

**THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ALIENATION OF FIRST AND SECOND  
GENERATION IMMIGRANT YOUTHS: INTERROGATING MAINSTREAM  
BULLYING DISCOURSE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Keywords: Bullying, Immigrant Youths, Media, Advertisements, Aggression.

Bullying is a multidirectional and a multileveled social problem, which affects every member of a community, thus it requires a diverse and multidisciplinary method to be addressed. Even though immigrant youths are as much prone to this phenomenon, if not more, as their native-born peers, the advertisements, media and news outlets have portrayed youth bullying as a white subject. The socio-cultural differences, past experiences of political, social and domestic violence, and the difficulties of integration and accommodation with the unfamiliar lifestyle of the new country heavily affect the vulnerability of the ignored young immigrant populations. If the bullying experts, bullying prevention activists and the justice system brackets their prejudices and look at every incident involving youth's violent carefully and analytically, regardless of the victims' socio-cultural backgrounds and the colour of their skin, it might uncover many other fatal bullying cases. In this thesis, I would like to have a closer look at three students' fatal cases: Kiranjit Nijjar, Hamid Aminzada, and Zaid Youssef and Michael Menjivar, as examples of this faulty view on the characteristics of the bully and the bullied.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to Kiranjit Nijjar, Hamid Aminzada, Zaid Youssef, Michael Menjivar, and all the other immigrant youths whose lives were cut short due to peer violence and bullying.

May you rest in power!

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This thesis offers a critical view on the concept of bullying and its standpoints regarding the minority youths, specifically Iranian immigrant youths. Here, I offer my readers a clear explanation in regards to what bullying is, both etymologically and scientifically, and who is considered an immigrant. Also, I question the ethical standpoint that anti-bullying organizations and activists apply to address this phenomenon among the Canadian youths, who are not parts of mainstream populations. Through the application of the content analysis on anti-bullying advertisements, novels and multimedia, I provide evidence regarding the absence of the immigrant youths in the anti-bullying movements. The first step toward the understanding this research, and analyzing this topic, is to know what bullying is.

Since English is my second language and Canada proudly introduces itself as a multicultural country, this thesis communicates with its audiences through a simple, humble and in some cases erroneous English. The English as a Second Language and the inaccessibility to this dominant language has kept some immigrants quiet, while it has forced some others to try harder to be heard.

### **What is bullying?**

#### **Etymology of the Word Bully**

Based on *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (Onions, 1966), the definition of the word *bully* has undergone a complex transformation within the past few centuries. The origin of the word *bully* has been traced to the early years of 16th century, and since then *bully* and its definition underwent a complete cycle of modification, which began from a congenial meaning



and ended in an unfavourable characterization. The word *bully* assumed a positive connotation in the earlier years; originally *bully* meant “sweetheart, beloved, comrade, fine fellow, as well as first rate” (Onions, 1966, p. 125; Hayes, 2012; Howard, 2003). Even *Pistol* in *Henry V* (Shakespeare, 1998) expresses his gratitude and dedication toward the king through the use of word *bully*:

The king’s a bawcock, and a heart of gold,  
A lad of life, an imp of fame,  
Of parents good, of fist most valiant.  
I kiss his dirty shoe, and from heartstring  
I love the lovely bully. (P. 74-75)

Likewise, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (Sykes, 1979) defines *bully* as “very good and first rate,” and provides us with the example of the phrase “bully for you/him” which means “bravo” (p. 130). Not only was *bully* “used as a term of endearment or reproach”, but it also referred to “tinned beef and boiled beef”; in some account this term became the symbol of tinned rations of beef, which was provided to people who lived during “Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1” (Onions, 1966, p.125). At this point, the word *bully* represented a heartwarming and comforting expression, either it was considered as a definition for the rationed food, which satisfied people’s physical hunger, or indicated a flattering remark, which nourished their emotional needs.

Although the word *bully* was initiated with a favourable demeanor, this attitude was overturned as it started to be associated with prostitution and outlawed activities. *Bully*, at this point, was referred to people who protected and supported prostitutes from the legal and moral prosecutions. These protectors, who are referred to as pimps according to today’s definition, supported the prostitutes from the hostility of the clientele, the society and the law. During the early era, prostitutes were perceived exceedingly unfavourably and faced extreme punishments

in case they were caught. Many prostitutes “were burnt alive, were scourged and had their ears cropped”; therefore, they sought the protection of people to act on their behalf, deal with the prospective clients and keep their identities secured (Sanger, 1972, p. 40). The course of hiring bullies as protectors, however, was short-lived, and soon the law authorities and the moral entrepreneurs became aware of the bullies’ presence. At this time, while the bullies - pimps - became the safeguard for the prostitutes, the bully himself, attracted social and governmental attentions. The bully was not a Good Samaritan anymore, since his own life became jeopardized. Consequently, the laws changed and included pimps and bullies in the penalties which were originally arranged for the prostitutes (ibid).

With the criminalization of the bully/pimp position, and since the pimps faced a similar punishment to the prostitutes, the bully’s action changed from a good natured protective role into an equally outlawed and punishable role. At this point, “bully” lost the benevolent and inspiring significance and, instead, assumed a negative connotation (Drury, 1969; Hayes, 2012; Sanger, 1972). With the social transformation of the status of bully and pimp throughout the history, his characteristics, as well, transformed into defining one of the most notorious enterprises, and this became the beginning of a more negative undertone assigned to the word *bully* (Hayes, 2012). Subsequently, people started using *bully* to describe any tyrannical action which a more powerful person performed to a person with a lesser social, cultural, economic and/or psychological power to coerce the weaker individual to comply (ibid). At this point, *bully* exhibited every characteristic of the new definition of the word, in addition to the inevitable sexual exploitation aspect.

### **Bullying in the current era**

The latest definition of *bully*, and the characteristics associated to the bully and its victims, however, were established in 1982, by a Norwegian psychologist called Olweus, as a subsequent reaction to three Northern Norwegian adolescent boys who committed suicide due to bullying ([http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/olweus\\_history.page](http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/olweus_history.page)). Olweus defines the *bully* based on three specific characteristics: “asymmetrical power relation”, the intention of inflicting (or striving to inflict) undesirable actions, and repetition and continuity in the occurrence of the negative actions (ibid, p. 98). Based on this definition, bully represents an individual who purposefully, repeatedly and over a period of time, victimizes and coerces others with less strength - physically and/or socially - committing undesirable activities in order to satisfy her/his own benefits and enjoyments (ibid). These undesirable actions may be “direct”, like physically assault or verbally aggression toward others, or “indirect”, such as shunning or excluding their peers (Kassirer, 2004).

After extensive effort, subsequent to the Olweus’ revolutionary attempt to prevent and control bullying, European countries have succeeded in keeping bullying under control. Although bullying incidents decreased in European countries in the past three decades, it has become one of the most serious and influencing factors in cases of youth suicide among North American youths in the past decade. Some of these cases attracted considerable media attention due to the preventable nature of such incidents, parental unfamiliarity to the signs of this phenomenon and the lack of awareness in addressing the bullying effectively, at the earlier stages. Among these tragic incidents were: the 2012 case of a physical and cyber bullying of Amanda Todd, the emotional and psychological bullying of Kiranjit Nijjar in 2011, and the sexual assault and cyberbullying of Novascotian Rehtaeh Parsons in 2013. Two of these cases of

bullying were halted by the bullied youth committing suicide (Gallman & Gast, 2013; Reeves, 2011; Gillis, 2013; Nguyen & Tepper, 2014).

In the first case, many young individuals physically, cyber- and sexually bullied 15 year-old Amanda Todd (Nguyen & Tepper, 2014). Second, the 17 year-old Rehtaeh Parsons hanged herself two years after two teenage boys bullied her sexually in 2011; Parsons was 17 when she committed suicide (Gallman & Gast, 2013; Patten, 2013). These two cases received a great deal of attention, due to their deadly consequences, but there are many more cases of physical, emotional, psychological, cyber and ethnic bullying which are left unattended, and in many cases even unnoticed (Tutton, 2014; Friesen, 2010; Sidhu, 2008; Marlow, 2007; Teotonio, 2010). All these cases of bullying affect individual youths' lives daily, whether they are the bully, bullied or bystanders. Bullying is a communication problem, i.e. providing youths with techniques which would assist them to connect with others not only saves the lives of individuals, but it also influences their mental wellbeing through teaching them how to unite and grow.

The most recent definition of *bully* has been persisting for the past three decades. In spite of the respect and admiration that bullying researchers have for Olweus' definition of bullying, this definition necessitates some critical modifications to satisfy the world's continuous changes attributable to globalization and migration. Olweus' definition of *bully* originally was established to address the Western European population's needs, the Norwegian youths in specific, and disregarded other populations. Considering Olweus' status as the founder and father of anti-bullying programs and theories, many researchers have taken away the immigrants' right to be represented and be beneficiaries of this improving research field. Especially in the North American hierarchy of power, youth populations get bullied by adults so that their "minds and bodies...have been 'territorialized', and inextricably tied to the institutional trends of the

political economy” (Visano, 2015 February 25). Anger and terror travel down through the layers of this hierarchy.

Immigrant youth, however, exist at the lowest social strata, due to “the bureaucratization of public education and the expectation that students should conform and assimilate to the dominant culture” (Patterson, Hale & Stessman, 2007, p. 5). Regrettably, many minority youths, and immigrant youths especially, are rarely incorporated either in the extensive research on the bullying prevention, or in bullying awareness advertisements. These youths define their own interaction with bullying phenomenon as discrimination and prejudices, even though they both have the same symptoms and treatments. In the case of facing bullying, immigrant youths do not communicate with their aggressor, which is the most effective solution for the bullying problem; they rather appeal to identity adjustments, acculturation and assimilation to address their bullying dilemma (Lê-Scherban, Albrecht, Osypuk, Sánchez & Diez Roux, 2014; Gupta, Leong & Valentine, 2013).

In a multicultural society, such as Canada, there is a crucial requirement to alter the concept of *bully* in order to include the non-European population. This reconceptualization is fundamental to the progress of the research on bullying and bullying-awareness since numerous bullying activists and researchers either have not taken the immigrants and minority populations into account, or simply have overlooked the multicultural aspect of the North American society through listing the minority population outside the limits of their research (Burns, Maycock, Cross, & Brown, 2008; Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003; Cappadocia, Weiss, & Pepler, 2011; Carlerby, Viitasara, Knutsson, & Gadin, 2012; Berlan, Corliss, Field, Goodman, & Austin, 2010; Espelage, Basile, & Hamburger, 2012; Bailey, 2013; Limber, 2011).

## *The global effects of changing hero to bully*

The word *bully*, which once meant sweetheart and dear, has gone through a complete change within 600 years. Nowadays, *bullying*, even as a word, triggers a range of negative mental images, from a crying child in the school bathroom (Hirsch, 2011) to the lifeless body of a teenage girl who committed suicide (Gallman & Gast, 2013). Regardless of the constant attempts of the researchers in this field, such as Olweus, to formulate a definition to explain all the characteristics and types of bullying, this process is still far from covering this phenomenon's different forms and the diversity of the affected population. One of the main questions which stayed unanswered is in regard to who is the responsible and the guilty party in a case of bullying?

Even though the parents, teachers and researchers, who deal with bullying cases in their everyday lives, tend to blame a variety of factors, from the youths' psychological disorder to the past history of violence (Pepler, Connolly, Craig, & Jiang, 2011), they tend to overlook the influences of the mundane competition that the education system (Nocentini, Menesini & Salmivalli, 2013) and the consumer culture force upon youth (Reed, Fazel, Jones, Panter-Brick & Stein, 2012; Fitchett & Caruana, 2014). With poor emotional wellbeing and the constant pressure on individuals toward success and overachieving, distressed individuals inflict their pent-up negative emotion on others (Bibou-Nakou, Tsiantis, Assimopoulos, Chatzilambou & Giannakopoulou, 2012). Considering that bullying is an outcome of the demanding competitive social, cultural and educational systems, according to Daoist principles<sup>1</sup>, the individual is required to either cease competing (Chung, 1989), or pursue the principle of inaction to respond

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<sup>1</sup> I chose Daoism view point on the subject to competition and heroism in comparison to the goal-oriented and competitive Western culture.

to this phenomenon. Based on the second option, the bullied individual should walk away from the bullying scene, without any response to the action of bullying; this would discontinue the chain reaction of the bullying; based on this relation the bully ceases to exist without its victim (Goulding, 2014).

### **The thin line between the hero and the bully**

The idea of a bully as a universally consonantly defined concept and the concomitant ideological standards and values, which characterize a hero, usually change based on the cultural values of any place (Den Hartog, House, Hanges, Ruiz-Quintanilla, & Dorfman, 1999). Despite this expected cultural specific heroising, the globally permeation of Western values has established an array of expected characteristics for “hero” which promotes individualism, competition and bifurcation (ibid). Due to the pressure exerted youth population, based on Western ideology, on the one hand, and the “violence and neglect” forced upon youth by their parents, community and peers, on the other hand, many young individuals who could not reach society’s high standards of success seek a life of crime and delinquency (Twemlow & Sacco, 1998, p. 505). In Western culture, the hero achieves his status through fighting with mythical creatures and cruel enemies (Fitzgerald, 1998). The Western heroine/hero should either “win” a battle between good and evil, “or die trying” (Harvey, Heames, Richey & Leonard, 2006, p. 4).

Dawson (1994) describes the Western hero as a “soldier hero,” that is “one of the most durable and powerful forms of idealized masculinity within Western Cultural traditions since the time of the ancient Greek” (p. 1). Western culture views the hero as a fearless, triumphant and masculine figure, who kills and destroys any object on his way to success. In Western ideology, the hero will conquer the difficulties through anticipation, and fight employing all his power. The

Western hero/heroine waits for opportunities to apply his/her victorious move. As Boon (2005) explains, this “mythical means of assuring survival” has established a new definitive perception of success for Western culture (p.301).

It is significant to mention that Western ideology has an absolutely favourable view on its hero as a “soldier-saint” (Dawson, 1994, p. 82). Based on unwritten social norms, the Western hero is tolerated to commit any inhumane action, break any rule, and/or apply any shortcut to achieve the ultimate aspiration; nevertheless, the hero preserves his saintly position. This lack of moral boundaries has ushered in “individualistic” paths for youths in Western society in regard to achieving their goals. The concept of *soldier-saint* has opened a welcoming door to bullying and disregarding others’ wellbeing. Interestingly, based on this concept, any action, even bullying, is considered acceptable on the condition that it transforms an individual to a successful hero.

This creation of power control, which Dawson (ibid) labels as masculinity, has created a *heroic* competition in many social and community-based interactions. Based on this active struggle to achieve absolute heroism, the Western mindset rejects the Daoist inaction, and advocates that youth students apply their entire power to overcome any obstacles on their path to success. Among these obstacles are their competitors. In addition to the academic competition, sport driven competitions are the leading sources of bullying in many schools. Although coaches and school personnel deny the existence of competition-oriented bullying, the violent and competitive actions, which dominate the sport-oriented youth activities, influence the lives of many youth individuals (Hoerl, 2002).



