

While it appears that the socioeconomic situations of the participants affected their educational experiences, it is difficult to establish a causal relationship between a lack of economic capital and early school leaving. It could be counter-argued that teens decide to seek out employment only because they find school and studying very tedious. Olatunji (2005) argues that some studies make the questionable assumption that youth would invest more of their time in school-related activities if they did not have any jobs and other responsibilities. It is difficult, if not impossible, to prove this valid and robust assumption. And yet, Tina blamed work for detracting her from school. She felt she needed to seek employment for financial reasons, and she decided to quit adult school only when she began questioning the value of a high school diploma. Now that she was back in school, Tina refused to work again because of her intense fear of being influenced to drop out by her other working friends. In contrast, work did not interfere in the studies of Jianna or Adrianna despite the fact that they share a lower class family status with Tina. Jianna did not have to work during the school term and Adrianna began working only after she had already quit school.

The results of my inquiry contrast with the findings of the study carried out by Rummens et al.(2008). The authors argued that lower socio-economic status in and of itself did not translate into higher rates of high school leaving. For this research, only one participant quit school because of work; however, two others experienced academic difficulties due to a lack of parental supervision at home. Similarly, both Adrianna and Jianna had parents who were too busy with work to spend time with them. When asked during our interviews why they thought Filipino teens quit school, almost all participants responded that work was the number one reason for school

leaving. The young women believed that most Filipino youth quit school when they start earning a significant amount of money. Therefore, it should be noted that even though some Filipino teens do not work during the school year, most of them believe that work is the main culprit pushing teens to drop out of school. The questions that emerge from the interviews are numerous. For instance, why do so many teens from the Philippines feel the need to work while they are still in school? How are these negative stereotypes about Filipinos leaving school for work created? It should be noted that even though Tina quit school in order to help financially support her family, it does not necessarily mean that all Filipino teens who work have the same justifications. Some teens may work in order to have the means to purchase commodities that are considered "cool" or that make them acceptable to or popular with their peers. Regardless of their reasons for working, the end result is the same: if first-generation teens from the Philippines work too many hours while in school, they could be putting their education in jeopardy.

Since most parents of the participants spent a lot of time working, their children had to learn to cope with problems on their own, a fact that is especially evident when examining Adrianna's situation. Given that she was an only child and both of her parents worked long hours, her truancy at school went unchecked. Nobody seemed to have helped her with her assignments at home or have motivated her to persevere in her studies. Adrianna was placed in a special needs program with students who had learning difficulties. One might argue that her parents should have provided her with more assistance and guidance as she progressed in school. As she describes, "Secondary two, that's when I needed someone to help me and push me". Her teachers should also have encouraged her and paid more attention to her, but it

seems that Adrianna could not rely on this resource. Unfortunately, this combination of circumstances caused her to turn to her peers, not only for social networking, but also for companionship and support. Tenenbaum et al. (2007) point out that children's perceptions of their parents' support (or lack thereof) can influence their own educational decisions.

Almost all the women had parents who occupied blue-collar jobs, such as caregivers and factory workers, which required long working hours. Interestingly, the only parent who held a career outside of the service sector did not work in Canada. As I discussed in chapter 2, due to the trends in Philippine immigration in this country, the number of professional migrants has dwindled considerably, and currently heavily favours those individuals in the Live-in Caregiver program. Most newly-arrived Filipino families in Canada, and certainly those who live in Montreal, tend to earn low wages. Haveman & Wolfe (1995) argue that income has a powerful impact on a child's educational attainment, stating that "after controlling for income, ethnic background is unrelated to high school completion" (as cited in Tenenbaum et al., 2007, p. 228). Unfortunately, some of the participants' parents had to support their families on a meagre income while at the same time sending money back to families and children in the Philippines.

Within this study, some participants possessed social capital while others did not. Social capital came in the form of relatives and acquaintances that could provide the girls with support. Some of the participants acknowledged this social network, and took advantage of it to benefit their education, while others either preferred not to or were unable to ask for help. Adrianna and Ashley each had several close relatives in Montreal, while Tweety had distant relatives on her mother's side in the area.

However, though they occasionally celebrated holidays and birthdays together, only Adrianna mentioned asking for guidance from older cousins regarding her education. Therefore, while positive social networks can provide invaluable support to fist-generation teens, not everybody has access to them, and even some of those that choose not to use them. This reluctance to seek help may stem from the cultural Filipino mentality and practice of keeping problems within the family in order to safeguard family reputation. First-generation teens, therefore, may have felt it necessary to keep their problems private to avoid them reflecting badly on their parents.

School

The results of my inquiry are consistent with the literature on school leaving and support the link between school environment and student engagement. Students who left school early were those who did not feel welcome, or who did not possess certain competitive values espoused by their schools. As with Caro's (2008) findings when she interviewed Filipino youth, the participants of this research also had difficulties learning French, or the "language of power". As a result, they lacked the cultural capital needed to succeed in school in a new country. Both Tina and Jianna transferred from regular schools because they felt alienated and humiliated by the staff. They lost motivation not about studying, because they both continued in adult education, but in being part of a school that clearly did not respect them, nor understand their needs. Much like students in Rummens et al.'s (2008) study, three informants of this research did not feel welcome in regular schools. In Tina's case, the source of these feelings was a teacher who demeaned her in front of the class,

while for Jianna, falling behind and being placed in classes with much younger students made her the center of unwanted attention. Both Jianna and Adrianna's extreme shyness were interpreted as inaptitude and a general lack of interest. Instead of providing more care and attention to these students, as one might expect from an educator, their schools and teachers ignored their needs and, as a result, failed them. Adrianna did not leave regular school of her own accord; her school made the decision for her. Tweety, on the other hand, was lucky to have had a caring teacher who encouraged her and treated her with respect. Her teacher became her inspiration to work harder and succeed in school. Clearly the presence of compassionate school personnel can protect students from school disengagement.

Another factor influencing Tina's decision to leave regular school was when she was physically attacked by other students. In her account, Tina disclosed the ethnicity of her attackers; however, I made the choice to use the term 'Asians' as a general group in order to protect the anonymity of her attackers, and because their ethnicity has no bearing in this inquiry. Tina's school can be commended for tackling this issue head-on and reprimanding the students who assaulted her. Nevertheless, Tina was not aware of whether any interventions or programs were put in place in order to prevent the bullies from victimizing other students in the future. The administrators could have used this incident as an educational lesson to spread awareness of discrimination and bullying, as well as discourage such youth violence in school. While it gave some satisfaction to Tina that the perpetrators were suspended, her school motivation deteriorated rapidly after this incident. According to a survey of forty countries, Craig et al. (2009) found that Canada is among those with the highest incidence rate of bullying and victimization. This particular study

only includes participants who are eleven to fifteen years old, and is therefore lacking information on youth between sixteen to eighteen years of age. Still, based on the results of this survey, and Tina's personal experiences, there is clearly a need for more programs in schools that address the problem of bullying and raise awareness regarding this serious issue.

