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EXPLORING MATROREFORM IN BICULTURAL MOTHERS

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Abstract

Matroreform refers to the intentional development of a new approach of mothering that differs from one's motherline. This process can encompass broader experiences shared by many mothers, such as identifying oneself as bicultural. For this reason, it is important for those interested in mothering research to have an adequate understanding of biculturalism and its influence on maternal identity and practices. The understanding gleaned from this narrative inquiry suggests that early conceptualizations of culture tie into mothering practices, with culture having an impact on the integration of biculturalism in the process of matroreform. Additionally, the process of matroreform is largely influenced by experiencing a lack of desired love and emotion from one's own mother during childhood, although reconciliation with one's mother later in life is possible. Recommendations for research on biculturalism in relation to matroreform focus on expanding existing scholarship, and conducting research pertinent to counsellors and psychologists working with mothers.

Keywords: Matroreform, mothering, bicultural identity, acculturation

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Chapter 1: INTRODCUTION

Beginnings

The process of becoming a mother can be conceptualized in both personal and universal terms. This experience varies from individual to individual, and is influenced by a variety of factors such as one's relationship with her mother, societal connotations of mothering, and one's personal conceptualization of the term mother. At times, this can lead to a conflict between one's mothering template and one's desires. In part, perhaps it is this contrast and conflict that leads to what Wong-Wylie describes as *matroreform*. In her writings, Canadian maternal mental health scholar Wong-Wylie (also referred to as Wong in her later writings) (2006; 2010) explicates *matroreform* as a maternal practice that results in the reconceptualization and transformation maternal practice. Specifically, it is conceptualized as "an act, desire, and process of claiming motherhood power... a progressive movement to mothering that attempts to institute new mothering rules and practices apart from one's motherline (Wong-Wylie, 2006. p. 739). Because the process of *matroreform* is so specific to the individual, it can be influenced by a variety of different personal factors. For example, in her early writings Wong-Wylie discusses how her own cultural heritage has influenced her perception of mothering and her journey through *matroreform* (Wong-Wylie, 2006). Therefore, the individual and personal experiences of mothers may be viewed as entry points into the process of *matroreform*.

Bicultural identity can be seen as one such entry point into *matroreform*. This entry point has become increasingly relevant in recent years as Canadian cultural and ethnic diversity has continued to change and evolve. In support of this assertion, data from the 2006 census revealed that over 200 different ethnic groups reside in Canada, with a significant number identifying with more than one cultural group (Statistics Canada, 2006). As a result, increasing diversity and

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immigration in Canada is contributing to a growing number of individuals identifying themselves as bicultural. This development can be seen across the general population, and in sub-groups such as in women and mothers. As an increasing number of mothers begin to identify themselves as bicultural, it is becoming even more essential to understand the personal and collective influence of biculturalism, its impact on mothering practices and values, and more specifically its effects on the process of matroreform. An examination of the literature indicates that women can be influenced by their bicultural identities in regards to their values and practices as mothers (Carranza, 2007); in this way, understanding the impact of bicultural identity in mothers is valuable and important in the effort to further understand the individual processes of matroreform.

The purpose of this research is to explore biculturalism and matroreform. Using biculturalism as an entry point, the influence of biculturalism on mothers, its role in the development of maternal values, identity, and in mothering practices will be examined. Because biculturalism is such a broad and encompassing term, much of what has been written by researchers explores the topic through the lens of race, ethnicity, and immigration. Therefore, in an effort to narrow the scope of biculturalism for the purposes of examining it in relation to matroreform, this research predominantly examines biculturalism from the perspective of immigrant and ethnically diverse women.

In an effort to explore biculturalism and matroreform comprehensively, key points and arguments have been grouped into two main sections in the following chapter. The first section examines biculturalism, focusing on the definition of the term, what is involved in forming a bicultural identity, its application to women and mothers, and its effect on mothering approaches and values. The second section explores the literature relevant to mothering and matroreform.

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Specifically, feminist and mothering literature is examined, lending support to the development and premise behind the concept of matroreform. Chapters three and four outline the methods and theoretical framework used for the research. Chapter five and six provides detailed accounts of each mothers' story, and addresses the analysis of the narrative inquiry. Four main themes (plot lines) that emerged from the research are discussed in detail in Chapters six and seven. This thesis concludes with addressing limitations and possible directions for future research in the area of bicultural identity in relation to matroreform.

Anticipated Significance

Although the process of going matroreform can be very personal, it can also encompass broader experiences shared by many mothers. One such experience is having a dual cultural identity and subsequently identifying oneself as bicultural. Through exploring matroreform in women who identify as bicultural, it is hoped that knowledge will be gleaned regarding the influence of bicultural identity on the desire and the process and experiences of engaging in matroreform.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Part 1: Exploring Biculturalism

Defining Biculturalism

Contemporary literature places the term biculturalism within the more encompassing concept of culture, and often describes it in concurrence with other terms such as multi-culture, acculturation, and assimilation (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993). Throughout the literature, many definitions for biculturalism have been proposed. Despite the numerous attempts at explanation, the essence of biculturalism can be effectively encapsulated in the definition brought forth by Stewart (2010), who describes biculturalism as including those individuals who are successful in assimilating the practices of more than one culture, yet are still able to maintain a sense of their individual identity. Because biculturalism is a broad term encompassing a variety of different factors, a large amount of the existing literature on this topic often examines more specific instances of cultural integration such as with immigrants, multiracial individuals, and multiethnic individuals. As a result, many scholars and writers view biculturalism in conjunction with a more defined theme. Despite the limited literature dedicated exclusively to biculturalism, it should be noted that the term is not limited to race and ethnicity, as it can also apply to a wide range of unique individuals who share more than one culture. Arthur and Collins (2010) identify culture as a broad and inclusive term, adopting the ideas that others have put forth suggesting that culture can include beliefs, customs, history, language, spiritual traditions, values, worldviews, as well as ties to geographical locations. By taking this description into account, biculturalism can also be considered within a larger, more inclusive perspective. However, in order to examine biculturalism in conjunction with other phenomenon,

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researchers often narrow the scope of the definition to fit the specific parameters of their research.

Theories Behind the Formation of a Bicultural Identity

A vast array of scholars writing about bicultural literature suggests that bicultural individuals organize and experience their cultural identity and meaning systems in a unique and personal manner (Benet-Martinez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002; LaFromboise et al., 1993; Mok & Morris, 2012; Pedrotti, Edwards, & Lopez, 2008). Although this can present as a congruent bicultural identity in some individuals, others may experience a distinct or contrasting identity (Benet-Martinez et al., 2002). Consequently, many researchers working with bicultural populations have noted this discrepancy. This has prompted the creation and evaluation of a variety of models and theories of bicultural identity acquisition.

Notable literature on bicultural identity acquisition includes the review of five distinct models of second-culture acquisition by LaFromboise and colleagues. These models comprise of acculturation, assimilation, alternation, fusion, and multiculturalism (LaFromboise et al., 1993). Their article provides a foundation for perceiving the individual experience of biculturalism, as well as the process of forming a bicultural identity as described below.

LaFromboise et al. (1993) describe the acculturation model as adopting the assumption that individuals or their cultural group will lose identification with their culture of origin, while ultimately becoming complete members of the dominant culture. The assimilation model takes into consideration that an individual living within two cultures will undergo a process of amalgamation into the more influential or desirable culture (LaFromboise et al., 1993). On the other hand, LaFromboise et al. describe the alternation approach as being more accommodating with the premise that an individual is able to possess knowledge and understanding of two

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separate cultures, and that the individual is capable of adjusting their actions and behaviour to fit either as needed (1993). In terms of the fusion model, they take a slightly different approach, assuming cultures that share an economic, political, or geographic space will fuse together until they are indistinct from one another (LaFromboise et al., 1993). Lastly, the multicultural model illustrates that individual cultures will maintain distinct identities, while still working together to uphold economic or national needs (LaFromboise et al., 1993). LaFromboise and colleagues also propose an additional hypothetical model, adopting a behavioural approach to culture and centering on the dimensions of bicultural competence. Within the proposed model, the reciprocal relationship between the individual and their environments (which include the culture of origin and secondary culture), and an understanding of both cultures is highlighted. Each of the models outlined above support the assertion that forming a bicultural identity can be a complex process.

Managing more than one cultural identity can be a complex process for many individuals. Additional researchers suggest that how an individual manages dual cultural identities differs on a case by case basis and depends on an assortment of characteristics and factors (Benet-Martinez et al., 2002). Benet-Martinez et al. propose the construct of bicultural identity integration (BII), which refers to the degree individuals represent their separate cultural identities as either interconnected and united, versus split or divided (2002). Therefore, individuals with a high BII can be viewed as possessing a more integrated cultural identity than those with a lower BII. Studies examining biracial identity serve as helpful examples illustrating this point.

Research by Pedrotti and associates (2008) examines the management of biracial identity, which can be considered a more specific model of bicultural identity. Their review of the literature compares earlier models of biracial identity with contemporary models. Pedrotti et al.

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(2008) conclude that recent models tend to share common themes which include focusing on influential individuals within the environment, placing emphasis on environmental factors, looking at an assortment of outcomes rather than concentrating on integration, and adopting a less deficit-based and marginalized method of identity development.

In accordance with the arguments of LaFromboise et al. (1993) and Pedrotti et al. (2008), Guo, Suarez-Morales, Schwartz, and Szapocznik (2009) provide support for a multidimensional perspective of biculturalism. Their perspective can be viewed as bi-dimensional, centering on heritage-culture retention and receiving-culture acquisition. In their 2009 study, multidimensional biculturalism was empirically investigated through the use of the Bicultural Involvement Questionnaire –Short Version (BIQ-S), which indexes Hispanic and American cultural orientations separately. The findings revealed that many forms of biculturalism were found within the multidimensional model, and that acculturation may be characterized by at least four constructs for the cultures studied. It should be noted that because the analysis was cross-sectional (and therefore unable to determine the course of acculturation over time) the results need to be interpreted carefully (Guo et al., 2009). These findings, along with the conclusions from the research of LaFromboise et al. (1993) and Pedrotti et al. (2008) suggest that bicultural identity acquisition is not a uniform process, but can be conceptualized in a variety of different ways.