### *Daoist ideology on hero*

Daoism, on the other hand, not only does not promote the struggle to win, but it also encourages inaction in order to obtain triumph. Zhuang Zi perceives the overwhelming competition among people as being like a “shadow-hater” trying to overrun his own shadow (Chung, 1989, p. 118). Zhuang Zi believes that “it’s actually quite simple to get rid of shadows: just take a rest in a shade and the shadow will disappear” (ibid, p. 118). This saying eradicates the Western glorification of competitiveness; Zhuang Zi believes that the ultimate winner is the one who waits and meditates, rather than strives to win. Based on *The Sayings of Zhuang Zi* (ibid), one of the fundamental contributory factors preceding bullying among youth is the interjected feeling of anger and exhaustion initiated by their parents and teachers’ continuous demands for overcoming the competition on a daily basis. Even in some research projects, the youth turned their pent-up anger toward their therapists (Quadrio, 1982) or even their soccer coaches (Vansteenkiste, Mouratidis & Lens, 2010). Therefore, with the continuous and increasing growth of competition among youth, there is a strong possibility of further escalating rates in bullying episodes and gravity among adolescents at school.

### **Theoretical background**

This research is mainly conducted based on hermeneutics, that is, is the study of the interpretations. Through the application of hermeneutics, I will study the interpretations of the creators of the advertisements as well as the broadcasted and communicated multimedia. Furthermore, I will analyze hermeneutically the messages and effects which these multimedia induce in their audiences, and circumstantially, and in a longer process, within the social setting

and communities. The hermeneutic circle explains that “we cannot understand the part without understanding the whole, and not the whole without the parts” (Goulding, 2015 January 8).

Based on this hermeneutic circle, the bullying-prevention organizations and multimedia would be able to alter the rising bullying phenomenon, only if they recognize and value every aspect and part of the equation affected by this phenomenon. Therefore, to control the number of bullying incidents, youth workers and bullying activists not only need to recognize different types of bullying, but also should identify and represent every youth population that is affected by bullying.

## **Methodology**

This research applies qualitative visual content analysis as well as qualitative textual content analysis. Qualitative visual context analysis is the hermeneutic study of three anti-bullying/bullying awareness picture advertisements from three bullying prevention organizations and campaigns, and examines the interpretation of those images. For this method, I study each advertisement image/picture carefully and analyse each feature and element presented in the picture. Similarly, the qualitative textual analysis focuses on bullying related newspaper articles and hermeneutically analyzes the applied words, i.e. the words describing circumstances in the famous bullying cases. Hermeneutically, the interpretation of words used in the articles lets the reader observe the undertone in the author’s message and the interpretation of the incident, which they communicate to their readers.

I will apply these methodologies to demonstrate how society and multimedia share a deeply rooted prejudicial point of view, especially when it comes to bullying and its attendant victims. All these social resources of knowledge ignore the diverse ethno-cultural and socio-

economic background of the North American population. I will scrutinize the absence/ misrepresentation of minority youth populations, youths with darker complexion in particular, in the bullying advertisement images and posters. Advertisements picture their messages carefully in a favourable light to attract their audiences and communicate with their consumers; the bullying awareness advertisements follow the same principles. “Perceived similarity,” between the advertisements’ model and the consuming audiences “engenders a greater level of interpersonal attraction, understanding, and trust” (Lawrence, Fournier & Brunel, 2013, p.295; Chang, 2014).

This research draws attention to the absence of immigrant youth in anti-bullying campaigns and their advertisements as well as this population’s representation in the news. It shows how the (lack of) representation of this population affects self-perception and their respective position regarding to the subject of bullying and where they would stand in the occurrence of bullying incidents. This thesis applies the visual content analysis to decode the anti-bullying advertisements, which were designed and distributed by bullying prevention organizations, and to discuss the absence of immigrants and racialized *others* in the outreaching pictures of this field. Through this decoding, I will focus on the similarities and differences of the portrayal of the bully, the bullied and the absence of the minorities.

The lack of representation categorises and relegates immigrant youths, especially those with visible diverse ethno-racial and ethno-cultural background, such as Indian youths, to positions of second-class citizens. As bell hooks (2004) describes it, *Where we stand: Class matters*. I will decode a series of posters, designed and created by ethno-culturally diverse youth in the effort of presenting themselves. These posters, although distributed through social media and not related to any organization, demonstrate the ethno-racial youth’s concerns in regard to

their lack of representation in the field of anti-bullying. In this set of advertisements, immigrant youth represented themselves as victims of bullying due to their cultural differences.

Next, I will employ textual content analysis to decode ten newspaper articles focusing on bullying related mortalities, such as those of Amanda Todd (1996-2012), Rehtaeh Parsons (1995-2013), Kiran Nijjar and Akash Wadhwa (1994-2011). Todd's and Parson's cases, which dealt with acute instances of bullying, have drawn national and international attention. These two cases, which each exemplified different types of bullying, including sexual and cyber bullying, and ended with a fatality, was investigated carefully and led to actions of law. These two instances became innovative promotions for anti-bullying activism, which forced Canada's criminal justice system to recognize bullying as a serious crime and to designate criminal charges for the bullying offenders (Gallman & Gast, 2013; Tutton, 2014; Boutilier, 2014; Patten, 2013). Following these cases, many researchers and organizations recognized bullying as a life threatening issue and prioritized this subject both financially and experimentally. Consequently, Todd and Parsons became heroic symbols for the anti-bullying activists, researchers and organizations (ibid).

On the other hand, the anti-bullying activists and the responsible law officials ignored Nijjar's case and, even though it displayed the psychological and physical characteristics of a bullying case, announced it as murder/suicide. Even the news outlets did not examine other possibilities and declared the case an exotic crime of passion (DiManno, 2011). I will argue that Nijjar's murder needs to be studied carefully as a bullying case, just like her North American counterparts, which may lead to recognizing the existence of bullying among immigrant youth. For the purpose of this thesis, I will focus on the similarities and differences of the representations of these incidents based on the nationality of the victims. These articles are

carefully selected from The Toronto Star, since this national paper identifies itself as a liberal-minded news outlet compared to other papers. Yet, the biased representation of the fatal cases of bullying is omnipresent. I will view these cases side-by-side and I will compare the representations of the native Canadian-born victims, Todd and Parsons, to their immigrant counterpart, Nijjar. Furthermore, I will review the recent cases of fatal accidents, involving immigrant youths, during the school hours (Gallant & Ballingall, 2014, September 23).

### **Literature review**

The *immigrant youth* population contains hierarchical layers, with each layer containing a similar group of individuals, based on personal characteristics, ethno-cultural background, age at the time of migration and the number of years residing in North America. Based on Ruiz-de-Velasco, Fix and Clewell (2000), the “most overlooked and underserved” subsection of this multilayered population are the youth who immigrated to North America in their teen years and did not receive sufficient attention academically in their previous years of education. These youths usually suffer from the lack of ample grasp on the dominant culture’s language, i.e. English in North America (ibid). Due to their lack of English proficiency, teachers categorize this population of immigrant youth under the subgroup of difficult students. Teachers neither have sufficient training to teach these students, nor believe it as their “job” to spend any extra time on these students, regardless of the amount of struggle these immigrant students have to engage in to further their education (ibid, p. 69).

Visano (2005) clarifies this lack of regard and apathetic attitude towards the minority youth population as the “unofficial curriculum,” which although is not recorded in any teaching handbook or guideline, is established through the “teachers’ attitudes, behaviour and relationship

with students in the classroom” (p.326). The teachers’ favourable attitude toward certain students and their applications of reinforcements and punishments affect the students’ success and their educational progress (ibid). In addition, the teachers’ “attitudes, values and beliefs” affect their relationship with their students; so that the relationships between teachers and their students directly influence the students’ academic outcome (ibid). Not only do the immigrant youth students not get any additional supervision or guidance, these students are easy targets for those teachers who equally bully their students. These teachers prey on the students who are more vulnerable and lack physical and/or social abilities to protect themselves. Immigrant youths with insufficient English to report these teachers and unfamiliarity about their host country’s culture become ideal candidates for these bullying teachers (McEvoy, 2005).

In these bullying cases, although teachers usually do not enforce any physical acts of aggression, they apply different forms of abuse, such as humiliation, threat, and inducing fear and psychological distress, in order to reinforce their position of power and authority (ibid). In rare occasions, when the bullied students report the bullying teachers, the school officials take it lightly and/or blame the student who has been subjected to the bullying. In the latter situation, the school authorities would hold the bullied student responsible for a range of liabilities, from discrediting the complaints by considering the bullied student to be paranoid, to accusing the student of making a false allegation to cover her/his failure in academic progress (ibid). When a teacher bullies her/his students, those students who are targets of bullying or are witnesses to this action lose their sense of trust in authorities, disbelieve in social equality, and acquire helplessness and dread. McEvoy (2005) reconfirms that bullying teachers choose their victims based on the differences of their characteristics and/or physical appearances with the dominant culture’s social norm.

Visano (2005) notes that “it is only by encountering *the real life experiences* of youth that one can fully realize the insidious ways in which hegemony operates to control thinking” (p. 6). DeKeseredy, Muzzatti and Donnermeyer (2014) validate Visano’s (2005) point and explain that media has a great role in creation of this hegemonic *real life*. While DeKeseredy and colleagues explain how the media villainize specific strata of people, Heidensohn and Silvestri (2012) explain that media not only dictate to youth how to stereotype people based on their stratifications, but also control youths’ lifestyle and viewpoints. The media’s hegemonic influence on youth alters every aspect of youth’s life in accordance to the media’s dictated stereotypes, from their expected gender roles to their “beliefs” and “behaviors” (Collins, Martino & Shaw, 2011, p. 294).

Many adolescents follow their gender roles’ stereotypes closely, since these are advertised and brought upon them via multi-media, cultural demands and peer pressure (Wolfe, Crooks, Chiodo & Jaffe, 2009). Even though in some cases gender roles are perceived to smoothen the transition from childhood to adolescence, those who do not act according to their stereotypes would be targets of gender-based bullying (ibid). In some cases, youth, both male and female, commit to their stereotyped gender-role to the point of degrading women (Collins, 2011). In some extreme cases, the stereotypes become the promoters of violence by endorsing masculinity and encouraging sexist and homophobic attitudes (Wolfe et al., 2009). Boys, especially, strive to act in extremely masculine ways to avoid feminine labels, based on what advertised stereotypes frown upon (ibid).

Connolly, Nocentini, Menesini, Pepler, Craig, and Williams (2010) note that their Canadian youth male-subjects reported more power imbalance in their dating relationships than their female counterparts. Moreover, even though gender and its power imbalance is an

important predicting factor in dating violence among youth, female adolescents are less likely to report dating violence in their relationship in comparison to their male counterparts (ibid).

Furthermore, the adolescents with childhood experiences of violence, insecurity and constant fear of punishment might protect themselves by the safety of gender role conformity (Wolfe et al., 2009). In particular, on the one hand, boys who have learnt their gender roles from their abusive fathers become violent to their partners, and on the other hand, girls who are familiar with domestic abuse tolerate the maltreatment, since they accept it based on their learnt gender role (ibid).

Pepler, Connolly, Craig and Jiang (2011) note that promoting healthy relationships to girls who behave aggressively, in childhood (as early as possible), decreases the chance of aggressive behaviour in the girls' young adulthood; this is the most effective method toward future healthy relationships for these girls. Pepler and colleagues (ibid) focus on the issue of girls' aggressive behaviours and the positive correlation existing between the development of aggressive behaviours in girls and the unhealthy relationships these girls would have in their youth. Based on this correlation, promoting healthy relationships in childhood decreases the chance of aggressive behaviours in young girls. Pepler, Craig, Yuile, and Connolly (2004) conclude that bullying is a relationship and communication problem, and therefore, by promoting healthy relationships for girls, childcare providers, educators and researchers facilitate healthy development in children and youth. The healthy development allows children with social resources to build healthy relationships in future (Pepler et al, 2011).

Visano (2005) explains that a youth worker should consider young individuals who exhibit violent action, bullying included, more critically than only based on their actions' surface value. The aggression and power control existing and circulating among youth can be the sign of



repressed anger and emotional conflict caused by the adults in higher positions in the hierarchy (ibid). Youths usually take a lower hierarchical position in relation to the adults they are in contact with, but also they stand in various hierarchical positions in the relation to other youths. Youths, who are repressed by many external forces and the higher levels of the social hierarchy, project and enforce their anger and their frustrations to the individuals locating in the next level in the order of hierarchy (ibid). In the hierarchy of power, minority characteristics of any kind are considered as liabilities and diminish the individual's rank in this hierarchy. In the North American social setting immigrant status, language deficiency, dark skin complexion and cultural differences are considered liabilities. Therefore, this social setting categorizes an immigrant youth with darker skin-tone in the lower strata compare to their native Canadian-born North American and their other immigrant peers who have lighter complexions.

Pepler and colleagues (2011) mention that children need to be trained *step-by-step* through the path of social relationships and communication. The nature of social relations is unpredictable and complex, and any child requires a mentor or a role model in order to learn how to understand one's own and others' emotions and behaviours. Pepler and colleagues (ibid) focus exclusively on girls who display aggressive behaviours, since the social view on violence is gendered and since girls' controlled aggression has been overshadowed with the outbursts of boys' aggressive behaviours. Although, aggressive girls and boys show the same antisocial behaviours and equally lack social skills to build healthy relationships, girls are usually encouraged not to show any violent behaviour during their years of development (ibid). Whenever girls' aggressive behaviour surfaces, it would not be tolerated due to their expected pro-social gender role, compared to their *competitive and dominating* male counterparts, and therefore, many girls' aggressive behaviours stay concealed under gendered prohibitions during

younger ages (ibid). Similarly, Jiang, Walsh and Augimeri (2011) inferred that there is a correlation between childhood's incidents of bullying and youth and adulthood's involvement with criminal lifestyle and the criminal justice system.

Jiang and colleagues (ibid) concluded that participants who bullied their peers in childhood have twice the chance of getting involved in criminal activities in comparison to their counterparts who did not exhibit any childhood bullying behaviours. Pepler and colleagues (2011) support the finding that there is a strong relationship between bullying behaviours in children and committing criminal activities at relatively young ages (12 years of age or older). However, it is important to mention that there is not enough evidence to declare any causal relationship between childhood antisocial behaviours and adulthood criminal activities (ibid). At the same time, the strong correlation between these two phenomena might help researchers to prevent future criminal activities among youth (ibid). Moreover, regardless of their age and gender, those who bully others, due to their greater possibility of involvement with criminal activities, have a higher chance to become consequently engaged with justice system and obtain criminal records during their youth and adulthood (12 or older) compared to those who do not bully (Jiang et al., 2011). This result remains the same even when the researchers control the other influencing factors such as age and gender (ibid).