The rigid policies and lack of standardized placement tests at the girl's schools also influenced their decisions to leave. The three girls who left regular school, Tina, Adrianna and Jianna, all received poor marks. Tina and Jianna were subsequently placed in classes where they were the oldest students. In Adrianna's case, she failed a year because she had been placed in regular classes, which was difficult for her. Instead of putting her back into the CPFT program, or into any of several other smaller classes for students with learning difficulties, the school failed her and transferred her to adult education. Instead of taking this rather harsh action, the school administrators should have provided Adrianna with guidance by speaking to her about her academic difficulties, or put her on academic probation so she would become aware of her precarious situation and be informed and empowered to take charge of her own studies. Most administrators are aware that placing students in adult education only increases their chances of dropping out, but perhaps in this case the school did not want to deal with another potential "drop-out" and preferred to send the troubled teenager to another institution, where the responsibility and statistics would be removed from them.

The majority of girls in this study also complained of feelings of boredom while in school; even Tweety, a studious teen, reported being stuck in a class that did not challenge her. The school did not take into consideration that she had attended a

private school in the Philippines and previously taken English courses. Consequently, she was forced to take mundane English courses that held her back from advancing in her education. Jianna also complained of the tediousness of her classes, which influenced her decision to skip school with friends. Ashley's observation of students in public schools was very interesting and relevant to this discussion. She described the students in her English public school as being "less motivated. They just kind of... want to hang out in school, and skip classes". It should be noted that Ashley's attendance of private school in a different country gives her view of the Canadian school system a distinct bias: it is difficult to ascertain whether these feelings and observations stemmed from a difference in the school system (public vs. private) or country (Canada vs. US) factors unique to her experience. Nevertheless, Ashley managed to stay motivated in her studies despite the fact that she lived alone and unsupervised in Montreal. Perhaps future research should look into how some students can stay motivated in high school despite a lack of parental presence in their lives.

Given the statistical evidence of early school leaving in immigrant teens, should schools administrators automatically consider newly-arrived immigrant students as 'at-risk' for dropping out or disengaging? According to Phillips (1989), the term 'at-risk students' is frequently used to refer to those who have histories of attendance problems, failing grades, and difficulty in conforming to school rules (as cited in Tidwell & Garrett, 1994). Since first-generation immigrant youth often experience difficulty adjusting to the educational system in Canada, perhaps they might benefit from special attention and care from their teachers. It is equally important for educators to rethink the use of the term 'at-risk' when referring to

newly-arrived immigrant students, since its associated connotations attach a negative label on these students and inherently imply that there is a deficit in their aptitudes and intelligence. Statistics compiled by various academics and government agencies are grim for students who come from low-income families. The Quebec Minister of Education found that 35% of students from impoverished neighbourhoods dropped out of school, compared to 20% from other areas (Ministère de l'Éducation du Loisir et du Sport, 2009). Newly arrived immigrant students also experience academic delay, with 20% falling behind in school compared to 16.7% of all students (Provencher, 2006). In a recent report, it was found that 40% of newly arrived immigrants leave school without a diploma (Ministère de l'Éducation du Loisir et du Sport, 2009). Given these findings, it seems that schools need to pay more attention to these youth and provide them with support and attention to ensure that they do not "fall between the cracks". Individuals with a particular ability to influence the adjustment and comfort of newly arrived immigrant teens are teachers. Educators need to make students feel that they matter and be sensitive to their cultural backgrounds, learning styles, and previous educational experiences. In addition, school administrators should have a holistic understanding of the experiences of these youths and not be so quick to judge and to fail them. It is the duty of the school, either legally, or morally, or both to equip these students for success in not only in school, but also in life after graduation, and not to contribute to their failure.

Many adult teens experience emotional stress while in high school. Immigrant students have to cope with not only the traditional stresses, such as first love and peer pressure, but also others associated with their immigration and newcomer identity. While ambition and drive can fuel a student's desire to complete school, some exhibit

these propensities more than others. An interesting and relevant question to this research is why some students are ambitious while others are not. Individuals possess certain aptitudes and cognitive abilities that can influence their academic performance, however, as previously explained, there are other factors that affect a teen's educational performance. Most importantly, all students should have an equal playing field where they are given a fair chance to realize their absolute potential. Rummens et al. (2008) argue that rather than framing "early school leaving as a response to perceived individual shortcomings, perhaps it is time to build more systematically upon inherent youth capacities instead" (p. 97).

Peers

In Ellenbogen & Chamberland's (1997) study, female early school leavers had more friends who were either working or had dropped out of school than their male counterparts. The findings of this inquiry identified the same trend. For Tina, her friends who were dropouts and worked at a factory managed to convince her to leave school and work full-time. During our interview, Tina expressed regret for allowing herself to be manipulated by her peers and admitted that she had already cut her ties with them in order to help prevent being influenced by them again. Adrianna and Jianna were also influenced by their friends, who persuaded them to skip classes. It is hard determine whether the girls were inclined to be delinquent, or whether they were mostly co-opted by their peers. Both Jianna and Adrianna mentioned preferring friends to school, which suggests a truant nature. Jianna acknowledged that she invited her friends to skip school and at times it was vice versa. And yet, it was also Adrianna's friends, but perhaps not the same individuals with whom she skipped

classes, who persuaded her to go back to school when she quit for two years. Peer groups thus strongly influence students' decision-making and educational trajectory but this influence is not necessarily negative.

Human agency, or the capacity to make choices, is important to consider when examining early school leaving since personal choice plays a large role in everyday decision-making. Teens always have an option to stand up against peer pressure and conformity, although this may come more easily to some, such as those who are more independent and confident. Of course, teens do not necessarily always choose to do things that are good for them. Youth are very impressionable and find this period in their life very confusing. In general, they weigh their decisions according to the rewards they value and expect to receive. For instance, Carroll, Durkin, Hattie, & Houghton (1997) found that delinquent students placed more importance on "Social Image" goals, which are related to "law-breaking activities, exemption from adult control, and independence" (p.448). In contrast, studious teens placed greater importance on "Academic Image" goals, those associated with knowledge, study skills, and schooling. In this inquiry, some students showed a tendency to be more conformist than others. For instance, while Jianna was easily influenced by her peers, Tweety valued her education and derived more pleasure in acquiring good grades than pursuing various social image goals.

When asked why Filipino teens disengage from school, most participants blamed deviant peers as negative influence on their studies. As Tweety points out:

> *Para sakin, nalululong sila sa barkada. Tapos, nag-rerebelde dahil sa reunification… siguro nag-aadapt sila sa culture dito sa Canada. Yung parang bale wala nalang "marunong naman makong mag-French, mabubuhay naman ako dito kasi may factory naman". Ganyan! Yung hinde ba nila iniisip yung future nila, yung pamilya nila, yung... hirap ng mama*

nila, papa nila sa factory o nag-aalaga ng bata... yung mabawi man lang nila yung paghihirap ng magulang nila, ganun.