In support of the findings and research on bicultural models outlined above, Bornstein and Cote (2004) compared the parenting cognitions (attributions and self-perceptions) of immigrant mothers to those in their country of destination and country of origin. Participants from five separate cultural groups: Argentinean, Japanese, Japanese immigrants to the United States, South American immigrants to the United States, and European Americans living in the

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United States were included in the study. The researchers revealed that mothers from each cultural group in the study were unique in how they experienced the process of acculturation. The process of the acculturation of parenting cognitions was found to be influenced by the attributes of the individual's culture of origin and culture of destination, as well as adaptability (Bornstein & Cote, 2004). Because Bornstein and Cote's (2004) study explored the specific experiences of individuals from distinct cultural groups, it should be noted that the results should be generalized with caution. Yet, the findings are important as they support the assertion that a uniform model of biculturalism cannot be imposed on all cultures or populations (Benet-Martinez et al., 2002; LaFromboise et al., 1993).

Recently, research has been conducted on the malleability of bicultural identity. The prevailing literature largely regards bicultural identity as stable (Mok & Morris, 2012). However, Mok and Morris' research explores the degree to which BII can be generated in temporary, situational contexts (2012). Their findings, based on four experiments, indicate that BII can be considered a psychological state that can be influenced by subtle, circumstantial cues. The researchers conclude that these findings are important in understanding how bicultural individuals can "enhance their performance in cultural contexts" (Mok & Morris, 2012, 244).

The Impact of Biculturalism on Women and Mothers

Many individuals identify as bicultural, and there are unique considerations for women within this classification. The American Psychological Association (APA) affirms that for this group, life experiences along with individual perceptions can be influenced by ethnicity, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status among a variety of other factors (2007). Women possessing bicultural identities have distinctive psychological and social realities (APA, 2007), and subsequently, these are important considerations for those working with this population.

Having a Bicultural Identity Impacts a Woman's Role as a Mother

Although there is a fair amount of literature on mothering, research on the experience of mothers influenced by culture and socio-cultural variables is limited (Tummala-Narra, 2004). Based on the fractional literature available, it has been suggested that identifying as bicultural can have an impact on a woman's role and mothering approaches (Koniak-Griffin, Logsdon, Hines-Martin, & Turner, 2006; Tummala-Narra, 2004). In support of this point, Tummala-Narra provides an example of how it is frequently the duty and responsibility of the mother to uphold the mother-tongue (an important aspect of cultural identity), and teach it to children after immigrating to a new country (2004). She also suggests that cultural displacement has an effect on motherhood, particularly in the areas of bicultural conflicts, gender roles, family structure, and with social networks (Tummala-Narra, 2004). During circumstances of immigration, it is frequently the responsibility of women and mothers to help children adapt to both cultures while successfully transmitting cultural traditions (Tummala-Narra, 2004). In support of this assertion, other researchers have also argued that maternal behaviours and roles are learned and are greatly shaped by an individual's cultural environment (Koniak-Griffin et al., 2006).

Rooted in Tummala-Narra's (2004) argument is the contention that biculturalism imparts a significant influence on maternal responsibility and activities. Further research by Maiter and George (2003) provides supporting conclusions. For instance, they examined the parenting approaches of immigrant South Asian mothers residing in Canada. The participants included eighteen mothers with children between the ages of one and 14 who were originally from South Asian countries (including India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Bangladesh). Each participant was qualitatively interviewed in order to acquire a comprehensive understanding of their parenting methods and goals. The researchers revealed that the parenting goals of the mothers and

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transmission of those goals to their children were largely shaped by beliefs, norms, internalized cultural values, and external factors related to their social environment. In addition, despite the fact that many mothers chose to maintain traditional cultural and religious beliefs, they recognized their children's social context and employed a parenting style amenable to this context. This suggests that biculturalism can have an influence on mothering, while also demonstrating that the practices of mothers can be impacted by cultural context. These findings are also congruent with the acculturation model outlined earlier by LaFromboise et al. (1993), which highlights the importance of preserving characteristics of both cultures in order to operate effectively within each distinct culture. It should be noted that generalization should be exercised with caution as the study centered specifically on immigrant mothers.

Bicultural Identity and Maternal Values

In line with its influence on mothering roles, having a bicultural identity has also been found to impact maternal beliefs and values. Koniak-Griffin et al. discuss how the process and values of motherhood can be influenced by instances of cultural displacement, as a mother's self-image is largely shaped by culture of origin (2006). However, it is important to consider that despite the influence of culture, each woman experiences and perceives motherhood in an individual and unique manner (Koniak-Griffin et al., 2006).

In addition to exploring maternal practices, Maiter and George (2003) also examined maternal values. They revealed that culture and religion had a significant influence on the bicultural mothers in their study. For instance, many of the mothers identified with a collectivist culture of origin, which was found to influence their values as well as the subsequent teachings passed on to their children (Maiter & George, 2003). It should be noted that the development of

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bicultural identity as well as dual socialization were also important factors contributing to maternal values (Maiter & George, 2003).

Researchers have also shown that culture and maternal values impact both the mother and her parenting style. Inman, Howard, Beaumont, and Walker (2007) studied the transmission of cultural values in Asian-Indian immigrant parents. They found that the majority of the eight mothers interviewed in their study described their bicultural identity with a cognitive approach, in particular, as a form of thinking. More specifically, the mothers expressed the desire to use values from both cultures (Indian and American) in raising their children (Inman et al., 2007).

Bicultural Identity and Mothering Practices

In accordance with having an influence on maternal role and values, mothering practices have been found to be connected to culture and be impacted by biculturalism. Carranza (2007) argues that a woman's mothering practices are connected to her acculturation, as mothering in a different context can be challenging. She supports the idea that mothering is influenced by a variety of different factors including psychological, social, political, and economic experiences. Carranza's research explored the mothering practices of immigrant Salvadorian mothers. The findings from her study indicate that variables specific to the Salvadorian population, (such as unique cultural practices, the effects of war and migration, as well as settlement issues), greatly impacted the mothering experiences and practices of participants. However, the findings also revealed the more generalizable conclusion that the process of immigration produced a re-conceptualization of the concept and understanding of mother practices for each participant.

Bicultural Identity and Maternal Identity

In regards to the influence of biculturalism on maternal identity, Murad (2005) draws from her personal experience of mothering from a cultural perspective, while also incorporating

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existing research and literature on biculturalism. Murad's experience of mothering within a culturally diverse and inter-faith family presented many considerations and challenges for her (2005). She recounts that one of her largest difficulties as a mother was her feeling of lacking control of her mothering while shifting cultural contexts. As an example, she provides a personal account of feeling incapable of adequately guiding and supporting her daughter through the new cultural experience of being in a different country. Murad discusses how she conceptualized her own bicultural experience as a deliberate and intended re-identification of the categories of identification, rather than a shift within such categories (Murad, 2005). This conceptualization differs from the bicultural models suggested by LaFromboise et al. (1993). Murad's model proposes that cultures or 'categories' are able to be reconceptualised by the individual to meet their specific needs, and supports the contention that biculturalism is not universally standardized (Benet-Martinez et al., 2002). From the perspective of forming a maternal identity, Murad's conceptualization has similarities to the process of matroreform.

Biculturalism and Mothering: Moving Toward Matroreform

The research and literature outlined substantiates the contention that bicultural identity can have a significant influence on mothering. Bicultural identity, if recognized and internalized, can be seen as an important factor contributing to the maternal values, role, practices, and identity for a great number of women. However, understanding biculturalism is only one half of the equation. In order to truly comprehend bicultural identity in conjunction with matroreform, the maternal literature needs to be considered as well.

Part 2: Maternal Literature

Feminist Theory

Much of the maternal scholarship available stems from a feminist theoretical standpoint. As such, understanding the principles and goals of feminism is important when considering what has been written on mothering. Feminism stems from a variety of different origins and encompasses a wide array of ideologies (Creswell, 2007; Kohli & Burbules, 2012). Essentially, within contemporary feminism and feminist research, the characteristics of equality, collaboration, social justice, and non-exploitive relationships are valued (Creswell, 2007; Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan, 2012).

Although it can be argued that elements of the feminist perspective have been present throughout history, researchers and scholars often consider it in three distinct waves (Kohli & Burbules, 2012; Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan, 2012). The first wave of feminism arose in the mid-nineteenth century in Britain and the United States during the period of the women's suffrage movement (Kohli & Burbules, 2012). This movement was supported by the Enlightenment philosophy of the times which urged for a move toward equality (Kohli & Burbules, 2012). The predominant focus of this first wave of feminism was on equal voting rights, acknowledgment of women as citizens, and female rights to property (Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan, 2012). The first wave came to an end in the 1920s, with the achievement of woman's right to vote (Kohli & Burbules, 2012). The second wave of feminism is generally agreed to have originated in the 1960s during a shift toward a focus on the personal and political experiences of women (Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan, 2012). This wave was characterized by a reaction to attitudes and policies pertaining to women, as well as the issue of gender in professional, political, and relational domains (Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-

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Flanagan, 2012). The second wave of feminism gave way to the third wave in the 1980s, characterized by a more inclusive and open feminist perspective encompassing areas outside of women's issues (Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan, 2012). Generally, this wave of feminism brings both genders together, working against oppression and toward social justice (Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan, 2012). It is within this third wave that contemporary writings on mothering have been shaped; and the concept of matroreform was born.

Emerging from the third wave of feminism, maternal scholar Andrea O'Reilly argues that mothers require a "theory and politic of feminism for mothers", which she refers to as *matrocentric feminism* (2012, p. 16). She stresses that matrocentric feminism, meant to be considered alongside traditional feminist thought, emphasizes the idea that a mother needs to be viewed in a distinct category of her own, and simply cannot be lumped under the general category of 'woman'. Matrocentric feminism captures the idea that many of the economic, political, psychological, cultural, and social struggles that mothers face are specific to the role and identity of being a mother, and that this "mother-centred feminism is urgently needed" to empower mothers (O'Reilly, 2012, p. 16).

Maternal Literature and Bicultural Considerations

Early feminist and maternal scholars examined motherhood as an institution, looking at how social restrictions and definitions impacted mothers and at how women have been constrained by the socially mandated conception of mothering as a whole (Green, 2004). Although these matters are still largely explored within the maternal literature, more recent writings have started to examine maternal issues and concerns related to ethnicity, class, sexuality, and ability (Green, 2004). Many of these concerns fit well with the considerations presented earlier regarding the impact of bicultural identity on mothering.