The development of an aggressive behaviour in children and youth is not entirely influenced by children's antisocial and aggressive mindset (Pepler et al., 2011). The children's social communication plays a significant role in the development of aggressive behaviour in them. This study offers methods and resources for children with aggressive behaviours, specifically girls, to build and maintain healthy relationships with others (ibid). Even so, it is a premature and uncompleted result considering that girls have a lower probability of having an

*officially recorded* criminal involvement compared to boys (Jiang et al., 2011). In addition, it is imprudent to ignore the social strata of youth exhibiting violent behaviour, since the participants who are from dysfunctional families experience a higher chance of getting involved with criminal activities compared to children from supportive families (Pepler et al., 2011). Furthermore, in a list of girls' inhibited aggression, girls are more likely to be affected by familial dysfunction than boys, due to girls' closer and lengthier relationship with their families, compared to their male counterparts. Therefore, the malfunction in the aggressive girls' families directly intensifies these girls' existing aggressive behaviours (ibid).

The girls' internalization of the violence and dysfunctionality of their families do not inhibit the researchers from holding these girls responsible for the consequential health and lifestyle problems these girls face due to lack of supervision and social and economic support, and social and familial protective factors (Lösel, & Farrington, 2012). Then again, Lösel and Farrington (ibid) report that the social and familial protective factors are conditional and closely related to the immediacy of the violence and risky lifestyle for these youth. Some researchers explain that the existence of health-related issues in aggressive girls is correlated with these girls' lack of self-regulation (Pepler et al., 2011). The lack of self-regulation attitudes become liabilities for the aggressive girls while attending to their necessary health-related activities and make this population vulnerable and prone to a higher chance of suffering from depression and substance abuse problems (ibid).

Furthermore, Pepler and colleagues (ibid) propose that recognizing and addressing the current bullying incidents and violent behaviours among youths would directly contribute to the prevention of future sexual harassment, dating violence and marital and parenting aggression. Pepler and colleagues (ibid) suggest that the only effective method to address aggressive and

violent behaviours among youth is to apply a multidirectional method through which, on the one hand, to assist the youths in building healthy relationship and lifestyle, and on the other hand, train and prepare the aggressive youths' immediate and secondary societies to assist these youth with a smooth and attainable cognitive-behavioural change (ibid). These youths' families, schools and immediate social networks should go through an environmental and societal intervention to become tolerable and accommodating of the youths' transformations (ibid). Rather than blaming the victim, these researchers blame the gravity of the role of environmental factors, such as familial circumstances, in the creation of aggression among young adults (ibid). However, the thought of intervening in the youths' community in order to overcome the youths' problematic behaviours is unrealistically idealist. Stratton, Lask, Bland, Nowotny, Evans, Singh, Janes and Peppiatt (2014) mention that even the family therapies involving willing parents of youths with aggressive and violent behaviour did not serve as well as they expected. These psychologists partnered with willing and cooperative parents to eliminate the "problematic family functioning", in order to assist the aggressive youths. Unfortunately, this experiment displayed a positive result for only 13% of the participants (p. 6, 12). This would be even less likely to change the mindset of a dysfunctional community which is not motivated for change in the repressed populations of youths, who are unsupported and unrepresented (Said, 1978; Griffin, 2013).

Visano (2005) explains this lack of success as a result of ignoring youths of their own interventions. Visano (ibid) notes that "[t]ypically youths are marginalized; they are not persons in their own right; and, they are not allowed voice, let alone, representation" (p. 330).

Additionally, social norms and standards recognize the youth population "as 'the other', the foreigner and the stranger," due to the youth cultures' "notion of 'difference' and 'otherness'"

(ibid). In addition, Griffin (2013) mentions that this lack of regard for the youth populations' autonomy and presence in their community gives the researchers a domineering authority to label youths as deviant, incompetent, depraved and/or disagreeable (ibid). In some cases, the researchers strip this population from their personal and humanistic characteristics and treat them as numbers (ibid). For example, Gredler (2003) states that Olweus' research and techniques on bullying reduced the bullying incidents by 50% in the "social climate" of the classroom, though he ignores mentioning a key element affecting this bullying reduction: Olweus' experiments' racially biased sample selection (p. 699). The suggested ambiguous *optimism* and unsupported success percentages offered by some researchers', such as Gredler's (ibid; Olweus, 2003), is evidence of the interpretative nature of this field of study. Olweus' anti-bullying program showed a positive effect in reducing bullying incidents among the Norwegian schools subjected to this program. However, Olweus (ibid) claims that the bullying incidents were *only* decreased amongst the subjects of his research. Otherwise, based on Olweus' research conducted in 2001, not only did bullying occurrences not decrease, but they also have increased by 50% (p.49). What would be the effect when the individual youth is an actual foreigner and a stranger?

Accordingly, immigrant youths, who are burdened with the double minority status, as the youth and the foreigner, experience marginalization and lack of representation on a more intense scale (Visano, 2005). Kristin Haltinner (2014) explains the successful segregation of the North American white culture from the minority populations through the application of four essential concepts: "abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and the minimization of racism" (p. 195-196). 70 % of the white culture population believe that "Irish, Italians, Jewish, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up." (Griffin, 2013) However, the above four concepts rationalize from these consenting individuals the means to debate the socio-

racial inequality dominating North American society (ibid). The researchers' self-granted superiority allows them to "implicate young people, their 'deficient' family forms or cultural background" (ibid).

The white culture rationalizes the inequalities existing in society by favouring the Euro-centric viewpoint through appealing to colourblindness and the four essential concepts to explain their privileges and their higher living standards. First, based on the abstract liberalism, the social hierarchical differences between whites and others is created through the individualism and the freedom of choice. Based on this notion the whites live better lives because of the better life-choices that each individual makes for her/his life. Second, the naturalization is a natural tendency of human beings' attraction to people similar to them (Haltinner, 2014). If members of the white culture live closer to each other, find other Euro-North American friends and hold experiments using mostly/only subjects with European background, it is because the humans biologically trust and attraction to people with whom they share similar characteristics (Dinesen, 2011). Third, this cultural racism relates to the lack of success of the minorities due to their ethno-cultural backgrounds and lifestyles (Haltinner, 2014). Based on this idea, the lack of success of minority individuals, compared to their counterparts, is attributable to their cultural upbringing and their work ethic, rather than to the systematic racism in society (ibid). Finally, the minimalization of racism argues that the undeniable visible racism existing in the society is not systematic; this racism is the individuals' personal prejudices toward others (ibid; Levinson, Cai, Young, 2009). The minimalization idea explains that it depends on the individuals, not the social and political system, when the police arrest more black individuals (Visano, 2005) and when the members of the juries declare the guilty verdicts more often for racial minority defendants (Levinson, Cai & Young, 2009).

In the interval between the years 2000 to 2006, a group of well-intended researchers attempted to examine the effects of bullying on and among the immigrant youth, since this population “has received little if any empirical attention to date” (McKenney, Pepler, Craig & Connelly, 2006, p. 251). These experiments which were conducted by Verkuyten and Thijs (2002), Strohmeier and Spiel (2003), Strohmeier, Atria and Spiel (2005), and McKenney and colleagues (2006), all came to the same conclusion: that immigrant youth do not stand a higher chance to experience either general or ethnic bullying (McKenney et al, 2006). However, these experiments have a few shortcomings which the experimenters overlooked during the process of conducting them.

The first shortcoming is related to the predominantly Eurocentricity of the subjects of the experiments. For example, McKenney and colleagues describe the subjects of their studies as following:

The majority of the students identifies themselves as European-Canadian (74.9%). The remainder of the sample was ethnically diverse: 9.9% Asian-Canadian, 3.8% African/Caribbean-Canadian, 3.8% South Asian-Canadian, 1.4% Latin American Canadian, 1.0% Middle Eastern Canadian, and 5.3% Other Ethnicities. (ibid, p. 246)

Although, there might be a limitation on the availabilities of immigrant populations for this research, this sample of the population is a shortcut allowing the experimenters to reach a more non-biased result. Strohmeier, Fandrem, Stefanek and Spiel (2012) note that immigrant youth, especially first generation boys, use aggression in order to gain their peers’ acceptance. Therefore, it should be considered that in a research with a three quarter white individuals and one quarter of a mix population of immigrants, the latter individuals might act in a more

aggressive manner in order to represent themselves to their native-born peers in a more likeable light (ibid).

When Strohmeier, Kärnä, Salmivalli (2011) conduct an experiment with a more diverse subject selection (51.6% whites and 48.4% first generation immigrants), the experiment's results significantly differ from the first set of experiments. Based on this experiment, Strohmeier et al. (ibid) argue that immigrant youths are more likely to be subjected to abuse due to their racial and ethnic background compared to their native-born peers. Immigrant youths deal with peer rejection, victimization and discrimination because of their cultural differences (ibid), which can be translated and transformed into bullying definitions.

The white ethno-cultural backgrounds of the social scientist conducting these studies counts as a shortcoming. Eslea and Mukhtar (2000) criticize the racial bias existing in anti-bullying movements and question the lack of attention paid to the racial differences both in the questionnaires and sample selections. They continue to criticize this movement in regard to number of white researchers conducting the anti-bullying projects and research as another imperfection of this field of research. Eslea and Mukhtar (ibid) believe the bullying prevention research field should be welcoming and inviting to a diverse population of researchers investigating the bullying phenomenon. Also, anti-bullying research funding should be distributed among a diverse population of researchers in this field. Recruiting researchers from minority populations would be assets to gather more accurate data from the immigrant subjects and minority populations. Since the lack of ethnic researchers triggers a sense of discomfort and insecurity in ethnic and racialized students, subjects are inhibited from disclosing their exact experiences with ethnic bullying and the emotional effects of these experiences to white researchers (ibid). Therefore, a diverse population of researchers would initiate trust and



assurance for the immigrant and minority youth, and communicate to immigrant youths that their concerns and experiences are valued and welcomed (ibid).

A further shortcoming of these researchers is the application of a generic questionnaire for all populations attending an experiment. For example, most, if not all, researchers utilize Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (1989) for gathering the quantitative portion of their researches (McKenney et al., 2006; Bender & Losel, 2011; Strohmeier, Kärnä & Salmivalli, 2011). In some cases, however, the experimenters use a carefully and slightly modified version of this questionnaire, in which, for instance, “the original category ‘sometimes’ was changed into ‘a few times a month’” (Fekkes, Pijpers & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005, p. 83).

Since the 9/11 attacks opened a new chapter on villainizing ethno-cultural minorities, *ethnic bullying* and *hate crime* have become more widespread and more tolerated than ever (Alsultany, 2013; Dunbar, 2006). The governmental organizations, on the one hand, and the most popular TV dramas and films, on the other hand, normalize the different treatment and the biased representations of ethno-cultural minority individuals (ibid). This maltreatment of a strata the Canadian population contradicts the following passage from the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Section 15 - Equality Rights, which states,

This section of the Charter makes it clear that every individual in Canada – regardless of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, colour, sex, age or physical or mental disability – is to be considered equal. This means that governments must not discriminate on any of these grounds in its laws or programs (Canadian Heritage, 2013).

This contradiction between the publicised Canadian citizen’s rights and the ethno-cultural minorities’ acquired status quo resembles George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*’s (1945) seven commandments stating, “[a]ll animals are equal, but some animals are

more equal than others” (p. 192). The duplicity existing between the written rules and rights and the practiced regulations normalizes the mistreatment of the ethno-cultural minority populations and situates these individuals as vulnerable targets for hate crimes and ethnic bullying (Alsultany, 2013).

### **Cyberbullying**

Recently, technological advances, which facilitate the creative and innovative methods of bullying, oblige the bullying prevention researchers to find novel effective techniques (Sugarman & Willoughby, 2013). Cyberbullying is another phenomenon of the era of technology that makes bullying easier and more permanent. In this type of bullying, the bully uses internet to circulate gossip, rumors or even nude pictures of the bullied for the purpose of humiliating her/him (Kowalski, Limber & Agatston, 2012). Cyberbullying removes the slight safety that youth attained through keeping apart from their bullies and others. The cyberbullying follows its victims even when they take refuge in the safety of their homes (Bailey, 2013). For instance, in the Amanda Todd case, even relocating several times could not protect Todd from the active bullying, which eventually led to her suicide (Nguyen & Tepper, 2014).

Some researchers introduce the cyberbullying as “wired” bullying (Bailey, 2013, p. 1), since when the discriminatory comment is added to the “wired” network it becomes accessible to all peers. The anonymity and the wide range of cyberbullying lead to a new phenomenon called “cyberbullying by proxy”, through which others get involved in bullying incidents, without even knowing the bullied (ibid, p. 2). *Cyber bullying by proxy* simply represents the circumstances in which the bystander is turned into becoming a bully by supporting the bully, commenting on the

bullying post, passing the bullying message around and or liking the post (Kowalski, Limber, Limber & Agatston, 2012).

### **Three major disciplines**

“A picture says a thousand word,” is a perfect axiom to explain my rationale for studying bullying through the lens of anti-bullying organizations’ advertisements. However, the significance of a picture is not only limited to the literal meaning of the picture, since the image that literature or a work of fiction portrays for its readers can be as vivid and visual for the reader as the recorded photographic picture. Regarding bullying, there is an urgent prerequisite for an interdisciplinary method which studies this phenomenon from different angles. Through the application of the interdisciplinary method, I will examine the nature of the anti-bullying outreach and the plausible preceding factors to the youths’ rapidly rising bullying incidents (Olweus, 2003).

Despite the generous amount of economic, academic and human resources, which are available for controlling bullying incidents, this destructive phenomenon is spreading among the youth population (Galbraith, 2014). This thesis examines the bullying phenomenon, from a new angle and through the application of three different disciplines of Criminology, Race, Ethnicity and Indigeneity, and Education. The application of hermeneutic methods will question the shortcoming of bullying prevention organizations, and has hinders the elimination or declining this fatal activity among youths.

Toward the completion of this paper, Criminology as a discipline assists me to study the debating and controversial process of criminalizing bullying (Albertson, 2015; Wayne, 2013; Waldman, 2012; Short, 2013). The bullying awareness movement has divided bullying activists,

researchers and/or victims into groups with hermeneutically different mindsets in regard to viewing bullying, the bullying victims and the bullies. The questions behind these mindsets are in respect to which element of the bullying should be criminalized: is the bully the guilty and responsible party in any bullying case (Albertson, 2015), should the act of bullying itself be criminalized separate from its actor (Short, 2013), or should the bullying be considered as a social issue and not related to the individuals who have any involvement in the action (Waldman, 2012; Wayne, 2013).

The nature of this criminalization movement is controversial. Some authorities view bullying as a civil case, in which the bully does not hold responsibility as a criminal. In these cases, the bullied parties, or their families, could sue their bullies, or their families, in civil courts (Findley, 2011 September 14). Also, the victims of bullying can acquire court orders to create a distance between the bully and her/his victims (Nelson, 2013 August 7). Although, in cases where bullying leads to fatality, such as Rehtaeh Parsons' and Amanda Todd's cases, criminal investigators examine the cases more carefully and with less leniency. In these cases, the crime officials investigation of the pieces of evidence led to some arrests. Through Criminology I will study the case of Kiranjit Nijjar's, who became the victim of her friend, Akash Wadha. Whadha stalked Nijjar, psychologically and emotionally bullied her, and finally stabbed her to death in a wood, and the bullying activists did not even consider this case as bullying. Here, I will question if there is any relevance between the criminalization of bullying and the migration status of the bullying victims. In other words, in this section, I examine the law and its differential view on the subject of bullying for immigrant youths with darker skin-tone and hair-colour compared to their Canadian-born counterparts.