> For me, they get involved with friends. Then they rebel because of the reunification... perhaps they adapt to the culture here in Canada. Like, it doesn't matter... "I know how to speak French, I can support myself because there's always the factory". Like that! Like they don't think about their future, their family, their... the hardships of their mother and father, in the factory or taking care of children... they should get back/ return the favour after the hardships that their parents went through.

In this passage, Tweety is voicing what many Filipino teens believe are the main reasons why students in the community drop out of high school. Perhaps this excerpt also shows the lack of positive role models available for immigrant youth. Most of the Filipino teens they are familiar with are those who spend time in groups and "chill" in metro stations, malls, and cafes. First-generation immigrants from the Philippines are constantly exposed to these stereotypes, which reinforces them in the minds of these impressionable young adults, who in time come to accept them as a part of their culture. When Filipino teens see their friends working and earning money, they also see the irrelevance of school, which leads to the beginning of school disengagement. In Tweety's opinion, most Canadian teens have a "laissez-faire" attitude towards their schooling, and do not truly value education. She also refers to the Filipino cultural trait of *utang na loob,* or debt of gratitude, in this case towards one's parents. In her opinion, teens from the Philippines should focus on their families and how to repay their parents for all the sacrifices they have made for their children. Tenenbaum et al. (2007) point out that it is important for parents in low-income neighbourhoods to carefully monitor their children's friends to ensure that their studies are not negatively affected by their peers. As previously explained, peer relationships can heavily influence a student's educational trajectory.

Another important finding of this inquiry is the prevalence of abusive relationships in the lives of young immigrant women. The majority of informants in this study mentioned a boyfriend in passing, but only in the context of other issues in their lives, such as during discussions on parental control. However, one of girls disclosed details about a very destructive relationship with her boyfriend that caused her to leave school before acquiring her diploma. During her remembrances of her ex-boyfriend, Adrianna used indirect speech in order to distance herself from what had happened to her in the past. Her intended meaning when she said "maybe he had the guts to hit me" can be interpreted in many ways: perhaps she had difficulty accepting the fact that she had been in an abusive relationship or that she was a victim; perhaps she was expressing incredulity that her boyfriend was capable of hurting her; it is also possible that she wanted to forget this incident and her speech pattern shows that she has already repressed this memory; her manner of indirect disclosure could signal her embarrassment and shame about the incident; or else, this statement could reveal that her ex-boyfriend's attitude and demeanour towards her were changing, and that, while he had not physically abused her yet, she had the impression that he could, or would. Upon further probing Adrianna also admitted that her ex-boyfriend was a drug user, and that she tried not to be overly influenced by him. She was only seventeen years old at the time and could have easily succumbed to a destructive lifestyle. Adrianna finally left her ex-boyfriend, but only after endless persuasion and support from her parents and peers. This situation again underlines the importance of social capital, in the form of a positive support system, such as parents and peers with positive and supportive attitudes.

There are two important lessons that should be emphasized from the experiences of female Filipino teens. Firstly, their poor academic performance could mask and reflect other problems they are experiencing in their lives, and secondly some girls simply have a harder time asking for help. For example, some troubled teens might fear punishment from authority or other influential figures. As Adrianna admits, her ex-boyfriend was her first love and she did not have any prior experience on which to base her judgments and actions regarding partners and dating. She was naive, and sacrificed a lot to be with him, including her studies and her relationship with her parents. Educators should encourage healthy peer relationships and be sensitive to the range of behaviours and signs exhibited by a teen that could be potential indicators of mental, emotional, and physical distress. It is very easy to interpret and attribute disruptive or self-destructive behaviour as "acting out", but perhaps teens are concealing other problems that they are incapable of disclosing. In the Filipino culture, maintenance of your family's reputation is extremely important, and airing your dirty laundry is frowned upon. Wolfe (2002) argued that, in the Filipino family ideology, "the family as a collectivity loses face when an individual member's problems are revealed, suggesting that the parents did not do their job" (p. 273). Consequently, Filipino teens cannot turn to their parents who may be the source of or contributing to their problems, and they may have a hard time confiding in their teachers for fear of further sanctions. This could exacerbate feelings of alienation, shame, and hopelessness. Similar to Espiritu (2001) and Wolfe's (2002) findings of high depression levels among female Filipino Americans, the present inquiry also indicates that first-generation female Filipino teens in Montreal show internalization

symptoms, which means that their moods and emotions were affected by depression and anxiety.

According to Statistics Canada, the rate of teenage pregnancy has been declining over the past few years. Despite this trend, one of the participants in this study became pregnant as a teen. Jianna became pregnant only after she graduated from adult education and yet her unplanned pregnancy still posed problems for her and became an obstacle in successfully pursuing a technical degree. At the time, she was nineteen years old and was clearly uneducated about reproductive health and safe sex practices. She revealed that she only found out that she was with child five months into her pregnancy. This shows a lack of communication between her and her parents, and a lack of sexual education in Montreal public schools. In 2005, when the province of Quebec underwent an educational reform, it abolished formal sexual education classes in public schools. Previously, schools had set aside five hours a year for sexual education (Elatrash, 2006), but under the reform, teachers were merely encouraged, and not obligated, to incorporate safe sex education into their curriculum. Unfortunately, the abolishment of formal sex education in Quebec occurred at a time when the rate of sexually transmitted infections, or STIs, is increasing among youth (Elatrash, 2006). Jianna could have seriously endangered herself and her baby because of her ignorance, and should have been better educated by her parents and her school.

Staying in School

Strong familial and parental support can be a protective factor in school engagement and motivation. Consistent with findings in the vast literature on school engagement, my inquiry indicates that parents have a significant influence on the

educational attainment of their children. For example, Tweety, an only child, confided in her father and valued his opinion, and it is largely due to his encouragement and guidance that she worked hard at school. Although most informants reported that their parents were not able to help them with their school work, the mere interest they showed in their children's studies, and therefore in their children's lives, helped bolster confidence and self-esteem.

All participants expressed a desire to continue their studies. Even Tina and Adrianna, who both transferred to adult school and subsequently left to pursue employment, want to obtain their high school diplomas. Even though statistics indicate that students in adult education have a 40% rate of leaving school before completing their degree, these girls are trying their best to stay focused on their studies. Perhaps as Phelan, Davidson, & Cao (1991) suggest, the establishment of long-term goal helps motivate them and overcome obstacles faced daily in school. It is interesting that those participants who continued in regular school, Tweety and Ashley, are also those participants who plan to attend university; the other three girls wanted to complete a technical degree instead. It is possible that having parents who have, or had had, professional careers has an influence on the educational aspirations of these teens. Tina and Adrianna currently have plans to finish school and they both wish to pursue technical careers upon graduating. Among all the teens interviewed, Adrianna seemed to be the least sure of her future profession and direction, which could stem from her learning difficulties.