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In her qualitative study based on the accounts of 35 White, middle-classed women from the London area, Byrne (2006) discusses how mothering includes practices that are affected by gender, race, and class. Byrne argues that gender, race, and class are key considerations at the heart of motherhood, with White middle-classed women signifying the standard of womanhood for many. In line with Byrne's argument, other sources contend that this perspective leads to the marginalization of other mothers (APA, 2007; Murad, 2005). In accordance with this point, it has been argued that class, employment status, and race result in the division and labelling of mothers (Koniak-Griffin, 2006). Therefore, it is necessary for those working with a maternal population to recognize how culture and placement within a culture can influence motherhood. Conversely, it is also important to understand that being a member of a dominant culture does not eliminate a person from the possibility of bias, as one can have experiences of privilege and oppression simultaneously (APA, 2007).

This individualistic viewpoint contrasts with the perspective of some scholars who believe in widespread principles that govern mothering (Keller, 2010, Ruddick, 1995). A prominent example is Ruddick (1995), who famously discussed how some features of mothering can be viewed as universal, appearing as constant throughout humanity. However, it should be noted that she later acknowledged that factors attributed to ethnic groups, class, and sex-gender systems are important factors to consider within this perspective (Ruddick, 2007). In a sense, Ruddick was not alone in her view of a collective maternal experience. It could be argued that the concept of maternal 'role' implies a sense of universality as well.

Maternal Role

The exploration of the maternal role is spread throughout the literature. For example, as outlined in the earlier discussion on biculturalism, the maternal role as influenced by culture has

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been studied by many researchers. There has also been a substantial amount written on the acquisition of the role of a mother in and of itself. Questions around the maternal role and the process of attaining that role have been present for many years. For instance, Rubin (1967) explored the attainment of the maternal role, conceptualizing it through a progression of stages. These included “mimicry, role-play, fantasy, introjection, projection-rejection, and identity” (Mercer, 2004, p. 226; Rubin, 1967). Since Rubin’s publication, other scholars have studied maternal role attainment (MRA) and evaluated this proposed maternal theory. An example of this is Mercer’s (2004) article on becoming a mother (BAM). Mercer critically evaluates MRA and presents evidence for replacing the concept of MRA with the more inclusive term of BAM. She argues that the experience of BAM entails an ever evolving growth, development, and creation of a new self-definition. The impetus behind this proposed change is to capture the “transformation and continuing growth of the mother identity” (Mercer, 2004, p. 231). Therefore, the notion of changing identity associated with motherhood has been identified as requiring larger and more inclusive parameters.

Maternal Thinking and Motherwork

Some scholars have chosen to explore the role and work of mothers from a different perspective. For example, Ruddick has written extensively on the intellectual aspect of motherhood (O’Reilly, 2009; Ruddick, 1995), and Ruddick’s work is considered by some to be some of the most significant work in maternal scholarship (O’Reilly, 2009). In her book *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace*, Ruddick discusses the nature of motherwork and outlines a common account of maternal practice pertinent to every mother (Keller, 2010; O’Reilly, 2009; Ruddick, 1995). Essentially, Ruddick argued that mothers engage in intellectual activities while fulfilling the demands of motherwork, and defines this process as maternal

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thinking (O'Reilly, 2009; Ruddick 1995). In essence, maternal thinking encompasses the demand that mothers engage in the intellectual activity of thinking and thoughtfulness (Ruddick, 1995). In addition to maternal thinking, Ruddick argued that growth, preservation, and acceptability of a child are other considerations that direct maternal practice (2007).

It should be noted that Ruddick's writing was criticized for "harbouring a latent ethnocentrism" in its perceived inability to acknowledge ethnic and racial differences in its universal outlook (Keller, 2010, p. 834). As an alternative, Ruddick's critics suggested a more specific and less universal account of mothering (Keller, 2010). For example, in response to the critiques of Ruddick's writing, Keller (2010) proposed adopting modified universalism as a middle ground between the two contrasting positions. She argues that although some goals can be considered universal, they can also be interpreted in culturally specific ways (Keller, 2010). As a compromise, Keller suggests an intermediate viewpoint, acknowledging that different maternal strategies can be used through proposing a "modified universalism" that better accommodates a wider range of mothers (Keller, 2010, p. 850).

Despite the criticisms of Ruddick's ideas, her writings remain influential works within maternal scholarship (O'Reilly, 2009). Perhaps this is due to the contention that she is considered to be the first to focus on the experience of *mothering*, rather than the institution of *motherhood* (O'Reilly, 2009). It is this focus on the experience of mothering, as well as the intellectual process of redefining motherhood that captures part of the essence of matroreform.

Matroreform

As described earlier, the term matroreform refers to the intentional and deliberate development of a new method of mothering that differs from one's motherline (Wong-Wylie, 2006, 2010). Essentially, it is a psychological, spiritual, cognitive, and emotional reformation of

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mothering at both an intra- and interpersonal level (Wong-Wylie, 2006, 2010). In her early writings, Wong-Wylie illustrates the course of matroreform as an internal process characterized by an emotional, psychological, and spiritual metamorphosis of mothering (Wong-Wylie, 2006; Wong 2012a). Through developing the concept of matroreform, Wong-Wylie has incorporated her own lived experiences, as well key writings and ideas from the larger body of feminist literature into the innovative notion. One significant idea that lends impetus to the conceptualization and development of matroreform is the term matrophobia, as described by Rich (1976).

In her revolutionary book *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*, Rich describes matrophobia as “a womanly splitting of the self, in the desire to become purged once and for all of our mothers’ bondage, to become individuated and free” (Rich, 1976, p. 194). Essentially, this describes the desire and need for a daughter to be distinct from her mother due to the sacrificial role of her mother and the sense of seeing her mother denounce her needs. Although this idea partially captures the essence of matroreform, it does not provide a comprehensive basis from which one can understand the term. Wong (2012a) describes the inadequacy of the term matrophobia in providing a complete delineation of the concept of matroreform. She outlines the term ‘phobia’ as problematic, due to the inaccurate connotation it provides. Instead of a phobia (which denotes unrealistic fears), Wong argues that the process of matroreform involves a conscious reformation of the meaning and practice of motherhood (Wong-Wylie, 2006; Wong, 2012a). In essence, it is a “transformative maternal practice” (Wong, 2012a, p. 95).

Yet, not much is known about this transformative practice. What has been written within the maternal and feminist literature provides only a partial and incomplete picture of the ideas

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behind matroreform. In a sense, it seems as if the process of shifting motherhood practices has been eluded to by scholars, however, has only been a conceptualization until recently. As a result, there remains a dearth of literature and research explaining the phenomenon in its entirety. What has been written on the topic outlines the conception of matroreform and provides depth and understanding to its meaning. For example, maternal feminist scholar Fiona Green acknowledges the reforming process behind matroreform, and recognises matroreform as an important theme in her study of feminist motherlines (2008). In spite of this, there is currently no published research into the lived experiences of women who have undergone the process of matroreform.

Concluding Remarks

There are many openings within the literature calling for additional information on matroreform. Because matroreform is such a wide-encompassing topic, it can be argued that studying it from a narrower perspective may be preferable, as this would provide specific information on the subject. One such perspective is through the lens of biculturalism. As outlined earlier, bicultural identity has been found to impact the values and practices of mothers. Exploring biculturalism in conjunction with matroreform can provide rich information regarding the cultural influences on transforming one's mothering template, concept, and practice. It has been noted that there is a need for more research in the area of biculturalism (LaFromboise, 1993; Maiter & George, 2003; Pedrotti et al., 2008). Similarly, research on matroreform is also lacking. Therefore, exploring the experience of matroreform for bicultural mothers will greatly contribute to an existing gap within the literature.

Chapter 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to gain insight into the experiences of mothers who self-identify as being bicultural and engage in matroreform. This research provides clear insight into the question: *What are the experiences of matroreform for mothers who self-identify as being bicultural?* Through gathering and analyzing the narratives and stories of five bicultural mothers who have identified as having engaged in matroreform, knowledge was obtained regarding the influence of bicultural identity on the desire and the process of engaging in this transformative maternal practice. The information gained from this study will contribute to the literature on matroreform, and provide further insight into the phenomenon.

Theoretical Framework

I adopt a social constructivist theoretical standpoint stemming from a feminist approach. In line with social constructivism, context and culture are highlighted as important in understanding the participants' stories, along with a focus on narration and internal processes (Lal, Suto, & Ungar, 2012). Creswell (2007) describes feminism as drawing from a variety of origins, with feminist researchers valuing and adopting collaboration, transformation, and giving voice to non-dominant individuals and populations. Considering a feminist lens, narrative inquiry resonates well with feminist ideology, as it is suited toward bringing to light various underlying themes within lived stories (Creswell, 2007), while emphasizing the collaborative process between the researcher and participant (Moen, 2006).

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry is a qualitative methodology with roots in anthropology, history, literature, psychology, sociology, and linguistics (Chase, 2011; Polkinghorne, 2007), and has

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been extensively used in a variety of disciplines as an approach aimed at understanding the accounts and experiences of people (Breakwell, 2006). Essentially, narrative inquiry is ideal for explorations stemming from personal stories and lived experiences of individuals (Chase, 2011; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2007). Therefore, in its simplest form, stories (or narratives) can be considered an entry point to an individual's personal account of their experiences ranging from the past to the present (Breakwell, 2006; Polkinghorne, 2007).

A narrative can be understood from a variety of different perspectives, including contextually, emotionally, historically, culturally, and biographically (Rapport, 2004). As a result, narrative approaches allow for exploration and understanding of a participant's story from many different points of inquiry. Common themes within narrative inquiry include focusing on the relationship between a participant's story and his or her life, understanding lived experiences, understanding and including the researcher's personal story, and focusing on the environment (Chase, 2011).

Despite the particular theme or approach taken within a narrative inquiry, it is widely supported that narrative research upholds three main underpinnings (Moen, 2006): (1) humans conceptualize their experiences into narratives, (2) stories emerge from the values, past, and present experiences of participants, and (3) that "multivoicedness" occurs within narratives (p. 60). Taking these foundational assumptions into account, one can begin the collaborative process of exploring a research question through the lived experiences of individuals.