The second discipline, which is essential for the completion of this thesis, is Race, Ethnicity and Indigeneity. This discipline provides me with necessary skills to explore the racial biases and inequalities which exist in the anti-bullying and bullying prevention fields. Many immigrant and minority youths with darker complexion deal with bullying in their everyday lives, but they do not even consider themselves victims of bullying action. Through the application of Race, Ethnicity and Indigeneity, I criticize the systematic bullying when the subject of bullying concerns these groups of immigrants. It sounds paradoxical, but when an immigrant youth is not recognized as a bully, the systematic bullying awareness fails in its mission. This failure is due to the miscarriage of an individual's right to an equal treatment and the chance to be recognized as a predator or a victim. This discipline will assist me to justify and articulate my concern about the distinct lack of equity in the area of bullying awareness, and specifically on the subject of bullying among youths.

Additionally, I apply the discipline of Education to examine immigrant-authored literatures. The authors of these literatures are specifically first generation Iranian immigrants writing about their experiences as new immigrants in their new host countries. Through the hermeneutic studying of these literature, I study the fictional stories through which these authors describe themselves, and other immigrants an identity for themselves and other immigrants (Amirrezvani & Karim, 2013; Dumas, 2003; Satrapi, 2004). These fictional autobiographies, some of which, such as *Persepolis 2*, have acquired great success and fame in popular culture and the academic setting, have become the point of reference for what an immigrant is, how they act and what they go through. These stereotypical characteristics, which these authors narrate from their own younger selves, blame migration as causing the ostracization and isolation of a new immigrant in a host country.

These fictional characters blame the unjust treatment they receive from peers in their host country on the lack of accessibility to the dominant language (Amirrezvani & Karim, 2013; Satrapi, 2004), social and economic hardship (Amirrezvani & Karim, 2013) and familial disintegration and inadaptability (Dumas, 2003). These widely recognized novels, which academia uses frequently as educational tools, blame the immigrants, as if they are responsible for their own failures. These novels and literatures represent the bullying circumstances, which the immigrant youth experience, as every immigrant's milestone. By promoting these fictions, we normalize the maltreatment of immigrant youth as an unpreventable and unavoidable stage for the immigrants. Although this chapter mainly focuses on the historical, cultural, social and academic aspects of the concept of bullying, interestingly immigrants' contributions and involvement in this phenomenon is undeniable. Immigrants, particularly immigrant youths, directly affect and are subjected to the effects of bullying based on different side-effects of migration (Pottie, Dahal, Georgiades, Premji & Hassan, 2014; Terriquez, 2012).

In the next chapter, I will discuss who an immigrant is, how migration affects the youth members of the migrant families, and what prospective difficulties may await young immigrants in their host countries.

## **Chapter 2: Immigrants representation in multimedia**

### **Who is an immigrant?**

The concept of immigrant is socially constructed, and refers to people who are perceived as foreigners, without considering their official status (Man, 2004). People migrate, legally or illegally, from the developing countries to the developed ones to work as “unskilled” domestic and labour workers (Piper, 2005, p. 207; *ibid*, p. 145). Jacobs (2008) explains that when these immigrant workers attempt to obtain better employment positions, they would be rejected with the excuse of lacking skill. Many women, men and children leave their homeland of their own accord to work abroad, due to lack of jobs, lack of capital in their home nation and/or higher wages in the host countries (Germano, 2010). An immigrant individual usually faces many obstacles upon her/his arrival in the host country: loneliness, isolation, racism, deculturation to lack of belonging and homesickness, just to name a few.

Many articles introduce migration to their readers in a desirable light; these articles only focus on the positive points of migration, and how migration provides families with new opportunities to grow (Andersson, 2003). Ignoring how the host nation promotes and persuades immigrant youths to “cultivate”; the arriving countries downplay or disregard the immigrant youths’ experiences of their past struggles, which are part of their identity formation (Satrapi, 2004, p. 17). Immigrant youth are in many cases ignored in research and articles with the focus on the issue of migration, due to their dependency on members of their families, which immigrant status is granted to (Man, 2004). This population who is still in the process of personality growth encounters inequality and isolation, learns to practice conformity to the host

country's norms, and self-identifies itself as "others", in regard to the main population which is considered "us" (Andersson, 2003, p.75).

This sense of otherness encourages some immigrant youths to refuse to break connections with their past identity in the nation of origin, while trying to maintain connection with the host nation. Park believes this hybrid identity, which is a simultaneous struggle to balance between the two cultures, imposes on immigrant youths a sense of marginalization, which permanently shadows their lives (Park, 1928). However, Hall argues that the sense of marginalization and isolation becomes less visible in the process of transformation, which is an everlasting process. Unlike Park, Hall believes that immigrant youths strengthen their union with the new nation as the time passes, through the building of a hybrid identity, which Hall notes as having access to both worlds to select from and to build their identities (Hall, 1990). In addition to Hall's view, Berry and Sabatier explain that the involvement with two cultures simultaneously ("integration") is the best method of acculturation. This process benefits the immigrant youth socially, emotionally and psychologically (Berry & Sabatier, 2010).

Separation is a known concept for immigrant youth; they leave their friends and family members behind to join a new society, which in many cases, treats them like outsiders. The loss becomes a known, but unexplainable, phenomenon for them (Suárez-Orozco & Todorova, 2003). In addition to the tangible separation, this population gets separated from the language, culture and society they once knew; this separation leaves this population in a position of forced adjustment, which has negative emotional consequences for many immigrant youth (Hirschman, 2006). The children of migration demand to be acknowledged and appreciated for their unrecognized contributions and sacrifices through the terms of the migration (Parrenas, 2001). Although parents refuse their children's sacrifices, as they consider themselves the true martyr



for leaving their families and friends behind to provide their children with chance for ameliorating their lives. These parents, as well, seek to be appreciated and respected by their children for their selflessness. These emotional and mental conflicts make the process of adjustment to the new lifestyle difficult and emotionally challenging. After migration, both children and parents might experience depression, withdrawal from each other and acting out in protest to these sudden physical and emotional fluctuations (Suarez-Orozco, Todorova and Louie, 2002).

For some immigrant youths the process of adjustment is not smooth; therefore, they are coerced to assimilate, rather than acculturate. Through assimilation, the youth dissociates and distances from her/his culture of origin, and identifies her/himself with the cultures and norms of their host nation. In many cases, the assimilation correlates with culture shock in this population, i.e. the anxiety immigrant individuals encounter in striving to hide their original culture and characteristics. Last, due to the intergenerational inconsistency in cultural values and expectations, the immigrant youth detaches her/himself from the familial bonds and connections. This detachment provides the immigrant youth with freedom and independence to connect with members of the host nation, but at the same time leaves this population vulnerable to social risks and to fending for themselves alone (Hirschman, 2006).

### **Migration: Beneficial or hindering**

The migration of the families to host countries becomes the beginning of a chapter replete with struggles, difficulties, miscommunications, and above all, disappointments (Boti & Bautista, 1999). In the process of migration, adolescents and younger members of the migrating families hold the lowest position in regard to the hierarchy of power. In the process of migration,

any Iranian family for instance goes through a series of long and difficult bureaucratic steps, which limits the choice of the family, indicating the time of the migration, and in many cases even the destination of the migration. For example, based on governmental laws, any Iranian individual needs to attain a valid visa in order to travel from Iran to any country around the world (with exception of few neighbouring countries) (U. S. Embassy, 2013, [http://armenia.usembassy.gov/step\\_by\\_step\\_iran.html](http://armenia.usembassy.gov/step_by_step_iran.html)). This process becomes more troubling depending on the circumstances of the migration and relocation of the families. These families endure a long assessment, evaluated by scores, before getting the permission of the host country for migrating. These scores are calculated based on the family's economic assets, parents' education level, language fluency, age, work experience of the parents, and many other aspects of the prospective migrating families (The World's Most Popular Immigration Advice Site, 2008). After the completion of all these steps the waiting stage begins. Some families wait for months (in some cases years) for their migration paper-works and applications to go through, without any guaranteed positive outcome. After all these rules, regulations and legal process, if the family's migrating application gets approved, the applicants are exceptionally eager to leave Iran.

### **What do we know about the immigrant youth?**

“It relaxed me to talk to [my mother]. It had been so long since I'd been able to talk to someone without having to explain my culture”, writes Satrapi (2004) in *Persepolis 2*, a graphic novel that explores one girl's experience of moving from Iran to go to school in Austria. When I migrated from Iran to Canada I encountered similar experiences as the protagonist of this novel. I had language deficiency, my degree was undervalued, and the culture was different from my

home country (Iran). After surviving my own migration experience and the process of adjustment, I wanted to learn more about other youths' migration experiences. Through the study of novels, I will ask: How do Iranian youth form new identities in their receiving country? How might these early experiences influence these young people as adults? Specifically, I will focus on the experiences of Iranian youth, not simply because it mirrors my own experience, but because as opposed to immigrant adults, they have been ignored. Immigrant youth arrive in Canada as dependents of their parents whom the immigrant status has been granted to (Man, 2004).

Stuart Hall's (1990) concept of cultural identity and its formation provides a guideline and a theoretical framework for this study. Cultural identity formation, Hall argues, is in a constant change and reform, and this process is the foundation for the construction of a hybrid identity for the immigrant youth in the new society. Hybrid identity is constructed based on the encounter and communication of one's cultural identity with the dominant culture of the host nation. Hall's (1990) concept of cultural identity will strengthen the theoretical background for studying immigrant youths and their identity formation. I will study immigrant youth's connections to their diasporic community, and their personal experiences and interactions with the culture of the host country. Hall's concept of hybrid identity is complemented by Homi Bhabha's (1994) cultural theory and his attention to the cultural pressures to assimilate. Homi Bhabha's (1994) theory focuses on the cultural pressure on immigrant population, forcing them to acculturate and to accept the cultural norms of the host country. Even in Canada, which advertises its multicultural standards, an Iranian immigrant youth is forced to change her/his native standards and characteristics to take the host country's cultural norms. Refusal to accept

the new cultural norms lead to ostracization and isolation. Nonetheless accepting the new identity makes the immigrant youth a stranger to her/himself (Lesko & Talburt, 2012).

Heidegger's hermeneutic method offers me with an opportunity to differentiate among immigrant youths, and their subjective points of view in regard to observing and inferring the importance of the experiences they confront. I would like to argue that cultural identity is formed uniquely based on an individual's "ground" and experiences (Heidegger, 2007, p. 102). The application of hermeneutic methods allows me to explore the subjectivity and uniqueness of experiences of Iranian youth migrants, and their perception of environment based on former experiences. Unfortunately, many researchers who study immigrant youth population focus on this population's shortcomings and their involvement with crime and risky lifestyles (Blake, Ledsky, Goodenow & O'Donnell, 2001). However, the lack of research on immigrant and minority youths makes this population a scapegoat for the legal authority to relate many criminal activities to them (Visano, 1998). Lesko and Talburt (2012) argue that youth are not children and not adults-- they are between these two stages. Yet, the young immigrant individuals experience more complexity during their stages of youth and young adulthood. Many researchers from different disciplines have done extensive research studies in regard to immigrant populations and the quality of their lives in their host country (Schiller, Basch & Blanc, 1995; Abada, Hou & Ram, 2008; Berry, 2005; Levitt, 2009). However, the study of migrant youth and their issues of and the challenges these populations have to cope with in the new culture has stayed untouched, left invisible and open for exploration, due to their unsettled stage of life. The experience of immigrant youth is multifaceted. While struggling to be accepted by the host nation, they encounter racism, ostracization, loneliness, and above all culture shock.

“The harder I tried to assimilate, the more I had the feeling that I was distancing myself from my culture ...and my origin” (Satrapi, 2004, p. 39). Here, graphic novelist, Marjane Satrapi (2004) describes her adjustment process as an immigrant teenage girl in a new country. Satrapi is one of the many Iranian authors who portray their experiences with migration in the delicate adolescent years. Migration, in general, is a difficult and complicating process; although this process becomes more challenging and unbearable when it coincides with one’s adolescence (Cummins, 2013). Adolescence and migration are two of the most vital stages of identity-formation for a young adult, because the young person, who is experiencing the age related confusion and struggles, suddenly finds herself/himself dealing with a new challenge: a sudden acculturating and assimilating with the culture of the host country in attempt to be accepted (Perreira & Ornelas, 2013; Kirmayer, Narasiah, Munoz, Rashid, Ryder, Guzder, Hassan & Pottie, 2011).

### **Language: The immigrant youths’ shaky bridge of communication**

Language is one of the main issues that reappears in all three narratives. Language is very significant, since without language lines of communication will be silenced. The young immigrants usually learn the new nation’s language through trial and error. The challenges of language are harder for the new immigrant youth because they become the subjects of ridicule for those who hold knowledge of the language (McBrien, 2011). The fluency in the dominant language of the country gives the native-born population a social power control, through which those who consider themselves as “us” enforce their power on those whom they label as outsiders (Andersson, 2003, p.75). The new immigrant youth would be treated like outsiders, the

*others*, for years to come due to their *foreign* accents and their “ethnic” features and characteristics (Dumas, 2003, p. 37).

Typically, learning English is a much easier and faster process for the younger immigrant individuals, although this ability to learn English turns the young immigrants into involuntary young labourers (Dumas, 2003). They are forced to become their parents’ ears and tongues, “their translators.” This act of translating, though seemingly unimportant and unworthy of getting any attention, is a fulltime unpaid job for these children, who prefer to stay home and watch cartoons, like other children, who are their age (Dumas, 2003). Dumas expresses her childhood desire in one sentence: “I wished I could be at home watching *The Brady Bunch* instead of translating the qualities of various facial moisturizer” (p.11). Some Iranian parents, who are lacking fluency in the host nation’s language, take pride in their young children’s ability in mastering the country’s dominant language and their separation from them. This pride is sometimes interpreted by the immigrant children as inferiority of their mother tongue. Therefore, these Iranian children refuse to speak Persian and reject any association with their mother tongue, and with people who speak the language. The example of Dari, who is fluent in both Persian and English, but refuses to speak Persian with Omid, who only speaks Persian, demonstrates this internalized inferiority complex formed by immigrant youth (Amirrezvani & Karim, 2013). When Dari learns that Omid doesn’t speak English, he introduces Omid to the Corner Mart’s owner as a boy “fresh off the boat,” who “doesn’t know his ass from a hole in the ground” (ibid, p. 6).

## Identity

The immigrant youth suddenly have found themselves a new identity: an “ethnic ...and ... racialized identity” (James, 1999, p. 23). Their race and ethnicity unexpectedly has become a barrier for them to assimilate with the host nation. The struggle to assimilate affects the evolving identity of new young immigrants. As Man (2004) mentions, immigrant identity stays with the migrating individual throughout her or his entire life, regardless of their changing legal status. In the delicate stage of adolescence, youths try to construct socially acceptable identities for themselves to flee the label of outsider in fear of isolation and separation. The young immigrants continue living their lives based on artificial personalities and characteristics, which are alien to their true identities (Kay, 2010).