The term "resilient", used by Lessard et al. (2009), could be applied to the young women in this study because "despite the presence of some form of significant risk or challenge in their lives, these students have adapted, persevered, and

succeeded" (Lessard et al., 2009, p. 21). All the young women interviewed have experienced one or more life-altering events, such as adjusting to a new environment and school, reuniting with an estranged parent, coping with the divorce of parents, violence at the hands of peers or a boyfriend, and failing a year in school. For instance, in spite of being unsuccessful in regular school, Tina, Jianna, and Adrianna persevered in their studies and enrolled in adult education. Ashley managed to stay focused in school even though her parents divorced and she grew up in a dangerous neighbourhood. Tweety redoubled her efforts in her studies despite failing her exams and experiencing public humiliation on several occasions due to her inability to speak in French. Among all the participants, Tweety fulfills all three criteria of a "resilient" person because not only did she believe in her abilities (as demonstrated by her numerous merit awards) but she was also able to reach out and receive help from her teacher. One can argue that her success was not based on her abilities alone but also influenced by the presence of a sensitive teacher who nurtured her and encouraged her progress. Tina was not as fortunate as Tweety, and was overall disappointed with her educators. She bitterly complained that her teachers in Canada did not measure up to her former teachers in the Philippines, who treated her like a second daughter. In the Philippines, teachers in general are held in high esteem by their students, and in return, teachers foster close relationships with their students. Though Tina, Jianna, and Adrianna were unable to find success in regular school, they persevered in their education and did not give up on their studies.

Prevention and Intervention Strategies

When asked why Filipino youth quit school prematurely, most informants gave similar answers. They believed that leaving school was either as a result of

working and earning an income, which made school seem irrelevant, or start spending time with the wrong crowd, resulting in negative peer influences and pressures. When asked what advice they would give other Filipino teens, most of them replied "just stay in school" or "don't listen to your friends". Tina's suggestion for teachers was that "they should be understanding, open... they should treat you not like a student but as a friend... as a friend who is teaching the right way" *(Dapat understanding sila, yung open... yung treat nila sayo na para kang hinde studyante, pero as a friend... as a friend na nagtuturo ng tamang way*).

How can we prevent school disengagement in youth? Morris, Pawlovich, & McCall (1991) cite a number of prevention and intervention strategies in their report, which are focused not only on dissuading students to leave school prematurely, but also on luring dropouts back to school. Successful strategies include: 1) mentoring and tutoring programs provided by the school; 2) parental assistance and involvement; 3) implementation of flexible schedules and alternative programs; 4) staff development programs; and as 5) community and business collaboration (Morris, et al., 1991). The authors suggest that establishing teacher mentorships, providing teachers with more autonomy and providing them with continuous and relevant staff development programs are well-founded strategies to prepare them to teach and guide at-risk students. The authors also recommend alternative schools for at-risk youth, which challenge them academically, provide personal counselling, and are staffed by caring and experienced adults. In this inquiry, Tweety is a good example of the positive influence a caring teacher can have on students. She became very motivated in her French class when her welcoming teacher became very

attentive towards her. Contrary to some of her cohorts, Tweety is in her last year in regular school and is poised to graduate at the time of this research.

Tilleczek, Ferguson, Edney, Rummens, and Boydell (2008) recommend adopting three principles to prevent school disengagement: 1) be more understanding, 2) be more flexible, and 3) be more proactive in reaching out to youth, families, and the communities of their students. These suggestions are geared towards parents, school personnel, government agencies, and policy makers alike. Consistent with the report of Morris, Pawlovich, & McCall (1991), Tilleczek et al. (2008) provided similar recommendations for teachers and schools. They suggest that educators should be more proactive when youth start to disengage in school, provide appropriate counselling and interventions, "develop better communication with parents and seek parental engagement in schools (especially immigrant parents); improve teacher skills at monitoring student understanding/progress; [and] create inter-sectoral partnerships to support poor and troubled youth" (Tilleczek et al., 2008, p. 195). They stress that schools should encourage a culture and climate in which youth feel that they 'belong', and actively seek to invite them back if they leave. Perhaps if Adrianna's teachers had simply taken the initiative of communicating with her parents, she would have performed better in school.

Communities can also help first-generation teens to better integrate academically and socially, by providing accessible infrastructures and community support. For instance, the two youth organizations mentioned frequently throughout this inquiry, the Philippine Basketball Association of Montreal and the Kabataang Montreal (KM), both provide positive peer networks by linking first and second-generation teens from the Philippines. Other community organizations for youth

include Boys and Girls Scout groups, tutorial sessions organized at the Philippine Community Center, the Catholic group 'Youth for Christ', the choral group 'Panday Tinig', the dance troupe 'Pamana ng Luzviminda' and other various cultural and religious groups. While many organizations and clubs are open to first-generation teens, not many try to address women's issues aside from the KM. There is an urgent need for youth organizations that allow and encourage Filipino women to discuss their problems openly without fear of judgment or punishment and where they can receive guidance, support, and mentorship.

Implications for Educators

This inquiry suggests the need to increase the number of staff development programs in order to improve awareness and cultural sensitivity among educators. It is important for teachers to be aware of certain issues that first-generation immigrant youth face when they arrive in Canada. It is time for educators to examine and understand the broader context of student experiences, and to not simply blame students for their deficiencies, their lack of motivation, or their low intelligence. As Cassidy and Bates (2005) point out, the challenge "for school administrators and teachers is to perceive opportunities to care, to find ways to enact care so that caring is received and benefits the receiver, and to do this in an era of competing expectations and pressures" (p. 99). For instance, Tina's French teacher should never have humiliated her in class. Instead, she should have been understanding and should have spoken with Tina in private in order to understand why she was having difficulties learning and to help develop a plan to improve. Her actions had a lasting effect on Tina's literacy, by forcing her to transfer to adult school, as well as on her

relationship with other teachers. Teachers should also learn how to promote positive peer relationships and self-image among female students.

Public schools could also improve by reintroducing sex education. Jianna's unplanned teenage pregnancy underlines the importance of sex education in high school, and an effect of eliminating this education. Her unplanned pregnancy was the result of unprotected sex, and her lack of knowledge resulted in an extremely delayed pregnancy test, which could have had negative repercussions on her and her baby's health. Teens should be taught reproductive health and safe sex practices. Without the proper education in school, teens might turn to their peers for information or go to the internet, where they could easily be misinformed. In Quebec, the rate of sexually-transmitted infections (STI) and diseases (STD) might decrease if sex education became mandatory in public schools as it was before the educational reform. It would also decrease the number of school leavers due to unwanted pregnancies.

Another area that would benefit from improvement is standardized testing for newly-arrived immigrant students. Schools should develop more and better standardized testing procedures to ensure that newly arrived students are placed in classes according to their levels, and are not simply blindly assigned. Schools and educators need to recognize the educational backgrounds and experiences of first-generation immigrant students, and how these can affect their capabilities and educational styles. Tweety was placed in an English class that was far too easy for her and found her class too monotonous. As a result, she quickly lost interest in her English studies, which discouraged any efforts to improve her skills in class.