Chapter 4: METHODS

Participants

Inclusion criteria for participants comprised of mothers who self-identified as being bicultural while also engaging in the process of matroreform. Mothers who did not self-identify as bicultural or did not have at least one child over one year of age were excluded from the study. The participants comprised of five mothers, as data saturation was reached within the narratives provided by these women. Of the five mothers interviewed, one identified as Italian-Canadian, one as Indo-Canadian, and three as Asian-Canadian. The participants ranged in age from 31 to 41 years old, and represented heterosexual, married, common-law, and divorced women. Each mother had either two or three children, all under the age of 18.

Collecting Stories

Researchers utilizing a narrative framework are able to choose from several different approaches of story gathering, depending on the nature of their inquiry. Typically, narrative inquirists can select from a variety of sources including diaries, letters, autobiographies, field notes, observations, conversations, interviews (Bold, 2012; Chase, 2011), and video recordings (Moen, 2006). Despite the diverse methods in which participants can express their stories, narrative researchers often incorporate interviews as a primary source of their data (Bold, 2012). In part, this is due to the rich narratives brought forth by asking questions about specific events or topics, and through engaging with the participant (Bold, 2012). However, it is important to note that although interviews tend to be a popular choice, the type of data source utilized by a researcher is often chosen in careful consideration of the research question, subject matter, and participant characteristics (Bold, 2012; Breakwell, 2006).

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Within narrative inquiry, interviews are often categorized into three types: (1) structured interviews, characterized by a fixed set of questions that are pre-determined by the interviewer, (2) semi-structured interviews, which utilize interview questions as a loose guide, rather than fixed entities, and (3) unstructured interviews, distinguished by a lack of structure and agenda (Bold, 2012). In many cases, interviews tend to be semi-structured, as this helps guide the process while also allowing the participant to voice their story (Bold, 2012).

Understanding of the participant's stories occurred through individual, one-on-one interviews following a semi-structured protocol. The use of a semi-structured interview protocol fits within existing narrative methods, and helped guide the narrative process while also allowing the participant to provide their own input and direction. Each interview lasted approximately one-and-a-half to two hours, and occurred either in person or via telephone. In-person interviews were conducted in a semi-private, confidential, and safe location of the participant's choice.

At the beginning of the interview, participants were asked to fill out an informed consent form (Appendix B) in accordance with the Athabasca University Research Ethics Board, and demographic form (Appendix D). During the interview, participants were requested to provide detailed accounts of their experiences growing up in their family, memories of being mothered, personal journey with matroreform, comment on how their bicultural identity informed their decision to engage in matroreform, and discuss how biculturalism has affected their experience with matroreform. All interviews were audio-recorded with a digital voice recorder and informal researcher notes and memos were taken throughout the interviews. The audio-recordings were transcribed after the interviews and de-identified during transcription to preserve the anonymity of the women who shared their stories and experiences. De-identification consisted of assigning each participant a pseudonym, removing all information about specific locations, and omitting

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names and identifying information about individuals (such as children and family members) mentioned in the stories.

Analytic Approach

This research has been analyzed through a social constructivist perspective, with the aim of understanding the participants and their stories within the context of motherhood and their unique bicultural identities. In line with this constructivist perspective, consideration was given to how the participants' stories were narrated and the internal processes that each mother shared (Lal et al., 2012). Therefore, attention to the inter-subjective and inner experiences of the participants was of great importance throughout the analysis process (Lal et al., 2012).

Data Analysis

Narrative inquiry does not employ a specific process or method for data analysis (Bold, 2012). As a result, researchers have the flexibility to choose analysis methods that best fit their research approach and the nature of their data, and can draw from a wide range of data collection methods that meet their needs (Bold, 2012).

Thematic analysis is a popular method that is commonly used for finding, evaluating, and reporting patterns that are found within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In essence, this method focuses on commonalities and differences between and within a participant group (Breakwell, 2006). This serves to help the researcher explain key findings from the participants' stories (Bold, 2012). Thematic analysis is widely used and often considered a "foundational method of qualitative analysis" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78). Despite its popularity, this approach lacks specific guidelines on content and execution (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In spite of this, narrative researchers have found this approach to be quite effective if the research question is clear, and if interview questions guide participants toward addressing the research inquiry (Bold, 2012).

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I analyzed the narratives gathered from this research predominantly through utilizing thematic analysis, with the end goal of gaining an understanding of the individual's experience and the impact of their bicultural identity on matroreform. Themes were extracted from the narratives using both computerized and manual coding. The typed transcripts were entered into NVivo 10, and analyzed with the purpose of defining broad themes. Broad themes, for example the impact of love and emotion on matroreform and the implications of biculturalism on matroreform were also reviewed by manually reading and reviewing the transcripts. I distilled themes into more specific ideas through repeated review of the transcripts until no new major themes were present and data saturation was reached. Analysis focused on the similarities and differences between ideas and themes related to bicultural identity and matroreform. The emerging themes were then related to the existing body of knowledge on the subjects of bicultural identity, mothering, and matroreform.

Rigor

According to Creswell (2007), rigor serves the purpose of assessing the quality of a study. Creswell (2007) outlines several factors that contribute to rigor in qualitative research. These include employing stringent data collection procedures, using a recognized qualitative research approach, adopting a rigorous methodology, analysis through multiple levels of abstraction, careful and detailed report writing, and taking into account ethical considerations. Each of these considerations has been evaluated and applied for this study. Rigor for data methodology, data collection, and analysis have been covered in previous sections. Ethical considerations for the study are outlined below.

Ethical Considerations

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Ethical approval was sought for secondary data analysis from Athabasca University AU Research Ethics Board (see Appendix F). Secondary data analysis was based on the narratives collected from the study entitled “An Evolution of Mothering: Understanding the Experience of Matroreform” on which I worked as a research assistant. The study is currently underway by principle investigator Dr. Gina Wong at Athabasca University. Dr. Wong strives to gain an indepth understanding into the process and experience of matroreform in mothers. Essentially, the aim of her study is to explore the experiences of mothers who intentionally chose to mother in a fundamentally different way than how they were mothered. The narratives collected from Dr. Wong’s study overlapped with my research, as it also provided detailed information on how bicultural identity affects the process of matroreform. Overall, 11 interviews were conducted for Dr. Wong’s study, and five of those were relevant to the present study.

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010), common ethical concerns within research include protection from harm, informed consent, and privacy. Each of these concerns was addressed within the study, and explained to participants.

Before providing consent for the study, I read all participants an informed consent form (see Appendix B) outlining the nature of the research, anticipated risks and benefits, confidentiality, and use of data. Participants were informed that their participation is voluntary, and that they are able to rescind their participation at any time during the interview, or after the interview until data analysis has started. Participants were provided the opportunity to ask questions or request clarification prior to providing data for the study. Participants were also provided a Counselling Resource sheet (see Appendix E) with low-cost or no-cost counselling options, in the event that participation in the study resulted in distressed emotions or memories.

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In order to preserve confidentiality, participant names were not included in the transcripts and were replaced with a pseudonym of the participant's choice. If a pseudonym was not chosen by the participant, then one was assigned by the principal investigator. All physical materials and data from the study are kept in a secure and locked cabinet accessible only by the principal investigator and supervisor. All efforts have been made to protect the anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality of participants. The principal investigator is the only individual who will have access to the participant's personal information (including their name and demographic information), interview data, and transcripts. All physical materials with identifying information are kept in a secure and locked location. Electronic data is stored in a password protected, secure database. Destruction of all collected data associated with this study will occur in five years.

Chapter 5: STORIES

My Story

In early 2011 I met with my thesis supervisor in a café in Edmonton to discuss the possibilities for my thesis topic. Going into the meeting, I knew that I wanted to focus my research on biculturalism. It was a subject I had written extensively on throughout my masters program, and something I could relate to on a personal level. During our discussion, my supervisor mentioned that she was in the initial stages of conducting research on matroreform, a concept she had developed based on ideas and concepts present in the maternal literature and her own experiences and conceptualizations. As she explained this new theory to me, I felt a sense of anticipation akin to that ‘ah ha’ moment we’ve all had at some point -the feeling that presents itself when something we’ve felt or experienced for a while suddenly has a name. For me, the phenomenon and process of matroreform embodied something I had been silently contemplating for years. At the time of our meeting, I wasn’t a mother. I’m still not a mother. However, whenever I think about the possibility of having children in the future, the underpinnings of matroreform form a large part of those thoughts. It was my newfound attraction to the concept of matroreform, and my existing interest in biculturalism, that formed the impetus of my thesis research and my journey into learning more about this topic.

My memories of being mothered are not positive. Throughout the two years that I have been completing my thesis and contemplating matroreform, I’ve reflected quite a bit on my own experiences. Trying to remember the positive aspects of my experience is like trying to locate individual threads in a tapestry. I know that they are present; however, it’s hard to distinguish those memories from all of the other, less positive memories that seem to stand out and

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overpower my recollections. In a similar fashion to many of the mothers who shared their stories with me during the completion of this research, my impressions and memories of my childhood are filled with feelings of not having the love and support from my mother that I needed at the time. I've always wondered if that had to do with the environment and culture that my mother was raised in, her own personality and choices, or a combination of both these factors.

My mother was born and raised in Singapore, although she comes from an East Indian background. She moved to Canada with my father (who comes from the same cultural background) in her mid-twenties, and had my sister and I in Canada shortly after. I don't think that my mother gave her own cultural identity much thought during her time in Singapore or in Canada. While I was growing up, the impression I had was that she identified as being Singaporean, and that was that. I strongly suspect this is still the case. The values she raised my sister and I with, especially those concerning education and discipline, hardly adopted Canadian influences at all. As a child born and raised in Canada, I've always felt as if I was being pulled between both of my cultural identities. For me, this made forming a cultural identity very difficult. I spent the majority of my childhood in a small, northern Albertan town, with almost all of my peers adopting and embracing 'Canadian' norms and culture. I found that it was hard to find a comfortable middle ground when there was no room for either culture outside its context. As I've grown older I've often reflected on this. My reflections have grown more frequent and in-depth throughout my completion of this research. Now, I find myself wondering 'when I have children, what am I going to teach them about *my* culture?' and 'how will my own process of matroreform inform these teachings?'. I still do not have clear answers to those questions and won't until I have children. However, the process of completing this research and listening to the lived experiences of the five women who shared their stories with me has brought

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me closer to figuring out how my culture fits with my personal concept of mothering, as I've heard elements of my own experience echo in their words.