Since different experiences and social interactions affect an individual’s identity formation, the young immigrants are no exception to this phenomenon. Dumas (2003) narrates her first day at school in California, and how the way she and her mother are treated affects her point of view of herself, her family, and her language. Young immigrant Firoozeh, similar to many other immigrants in comparable situations, internalizes the lack of language and being different as her own fault. She states, “[n]ow all the students stare at us not just because I came to school with my mother, not because we couldn’t speak their language, but because we were stupid” (Dumas, 2003, p. 5). Suddenly, Firoozeh’s self-identity changes from an average and normal child into a stupid and weird stranger, who deserves to be stared at.

Even though Firoozeh has anticipated their migration to the new country, she faces disappointment, embarrassment, marginalization, and discrimination in the host country. Robert E. Park (1928), one of the most renowned figures in North American Sociology, calls

marginalization an inevitable symptom of migration for youth. Park (ibid) explains the struggle that immigrant youths endure creates a balance between the culture of country of origin, which she/he cannot disregard since her/his identity formation started there, and the culture of the host country, which is vital for her/his survival in the host nation. The dissonance between these two cultures is the foundation for the immigrant youth's hybrid identity, which keeps immigrant youth in a lifelong marginalization.

Due to the long and demanding process of migration, children who are dependent on their parents usually stay forgotten (Man, 2004). In many cases, the youth members of the family would not even be consulted during the decision making process about migration, the time of departure, or even the country of destination. Children are silent and nonvoting partners to any migration, regardless of the forced or premeditated nature of their migration (Reed, Fazel, Jones, Panter-Brick, Stein, 2012; Clauss-hlers, Akinsulure-Smith, 2013). In many cases, children and youth become the scapegoat and the receiving end of their parents' frustration and humiliations in the new nation, where they have had no choice but to migrate to (Dreby, 2012). Many children and youths, despite their young age, have experienced war, bombs, destruction, the loss of family members, and even life in the refugee camps. In the new society, they confront completely different, through as great challenges of their lives; they come vis-à-vis with a completely new lifestyle, different from everything they have known or have ever experienced. Similar to many refugees who flee the political, social and economic hardship and punishment of their countries, many Iranians experience poverty in their new host countries (Yun, Fuentes-Afflick & Desai, 2012). However, this poverty is even more stressful for the immigrant youths, because they do not have a complete understanding of it and because they are kept out of family discussions and decision makings (McBrien, 2011). All they comprehend from the economic change is the loss



of privileges and familiarization with strange practical concepts such as hand-me-down clothes (Amirrezvani & Karim, 2013).

Iranian immigrant youth, who are looking for their identity after migration, deal with three different social cliques: the host nation's, who view them as uncultured and tries to "cultivate" them (Dumas, 2003; Satrapi, 2004, p. 19), the other Iranian immigrants, who treat them as scapegoats and project the host nation's aggression on them, and their immediate families, who expect them to hold on to their Iranian culture and heritage, while assimilating with the dominant culture (Amirrezvani & Karim, 2013). Many young immigrants experience cultural dissonance, which remains consistent into their adult lives. This cultural dissonance is omni-present in every stage of their lives, because of their constant struggles during their adolescence to manage the expectations of the three social cliques, next to their own desire to be accepted (Dumas, 2003).

The state of "unhomeliness", which the immigrant youth dwells in, is the area between the two cultures and keeps both sides of one's identity unstable and unrooted (Bhabha, 1994, p. 13). They do not belong to their countries of origin any longer, since the process of their identity formation has separated them from their cultural background. Simultaneously, they never become a member of their host countries due to their differences, defined by their countries of origin. The same feeling of in "betweenness" and "unhomeliness" hunts the immigrant youth regardless of their nonstop struggle since migration all the way through assimilation and integration; their cultural and racial differences are a constant reminder of their otherness (ibid; Goulding, 2005, p. 678). For instance, the Persian youths' hidden Persian accents, their monolingual Persian parents, their Iranian decorated houses and the colour of their skin follow

them everywhere as a reminder of their difference and lack of belonging (Amirrezvani & Karim, 2013).

Juxtaposed against Bhabha's (1994) notion of "unhomeliness" (p. 13), Stuart Hall (1990) has a more optimistic view on the subject of identity formation and belonging of immigrant individuals. He, similar to Park (1928), focuses on hybrid identity in immigrants. Though Hall argues that the sense of marginalization and isolation becomes less visible in the process of transformation, he sees it as an everlasting process. Unlike Park (1928), Hall (1990) argues that even though "there is no guarantee", many immigrant youths reinforce their union with their host nation as the time passes, and the pressure and marginalization encourage them to build a hybrid identity (p.112).

Hall (1990) states that having access to the culture of origin and the host country provides the immigrant young adult with an opportunity to form their identity in a way to protect them against the both worlds' advances. In addition to Hall's hybridity theory, Berry and Sabatier (2010) explain that a new immigrant's attachment to both cultures simultaneously is the best method of re-socialization, because it benefits the immigrant youth socially, emotionally and psychologically. Building hybrid identity is empowering for the young immigrant. Marjane Satrapi's graphic autobiography perfectly portrays this hybrid identity. In a moment of pure anger, young Marjane has an outburst in her school's cafe, and asks a couple of girls to "shut up", as she states, "I am Iranian and proud of it" (Satrapi, 2004, p. 43). The fact that Marjane uses the host country's language to express her belonging to her country of origin is a perfect symbolism of cultural hybridity and empowerment.

### *The socially advertised image of immigrants in the West*

Many immigrant youth, due to social, political or financial reasons, are forced out of their familiar environment, relocated into completely different atmospheres, and left to fend for themselves (McBrien, 2011). The migrating parents, frustrated with the bureaucratic procedures and anxious about their unknown future in the host country, ignore their children's newly forming communication skills. Similarly, migration affects the immigrant youth's communication skills (Sime, & Fox, 2014). School is the first institution that exposes immigrant youths to the new standards and normalities of the host countries, and, for the purpose of this research, subjects this young population to "[North] Americanization" (Peguero, 2012, p. 404). In Canada, *North Americanization* not only declares the host country's beliefs, values, norms and standards for the young immigrants, but also clarifies these youths' acceptable positionality and expected behavioural norms in regard to merging peacefully into their new host country, without disturbing its equilibrium (Smith, 2012; Beiser, Zilber, Simich, Youngmann, Zohar, Taa & Hou, 2011).

According to Frantz Fanon (1952), it is essential to question the extent to which we can relate the results deduced from experiments conducted by white researchers on white subjects to the minority population, to explain the phenomenon a minority individual experiences or her/his "vision of the world" (120). With overrepresentation of the mainstream subjects and researchers in the experiments on bullying phenomenon, the non-white, or, for the purpose of this paper, the immigrant youth sees her/himself as rejected due to her/his differences. The immigrant child who has been normal and accepted up to her/his migration to the "so-called civilized or civilizing" nations, such as the United States and Canada, suddenly sees her/himself as others and inferior to

her/his peers (ibid, 121). At this point, the struggle is to become “white” and to get as far as possible from the stereotypes related to them.

Fanon (ibid) describes how the black Antilleans who go to France, speak with “a hushed murmur” to hide their stereotyped way of pronunciation (4). Just like the Antilleans, who mispronounce R as W (ibid), the Persian youth has difficulties to correctly pronounce words starting with S, such as student, scream or stranger. The Persian youth tend to add an extra E to some words starting with S. For example, they pronounce *stranger* as *estranger*. The number of times that any Persian youth hears from their North American peers and acquaintances how amusing it is when they pronounce ES instead of S is uncountable. This friendly reminder to Persian population about their exposed secret identity, forces these immigrant youths to practice and change their dialect, so they can get themselves as far as they can from the identity which causes imperfection in the eye of their perfectly English speaking white peers. This effort to conceal their cultural identity becomes even more urgent and desired when a Persian author, such as Firouzeh Dumas (2004), takes it upon herself to show North Americans how *funny* it is to pronounce English words in *Farsi*.

Though, Dumas (ibid) does not avoid glamourizing how she spoke “English without an accent” and how “people assumed [she] was an American” (65). Dumas takes it upon herself to show how embarrassing it is to be a new immigrant in North America. She ridicules how her father created “a private language” for himself by using outdated vocabulary (77) and how her mother’s “thick Middle Eastern accent” represented her as a “maid” (77-79). Dumas, who struggled to become associated with North Americans and away from her own cultural group, ignores the effect she has on her young audiences who look into her book to be familiarized with the concept and characteristics of new immigrants. Moreover, Dumas transfers a sense of

inferiority to new immigrant youth by portraying them as incomprehensible, strange and unacceptable.

Many ethnically Persian authors become united in expressing this outlook to their North American and immigrant readers in *Tremors: New fiction by Iranian American writers*, which is a collection of short stories (Amirrezvani & Karim, 2013). “*The Other Mothers, the Other Sons*” in particular is a short story that introduces new Persian immigrants as socially, economically and emotionally unstable and held-back characters, who in their compliant attitude turn themselves into criminals. In this short story Omid’s mother who is portrayed as a powerless and vulnerable woman gets into trouble when she tries to commit shoplifting, when she sheepishly follows the instruction of an immigrant Persian woman. This story describes other immigrants, who came to North America earlier on, as untrustworthy, opportunist and non-supporting people. Marjane Satrapi is another well-known Persian author who portrays the naivety of a new immigrant Persian girl. Satrapi does not conceal her discontent about a Persian immigrant girl’s unattractive physical appearance juxtaposed to her typical North American counterparts<sup>2</sup>.

In her autobiographical graphic novel, *Persepolis 2*, Satrapi, similar to other authors, represents immigrant individuals as uncaring and spiteful people who easily betray and disregard each other’s trust. These narrations, just to mention a few, portray immigrant people, i.e. Persians, to their patrons. These patrons are combinations of lay audiences, who look into another culture’s literature to gain a better understanding of that specific ethnic background, and new immigrant individuals who look into authors with similar ethnic background in search of the comforting feeling of home (Deckers & Zinga, 2012). Specifically, the latter readers, with

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<sup>2</sup> Even though Satrapi shows this displeasure through describing her own physical appearances, she describes and ridicules the typical signs of growth in any young Iranian girl, i.e. the dark facial hair, which many Iranian immigrant youths try to do everything to conceal.

English as their second language, get more satisfaction in reading literature from their own home-country (Dali, 2013). Though when the immigrant readers are required to read in English and “merge” their two cultures (Mukherjee, 2011, 681), they prefer literatures which convey the atmosphere and the sense of their home-country; many immigrant individuals choose ethnically similar authors to satisfy this sense of belonging. Unfortunately, literatures which transfer stereotypes and negative connotations to a community act as counterproductive for the mainstream audiences and reinforce a sense of inferiority in the immigrant audiences.

The negative representation of any immigrant community has a bi-directional effect on the community. On the one hand, the outside viewer perceives the particular community in an unfavourable light and stereotypes its members as strange, peculiar and unpleasant. These exploring audiences observe the ethnic community as disjointed and opportunist individuals without any sense of loyalty. On the other hand, the new immigrant members of this ethnic community, who look into the familiar literatures in search of a clear view of their new host country, see themselves as unaccepted, unsupported and lonesome, by the *cruel* and *backstabbing* members of their own ethnic community and by *close-minded* and *judgemental* members of the host country. This biased observation gives the new immigrants a sense of inferiority that makes them not only vulnerable to, but tolerant and accommodating of any mistreatment and manipulation forced upon them by members of either their ethnic or mainstream communities.

The immigrant youths’ membership in two of the most repressed social groups and populations, i.e. youth and immigrant, confines this population to one of the most invisible yet the most “hypervisible” populations (Vaquera, Aranda, & Gonzales, 2014, p. 1827; Chan, 2013). The underrepresented immigrant youths in the psych-socio-political representation in media

outlook and the policy making processes in many cases force the immigrant youth to retreat to their diasporic ethnic *enclaves* (Kumar, Seay & Karabenick, 2014; Beiser, Zilber, Simich, Youngmann, Zohar, Taa & Hou, 2011). Juxtaposed to the ignored and understated immigrant youth population, this population attract attention when it comes to the life of crime and delinquency (Kubrin & Ishizawa, 2012; Davies & Fagan, 2012). The recent representations of both native-born and foreign-born youth involved in criminal activities are evident examples for this proclamation.

### **The ethnic background and maturity**

In Canada, a youth of 12 years and older is considered mature enough to be convicted for her/his criminal activities (Pepler et al., 2011). Notwithstanding, based on the Youth Criminal Justice Act, part 6 (Publication, Records and Information: Protection of Privacy of Young Persons) “the identity of the offender is not to be published” or disclosed if she/he is under the age of 18 (Youth Criminal Justice Act, S.C. 2002, section 110, c. 1, 2015)<sup>3</sup>. This act was demonstrated and practiced in the cases of Rehtaeh Parsons (Gallman & Gast, 2013; Patten, 2013) and Audrie Pott (Dejohn, 2014).

In these cases, which are related to the rape, production and distribution of the child pornography of two teenage girls, the perpetrators’ identities stayed concealed from the public eye, due to their underage status’ at the time of committing the crime. Additionally, the justice system handled these guilty parties’ criminal actions lightly, and their consequences did not match the committed crime at all. The judicial system has taken this act incredibly seriously that

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<sup>3</sup> Subject to the section 110. (1) No person shall publish the name of a young person, or any other information related to a young person, if it would identify the young person.

in Parson's case, even though her rapists had reached the legal age by the time they stood trial, they were still prosecuted with concealed identity because they had not reached the legal age at the time of committing the crime (Gallman & Gast, 2013; Patten, 2013). In both these cases, the highest punishment was 45 days of confinement in youth facilities (Dejohn, 2014).

However, the Youth Criminal Justice Act does not relate to immigrant and minority youths. The Toronto Star article, titled *Six Quebec teen fall to lure of jihad*, is a clear evidence that only some youths deserve to be treated as underage with identities worthy of concealment (Allen Woods, 2015, February 27). The Toronto Star's audiences observe the picture of a teenaged Shayma Senouci, which is plastered on pages A1 and A14, who left Canada to join Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Syria (figure 1.1). Just like a teenager with financial dependencies, Shayma had sold her sole asset, which is her prom dress, for \$300 to be able to pay for the expenses of her journey (ibid). She has not committed any action which provide Canadians with any proof for her Islamist and/or extremist activities. Yet, her picture which shows a scarfed woman, who mischievously looks straight into the camera and consequently in the audiences' eyes, gives an infamous portrayal of this Canadian youth.

This exposure of a teen girl, with features that represent her as a member of the ethnic minorities in Canada, is a loud and clear indication of Canada's hypocritical treatment of its citizens. In this case, the Canadian authorities, once again, overlook the possibilities of the peer pressure, the teenage rebellious action and/or the youth desire to be accepted and belong, and consider young individuals as terrorists and criminals without any evidence of any criminal activities or involvement in any extremist activities. While the native-born Canadian teenagers, whose victims and the consequences of action are physically present, were pardoned or treated lightly, due to their minor age brackets at the time of the criminal activities, teenagers, such as



Shayma, are being prosecuted without actually committing any illegal action (Gallman & Gast, 2013; Patten, 2013; *ibid*).