Implications for Policymakers

There are number of specific ways that policymakers can improve the academic and economic opportunities for Filipino teens to succeed in school. Since most parents of first-generation immigrants from the Philippines work as caregivers, addressing the issues linked to the Live-in Caregiver Program will have direct positive effects on the lives of Filipino children as well. On December 12, 2009, Citizenship and Immigration Minister Jason Kenney announced changes to the LCP that are designed to improve the working conditions of LCP workers (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2009). Some of the proposed changes include extending the time period to complete the program from three to four years, recognizing up to 10% of overtime hours completed by the caregiver, and requiring employers to pay for the travel and medical costs required for caregivers to come Canada. While these changes are certainly limited, one advantage is that workers will avoid accumulating debts early on in the process of immigrating to Canada. Families from the Philippines will have less financial and economic constraints when they start their new lives in this country, which might alleviate some of the economic stress that forces youth to quit school to help support their family.

Filipinos in Montreal have different opinions of the Live-in Caregiver Program. While some groups recognize the advantage of the program and seek to modify and improve it, others are completely opposed and are fighting to have it abolished. The majority of Filipinos in Montreal agree that this program should eventually be eliminated to allow immigrants from the Philippines to find jobs in their respective professions, which was the dominant immigration trend in the 1970s. They also want to eliminate the staggered migration resulting from sponsorship, and

facilitate the immigration of entire families to Canada. There are many positive effects of recognizing the educational backgrounds and professional skills of immigrant workers in Canada. No matter what policymakers decide in the future, it is clear that ignoring the working conditions of Filipino immigrant workers has a detrimental effect on the psychosocial health and socio-economic status of not only these individuals, but their children as well. At a minimum, the economic difficulties faced by Filipino families have a negative effect on the educational attainment of first-generation youth. If policy makers allow for and facilitate parents to find jobs in their respective professions, it could allow parents to become more involved in their children's lives and studies, and could certainly increase the motivation and educational attainment of their children, increasing their chances of success later in life.

Reflection

This case study is based on only five participants, and the findings might be different if more informants were recruited. For example, Filipino students who actively participate in religious or cultural groups may believe more strongly in the importance of community organizations or of staying in school. Since most of the teens interviewed in the present study were either active members of the Kabataang Montreal (KM) or family members of these individuals, this may have restricted the type of recruited participants to those who were more responsible and serious in school. To reiterate, KM is a social activist group which aims to make youth aware of the social and immigration issues facing the Filipino community in Canada. Once teens participate in the activities of KM, they become empowered and more conscious of the common struggles and difficulties that Filipino youth face. It is

possible that through their involvement with KM, the participants in this study realized the importance of education in upward social and economic mobility. Similar to a snowball technique, I may have recruited participants that are more similar in many ways. Even though Tina and Jianna knew each other, Jianna was the only one who was not involved in KM. Therefore, while four of the participants have started investing in their social capitals by building positive social networks, Jianna preferred not to become involved in community groups. Perhaps this reluctance is a result of her timid nature, which prevents her from interacting with people outside her circle of friends. Another possible bias is that the female teens who participated in this study may be those more inclined towards education, since interest in the study material itself may have been the deciding factor among successful recruits.

In the present study, there was not enough information to support Mossakowski's (2003) finding that ethnic identity helps Filipinos to cope with discrimination. Only Tina and Tweety reported experiencing overt discrimination from Quebeckers. It is possible that the other girls have also experienced some type of discrimination, but that these incidents did not affect them as much, and as a result they did not choose to mention it during our interviews. In regards to group membership, two out of five participants, Tina and Adrianna, were active members of a group (Kabataang Montreal). Ashley attends KM events from time to time, due mostly to the influence of her sisters, who are also active members. Tweety has participated in KM activities in the past, but only during the summer; she is very focused on her studies during the school year. None of these young women actively participated in any cultural or religious organizations. Therefore, I cannot make any conclusions about the importance of ethnic pride in a youth's mental wellbeing.

The impact of positive family relationships cannot be underestimated when assessing student disengagement and motivation. As my inquiry shows, the family plays an important role in keeping newly arrived immigrant teens in school. However, many first-generation families are susceptible to financial constraints. This is specifically problematic for Filipino families because their immigration trend is based on the Live-in Caregiver Program. Workers under the LCP, in general, are restricted to low wages and long hours. Consequently, they are unable to spend a lot of time with their children even after their reunification in Canada. These working conditions have negative impacts on family relationships, as well as on the academic performance of first-generation female teens from the Philippines.

The socioeconomic status of these young women also played a role in their respective educational attainment. Poverty leads to a lack of parental involvement in the lives of some of these girls, and having financial difficulties may have contributed to their early school leaving. These findings support Bourdieu's argument that capital plays a role in the educational experiences of students. The different forms of capital had varying importance and presence to the participants of this study. For instance, Adrianna could speak French fluently yet she still had problems in school and eventually dropped out. Tweety is still currently learning to speak French and has managed to stay in school.

Having a rigid and impersonal school system and equally insensitive personnel can also lead teenage girls to leave school prematurely. Cassidy and Bates (2005) argue that for schools to adopt the ethic of care, help for students who are members of disadvantaged groups "must begin with recognizing [the] societal challenges they face and then altering the structural impediments in the community

and in the school so that learners may thrive" (p. 70). The lack of cultural sensitivity made some of the participants feel alienated and humiliated during their time at school. Finding neither success nor acceptance in regular school, two of the participants voluntarily transferred to adult education, while one was forced to do so by her school administrators. When schools do not recognize the former educational experiences of immigrant students and hold them back, they not only increase the risk of these students dropping out of school, but also trap them in a marginalized position by limiting their future choices and opportunities. The only degree that Tina and Adrianna can now strive for is a technical diploma, if they even succeed in finishing their studies at all. As statistics indicate, the older an individual becomes while completing adult education, the more likely they are to experience school disengagement.

The schooling of these young women was greatly affected by their personal relationships and peers. One informant was beaten up by a gang in school, causing her to become paranoid about attending classes, and was later influenced her peers to drop-out of adult school to work. One participant was convinced by a boyfriend to quit school, while another spent time with friends who encouraged her to skip class. Teen pregnancy was also an impediment in the educational goals of one participant. Many students experience intense peer pressure at this time during their lives however, the participants' immigrant and economic status made them even more vulnerable to these potentially negative influences.

School motivation among these participants was promoted and developed in several ways, the most important of which were through parental involvement and caring teachers. Parental guidance and interest in lives of these young women's lives

acted as a buffer to the difficulties they experienced in high school. In addition, a caring and understanding teacher made a significant difference in one female Filipino student's life. She became more motivated in school and started receiving merit awards. Despite the fact that she experienced discrimination from other students and society at large, these hurdles did not distract her from achieving her goals, in part because she had a close teacher mentor who guided and encouraged her, and was culturally sensitive and respectful.