A Brief Introduction: The lived Stories of Five Bicultural Women

Five women shared their personal stories about their bicultural identities, their choice to engage in matroreform, and the impact of their bicultural identity on matroreform. Each story provided a personal account of an intimate journey into motherhood, matroreform, and the impact of bicultural identity on each of those factors. This chapter includes a brief introduction to the five women who participated in this study.

Maria

Maria's family has been in Canada for three generations. She can trace her ancestral roots to the United Kingdom and Italy. She aligns closely with her Italian roots, finding it hard to connect to her "British" culture. Her parents separated and divorced when she was seven. She lived with her mother until she was 15 years old, then left home to live on her own. Maria describes her early relationship with her mother as "strained", explaining that her warm, boisterous Italian personality often clashed with her mother's reserved British upbringing.

Maria first became a mother at 22, and is currently the mother of three children. Her decision to engage in matroreform happened "right from the beginning". She describes her choice as "[not] even a conscious thing, I just knew from the beginning that parenting from your heart was the way to do it".

Paula

Paula was born in Eastern Canada, and moved to Alberta when she was nine. She grew up with three sisters, and notes that she was viewed and treated as the "black sheep" of the family by her mother. Paula describes her mother as "[not] the nurturing type at all". She

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explains that some of the friction with her mother may have been facilitated by her strong identification with Canadian culture, which “clashed” with her mother’s identification with Chinese culture.

Paula first became a mother at 28 and has two children. Her own experiences of being mothered have had a huge impact on how she mothers her children. She explains that it is important to let them know that “they matter”, and that “that they don’t have to be a certain way to get my love”.

Rachel

Rachel moved to Canada from Tanzania when she was six years old. The move to Canada resulted in mixed emotions for her family; her mother was “clearly unhappy about it” and took her frustrations out on Rachel. The mothering she remembers in Tanzania was vastly different to what she experienced in Canada. The family’s servants and staff in East Africa provided a lot of assistance to her mother, whereas in Canada, her mother took on those responsibilities alone with some help from Rachel’s older sister. Rachel remembers her family environment as “dysfunctional”, explaining that she endured a lot of emotional and physical abuse from her mother.

Rachel became a mother at 23. She describes her experience as petrifying, explaining that she didn’t feel that she had the “mommy genes”. Her journey into mothering and matroreform was steered by the conscious decision to not do the things her mother did. Rachel is recently divorced, and raises her two children mostly on her own.

Jeanette

Jeanette moved to Canada from the Philippines with her family. She describes her upbringing to be “very typical” of Asian families, with a “very strong focus on academics”. Her

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mother, who she refers to as “basically a tiger mom”, appeared to be heavily influential in most aspects of her parenting, with her father taking a more distant, behind-the-scenes approach. Many of Jeanette’s childhood memories consist of her being told what to do, and not being able to meet the high expectations of her mother. She describes her cultural identity as being “confused” due to the incongruity between her Asian upbringing, and her identification as Canadian.

Jeanette first became a mother when she was 27 years old. She describes a desire to “give my kids a different kind of childhood”. She remembers being provided for materially, but notes a lack in the emotional aspect of her upbringing. One of her goals as a mother is to sustain a balance between providing both emotionally *and* materially for her children.

Corrine

Corrine was born in Vietnam and is of Chinese descent. She left Vietnam with her family when she was very young and came to Canada as a refugee. Corrine was raised predominantly by her maternal and paternal aunts. She recalls that her parents were often away for long periods of time while she was young, resulting in feelings of abandonment for her and her two siblings. The Chinese language became a large part of Corrine’s bicultural identity, as she spoke the language with her aunts while growing up in Canada; a strong thread that connects her Asian roots to her life in Canada.

Corrine became a mother at 29, shortly after getting married. She has consciously made the choice to mother her children in a warm and loving way, a contrast to her own experiences with her mother. She wants her children to “feel loved... to feel cared for... to know about [me] as a human being”. Additionally, she has made the conscious choice to share her culture with her children through the use of language.

Chapter 6: FINDINGS

Emerging Themes of Biculturalism and Matroreform Through the Lived Experiences of Five Women

The tapestry of life continues to be woven. Occasionally a chance arises to repair an older, tattered piece of the weave. Something happens to jolt our awareness back in time to an event that resulted in tears and rips. With new, more mature vision, we see the circumstances in present time and have compassion for the unclear events of the past. While the new experience is being woven into the design, the old rip is simultaneously being repaired. All is well.

–Bessie Senette

Bicultural Identity and Mothering

Each culture is unique. Each individual conceptualizes and incorporates culture into their lives in a distinctive manner. This process is especially true for those who identify as bicultural (Benet-Martinez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002; LaFromboise et al., 1993; Pedrotti, Edwards, & Lopez, 2008). In support of this assertion, the women who shared their stories each conceptualized their bicultural identity in a different way. The importance of their bicultural identity ranged from less significant to profound in their lived experiences. Despite this, cultural identity was a very important factor in the process of matroreform for each woman. For a few, it provided part of the impetus and desire for change in their mothering practices, while for some, it was a neutral force, informing their choices as mothers in equal stride with other personal factors. Others held their bicultural identity in high esteem, something to be cherished and preserved through their mothering practices. Bicultural identity was woven through each story, like a colourful thread in a tapestry. In some tapestries the thread was vibrant, creating a striking presence throughout the fabric, weaving itself seamlessly through the pictures and designs interwoven in other shades of thread. For others the thread's presence was subtle, showing glimmers of color, only apparent to the naked eye upon detailed inspection of the fabric and its

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rich designs. In either case, the thread was a part of the fabric, contributing to its structure and artistic appeal, contributing to the beautiful pictures and designs of each unique work of art; its presence undeniably a part of the greater whole.

Themes

The major findings from this narrative inquiry comprise of four prominent themes: (1) the participants' bicultural identity and conceptualizations of culture had an impact on their mothering, (2) their early experience with culture affected their bicultural identity later in life, (3) not experiencing love and emotion from their mother during childhood was an important consideration in their decision to engage in matroreform, and (4) some mothers were able to reconcile with their mother later in life. Each of these themes is explored in relation to bicultural identity and mothering in the sections below.

1. Conceptualizations of Culture had an Impact on Mothering

Culture is a framework in which we communicate
-Stephen Roberts

A common thread running through each mother's conceptualization of her bicultural identity is the notion of assimilating and integrating parts of her conceptualization of culture into her life and her mothering practices. These conceptualizations closely mirror the assimilation and alternation models as outlined by LaFromboise et al. (1993). Essentially, the mothers interviewed either amalgamated into the culture that was more influential or desirable for them, or maintained an understanding and practice of two separate cultures, adjusting to fit either when appropriate or preferred. Whether a mother chose an assimilation or amalgamation approach was largely dependent on her personal experiences with both of her cultures, both as an adult and as a child. In the excerpts below are personal accounts of each participant's bicultural identity

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and how it relates to their mothering practices. These personal accounts are prefaced with a metaphor relating each participant's bicultural identity to a thread in their unique tapestry.

Paula.

The subtle glimmer of red, woven among the deep colors of the ocean.

When I think of Chinese mothering I think of, you know, emphasizing school, and achievements, and, you know playing a musical instrument and being *top* in every single one of those things. Are those important to me? No. It's important to me that my kids try their best and do well because it does build confidence. But none of that resonates for me in any other way, so I don't really know what Chinese mothering is, to be honest.

–Paula

Paula's early experience with her Chinese culture is conflicted. In reference to her own experience of being mothered, she states "I have no idea what [my mother's] template for mothering was, or what would be sort of the ideal in the Chinese culture, and like really, I don't have a sense of that, of what that would be". As a result, her style of mothering is more closely aligned with Canadian norms, as she identified that she "assimilate[s] with the Canadian culture". This, as well as her own thoughts, learning, and beliefs on what practices are best for her children tie into her current mothering practices.

Maria.

Fiery orange threads, accenting each robust picture.

I've tried to raise my children with all three cultures, you know what I mean? Ah, my kids are learning to speak Italian. Ah, we try to take part in a lot of Scottish festivities.

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And, um, and ultimately we are Canadian ‘cause we live in Canada and my children were born here, I was born here....so I try to have a balance between all of that. –Maria

Despite her strong identification with her Italian heritage and having her personal bicultural identity being shaped by the Italian and the Canadian cultures, Maria finds it important to raise her children with information and understanding about all three cultures that they are connected to: Italian, Canadian, and British/Scottish. She aims to raise her children in a “multicultural sense”.

However, Maria notes that she consciously incorporates many elements from her Italian heritage into her mothering. She explains that: “everything I do has been heavily influenced by my cultural background...Italians embrace emotion in a way that a lot of cultures don’t”. Incorporating the emotion and love that she associates with her Italian heritage into her mothering practice is of extreme importance to her.

Rachel.

A light grey thread, providing a foundation to the work. Readily present throughout the piece, but blended into the background.

Rachel identifies with her bicultural identity, stating “I am more than one culture. I was born in Tanzania but I’m of Indian background and you know, um, and I lived in Canada so I identify with all of it”. Her cultural identity plays an important role in informing some of her mothering practices, but it does not weigh heavily on all of her choices as a mother. Specifically, cultural traditions, religious and spiritual practices, and food choices from her Indian heritage are of great importance to her. She identifies with these traditional and tangible aspects of her culture and takes great care in sharing these elements with her two children, staple components

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of their day-to-day lives. Additionally, she feels that her own personal sense of culture makes her more accepting of other cultures, and more of a “worldly” mother.

Jeanette.

A beautiful shade of blue, present among greens, purples and yellow. Carefully interwoven into the tapestry in equal measure to the other colors.

...My own cultural identity is really confused as well...I've never really identified [as] Asian after moving to Canada and um seeing that not, like the non-Asian friends that I had did not live in very strict households and things like that. So I wanted to be um, Canadian. I wanted to be western. But at the same time, now that I'm a mom I want to teach my kids about um the Philippines and our Asian background... I haven't identified with Pilipino culture in so long, I'm not really sure how to do it. –Jeanette

Jeanette describes her struggle with her bicultural identity. It is something that she has reconceptualised many times throughout her youth, as an adult, and as a mother. She describes her Asian identity as coming full-circle in a way. When asked about whether she identifies herself as bicultural, she stated “I do now more so than I did, ...having kids changed that...So it's kind of an evolving thing for me”. Although she is currently “taking a lot more from North American culture and from western mothering than [from] Asian”, she shares that becoming a mother has resulted in her desire to reconnect to her Asian culture so she can pass elements of it along to her children.