Figure 1.1 Advertised Image of an Immigrant

## TV shows

Unfortunately, though, literature is not the only medium that transfers the unfavourable messages about immigrants to its audiences. In many North American TV shows immigrant populations are completely ignored, even though North America is a diverse continent, and its population contains different races and nationalities. However, there are TV shows which appoint a token immigrant person to their program, as the main or a side character. Again, many of these immigrant characters are being represented in a biased or humiliating light. The misrepresentation of the immigrants and their diverse cultural background in popular media has been a notorious component of many animated or live TV shows. The most disruptive aspect of these TV shows is in their humorous nature. These shows' comical and exaggerated characteristics and simple storylines conceal the discriminatory nature of these shows.

North American TV viewers not only consume the hateful and ignorant messages spread in simplistic one liners without any opposition, but they also allow these prejudiced, so-called funny jokes dominate their viewpoints, their behaviours and their daily conversations (Willett & Willett, 2014). For example, in the popular TV series of That 70s Show (1998-2006), the viewers are introduced to a character called FEZ, which is an acronym for Foreign Exchange Student. This character is a token immigrant representation of a *foreign* person in an otherwise all *white* cast. FEZ who was from another country, which can be any country since the show did not decide upon it, is a naive person who speaks English with a thick accent. He is completely unaware of his surroundings and acts awkwardly in regard to social etiquettes. Throughout the eight years of this show, which the show and its characters go through chronologically, his lack of mastery in English causes him to misinterpret and misunderstand many social circumstances, leading to embarrassing outcomes. FEZ, whose character constantly has an unintelligent and

wide smile on his face, even misunderstands these embarrassing outcomes, which make his friends even more uncomfortable.

Then again, Raj in the popular TV series The Big Bang Theory (Lorre & Prady, 2007- ) is another awkward and embarrassing immigrant character. Raj who is an Indian immigrant, although holding a PhD degree, is incapable of speaking in the presence of women. However, when he becomes intoxicated by alcohol, Raj displays a set of *uncivilized* and *uncultured* characteristics, which are not suitable for the cultivated society of North America. Raj, who is the only non-white main character of the show, is the only one who stays single throughout the show; finally, in season 5 of this show, his friends get him a female puppy as a substitute to the girlfriend (ibid, 2012). Just like FEZ, Raj has many humiliating circumstances with misunderstanding of the English language, even though he tries excessively to use English slang.

The humiliating representation of immigrants is not limited to such stereotypical portrayal of these populations. Some TV series obtain a confused view on immigrants; these TV shows ignore the unique diversities of different ethnic backgrounds of immigrants, and categorize all minorities under one general label of *the others*. These TV shows ignorantly substitute one nationality and ethno-social background with another, based only on the geographic approximation of their countries of origin or their physical similarities. In the 74th episode of South Park, “Osama Bin Laden Has Farty Pants” (Parker, 2001), the creators apply Persian dialect, with a mixture of gibberish imitations of Arabic dialects to create the script for Bin Laden’s Arabic speaking crew. This episode of South Park relays the message of ignorance to its audiences. Based on this episode, since Persian and Arabic languages sound the same, it would be suitable enough to replace one nation’s language that is available, with another one which requires research and effort to obtain.

Sometimes, the creators of popular TV shows execute indolent and uneducated efforts to picture diversity. For instance, in the sixth episode of American Dad, called “Homeland Insecurity”, the Persian characters are featured with dark-brown skin complexion and facial features of individuals from Indian ethnic background, which is an obvious error (MacFarlane & Barker, 2005). With such misrepresentation of skin colour, this TV show shows its indifference for *others*. MacFarlane and Barker completely disregard the immigrants’ unique diversities and characteristics and categorize them under the subgroup of *international*. This collective and/or misrepresentation of immigrants not only is ignorant and misguided, but it also locates these groups in an insignificant position compared to their *cultured* North American counterparts. This point of view, disregards the individuality and uniqueness of each ethno-cultural background and introduces the immigrant population as clusters of foreign people who are disposable and replaceable. This advertised mentality encourages a lack of respect for immigrant individuals as equal members of the society, who deserve equal rights and recognition.

As Visano (2005) states, popular media through the use of violence, racism, sexism and consumerism, to name a few, shape today’s youths and create a society of consumer slaves, and is receptive to violence and aggression, which in turn not only it satisfies the media’s needs for audiences, but also nourishes the different levels of social justice. Considering this, the literature mentioned, TV shows and sitcoms all actively assume that immigrants are in fact different from the *normal* mainstream population of North America. This not only affects the emotional and mental wellbeing of the young immigrants and hinders their cultural and environmental transitions in their new host country, but also it invites hostility and bullying upon these populations since the *majority* youth population observe them as inferiors, outsiders and

unintellectual (Eamer, 2012). North American youth rationalizes bullying and abusing the immigrant youth, due to their differences and their strangeness.

### **The concealed effects of migration on youths**

The movie Spirited Away (Miyazaki & Wise, 2003) is by far the best movie which captures the covert and unnoticed effects of the migration on youths. This Eastern (Japanese) animation film pictures the struggle, invisibility and acculturation of a young person facing the new host country and its cultural values and beliefs. Although symbolic, Chihiro, the protagonist of the story, crosses the tunnel and reaches to the other side, to experience every loss that an immigrant youth goes through. Among the other hardships that Chihiro experiences, there are three losses that play the key roles in her identity transformation.

First, Chihiro's loss of her name, when the name Sen is assigned to her. Many immigrant individuals tolerate changing their names to make it easier for the members of their new host countries. Name simplification is a common action among the Iranian, Chinese, Arabic, Indian, etc. immigrants. The second change that Chihiro faces is familiar to the young members of many migrating families. Chihiro is the witness to her parents' transformation from two powerful and protective icons of her life to disrespected, uncultured and disposable pigs. Many immigrant, who have seen their parents as their ultimate idols, become silent witnesses to their parents' deteriorating power and respect. In many cases, the immigrant youths not only are required to fend for themselves, but they also need to fight their parents' battles. The last but not least loss that Chihiro experiences is the loss of her childhood and her childish carefree freedom. Similar to Chihiro, many immigrant youths experience the sudden transformation from the childhood stage

to adulthood. Persian poet, Salehi (2003), expresses that this sudden transformation is comparable to going to sleep as a seven-year-old child and waking up as a thousand years old.

### **The emotional wellbeing of immigrant youths**

To reach an aggression-free society in a diverse society such as Canada, and for the purpose of this paper a bully-free school, individuals need to eliminate irrational thoughts driven by the aggressive nature of their past neurotic experiences, which reject reasonable thoughts and “replaces [them] with coercion (internal and external), which does not allow free-will and freedom.” (Georgiou, 2011). In other words, the children’s interactions with the discriminatory circumstances and stereotypical beliefs within their families, communities or media, act as agents of external forces which lead to internal xenophobia and prejudices. The irrational social factors (external) create fear and anxiety in the individual (internal), which constrain the children’s freedom of interaction and communication and lead to neuroticism and aggression in these young individuals.

The aggression and suppressed emotions surface themselves gradually in the form of bullying and aggressive behaviours toward immigrant youth with different ethno-cultural backgrounds. An important factor in bullying prevention and anti-bullying programs is the existence and the influence of bystanders. Polanin, Espelage, and Pigott (2012) elucidate that while bullying prevention methods have the best outcome among younger youth, the bystanders’ bullying prevention methods are most effective among older youth; these methods have the highest productivity among high school students.

Choi and Cho (2013) bring a new perspective to the table. Even though the race related bullying focuses more on African and Hispanic students, 30% of Chinese students experienced

bullying and 70% of them observed bullying. Those Chinese students who have never been bullied before have an extreme fear of being bullied, so try to keep away from any bullying incidents. Therefore, one of the most vital steps, in regards to racial bullying, is to inform people about diversity, instead of the standard colour blindness. The responsible parties should equip the public with the inevitable truth: bullying needs to be controlled even when it is involving ethno-racial minorities. As Oh (2007) mentions, race and ethnicity has received very little attention in regard to bullying. However, there are even less experiments in regard to the race and ethnicity in relation to bystanders. Chinese, Latino/Latina and Native Americans recalled significantly higher levels of stress when thinking about witnessing the bullying incident, than mainstream population and individuals of African descent. This is important to mention since there might be different levels of language, accent, immigration and assimilation problems, which could make these groups separate Caucasian and African-American students (and those who are from this culture and language, regardless of the colour of their skins) from themselves.

Race and gender are two influential factors affecting people's view, perspectives and reactions in different settings (Hirdes, 2010), especially in race related bullying incidents where even the bystanders hesitate to intervene due to their avoidance of involvement in racially charged circumstances (Nelson, Dunn and Paradies, 2011). However, the minority bystanders face different prohibiting factors; in many occasion the minority bystanders avoid involvement in the bullying incident due to the fear of the bully individuals and/or the fear of invoking violence toward themselves (ibid). In the cases regarding children witnessing bullying circumstances dealing with stereotypes, such as race, ethnicity, accent, and name calling, such as racial slurs and personal insults, even though 80% of the children described their experiences as uncomfortable situations, most children justified their refusal to intervene and support the victim



with phrases such as, “none of their business” (Pepler, Hawkins and Craig, 2001, p. 513). These children, although praising the individuals who intervened in the bullying action and supported the bullied children, did not intercede themselves, due to the children’s insufficient communication skills and their unsatisfactory problem solving abilities (ibid). Pepler and colleagues (ibid) note that “school-base intervention programs” offer the children and youth the required skills to facilitate communication and intermediation skills (p. 522).

The bullying prevention research is a growing field that attracts researchers from many disciplines to itself. Many researchers choose this innovative field of study because of the novelty of the subject. It is inviting to new ideas, and it has undiscovered and unanswered angles to be explored. Moretti and Obsuth (2009) mention that North American countries spend an extensive amount of money<sup>4</sup> to rehabilitate a young individual from the life of crime to a productive member of the society. However, this expense can be decreased if the youth activists and social workers act proactively and attempt to prevent the involvement of the youngsters in the life of crime. Therefore, through addressing the youth’s problem behaviours, such as violence and bullying, and developmental shortcomings, such as parental involvement and attending on youth’s mental health, the authorities and youth-workers can try to control the number of future criminals (ibid).

Due to the modern and consumer-centered lifestyle, an extensive number of youth are in need of attention from their parents and the other people who are in charge of raising and supporting these youths. 70 to 90% of young individuals are deprived of the necessary care and supervision (ibid). Since the dyadic parent-child relationship is closely related to the decrease of aggression and insecurity in youth, there are programs, such as Connect (a 10-week program

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<sup>4</sup> Approximately \$2 million a person.

focused on the child-parent dyad), which seeks to deal with these dyadic relationships. However, the question is the accessibility of these programs to the immigrant families, considering the language barrier, their unfamiliarity about the system and what it offers, and the long hours of unspecialized jobs, due to their migration and the depreciation of their credentials (Walsh, Brigham & Wang, 2011; Man, 2004). Considering the effects that parental communication, supervision and attachment has on children's emotional security, their dissociation with aggression and their healthy future lifestyle (Moretti & Obsuth, 2009), makes one wonder about the future of immigrant families' children, whose migration separates them from their parents and distances them from each other emotionally, physically and culturally (Bohr & Tse, 2009).

One of the more effective anti-bullying programs, which was designed and launched in Canada, is called Stop Now and Plan (SNAP). This program, which experimented on a sample of 949 Canadian participants (570 boys and 379 girls) between the years 2001 to 2009, trained children to stop and think before acting in an aggressive manner, when they desire to act aggressively (Jiang, Walsh & Augimeri, 2011). Furthermore, SNAP teaches parents and school personnel to facilitate children's behavioural transformation. SNAP, which started as a gender neutral program, turned to become gender specific since 1996, and has been tailored to address unique gender needs (ibid). This research, similar to a lot of other research mentioned in this paper (Cappadocia, Weiss & Pepler, 2012; Connolly, Nocentini, Menesini, Pepler, Craig & Williams, 2010; McKenney, Pepler, Craig & Connolly, 2006; Pepler, Connolly, Craig & Jiang, 2011; Pepler, Craig, Yuile & Connolly, 2004), focuses on some specific characteristics of the youths, such as gender and age, but they all overlook some of the most influencing socio-cultural characteristics of the populations, such as race, ethnicity and immigrant status.

The racially and culturally biased sampling and data collecting are not the only shortcomings of the bullying awareness and bullying prevention movements. The lack of representation of minority youths in the anti-bullying advertisements excludes the minority youth from this movement, and the refusal to investigate the bullying possibilities in the fatal cases among minority youths, immigrants included, disregards section 15 of The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Based on this section, “every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.” (ibid)

In this chapter, I reviewed the experiences an immigrant youth undergoes in her/his host country. Here, I criticized the misrepresentation of the immigrants in multimedia and literature, and explained how these misrepresentations affect an immigrant youth’s self-worth, identity formation and emotional wellbeing negatively. In the next chapter, I will analyze a series of picture advertisements from three anti-bullying organizations, as well as examining the newspaper articles reporting the cases involving bullying related suicides and peer-related homicides among youths.

### **Chapter 3: Findings and discussions**

Advertisement, multimedia and news outlets have portrayed youth's bullying, and the bullying related suicides, as an issue concerning members of the white culture. Most advertisements represent pictures of white, able bodied, fit, and in one word *normal* subjects. In some cases, however, the audience sees a few black or Chinese youths added to the advertisements to satisfy their quota of minorities. These token minority youth, though, are extremely white-washed, and their make-up, their clothing and their expressions are other representations of the White culture. The questions which stay highlighted here are: where are the ethno-socio-cultural minorities? Where are the representations of the psychological and/or physical differently-abled minorities? Where are the immigrants?

#### **Pictures as the Main Sources of the Advertisement**

*“Look and you will find it - what is unsought will go undetected”*

*Sophocles*

#### **Visual content analysis**

Through the use of visual content analysis, I decode and interpret the selected pictures with anti-bullying messages, which represent and advertise for the bullying prevention organizations in North America. These pictures are intended to carry messages against bullying to the individuals in our society, both adults and youth/children. These pictures are also designed to help the pioneers in this field to control this damaging phenomenon. Even though the action of

bullying has always been practiced and people are familiar with the term of bullying, the long lasting and harmful effects this action has on people's lives has stayed unknown and unnoticed. Some people even consider bullying as a "normal part of growing up" (Johnson, 2014, p.11).

Roland Barthes (1978) explains that despite the common perception about the objectivity of images, to which Barthes refers as a "message without the code," each photograph carries a deeply rooted message of its photographer's "style" and "culture" (p. 17). Through these photographs, the photographer communicates her/his message and point of view to her/his audiences (ibid). For the purpose of this paper, the pictured advertisements are some campaigns' primary source to communicate their main message to the lay audiences: Bullying Hurts. Contrary to my expectations, however, only a limited number of bullying prevention organizations have chosen the option of advertisement via pictures and photography.