Two important findings of this study need to be underlined. The first is that that even though boys are statistically more inclined to leave school early, girls also drop out of school. Given this fact, it is important not to neglect female students because, as previously mentioned, girls tend to depart from school silently. While academic failure may push teens to leave school before acquiring a diploma, the disengagement of others stems from a myriad of factors. For example, just because a student is passing all of her exams during the school year does not mean she will return to school the next. It is important for teachers and administrators to encourage school motivation and make all their students feel welcome, regardless of their sex and ethnicity. The second key observation is that young women who are experiencing trauma and stress may have difficulty asking for help, and their anxiety could subsequently manifest itself as poor academic performance. Therefore, parents and teachers should be sensitive to changes in the behaviour of their children and students, and should not be so quick to judge. Immigrant girls may have more problems confiding in teachers and asking help from authority due to cultural mentalities regarding privacy and reputation, and so teachers should encourage dialogue and communication whenever possible.

Self-Reflections

Conducting this study has both been challenging and rewarding for me because the topic is very close to my heart. Even when I was completing my undergraduate studies, I was always curious about early school leaving and the educational experiences of other first-generation Filipino teens in Quebec public schools. Perhaps because I had a hard time adjusting in high school, and myself wanting to give up and quit school on so many occasions, I wondered if other first-generation immigrant teens from the Philippines suffered like I did. While I experienced difficulties when I was reunited with my father, starting my life 'from scratch' at the age of fifteen was even more daunting. I have few positive memories of high school, and thinking about that stage of my life only invokes feelings of resentment and anger. Despite my personal negative experience, I tried to keep an open mind while conducting the interviews, and had to keep my assumptions in-check and not use leading questions. I half-expected to hear different – and positive – stories from my informants, but in the end only came to the realization of how similar our experiences had been. Like Tweety, I also graduated in high school in part because of caring teachers who showed me kindness and understanding. Since the negative stereotype of Filipino teens quitting school to seek employment is so prevalent, I was not surprised when my informants described the same experiences.

I was surprised by the extent and influence of peer pressure in a teen's decision to quit school. Having been raised by parents who were very authoritarian, I thought that most teens from the Philippines would be protected from the negative influences of their peers due to their strict upbringing. My parents were involved in my life and were fortunate to have jobs that allowed them to spend quality time with

their children. Most of the informants in this study, however, had parents who immigrated under the LCP, and therefore had to deal with absent parents in the Philippines, and even upon arrival in Canada. They had to cope with the challenges of adjusting to a new country and a new school on their own, and had to learn to be independent as soon as they moved to this country. This kind of life style is in stark contrast to what they were accustomed to in the Philippines, where relatives and family members often live in close proximity to each other and can be counted on for help and support. Consequently, many first-generation teens in Montreal end up turning to their peers to fill this void.

If I were to conduct this study again, I would also choose to include a focus-group discussion among first-generation female Filipino teens to address the problems they face in schools and help them find common solutions together. Teens in the focus group could discover similarities in their experiences, and this process could have a cathartic affect and may alleviate their feelings of isolation and marginalization. Teens might also reveal other information about their experiences that they might not have thought about during the individual interviews. Of course, I would also conduct personal interviews, which have positive aspects in and of themselves, the most important of which is privacy and lack of judgement or opinion from others. If more teens from the Philippines understood that they are not alone, and that they can seek help and guidance from older and more experienced individuals in their community and their city, it might empower them to see past their individual struggles, and perhaps even encourage them to persevere in their studies.

Further Directions

My inquiry contributes to the literature on school disengagement and motivation. Specifically, it adds to the body of information on immigrant students' educational experiences in Canada from the perspectives of female Filipino students themselves. However, there are other aspects of first-generation experiences in school that should be examined. For instance, it would be beneficial to know if self-identity and assimilation play a role in the academic performance of first-generation female immigrant students. Does cultural integration help Filipino teens to succeed in school? Studies should also consider the impact of having access to positive role models in keeping youth engaged in their studies. Further studies should explore the variety of educational services offered to newly arrived immigrants to encourage them to persevere in school.

While my research focuses on first-generation female Filipino teens, some of these findings could be beneficial and applied and contextualized to other immigrant groups. Since the immigrant population will be increasing in years to come, it is extremely important for educators and policy makers to ensure that newly arrived teens feel welcome, have an equal chance to succeed as native youth, and have every opportunity to integrate into Canadian society. Immigrant students come from rich cultural backgrounds and experiences, and have a lot to contribute, if they are only provided with the opportunity to and support to find their own voices.

References

Abada, T., Feng, H. O. U., & Ram, B. (2009). Ethnic Differences in Educational Attainment Among the Children of Canadian Immigrants. *Canadian Journal of Sociology, 34*(1), 1-28.

Ang, W. (2006). *Negotiating spaces of belonging: Social support in Filipino immigrant youth.* Unpublished M.Sc., McGill University (Canada), Canada.

Arnot, M. (2006). Gender equality, pedagogy and citizenship: Affirmative and transformative approaches in the UK. *Theory and Research in Education, 4*(2), 131-150.

Ballivy, V. (2005, February 10). Nouveau régime pédagogique: De l'anglais en première année et des arts jusqu'à la fin du secondaire. *Le Soleil,* pp. A1-A2. from http://www.infobourg.qc.ca/sections/chemises/afficheChemise.php?idChemise=5&id=9527.

Block, I. (2007, September 11). Filipina a victim of racial profiling, community charges. *The Gazette*. Retrieved July 7, 2009, from http://www2.canada.com/montrealgazette/news/story.html?id=46fedd66-57cf-493f-8e91-018e7231fee7&k=24268.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). Forms of Capital (R. Nice, Trans.). In A. H. Halsey, H. Lauder, P. Brown & A. S. Wells (Eds.), *Education : culture, economy, and society* (pp. 46-58). New York: Oxford University Press.

Branswell, B. (2009, February 14). Staying the course; Our city has a wealth of Culture, Knowledge, history, dropouts. For Montreal to recognize its potential, it has to find a way for students to recognize theirs. . *The Gazette*. Retrieved December 3, 2009, from http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=1646516071&sid=2&Fmt=3&clientId=10843&RQT=309&VName=PQD

Buchmann, C., DiPrete, T. A., & McDaniel, A. (2008). Gender Inequalities in Education. *Annual Review of Sociology, 34*(1), 319-337.

Canadian Council on Learning (2009). No "drop" in the bucket: the high costs of dropping out. *Lessons in Learning* February 4, 2009. Retrieved December 4, 2009, from http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/Reports/LessonsInLearning/LinL20090204CostofDroppingout.htm

Caro, J. F. (2008). *The educational experiences of Filipino youth in Quebec in the context of global migration.* McGill University, Montreal.

Carroll, A., Durkin, K., Hattie, J., & Houghton, S. (1997). Goal setting among adolescents: A comparison of delinquent, at-risk, and not-at-risk youth. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 89*(3), 441-450.