Corrine.

The richness of deep red, providing the foundational color of the tapestry. The color that pulls all the others together.

I'm very much bicultural because I'm actually quite traditional....Every Vietnamese word I know, they know. Every Mandarin word I know, I try to teach them. So I hope

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they would you know, be multi-lingual and also have a strong bicultural identity as well.

–Corrine

For Corrine, preserving and maintaining her Chinese and Vietnamese heritage and passing elements from those cultures down to her children are pivotal considerations in her mothering practice. Corrine approaches this through incorporating culture through the use of language, as language represents an important link to her Asian roots. She believes that “once this language... dissipates, the culture kind of, kind of just becomes diluted”; something she wants to avoid for her children.

2. The Impact of Culture Experienced in Childhood

A bicultural upbringing is a rich but imperfect thing
-Jhumpa Lahiri

It was apparent through the stories shared that each mother’s experience with culture during her childhood had a significant impact on how she integrated culture into her adult life and into her mothering practices. Positive and negative experiences with one’s culture in childhood had an influence on cultural integration in relation to matroreform and mothering. Positive experiences with culture were later passed down to children, whereas negative experiences with culture were intentionally transformed or excluded from the mothering practice through the process of matroreform.

Paula.

Paula’s childhood experience with her Chinese heritage had many negative aspects to it. Paula describes a salient memory, illustrating the difference between her mother’s notion of culture and her own:

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And I think particularly in my teenager years it was tough because I was, you know, into Canadian culture, and doing all the things the Canadian girls were interested in, I think that really felt offensive to [my mother] and so we clashed in many ways over those kinds of things and I mean that's just kind of the way our relationship has been even to this day, so, it's never, you know never moved from, from those experiences. -Paula

Paula goes on to explain how in later years, she developed more of an understanding on how her conceptualization of culture has impacted her relationship with her mother:

...[T]hey thought that I was telling them through my behaviour that Chinese was down here, and being Canadian was [up] here, and I was going to be Canadian and I was choosing to be Canadian, and that I was ashamed of them. Like I think this was how, I think there was a sense of inferiority in the first place for them, and then seeing me you know, assimilate to the Canadian culture made them feel even more of that shame. -Paula

Paula's identification with Canadian culture contributed to straining her relationship with her mother. This identification resulted in feelings of shame and rejection from her mother, who strongly identified with a more traditional Chinese culture.

Paula's current mothering practices focus on ensuring that her children experience the emotional support that she did not experience as a child. Paula mentions that her ability to mother her children differently is largely based on her experiences as a child "ironically, I think the strength comes from how hard it was for me, I do the opposite".

Jeanette.

Similarly to Paula, Jeanette also experienced conflicting experiences with culture while she was being raised. She describes her upbringing to be "very typical of an Asian family". The

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majority of her early experience with her Filipino culture embodied structure and discipline.

Jeanette explains:

...It was um, a very typical, you know for, for what I have heard for Asian families that there's a very strong focus on the academics and that um we couldn't really just go out with friends and have fun, that wasn't allowed... there was not really a lot of opportunities to express ourselves ...and our individuality and even just our thoughts and feelings. –Jeanette

Jeanette mentions that her own experiences of being mothered from a cultural perspective have largely impacted her current mothering practices. She reflects that as a result of her experiences she “tried not to be too strict with them... in the beginning I went too far the other way, so now I'm trying to find a happy medium”. For Jeannette, this embodies incorporating some of the discipline that characterized her upbringing, however, also incorporating Canadian norms. Her goal is to ensure that her children are aware that “they're loved and that it's ok if there are things that they can't do, or things that they can't do perfectly... I've tried to show them that um no matter what they do they're still loved”.

Rachel.

As an immigrant who spent only part of her childhood in Canada, Rachel's early experiences with culture are mixed. Her upbringing in Tanzania and her experiences in Canada were vastly different. She recounts that in Tanzania, her mother had a lot of help from servants, and therefore practiced a different type of mothering that encompassed having “had a lot more quality time to spend with us”. This changed when her family moved to Canada. Her mother became overwhelmed with the increased responsibilities and took her frustrations out on Rachel in the form of physical and verbal abuse.

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Rachel recognizes the differences in parenting styles in North America versus what is often the case in countries such as Tanzania. She states:

North Americans are very multicultural. So you have, you know, tons of cultures with different parenting styles. So it's really difficult to narrow it down to say ok, well you know, I parent my children in this sense. Um, I think the one thing that we do have in North American parenting as opposed to, you know, what we don't get in third world countries, um, is having our children have the ability to make their own choices. Even at a young age. You know, giving them options, um, and kind of negotiating. –Rachel

Rachel incorporates this belief of culture into her parenting. She aims to raise her children in a more open fashion than what she experienced as a child. She describes this through her explanation of her parenting style:

I'm definitely more open to more suggestions and ideas and kind of a, a really broader way of parenting. It's just not rigid and with one thought, you know my children have choice of, you know, do they want to be religious, do they want to be spiritual, do they want to eat this kind of food... [they're] basically sharing the same experiences as I am because of that multiculturalism. –Rachel

Corrine.

Corrine's early experiences with culture are vastly different than the other participants. At a young age, her parents left Corrine and her siblings with her maternal and paternal aunts while they traveled. For Corrine, it was a very traumatic experience. She explains "when I woke up...they were gone and even though my parents were not the best parents, they never talked to us, never really told us that they loved us, I still needed parents at the time". Corrine was raised in a collectivistic manner by her extended family. She describes the parenting style as

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authoritarian. Corrine's mother later returned to live with her in her late childhood. However, Corrine still maintained a lot of maternal support from her maternal and paternal aunts.

Many of Corrine's memories concerning culture center around the collectivistic values that many traditional Asian families adhere to. Additionally, communicating in the Chinese language was an important part of her upbringing, as that was the "dominant" language for her as a child. Currently, Corrine incorporates language into her mothering practices as she believes that "to pass on a language...is really important for many reasons, it's cognitively beneficial and also culturally...my mom can speak Chinese with my children". Through the use of language, Corrine is able to share an important part of her heritage with her children.

Maria.

Maria has memories from growing up with both an Italian and British heritage. Her parents divorced when she was young, so she was predominantly parented by her mother. She describes her experience being mothered from a British perspective:

I feel that my mother parented from a place of what she thought was the right thing to do based on a British background telling her that kids should be seen and not heard and they should be highly disciplined and they need to have, you know, regular bedtimes and tons of structure and all these rules because if they don't have structure and rules and blah blah they're going to turn out to be hellious, right? I mean that's I think where she was parenting from because that's how she was raised and that was her mentality about parenting. Did she parent from her heart? No. –Maria

Maria contrasts this with her experience and perception with the Italian culture, which she describes as "passionate". She mentions that she currently is greatly affected by her Italian culture because it "influenced me as well because I have always found Italians to be incredibly

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loving, loving generous people... I love the way Italians deal with emotion. And so that, too, affected me”.

Maria’s current parenting style gleans a lot from her early experiences with her Italian side of her family. She states:

And that’s where I really clearly made a decision to be incredibly different from her right from the beginning. And, and a lot of it has to do with the fact that I am so much like my father who did parent from his heart. Who was a ...loving, caring...person. Passionate person. Passionate about life which was not what my mother was. -Maria

3. Emotion and Love

The emotion that can break your heart is sometimes the very one that heals it...
-Nicholas Sparks

Woven through each story, despite how different each one is from the other, is the feeling of not being loved or nurtured as a child by one’s mother. Regardless of words spoken, or those that were never uttered; the confusion, pain, and feelings of emptiness and longing to feel a mother’s love echoed powerfully through each narrative.

She never really showed emotion, she never once told me or my brother that she um loved us. So she never expressed emotion, she never told us how she felt unless she was mad, and she was mad a lot... So the only time she expressed how she felt and how she felt about us was when she was mad, and she was mad a lot... like there was never really any nurturing or comforting. -Jeanette

...I am the kind of person, I, I’m an emotional touchy-feely person, right. I was raised by an ice cube. So, she didn’t hug me, she didn’t say “I love you” and there was no nurturing, no ah, emotional loving physical support of any kind. She just, she just took

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care of me, you know, she made sure I was fed and I had clothes and school supplies, like that as the extent of her parenting... growing up in that kind of environment I think for any child, what does it do, it completely undermines your self-esteem, you know what I mean? You feel like you're not worth loving or worth being valued when, when the key person in your life sends that message to you every day. –Maria

I always had this feeling that we were a burden to her, like we, I really did, and I still continue to, to feel that sometimes she resented us because without us being alive that she would still be travelling with my dad, she might still be with him. It felt like when we were kids she didn't have anything to do with us you know, like she didn't want to talk to us. –Corrine

She just failed to understand me, constantly over-criticizing, overbearing, ah, extremely, extremely selfish, protective. Didn't really allow me to live my life, you know, it was, it was, everything was according to the way she dictated it. And it was real dictatorship in the house, um, very unpleasant. –Rachel

My mother wasn't the nurturing type at all, um, she worked a lot but I don't know if that made a difference. Yeah, she wasn't very nurturing [or] kind of caring to the extent of which I would imagine when I think about a mother. –Paula

The process of wanting to engage in matroreform was largely born from not feeling loved from one's mother as a child. It is this feeling that encompasses a sizable and important element

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of matroreform. Each mother shared numerous experiences and identified salient moments in their early lives when their own mothers were not able to provide for them emotionally. The definition of matroreform has been described as “an act, desire, and process of claiming motherhood power...a progressive movement to mothering that attempts to institute new mothering rules and practices apart from one’s motherline” (Wong-Wylie, 2006. p. 739). From the lived stories of these five women, it is apparent that part of these new mothering rules and practices involve incorporating love and emotional availability into their mothering.

Many of the mothers identified with facilitating this process through some of the concepts behind attachment parenting. This form of parenting can be loosely defined as a “child-centric parenting technique in which children’s needs are ideally met on the child’s schedule rather than that of the parent” (Liss & Erchull, 2012, p. 132). Although the process of ‘attachment parenting’ was only named by one mother (Maria), both Jeanette and Corrine described elements of their mothering practices that aligned with attachment parenting.