As Erving Goffman (1959) explain, every person has an intention to present her/himself in a desired manner. The individual, therefore, poses, behaves and interacts in a certain manner to convey the anticipated persona for her/himself to other social cohabitants. Every advertisement, image advertisements for the purpose of this thesis, can be explained through Goffman's idea of *presentation of self* (ibid). However, Goffman's idea requires a minor alteration regarding this presentation: in advertisements the creator of the image dictates the message and the body postures that she/he intends others perceive from the image's actors. However, in motionless images, such as picture advertisements used for this research, the creation of the desired presentation becomes limited. Therefore, the creator of each advertisement carefully stages the surroundings of their actors to communicate their precise messages to the audiences.

In this section, I focus on three organizations that have chosen to reach out to their audiences through exhibiting the picture-advertisements. These three organizations are Stop a Bully, Kids Help Phone, and Jaguar Educational's Bullying Hurts Series. Through this decoding of visual advertisements, I hermeneutically study the subjective interpretations each picture transfers to its audiences. I will, also, accentuate the lack of representation of the immigrant population in the anti-bullying movement, through the application of these advertisements. Moreover, I will present a series of posters initiated by a campaign called *Create Your Own Poster* that are designed and created by some minorities and immigrant youth. I discuss in detail how this singular advertising project demonstrates the minority youth's desire to be heard and represented. I choose three advertisements from each bullying prevention organization to allow inclusion of the organizations with limited number of advertising pictures, such as Kids Helpline.

### ***Stop a Bully Campaign***

Figure 2.1: Bullying is not OK in our school!

In the first glance, this picture represents a girl who is sitting alone and crying. Based on the message of the advertisement, the audience interprets that this girl has been the victim of bullying. But, what are the other messages hidden in this picture relayed to its viewers? The girl in the picture is sitting with her face covered, however her white hands and blond hair make it known that she is white. Her covered face sends out the message that she can be any white girl, which makes the picture more sympathetic and relatable for the white female youth. The bullied girl is clothed in a big black jacket and black running shoes. Her big black jacket, which the girl is wrapped in, makes the girl's sorrow even darker to the audience. The use of the black clothing, in this picture, and the negative and heavy characteristics which are attributed to the black

colour, create a distinguishable contrast with the innocent and fragile whiteness of the bullied girl's attributes. The girl's skinny jeans, which cover her slim legs, is another element which makes the girl even more representative and thus relatable to average girls with Eurocentric background. Considering these aspects, the picture exhibits to its audience that this girl can represent any teenaged girl as long as she is not Black, Indian, Afghan, Arab, Chinese, fat or an individual with disabilities.

The empty corridor of the school with the long line of lockers, all pad locked, relay a message of hopelessness, isolation and loneliness to its audiences. Even though the viewer sees a partial chair in the background, the young girl chose to sit on the floor, which is another affirmation to the girl's depressive state. The girl is too depressed to consider any elevated position or seat for herself. This conveys the message of mental distress that follows bullying. The white corridor, white background and white florescent lights on the ceiling gives the picture a sense of sterilized atmosphere, in which the young girl exists alone.

Figure 2.2: Don't be a bully bystander!

This poster portrays a lonely boy, with his face hidden between his arms and elbows. The boy, who is represented with the light-coloured hair and white hands, elucidates the European background of the bullied to the advertisement's audiences. The young boy is clothed in a black pair of pants and black pair of shoes, which convey a sense of heaviness and tiredness to the viewers (Turner, 2013). The black clothing, which has a negative connotation, has covered the boy and separated him from the otherwise light grey surrounding. This communicates the message of isolation and loneliness. The ordinary appearance of the boy, wearing standard and conventional clothing initiates a sense of sympathy and relatedness, toward the bullied young boy, from the white and middle-class male youth. These audiences with characteristics similar to

the portrayed bullied boy associate themselves with him and identify themselves with the victim (Lawrence, Fournier & Brunel, 2013; Chang, 2014).

The boy, positioned in the corner of two attached brick walls, instigates the interpretation of being entrapped in a confined space without any chance to exit. From the audience's point of view, the brick walls are vast/unlimited, both in height and in length, since the walls cover the entire background of the picture. The entrapment relays the message of helplessness and isolation to young male audiences who share similar characteristics with the bullied, which stimulates a sense of sympathy with the bullied boy in them. This interpretation and sympathetic feelings might reduce bullying against the white middle-class students with normative and ordinary physical appearances (ibid). What would then assist the minority youth who do not correspond to this clear-cut specifications?

The background of the photo, though bright, is grey and dirty covered with gravel and broken stones. The position of the boy among these uneven and uncomfortable materials conveys a sense of discomfort to the viewer, which follows the message of the poster that is intended to discourage being a bystander. The audiences of this advertisement interpret the pain and the desperation of the young boy in the picture and associate themselves with him. The boy has a generic appearance, dressed in an ordinary fashion of any North American youth, such as jeans, running shoes and a hoodie. The position of the boy's feet is another communicative factor in this picture. The boy's feet are not aligned with each other; while one of his feet is lined up in front of his body, the other foot is pointed away from the restraining corner, to show his intention to walk away, but seems trapped and stuck in the broken stones and gravel on the ground. This image of entrapment creates a sense of vulnerability and helplessness in the advertisement's audiences.



Figure 2.3: Spreading rumors is bullying!

In this poster, before everything, the audiences notice the gaze of the camera. Without any explanation, the audience interprets the message of the picture, and easily distinguishes who the bullied is and who represent the bullies. Here, the bullied young girl looks straight out to the eyes of her audiences; her existence in the picture is clear, sharp and focused. The representations of the bullies, on the other hand, are blurry, fading and out-of-focus. For avoiding any confusion, I will name the three girls in the picture as follows: the girl who is central and clear in the picture is the bullied girl; the girl with blond hair and the blue t-shirt, in the background, is bully number 1; and, the girl with black hair wearing a grey sweater is bully number 2.

First, the bullied girl, with white skin and blond hair, attracts the viewer's glance before she/he notices anything else. The bullied girl represents any girl who exhibits typical feminine gender roles. She is wearing a pink shirt and clutching a pink binder to her chest as tightly as possible. She is wearing a light make-up and her hair is perfectly and carefully arranged. Then again, she is carrying a black backpack; the audience sees the black straps of her backpack wrapped around her shoulders. The black backpack interprets the black burden this girl carries on her back. The blackness of the backpack is accentuated in the presence of the colour contrast existing between the straps, covering the girl's shoulders, and her choice of colour in her attire and accessories. This girl has a straight gaze into the camera, which creates a sense of inclusion in the audiences (Wirth, Sacco, Hugenberg & Williams, 2010). The sense of inclusion creates a positive emotion in audiences so that they regard this girl in a more favourable light (ibid).

Second, the bully number 1 has white skin, blond hair and is wearing a blue shirt and pair of jeans. The girl is angled away from the bullied girl, while her sideway gaze is fixated on her.

The distance of the bully number 1 from the camera, her angled position to the gaze of the audience and her unclear picture create a sense of discomposure and mistrust in the audiences (Li, Barkowsky, Wang & Le Callet, 2011). The mistrust coupled with the anti-bullying caption lead the audience to believe this girl to be the bully. This girl's choice in clothing is not feminine. Despite the colour pink, which culturally has been established to be the feminine colour, the colour blue of the bully number 1 shirt is the stereotyped colour for boys (Nova, 1980). Also, she holds a black book tightly in her arms, and her upper body is hunched over the black book; bully number 1's posture locates the black book in a central position of her physical being. The image of the bully number 1 holding the black book to her chest represents her as a dark hearted person, considering the unconscious, long history of association a black book with black magic and cursed witches (Simsone, 2014). Moreover, even though the bully number 1 is blurry and unclear in the picture, her indirect gaze attracts the viewer's attention, which represents her as a dishonest and untrustworthy person (Wirth et al., 2010; Wesselmann & Williams, 2013).

Third, the bully number 2 is the most indistinct and the blurriest figure in this advertisement. She is the only person, among three, who has black hair and her hair covers half of her face. Even though completely blurry and out of focus, her covered face relays the message of dishonesty to the audiences and indicates that bully number 2 is hiding something. Furthermore, bully number 2 is the only one who is not holding anything, although her hands are curled in front of her chest as if she has something in her arms. The bully number 2, is wearing a grey sweater; according to Madden, Hewett, and Roth (2000) the colour grey indicates passivity and inaction. She is clothed in a black shirt underneath her grey sweater, which the audience only sees some cloudy parts of. It represents the hidden darkness that the bully number 2 is wearing under her docile and passive attitude. Moreover, her long-sleeve sweater covers her arms

entirely, in comparison to the short sleeve shirts the other two girls are wearing. The bully number 2's black hair colour, her long sleeved sweater, and the passive colour of her sweater, in an otherwise colourful picture, attract unfavourable attention to herself, regardless of her unclear existence.

Stop a Bully Campaign Posters



Figure 2.1. Bullying Is Not OK in Our School



Figure 2.2. Don't Be a Bully Bystander



Figure 2.3. Spreading Rumours Is Bullying



## ***Kids Help Phone***

Figure 2.4: The worst part of the day is trying to...

This advertisement portrays a white girl with brown hair colour, sitting with her back resting on a grey stone wall and her knees gathered to her chest. Her body posture is hunched with her shoulders drooped, and her head is bent to one side and resting on her hand. Her eyes are looking down and she has a textbook case of sad expression on her face (Tian, Kanade & Cohn, 2011). Her hair, though away from her face, looks messy and unmaintained. She has a button-down black sweater on and a pair of jeans; this young girl can be any North American girl. The wall behind her is solid and rough, with the occasional cement patch filling the gaps. Her black sweater has a pattern of holes on it, through which the audience sees her white skin. The message of “the worst part of the day is trying to get up enough courage to go to school”, informs the viewers about this girl’s depression, fear and lack of motivation to go to school.

Figure 2.5: My name and picture was posted all over...

In this picture, the audience sees a Eurocentric boy with a dark coloured hoodie, the outline of which grabs the audience’s attention. At the first moment this outline seems like a shadowy and dark covering of the boy’s body. The boy is wearing a pair of glasses and only half of his face is visible to the gaze of the camera. He has a white complexion, with light brown hair, or possible blond hair, and his head is resting heavily on his hand; his long fingernails attract the viewers’ attention. The only light, in the otherwise dark room originates from a hidden computer screen, which let the viewers see the boy’s partial face, hand and a silhouette of his body. Even though the observer does not see the computer’s screen, the familiar glare of the screen and the partial reflection of the blue picture in the boy’s glasses make the screen evident to the audience. This representation of the screen and the message which accompanying the picture “my name

and picture was posted all over”, make it clear to the audience that the boy suffers from cyber bullying. The second part of this advertisement’s message “I felt horrible,” lets the audience know about his negative feeling loud and clear, rather than the application of the symbolic words or pictures.

Figure 2.6: Being there for kids

This advertisement is contained of eight smaller vertical pictures. The first four are partial pictures of young individual faces, and each picture of the second set of four pictures shows a parent and a toddler. The first four vertical pictures have a greyish blue colour with a white caption of “KIDS HELP PHONE”, completed by a symbol of a white heart linked to a white phone by a transparent hand. This half of the picture, however, is juxtaposed with the second half of the picture, which has a reddish grey shade. The white caption on this half reads “PARENT *help line*”, which is completed with a white circle composed of two transparent hands. For representing this picture perfectly, I discuss each vertical picture separately; I assign numbers 1 through 8 to the picture from left to right.

The first picture is a partial face and neck of a boy with European facial features. Although it has shades of grey, the boy’s facial freckles are visible. The boy’s head is tilted to one side and the audience sees only one of his eyes, but his gaze is straight into the camera. The contrast of the colour between his pupil and iris is an indication of his light eye colour. His light and curly hair is noticeable in the very top of the picture.

The second picture portrays a girl, who has white complexion with contrasting dark hair. The audience sees her face and a portion of her body. She is wearing a white shirt with black design around her neck and on the upper part of her shoulder, as far as the viewer can observe. The black colour on her shoulder transfers a sense of heaviness to the audience (Turner, 2013).



The black neckline of her shirt separates her head and her body (her mind and her heart) from each other. Her head is tilted and her gaze is downward.

The third picture shows a young boy, who is standing with his side to the camera. Although the audience sees his face from one side, the boy's complexion and hair colour is inconclusive. His picture has the darkest grey in comparison with the other three pictures of the head is dropped and his gaze is down, as if he is looking on the floor in front of him. He is clothed in a dark, possibly grey, sweater with black vertical lines on its chest and a thin white line runs around its collar. He has a white t-shirt under his sweater, which its neck portion is visible to the audience from above the sweater's dark colour. The black line on his sweater (which the audience sees a portion of it at the very bottom of the picture) represents the darkness he carries on his heart, while the white colour of his undershirt shows his innocence hidden under his sadness.

The fourth picture shows a white young girl staring into the camera, with her chin rested on the palm of her hand, which is visible partially to the audiences. Her hair is very light, possibly blonde, and her eyes have a lighter colour as the iris seems transparent around her black pupils. According to the partial picture of her hand and forearm, this girl is wearing a light-coloured shirt with tight sleeves coming down to her mid-forearm.

In the first set of pictures, the first and the fourth pictures have the lightest complexions and eye colours. Their freckled faces and their almost invisible eyebrows are evidence for their European background. These two children look straight into the camera, as they have nothing to hide. Their faces, although angled, convey a message of confidence in their innocence and martyrhood. In the second picture, the girl with dark hair does not look into the camera. Her eyes are looking downward which affects negatively on her likeability by the advertisement's audiences

(Wirth, Sacco, Hugenberg & Williams, 2010). Her downward glance creates the feeling of discomfort and rejection in the audiences (ibid). The third picture, however, creates the least likeability and comfort in the viewer. The picture with the darkest shade of grey portrays the young boy who has the darkest complexion, in comparison to the other three youths, and he is the farthest from the camera. In this picture not only his sideways posture and his completely downward glance portrays withdrawal (ibid) and unreceptivity (Willis, Palermo & Burke, 2011), but also the subject's distance from the camera creates a "visual discomfort" in the viewer (Li, Barkowsky, Wang & Le Callet, 2011, p. 7).

Based on Li and colleagues (2011), when the observer looks at the four pictures, discussed above, first, second and fourth portrayed children maintain the same approximation from the camera, while the boy in the picture three is located deeper in the picture. The viewer's eye movement and adjustment between the two set of distances creates a physical discomfort in the viewer, which affects her/his subjective feeling toward the picture and what it is representing (ibid). Considering these evidences, the young boy with the least Eurocentric characteristics, among the four youths, receives the least emotional congeniality and relatability, due to the representation of this picture separately and in relation to others.