Cassidy, W., & Bates, A. (2005). "Drop-Outs" and "Push-Outs": Finding Hope at a School That Actualizes the Ethic of Care. *American Journal of Education, 112*(1), 66-102.

Chen, A. B. (1998). *From sunbelt to snowbelt : Filipinos in Canada*. Calgary: Canadian Ethnic Studies Association.

Chui, T., Maheux, H., & Tran, K. (2007). *Immigration in Canada: A Portrait of the Foreign-born Population, 2006 Census*. Retrieved July 4, 2009. from http://www.statcan.gc.ca/bsolc/olc-cel/olc-cel?catno=97-557-XIE2006001&lang=eng#formatdisp.

Chung, A. (2009, March 12). Quebec tackles high school dropout crisis. *The Toronto Star*. Retrieved December 3, 2009, from http://www.thestar.com/News/Canada/article/600889.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2009). Minister Kenney proposes significant improvements to the Live-in Caregiver Program. Retrieved from http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/releases/2009/2009-12-12.asp

Corcoran, M. (1995). Rags to Rags: Poverty and Mobility in the United States. *Annual Review of Sociology, 21*(1), 237-267.

Craig, W., Harel-Fisch, Y., Fogel-Grinvald, H., Dostaler, S., Hetland, J., Simons-Morton, B., et al. (2009). A cross-national profile of bullying and victimization among adolescents in 40 countries. *International Journal of Public Health, 54*(0), 216-224.

CSDM (2009). Plan Réussir : Stopper le décrochage. Retrieved from http://www.csdm.qc.ca/SallePresse/Communiques/2009/COM_2009-09-16-2.aspx

Curdt-Christiansen, X. L., & Maguire, M. H. (2007). Portraits of Self and Identity Constructions: Three Chinese Girls' Trilingual Textual Powers. In D. Thiessen & A. Cook-Sather (Eds.), *International Handbook of Student Experience in Elementary and Secondary School*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.

Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1988). The Value of Conformity: Learning to Stay in School. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 19*(4), 354-381.

Deskill (n.d.). Collins English Dictionary 5th Edition Retrieved from Lexibase Intranet 7.0 database Available from http://mcgill.lexibase.reverso2.net/Main.aspx

Elatrash, S. (2006, Apr 6-12). Sexual ignorance *Mirror*. Retrieved December 10, 2009, from http://www.montrealmirror.com/2006/040606/news2.html.

Ellenbogen, S., & Chamberland, C. (1997). The peer relations of dropouts: a comparative study of at-risk and not at-risk youths. *Journal of Adolescence, 20*(4), 355-367.

Espiritu, Y. L. (2001). "We don't sleep around like white girls do": Family, culture, and gender in Filipina American lives. *Signs, 26*(2), 415.

Fleras, A., & Elliott, J. L. (Eds.). (1999). *Unequal Relations: an Introduction to Race, Ethnic, and Aboriginal Dynamics in Canada* (Third ed.). Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc.

Hébert, R., Crew, M., Delisle, S., Ferguson, S.-J., & McMullen, K. (2008). *Educational Portrait of Canada, 2006 Census*. Retrieved July 30, 2009. from http://www.statcan.gc.ca/bsolc/olc-cel/olc-cel?catno=97-560-XIE2006001&lang=eng.

Human Resources and Social Development Canada (2006). *Learning — School Drop-outs* Retrieved January 23, 2010. from http://www4.hrsdc.gc.ca/.3ndic.1t.4r@-eng.jsp?iid=32#M_2.

Identity. (n.d.). Collins English Dictionary 5th Edition Retrieved from Lexibase Intranet 7.0 database Available from http://mcgill.lexibase.reverso2.net/Main.aspx

Kapit Bisig Centre (n.d.). Kabataang Montreal Retrieved February 11, 2010, from http://www.kapitbisigcentre.org/?page_id=86

Kelly, P. (2006). Filipinos in Canada: Economic Dimensions of Immigration and Settlement. *CERIS Working Paper Series,* (No. 48). Retrieved from http://www.ceris.metropolis.net/Virtual%20Library/WKPP%20List/WKPP2006/CWP48_Kelly_final_colour_revised.pdf

Kharroubi, Z. F. (Ed.). (2009). *The North American Filipino Star* (Vol. 27, Issue 12). Montreal: Filcan Publications, Inc.

Laquian, E. R. (1973). *A Study of Filipino Immigration to Canada 1962-1972*. Ottawa: United Council of Filipino Associations in Canada.

Largo, M. (2007). *From the Pearl of the Orient to Uptown: A collaborative arts-based inquiry with Filipino youth activists in Montreal.* Unpublished dissertation, Concordia University Montreal.

Lejtenyi, P. (2003, March 27 - April 2, 2003). Fighting Gangs. *Mirror*. Retrieved June 13, 2009, from http://www.montrealmirror.com/ARCHIVES/2003/032703/cover_news.html.

Lessard, A., Fortin, L., Marcotte, D., Potvin, P., & Royer, É. (2009). Why did they not drop out? Narratives from resilient students. *Prevention Researcher, 16*(3), 21-24.

Levinson, M. (2003). Challenging Deliberation. *Theory and Research in Education, 1*(1), 23-49.

Lindsay, C. (2001). *The Filipino Community in Canada*. Retrieved July 4, 2009. from http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-621-x/89-621-x2007005-eng.htm.

Maguigad, J. (2008). The History of Philippine Basketball Association of Montreal Retrieved June 1, 2009, 2009, from http://www.pbam.ca/history.html

Maguire, M. H., & Curdt-Christiansen, X. L. (2007). Multiple Schools, Languages, Experiences and Affiliations: Ideological Becomings and Positionings. *Heritage Language Journal, 5*(1), 50-78.

Méthé, L. (2008, May 14). Portrait du décrochage scolaire au Québec. *Infobourg*. Retrieved December 3, 2009, from http://www.infobourg.com/sections/actualite/actualite.php?id=13120.

Ministère de l'Éducation du Loisir et du Sport (2009). *L`école, j`y tiens! Tous ensemble pour la réussite scolaire*. Retrieved December 2, 2009. from http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/sections/publications/index.asp?page=fiche&id=1055.

Morris, S. V., Pawlovich, W., & McCall, D. (1991). *Evaluating the effectiveness of school drop-out prevention strategies : some suggestions for future research : final report*. White Rock, B.C.

Mossakowski, K. N. (2003). Coping with Perceived Discrimination: Does Ethnic Identity Protect Mental Health? *Journal of Health & Social Behavior, 44*(3), 318-331.

Mueller, M. P., Tilleczek, K., Rummens, J. A., & Boydell, K. (2008). Methodological Considerations for the Study of Early School Leaving In K. Tilleczek (Ed.), *Why Do Students Drop Out of High School?: Narrative Studies and Social Critiques*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press.

Olatunji, A. (2005). Dropping Out of High School among Mexican-Origin Youths: Is Early Work Experience a Factor? *Harvard Educational Review, 75*(3), 286-305.