4. Reconciliation with Mother Later in Life

When you forgive, you in no way change the past - but you sure do change the future
-Bernard Meltzer

Three out of the five mothers described some type of reconciliation with their mother later in life. This occurred after having children, and often as a result of the participant’s conscious choice. Rachel describes her experience as having resulted out of forgiveness. She states

We get along. Because she’s old I think it’s because quite frankly, she knows that, she calls it the evening of her life. Ah, and she’s, I don’t know if she’s ever going to repent

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for what she's done. Ah, but we're friends. I, I, it's mainly because I've forgiven her and I've just cultivated that friendship with her. –Rachel

Rachel's experience mirrors both Jeanette's and Corrine's. Jeanette describes her current relationship with her mother as a "truce" where her mother has "stepped back from criticizing" to take a more supportive role in Jeanette's life as a grandmother to her children. Corrine explains how her mother is currently an important figure in her children's lives "even though we don't talk, she's very, she tries to be a good grandmother, which is something I am shocked about and I'm very grateful for".

In contrast, Paula recounts how the quality of her relationship with her mother has not changed since she was a child: "we clashed in many ways over those kinds of things and I mean that's just kind of the way our relationship has been even to this day, so, it's never, you know never moved from, from those experiences". In fact, Paula shared that if she sees her mother she feels as if she is "right back to being nine years old". In a similar fashion to Paula, Maria's current relationship with her mother also remains strained. Maria describes it as becoming worse due to undisclosed events:

We had so many years of a strained relationship and BS and everything else, about six years ago, basically around the time I got pregnant with my son, we, I mean, I won't go into the details now but events unfolded and we became estranged essentially, so we have not had a relationship for the past five years basically. So she hasn't been in the lives of my two younger children. –Maria

The information collected from the narratives does not draw clear correlations between engaging in the process of matroreform and reconciling with one's mother later in life. In spite of this, slightly more of the mothers in this study have managed to form a more positive and less

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volatile relationship with their mother after becoming mothers themselves and engaging in matroreform. Some mothers described this as a natural process, whereas others stated that this outcome resulted in employing forgiveness and implementing firm boundaries on their end. Considering the catalysts that prompted each mother to engage in matroreform, this later reconciliation with one's mother can be viewed as an unexpected finding.

Chapter 7: DISCUSSION

Summary of the Findings

The findings from this research consist of four major themes that emerged from the participant's stories: (1) bicultural identity and conceptualization of culture impacts mothering practices, (2) early experiences with culture influence the development of bicultural identity in later life, (3) lack of perceived love and emotion from one's mother during childhood is an important impetus behind the process of matroreform, and (4) reconciliation with one's mother later in life is possible for some mothers. The experiences of the mothers interviewed for this research indicate that early experiences with culture of origin had an impact on how the mothers integrated culture and cultural practices into their mothering and into the process of matroreform. Those with positive early experiences of their culture of origin expressed the desire to incorporate those positive elements into their mothering, whereas those with negative early experiences made the conscious decision to leave out those negative cultural elements, or 'edit' them to bring out more positive and desirable elements. These positive and negative early experiences of culture also impacted the development of a bicultural identity for the five mothers in this study. In line with the previous finding, positive experiences resulted in feelings of identification with their culture of origin and negative experiences resulted in the desire to align with Canadian culture and norms. These findings illustrate the impact that one's bicultural identity has on one's personal identity and mothering practices. They also provide some insight into how each mother engaged in the process of matroreform. In addition to cultural influences, a strong impetus for the participants to engage in matroreform was born out of their early experiences of desiring more love and affection from their mothers. This finding was very prominent within each participant's story, and reflected an important consideration in their

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current mothering practices. The fourth finding in this study centres on each participant's reconciliation with their mother later in life. Three of the five mothers who participated in this study noted that they currently have undergone some form of reconciliation with their mother. Furthermore, these three participants indicate that their mother is currently an important part of their children's lives. This finding is surprising, considering much of the motivation for engaging in matroreform stems from one's early experiences with one's mother.

Directions for Future Research

In recent years the amount of literature relating to biculturalism and mothering has increased. New topics under the umbrella of biculturalism continue to be explored and published in the academic arena. Furthermore, research is currently underway on understanding the lived experiences of mothers who have engaged in matroreform. However, despite these contributions to the literature, there are still many opportunities for further learning and understanding concerning biculturalism and matroreform. Additional research in this area can be of benefit to a wide audience of scholars, feminist researchers, counsellors, psychologists, and individuals interested in mothering research.

As discussed in Chapter 2, much of the existing scholarship on mothering centres on motherhood as an institution. Although this has facilitated an understanding of maternal role, motherwork, and the social restrictions influencing motherhood, it does not adequately address the underpinnings of matroreform. Because matroreform is a new area of scholarship with only one completed study and one study currently underway, there are many opportunities and directions for future inquiry. Based on the narratives collected in this study, one such direction could include exploring the cognitive and affective processes influencing mothers who engage in matroreform in their reconciliation with their own mothers later in life. Other directions for

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future research could include exploring the links between approaches to parenting and engaging in matroreform, expanding research on bicultural identity and matroreform to include a more diverse cultural representation, and conducting longitudinal studies exploring at the process and evolution of matroreform through multiple generations. Additionally, there are opportunities for larger-scale, quantitative inquiries into how factors such as demographics, cultural affiliation, birth order, and personality traits impact the process of matroreform.

Within the areas of counselling and psychology, bicultural women can be considered a distinctive population, as discussed in the research presented in Chapter 2. Although counsellors and psychologists working with bicultural women have a breadth of literature available to them, only a very slim percentage of that literature addresses the underpinnings of matroreform, and does so indirectly. It would be useful for counsellors and psychologists working with bicultural women and mothers to have an adequate understanding of the phenomenon and process of matroreform in order to provide them with a better understanding of their clients who are engaging in this process. The notion of matroreform provides hope for women who wonder: “will I be just like my mother?”. Future research on bicultural women engaging in matroreform in regard to counselling and psychological practice could explore which theories and approaches are most helpful when supporting bicultural women who have engaged in matroreform. For example, the use of cognitive behaviour therapy to connect thoughts and behaviours in parenting, and roots to those thoughts and behaviours stemming from one’s early experiences of culture and of being mothered. As the discipline of counselling continues to grow and become more inclusive, I am confident that researchers will begin to place more emphasis on matroreform and expand on the existing literature.

Limitations

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One common concern of narrative inquiries is that information is often gathered from a small number of participants which can result in a skewed or biased perspective (Bold, 2012). This small number of participants is thought to affect the generalizability of the research. However, generalizability is not the goal in narrative inquiry. Essentially, narrative research values the individual voice and lived experiences of participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Smaller sample sizes can be seen as advantageous from this perspective. Indeed, the five participants who shared their narratives for this research expressed similar emotions and experiences captured in four major themes.

Although all participants were given the opportunity to review their transcripts prior to data analysis, time constraints did not allow for the opportunity to crosscheck the findings with participants. Member checks are a common way to ensure confirmability in narrative research (Bold, 2012). Not engaging in this process can be viewed as a limitation for this study.

A further limitation of this study centers on the concept of mother blame, which has been a topic of interest for feminist and maternal scholars (Keogh, 2013). Essentially, this ties into the myth of the “perfect-mother”, the idea that mothers blame themselves and are blamed by society for being less than perfect (Keogh, 2013, p. 20). Some may view the concept of matroreform as feeding into this phenomenon, as it was found in this study that the experiences leading to the desire to engage in matroreform often highlight the negative aspects of one’s experience with one’s own mother. In fact, Wong (2012b) cautions that writings on the topic of matroreform must be “sensitive” to this consideration (p. 90), as discussing and highlighting many of the experiences and emotions central to matroreform could be viewed by some as perpetuating mother blame. However, the intent of this research was not to judge mothers as ‘good’ or ‘bad’. Rather, a neutral stance was adopted, with the desire to learn from the participant’s lived

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experiences in an attempt to bring to light the underpinnings of matroreform in bicultural mothers. In order to present unbiased findings congruent with the narratives of the five participants, the findings of this study were not screened or censored in any way.

Concluding Comments

Through the process of completing this research, I have seen subtle threads of my own experience in the tapestries of the mothers that I have interviewed. I can empathise with Paula's experience of her own cultural identity clashing with that of her mother's. Like Jeanette, I understand the pressures of high expectations of achievement. I can empathise with Corrine's experience of not having a mother when I needed her, and Maria's experience of having almost too much discipline when her mother was around. Finally, like Rachel, after almost thirty years, I can relate to navigating between two cultures to find a middle ground that works for me. I have come to learn that although each of our stories about our personal journey with biculturalism and matroreform form a unique tapestry, there are common threads that run through each of our experiences. It is these threads that connect our stories and enable us to understand and relate to each other that make this research relevant for bicultural women who have been impacted by their experiences of being mothered. It is my hope that continued research in this area will shed more light on the present understanding of biculturalism in relation to matroreform.

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APPENDIX A

Research Study:

Exploring Matroreform in Bicultural Mothers

Wong-Wylie (2006; 2010) describes matroreform as a maternal practice that results in the reconceptualization and transformation maternal practice. Specifically, it is conceptualized as “an act, desire, and process of claiming motherhood power...a progressive movement to mothering that attempts to institute new mothering rules and practices apart from one’s motherline (Wong-Wylie, 2006. p. 739)

Purpose

The purpose of the study is to gain insight into the experiences of mothers who self-identify as being bicultural and engage in matroreform. Through gathering and analyzing qualitative data from the accounts of participating mothers, is hoped that knowledge will be obtained regarding the influence of bicultural identity on the desire and the process of engaging in matroreform. The information gained from this study will contribute to the literature on matroreform, and provide further insight into the phenomenon.

Call for Participants

Currently Seeking Participants who fit the Following Criteria:

- ✓ Mother of at least one child over 1 years old
- ✓ Self-identify as bicultural
- ✓ Have made the decision to choose to mother in a different way than you were mothered
- ✓ Open to discussing those experiences in a 1.5 - 2 hour audio-taped interview conversation for research purposes and completing a demographic information sheet

Contact Information

Research Supervisor

Dr. Gina Wong
Associate Professor
Graduate Centre for Applied Psychology
Athabasca University
Phone: 1-866-442-3089 (Toll Free)
Email: ginaw@athabascau.ca

Primary Researcher

Ms. Anita Saini
Master’s Student
Graduate Centre for Applied Psychology
Athabasca University
Phone: 780-289-3941
Email: anita.saini@gcap.ca

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent Form

Research Study:

Exploring Bicultural Identity in Matroreform

Researcher

Ms. Anita Saini

Masters Student

Graduate Centre for Applied Psychology

Athabasca University

Phone: 780-289-3941

Email: anita.saini@gcap.ca

Supervisor

Dr. Gina Wong

Associate Professor

Graduate Centre for Applied Psychology

Athabasca University

Phone: 1-866-442-3089 (Toll Free)

Email: ginaw@athabascau.ca

Research Purpose:

The purpose of the proposed study is to gain insight into the experiences of mothers who self-identify as being bicultural and engage in matroreform. Through gathering and analyzing qualitative data from the accounts of participating mothers, is hoped that knowledge will be obtained regarding the influence of bicultural identity on the desire and the process of engaging in matroreform. The information gained from this study will contribute to the literature on matroreform, and provide further insight into the phenomenon.