Park, C. C. (1997). Learning Style Preferences of Asian American (Chinese, Filipino, Korean, and Vietnamese) Students in Secondary Schools. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 30*(2), 68 - 77.

Pelletier, M., & Rheault, S. (2005). *Academic Success and the Gender Gap: The Influence of the Socioeconomic Environment.* Retrieved July 4, 2009. from http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/stat/recherche/doc05/442865.pdf.

Phelan, P., Davidson, A. L., & Cao, H. T. (1991). Students' Multiple Worlds: Negotiating the Boundaries of Family, Peer, and School Cultures. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 22*(3), 224-250.

Pratt, G. (2004). *Working Feminism*. Malta: Temple University Press.

Provencher, C. (2006). *Educational Profile of Students From Immigrant Families: 1994-1995 to 2003-2004*. Retrieved July 4, 2009. from http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/stat/Autres_doc/immigration_angl_460774.pdf .

Rousseau, C., Hassan, G., Measham, T., Moreau, N., Lashley, M., Castro, T., et al. (2009). From the family universe to the outside world: Family relations, school attitude, and perception of racism in Caribbean and Filipino adolescents. *Health & Place, 15*(3), 751-760.

Rummens, J. A., Tilleczek, K., Boydell, K., & Ferguson, B. (2008). Understanding and Addressing Early School Leaving among Immigrant and Refugee Youth In K. Tilleczek (Ed.), *Why Do Students Drop Out of High School?: Narrative Studies and Social Critiques*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press

Sévigny, D. (2006, September). Portrait du décrochage scolaire à Montréal, from http://www.reseaureussitemontreal.ca/IMG/pdf/Portrait_decrochage.pdf

Solyom, C. (2009, September 24, 2009). Youths clash on basketball court. South Asians, Filipinos at odds. *The Gazette*. Retrieved November 30, 2009, from http://www.globalmontreal.com/world/Youths+clash+basketball+court/2026570/story.html.

Statistics Canada. Census 2001. *Topic-based Tabulations* Retrieved July 4, 2009, from http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/standard/themes/RetrieveProductTable.cfm?Temporal=2001&PID=68642&APATH=3&GID=517770&METH=1&PTYPE=55496&THEME=44&FOCUS=0&AID=0&PLACENAME=0&PROVINCE=0&SEARCH=0&GC=99&GK=NA&VID=0&VNAMEE=&VNAMEF=&FL=0&RL=0&FREE=0

Statistics Canada (2009). *The Canadian Labour Market at a Glance 2007*. Retrieved December 3, 2009. from http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/71-222-x/71-222-x2008001-eng.pdf.

Stats: High School Dropouts (2000). Retrieved December 4, 2009, from Canadian Centre for Adolescent Research: http://ccar.briercrest.ca/stats/highschool.shtml

Tenenbaum, H. R., Porche, M. V., Snow, C. E., Tabors, P., & Ross, S. (2007). Maternal and child predictors of low-income children's educational attainment. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 28*(3), 227-238.

Terry, M. (2008). The Effects that Family Members and Peers Have on Students' Decisions to Drop Out of School. *Educational Research Quarterly, 31*(3), 25-38.

Tidwell, R., & Garrett, S. C. (1994). Youth at Risk: In Search of a Definition. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 72*(4), 444-446.

Tilleczek, K., Ferguson, B., Edney, D. R., Rummens, J. A., & Boydell, K. (2008). A Critical Review of Initiatives to Redress Youth and School Disengagement In K. Tilleczek (Ed.), *Why Do Students Drop Out of High School?: Narrative Studies and Social Critiques*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press.

Veloso, A. (2007). Notre Dames des Philippines Catholic Mission Historical Vignette Retrieved June 25, 2009, from http://fcmm.homestead.com/history.html

Ville de Montréal (2009). Profil sociodémographic Côte-des-Neiges–Notre-Dame-de-Grâce http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/MTL_STATISTIQUES_FR/MEDIA/DOCUMENTS/C%D4TE-DES-NEIGES%96NOTRE-DAME-DE-GR%C2CE_AVRIL09_2.PDF

Webb, J., Schirato, T., & Danaher, G. (2002). *Understanding Bourdieu* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Willis, P. E. (1977). *Learning to labour: How working class kids get working class jobs*. Farnborough, Eng: Saxon House.

Wolfe, D. L. (2002). There's No Place Like "Home": Emotional Transnationalism and the Struggles of Second-Generation Filipinos. In P. Levitt & M. C. Waters (Eds.), *The Changing Face of Home* (pp. 255-294). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Zenaida, T. R. B., Ravanera, R., & Abada, T. (2005). Spatial Residential Patterns and Socio-economic Integration of Filipinos in Canada. *Canadian Ethnic Studies, 37*(2), 67-76.

Key Concepts

Capital: a concept used by Pierre Bourdieu (1986) to refer to an object, ownership, knowledge, relationship, and attributes that could be exchanged for goods or services

Discourse: is described by Pierre Bourdieu (1977) as a structured language used to construct and emphasize social class

Drop out: term used when a student stops attending class before graduation

Ethnicity: shared heritage based on religion, kinship, culture, language, traditions, history and nationality

Filipino family ideology: a concept used by Diane Wolfe (2002) to signify the centrality of family in the Filipino culture

Appendix B

McGill

CONSENT FORM
McGill University

Working Title: Examining the perceptions and educational experiences of Filipino youth in Quebec	
Researcher: Stephanie Pineda, Master's Student, Faculty of Education **Phone:** (514) [redacted] **Email:** stephanie.pineda@mail.mcgill.ca	**Supervisor:** Dr. Mary Maguire **Phone:** (514) [redacted] **Email:** mary.maguire@mcgill.ca

This is to invite you to participate in a research entitled "Examining the perceptions and experiences of Filipino youth in the educational system of Quebec" for my Master's Thesis research in the Faculty of Education of McGill University. The goal of this study is to understand what motivates young Filipinos to stay in school, and the reasons why others drop out of high school.

Your participation in the study will entail a short face-to-face interview with me as the researcher. You will be asked questions regarding your experiences in school and what you think about the educational system here in Canada. The interview should not last about more than an hour, although we can stop this interview anytime you want, and you can withdraw from this research if you do not feel comfortable.

The identities of the participants will not be disclosed to anybody but me. In addition, any details that you divulge that could expose your identity will be removed and you will be given a fictitious name in the final report.

Your signature below serves to signify that you agree to participate in this study.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can choose to decline to answer any question, or even to withdraw at any point from the research without penalty at any time. Anything you say will only be attributed to you with your permission; otherwise the information will be reported in such a way as to make direct association with yourself impossible. My pledge to confidentiality also means that no other person or organization other than my supervisor will have access to any identifying information. All consent forms will be locked in separate filing cabinets.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need more information or if you wish to add anything. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at any time at (514) [redacted] or at stephanie.pineda@mail.mcgill.ca.

Consent:

Participant's signature: _____ Researcher's signature: _____
Date: _____