When participating, you will be asked to discuss your views of your bicultural identity, its impact on your decision to engage in matroreform and mothering, and to recount meaningful experiences of matroreform and the process in your mothering experiences and beyond. Subsequently, I will talk with you to further understand your experiences. The information that you share will be used for research purposes and will be presented at professional conferences and through published works. Secondary analysis of the data may occur within 5 years of collecting your experiences. The information that you share will be kept in a locked filing

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cabinet and in password protected documents on computer. All research materials will be destroyed after five years following the completion of this study. Files will be identified by pseudonym. Your full name and any identifying information will not be shared in the final reports.

As a participant you are asked to be involved in three specific ways:

1. To be available for audio-taped interview conversation about 1.5-3 hours in length.
2. To complete a demographic sheet.
3. To share personal experiences with the researcher and engage in discussions about them.

Your involvement as a participant in this study is your choice. This means that you:

- May verify your transcriptions and representations of your experiences at least once to ensure their accuracy.
- May opt out of answering any question(s) and/or discuss any topic(s) during the research interview.
- May stop the conversation at any point in time and can cease consent for participation at any time during the data gathering phase.
- If you chose to no longer partake in the study, the researcher will collaborate with you to determine what (if any) of the data gathered can be used for the research.
- Can withdraw from the study at any time either before or after consent of participation. The information that you have shared with the researcher prior to withdrawal will be used only with your permission. If you decline this permission, the researcher will destroy all written material and erase all audio-recordings of conversations and shred all verbatim transcripts on the same day.

The researcher may use anonymous excerpts when presenting the research findings. Accounts in the study will not include your name; rather, you will be identified by a pseudonym (fictitious name), which you may choose or will be assigned at the researcher's discretion.

As a research participant you will have an opportunity to ask any questions concerning the study. These questions will be answered to your satisfaction prior to beginning and throughout your involvement in the study.

There are no known risks to mothers participating in this study. Some participants may experience resurfacing of family issues or other emotional issues while engaging in the research interview talking about their mothering experiences. The researcher will provide a list of counselling resources to you at the outset of the study. Although researchers are trained counsellors, in no way will they take the role of counsellor at any time while in the

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role of researcher. Notwithstanding, the researcher will use facilitative and supportive approaches to provide care and sensitivity to the participant when necessary.

There is no financial (or other) compensation for participation in this study. However, it is hoped that you will find it worthwhile to share personal stories and to discuss experiences of matroreform. Your participation may help to further understand the lived experience of matroreform.

I _____ (print name) certify that I have read (or have been read) and fully understand this consent form. I agree to participate in this research study and have a copy of this signed form for my own records.

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher Signature (Witness)

Date

APPENDIX C

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Research Study:

Exploring Bicultural Identity in Matroreform

1. Please tell me about your current family.

- Who are the members of your current family?
- Are the father(s) of your child/ren currently a part of their lives?
- Cultural/religious affiliations and/or practices?

2. Please tell me about your family when you were growing up.

- Who was in your family?
- Describe your experiences growing up in your family?
- What was your relationship like with your siblings/parents?
- What was your relationship with your mother?
- What culture did/does your family identify with?
- How would you describe your bicultural influences/experiences while growing up?
- How/in what ways did you define your bicultural identity while growing up?

3. Describe your mother (general impressions, relationship, memories that stand out)

- What things do you remember that stand out about your experiences of being mothered (positive/negative/neutral)?
- What do you know about your own mother's experience of being mothered by her mother?
- Did your mother incorporate elements of culture/biculturalism into her mothering (if so, how)?
- What was your relationship like with your mother while you were growing up?
- What is your current relationship like with your mother?
- What does your mother think about the way you mother your child/ren?
- How does your current cultural identity fit with your mother's?
- In what ways are you different/similar to you own mother?

EXPLORING MATROREFORM IN BICULTURAL MOTHERS

4. In what way(s) has your experience of being mothered impacted you becoming a mother?
 - In what way(s) has your bicultural identity influenced your decision to become a mother?
 - Is there anything that you like about yourself or the experience of choosing to mother in a different way than you were mothered?
 - Is there anything that you regret or do not like about yourself or the experience of choosing to mother in a different way than you were mothered?
5. What key aspects of your bicultural identity have shaped the way in which you mother?
6. Have any social relations at the community level, institutions, and/or social organizations impacted or changed your experience of matroreform (influenced how you think or practice mothering) in good and/or bad ways?
7. Have any cultural groups/affiliations/practices impacted or changed your experience of matroreform?
8. Do you have any additional comments to add regarding your experience with biculturalism and matroreform?

EXPLORING MATROREFORM IN BICULTURAL MOTHERS

APPENDIX D

Demographic Information Sheet

Research Study:

Exploring Matroreform in Bicultural Mothers

General Information

Pseudonym_____

Age____ Gender____

Sexual Orientation_____

Religious Affiliation/Preferences_____

Cultural Identity(s)_____

Partner Status (e.g., number of years married, separated, divorced, single-mothering)_____

Ethnic Background (e.g., Chinese Canadian)_____

Place of Birth:_____

Participant's Mother's Educational Background: _____

Participant Educational Background: _____

Age when you first became a mother:_____

Age and gender of children:_____

Household Income: Below \$50,000____ Between \$50,000 and \$100,000____ \$100,00 and up____

Special Instructions/Requests (e.g., not phoning after certain hours):

APPENDIX E

Counselling Resources Sheet

Research Study:

Exploring Bicultural Identity in Matroreform

Postpartum Depression Awareness Website:

<http://www.ppda.ca/>

The Support Network, Distress Line of Edmonton:

<http://www.thesupportnetwork.com.ws026.alentus.com/crisispreventionprograms/distressline.php>

If you are in Distress call (780) 482-HELP (4357)

Counselling Support:

- (1) **Dr. Tamara Hanoski**, Registered Psychologist
9690 182 Street Edmonton, Alberta T5T 6M1
780.604.8704
www.drthanoski.com

Dr. Tamara Hanoski is a registered psychologist (and mother of two young children) who has been in the counselling field for over 13 years. She provides counselling to individuals, couples, and families, as well as play therapy for children. As a Mother herself Dr. Hanoski has a special interest in Postpartum Adjustment. She also treats depression, anxiety, self-esteem, past abuse, grief, anger, parenting, relationship issues, and other personal concerns.

- (2) **Stepping Stones Counselling**, Cara Linzmayer, Registered Socialworker
#107, 5107 - 50th street Stony Plain
780.643.7224
caral@ualberta.ca

- (3) **The Family Centre**, #20, 9912-106 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 1C5
780.423.2831 reception; 780.424.5580 first time appointments
info@the-family-centre.com; www.the-family-centre.com
Contact: Cathy Harlan, Therapist and former coordinator of the Postpartum Depression Support Program at the Family Centre. Individual, couple & family therapy for all types of issues including PPD. Sliding fee scale available.

- (4) **Cornerstone Counselling**, #302, 10140 - 117 street Edmonton
780.482.6215; office@cornerstonecounselling.com; www.cornerstonecounselling.com

APPENDIX F

Ethics Approval



MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 28, 2013

TO: Anita Saini

COPY: Dr. Gina Wong (Supervisor)
Janice Green, Secretary, Athabasca University Research Ethics Board
Dr. Simon Nuttgens, Chair, Athabasca University Research Ethics Board

FROM: Dr. Simon Nuttgens, Chair, GCAP Ethics Review Committee

SUBJECT: **Ethics Proposal #GCAP-13-01: "Exploring Matroreform in Bicultural Mothers"**

The Graduate Centre for Applied Psychology (GCAP) Research Ethics Review Committee, acting under authority of the Athabasca University Research Ethics Board to provide a delegated process of review for minimal risk student researcher projects, has reviewed the above-noted proposal and supporting documentation.

I am pleased to advise that this project has been awarded **APPROVAL TO PROCEED**. You may begin your research immediately; **HOWEVER, prior to contacting participants** please provide, **for file purposes only** (further review not required), a revised application showing the following changes and additional information. Please use the attached "compiled" version of your application to make revisions, **highlight new wording in yellow** and use **striketrough with yellow highlight** to show deletions.

1. **APPLICATION FORM: B2-3** Please specify that physical participant information will be kept in a locked file cabinet.
2. **CONSENT FORM:**
 - Since the data files are identified by pseudonym, participants should select their own pseudonym. An identified space on the consent form should be provided for this. [This eliminates the need for the researcher to select the pseudonym and ensures that the participant is OK with the pseudonym selected.]
 - Add wording to the consent form to state that the pseudonym will be used when comments are attributed to the participant in the thesis, articles, or conference presentations. [This also improves readability (instead of "Participant 1 said...." the author can write "Jane said...")]
3. **Please provide a new e-mail from your research supervisor** indicating her knowledge and support for the revised application.

This approval of your application will be reported to the Athabasca University Research Ethics Board (REB) at their next monthly meeting. The REB retains the right to request further information, or to revoke the approval, at any time.

EXPLORING MATROREFORM IN BICULTURAL MOTHERS

The approval for the study “as presented” is valid for a period of twelve (12) months from the date of this memo. If required, an extension must be sought in writing prior to the expiry of the existing approval by submitting an Interim Ethics Progress Report for. **A Final Ethics Progress Report form is to be submitted when the research project is completed.** The reporting forms can be found online at <http://www.athabascau.ca/research/ethics/>.

As implementation of the proposal progresses, if you need to make any significant changes or modifications, **after discussing and obtaining approval of the changes with your research supervisor,** please forward this information immediately to the FB Research Ethics Review Committee via rebsec@athabascau.ca for further review.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact rebsec@athabascau.ca