The fifth picture is a picture of mother sitting outside on a bench, in front of a building with her child, possibly her son, standing next to her with her/his back to the camera. Based on the shadows of the mother and the child, the audience observes that it is a sunny day. Sunny weather and bright day generates the feeling of happiness and optimism in the audiences, which affect their likeability toward the picture and its atmosphere (Quoidbach & Dunn, 2010). The mother has tied back her blond hair, and she is wearing a loose dark colour shirt, a well-fitted and practical pair of white pants and a pair of comfortable boots. She is positioned with her

whole body facing the camera, although her head and face is turned to her child to whom she has dedicated her full attention. Although her body seems grounded, her hands, while resting on her thighs, are on-guard. The child, who has her/his back to the camera, has blond hair and is wearing a dark shirt.

The sixth picture a mother with light hair and skin tone. She has her back to the camera entirely, while she is pushing her child's stroller. She is dressed in a pair of white loose shorts and a white short-sleeved top. She seems like a working woman with her dark-coloured carrier leather bag hanging from her shoulders on her back. The viewer only sees the child's feet from inside the stroller. The shadows in the picture suggest a sunny day, and the mother's clothing signify a warm summer day.

The seventh picture is representing a father holding his baby to his chest. The father has white complexion and dark hair. He is wearing a pair of glasses and a white short sleeved button-down shirt. The baby, who has white skin and blond hair, is wrapped in a white blanket. The father's shadow cast upon the baby's head and face represents a sunny day. The observer sees the father's partial face, since his head is turned away from the camera toward the child. Also, his partial arm is exposed to the camera while it is holding the baby close to his body. It seems as the father's body is entirely in service to serve and protect the baby.

The eighth picture shows the partial face and forearm of a father holding his toddler against his upper torso. The toddler is facing the camera with her/his back to the father's chest. The father is clothed in a dark coloured sweater with white horizontal stripes on his chest and white neck and shoulder design. His partial face at the upper right corner of the picture appears to be calm and attentive toward the toddler in his arms. His partial forearm is holding the

toddler's body onto his own. The toddler has a white face and blond hair; he is dressed in a dark sweater, looks straight into the camera.

The second half of the advertisement, containing pictures five to eight, portrays devoted parents with their young children. The dark element in each picture is specifically noteworthy. In the fifth picture the mother is wearing a dark sweater (in comparison with her white pants), which contrasts her otherwise light colour attire and complexion. The dark article of clothing and accessory repeats in the sixth picture as the dark bag (in comparison with her white dress) hanging from the mother's back, and again in picture eight as the dark sweater the father is wearing. These dark articles of clothing and accessories can be the weight of the responsibilities each parent handle in the process of raising and caring for their children. For example, the first mother, whose child is the oldest of the four, wears a dark top, which represents the tired upper body. The second mother is having the weight of the carrier on her shoulders and her back, representing the stress of her working life. The second father's dark sweater represents his tiredness, then again the white stripes on his upper chest and around his neck and shoulder represent the lightness of his heart and shoulders (Turner, 2013). Interestingly though, the first father (third parent), in the seventh picture, who is the only parent with dark hair does not have any dark article of clothing or accessories. In each picture, the dark coloured physical possession represents the liability, tiredness and weight on the wearer or the carrier of the dark colour. Based on my interpretation of these sets of images, I encountered the following questions. Is the dark hair considered as liability for the father in the seventh picture, and if not, why he is the only one without the dark article of clothing? Is the picture sending out the message that this father takes it more easily than the other Eurocentric parents? Finally, where is the diversity among the parents who protect their children from the cruelty of the outside world?

Kids Help Phone Posters



Figure 2.4. The Worst Part of the Day Is To



Figure 2.5. My Name and Picture Were Posted All Over



Figure 2.6. Being There for Kids

### ***Bullying Hurts: Anti-bullying Guidance Poster Series<sup>5</sup>***

Figure 2.7: Weak people bully others.

In this picture, the viewer sees five smiling young individuals, three women and two men, standing side-by-side, while the background represents a sunny autumn day. The three girls are carefully dressed, and their hairs and makeups are carefully tended. All three faces are partially concealed by their hair. All three women are clothed in different styles of skinny jeans, tightly wrapped around their legs and every one of them is wearing a light coloured top: the first girl is wearing a bright pink shirt and a jean jacket, the second girl has a white shirt under a light green sleeveless sweater, and the third young woman is clothed in a white long-sleeved shirt, under a white short-sleeved poncho. These three girls are physically thin, and based on the North American social norms and standards, are considered attractive (Mischner, van Schie & Engels, 2013). All three girls have a light complexion and long brown hair which is scattered on their shoulders fashionably. The two girls standing on the both sides of the group are holding colourful binders in their arms, while the girl in the middle is wearing a colourful scarf wrapped around her neck.

All three women, although gazing straight into the camera, have their necks angled and their heads tilted to a side, which is perceived as a submissive attitude, in comparison to their male counterparts, who hold their heads high and straight toward the camera (Mignault & Chaudhuri, 2003; Henley, 1973). The back of the neck and the hair of the woman with the red binder is held by the young man standing next to her. The woman with yellow binder is the only

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<sup>5</sup> Jaguar Educational Canada website ([jaguared.ca](http://jaguared.ca)) designs and distributes a variety of motivational and preventing posters and banners, anti-bullying posters included, to schools all around Canada.

person with both her hands visible, since she does not hold the back of the person next to her, but she is held tightly around the waist by the young man next to her. All three young women stand with their legs crossed and tightly pressed against each other, compared to their male counterparts, who are standing with their legs separated and away from each other. In total, the women in this poster exhibit a closed body gesture with the two on the sides having even their arms and hands drawn toward the center of their bodies. On the other hand, the male individuals of this picture are standing straight, centered and grounded. They both are dressed in blue tops and jean pants. The taller young man, with an extremely short hair, is wearing a dark blue loose hoodie and his jeans are loose and worn-out. The other young man is wearing a checkered combination of different shades of blue on top of a white t-shirt. He has a pair of blue headphone around his neck and his hair is brushed away from his face leaving his face wide open. Neither of the young men nor their clothing would be considered stylish, sharp or even fit, based on social standards. This picture not only has portrayed the dominant culture's youths, but it also has represented the stereotypical traditional North American gender roles (Fiske, 2012). This picture visualizes the harmony and happiness for the youths who follow their socially constructed stereotypes and gender roles (ibid).

Figure 2.8: Don't be mean behind the screen.

This poster portrays a girl with Chinese ethno-cultural background, but she has dressed and is made up based on the Western standards. The girl's whitewashed appearance does not represent any North American youth, rather than a member of any minority group. Although, the combination of her stylish short black hair and her fashionable black glasses remind the viewers of the sketched anime characters. The girl's face is heavily made-up; her complexion is whitened, and she is wearing thick black eyeliner and pink lipstick. She is clothed in a dark loose



short-sleeved sweater and holding her black-covered cellphone in her hand. She is in a sitting position with her upper body leaning on a white table in front of her, which the viewer only sees a small portion of. Her forearms are resting on the table, and her free hand is leaning against her face. The girl is surrounded by bright lights located behind her and on the ceiling, which although out of focus, attract the audiences' attention to the background. The girl's position is angled to the left of the camera and her head and upper body is slanted toward down. The position of the young girl in this picture and her melting gesture, under the bright lights of the technology, takes the urgency away from the girl and transfers a sense of confusion, weakness and hopelessness to the picture's observers. However, there is a question that stands lingering in midair. Do the stereotypes, such as relating Chinese individuals to the technology, have any influence on the choice of a Chinese girl for this advertisement, or was this choice just an unconscious and unaware decision?

Figure 2.9: Stop bullying.

In this poster, the audience observes an ordinary and everyday young girl, who is sitting on a cement floor while her back is leaning on a plywood wall behind her. Her knees are pulled into her chest, and her head is resting on them. Her arms are around her knees and she is holding a fetal position. She has a slender and petite figure. The viewer sees a glance of a pink cellphone cover in her hand, while she has another black object, which resembles cellphone, in her jeans' back pocket. She is wearing a t-shirt and a pair of skinny jeans, and her grey and black sneakers grab the viewer's attention. Her brown hair is cut and highlighted stylishly, but it looks messy and untended, as her hair falls around her face and knees untidily. There is a rough and uneven gap between the cement floor and the plywood wall, where she is sitting. There is a cement pillar rising next to her which separates her from the background of the poster. This picture represents

a sense of absolute loneliness and isolation for the audiences. The girl's cement surrounding, which confines her away from the world creates a sense of empathy and devastation in the observers (Griese & Buhs, 2014).

Bullying Hurts: Anti-bullying Guidance Poster Series



Figure 2.7. Weak People Bully Others



Figure 2.8. Don't Be Mean behind the Screen

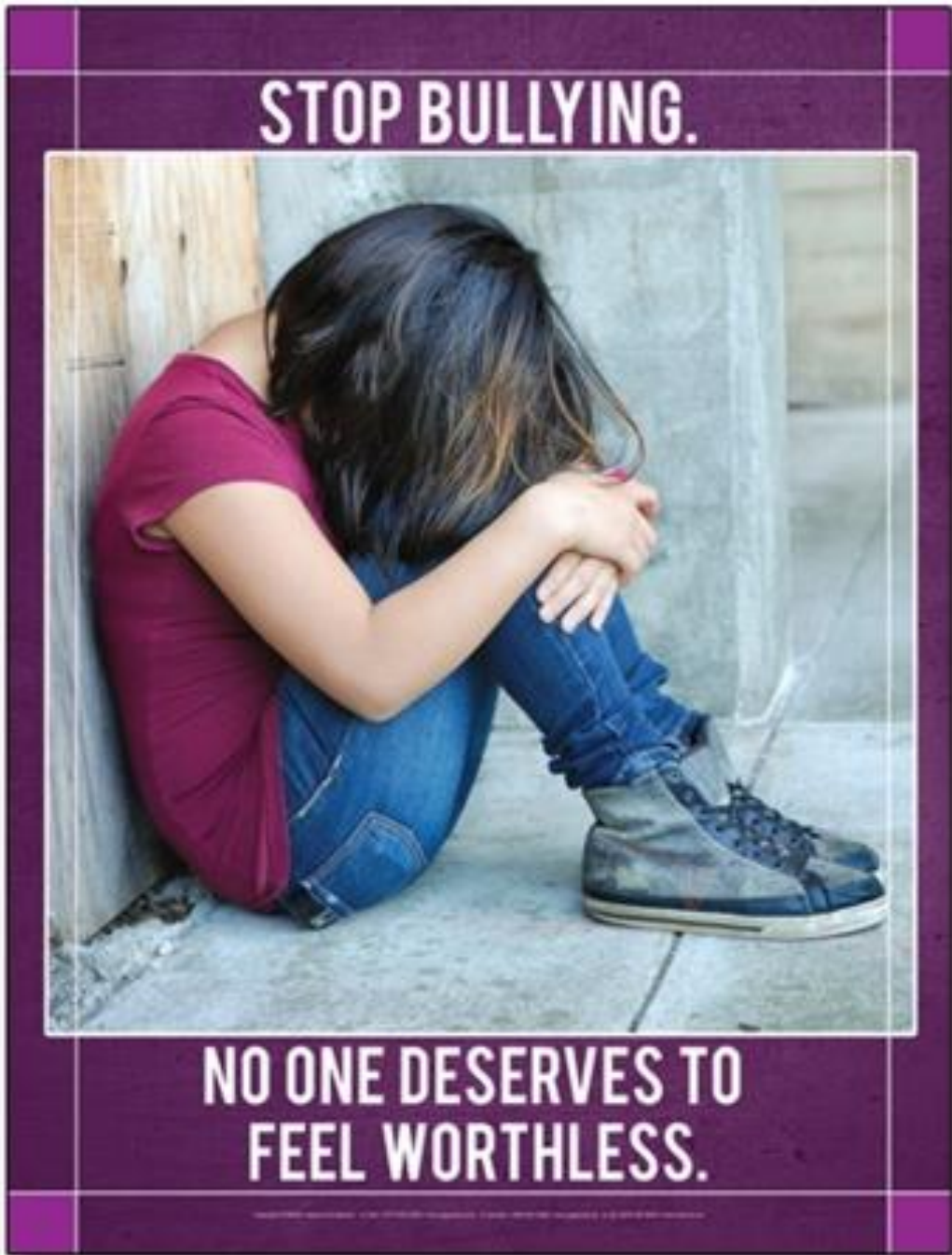


Figure 2.9. Stop Bullying

### ***STARS: Create Your Own Campaign Poster***

In an attempt to give minority youth a voice to express their view and standpoint on the subject of bullying, a North American group commenced a campaign called Students Teaching Against Racism in Society (STARS) (Rivas, 2011). Through this campaign, a group of immigrant youth, courageously, show their dissatisfaction and disappointment toward the stereotyped and fixed characteristics they acquired in North America. These posters show that there is an issue in regard to stereotyping and bullying on minority and immigrant youth, which is in need of addressing. Also, researchers in the bullying field should take the challenge and give the increasing population of immigrant youths a channel to express their concern in regard to the treatment they receive from their peers and counterparts.

Figure 2.10: We are a culture, not a costume.

A youth with Japanese ethno-cultural background is wearing a black top, a black wristband and a black and red necklace. Her long black hair is resting on her shoulders and she is holding a picture of a Geisha. Geishas are trained Japanese hostesses and female entertainers who entertain men from *elite* social level (Dalby, 2008). The young girl stands straight in front of the camera, with her head tilted toward the ground and her eyes lowered. The averted gaze transfers the girl's feeling of ostracization and "relational devaluation", due to cultural stereotypes to the audience (Wirth, Sacco, Hugenberg & Williams, 2010).

Figure 2.11: We are a culture, not a costume.

A youth with Mexican background, with short black hair, black t-shirt and a silver-colour chain and round pendant, is holding a picture. This animated picture shows a man wearing a Mexican poncho and a hat, while sitting on a fake donkey. It seems the donkey and the man are merged into each other from lower half of their bodies in a way that the donkey's legs are human

legs. In this poster the boy looks straight into the camera with a sad impression on his face (Tian, Kanade & Cohn, 2011). The boy's sad facial expression transfers the sense of sadness to the audiences, since sadness is one of the most relatable facial expression (Wrede, Ask & Strömwall, 2015).

Figure 2.12: We are a culture, not a costume.

This shows a young man with a button-down dark colour shirt and a white undershirt, with its neckline showing. His face has a sad and disappointed expression, while his tearful eyes gaze straight into the camera. He is holding a picture of a Saudi man in dishdasha (traditional Arabic men's attire) and keffiyeh (traditional Arabic men's headscarf), and he is wearing a homemade bomb strapped around his immense waist (Alafi, Irtameh, Alkayed, & Mohammad, 2013). The boy's "teary eyes" conveys the strong sense of sadness to the audience; audiences recognize a face as sad when it has tearful eyes, even if it has an ambiguous facial expression (Provine, Cabrera & Nave-Blodgett, 2013, 127).

These youth-made advertisements need to be considered as youths' cry for help against systematic ethnic bullying (Elamé, Bassani, Stefani & Darjo, 2013). On the one hand, the immigrant youths deal with ethnic bullying in their everyday lives, on the other hand, they are witness to the dismissive attitude that anti-bullying organizations and activists have toward them. These youths are left alone to fend for themselves.



STARS: Create Your Own Campaign Poster

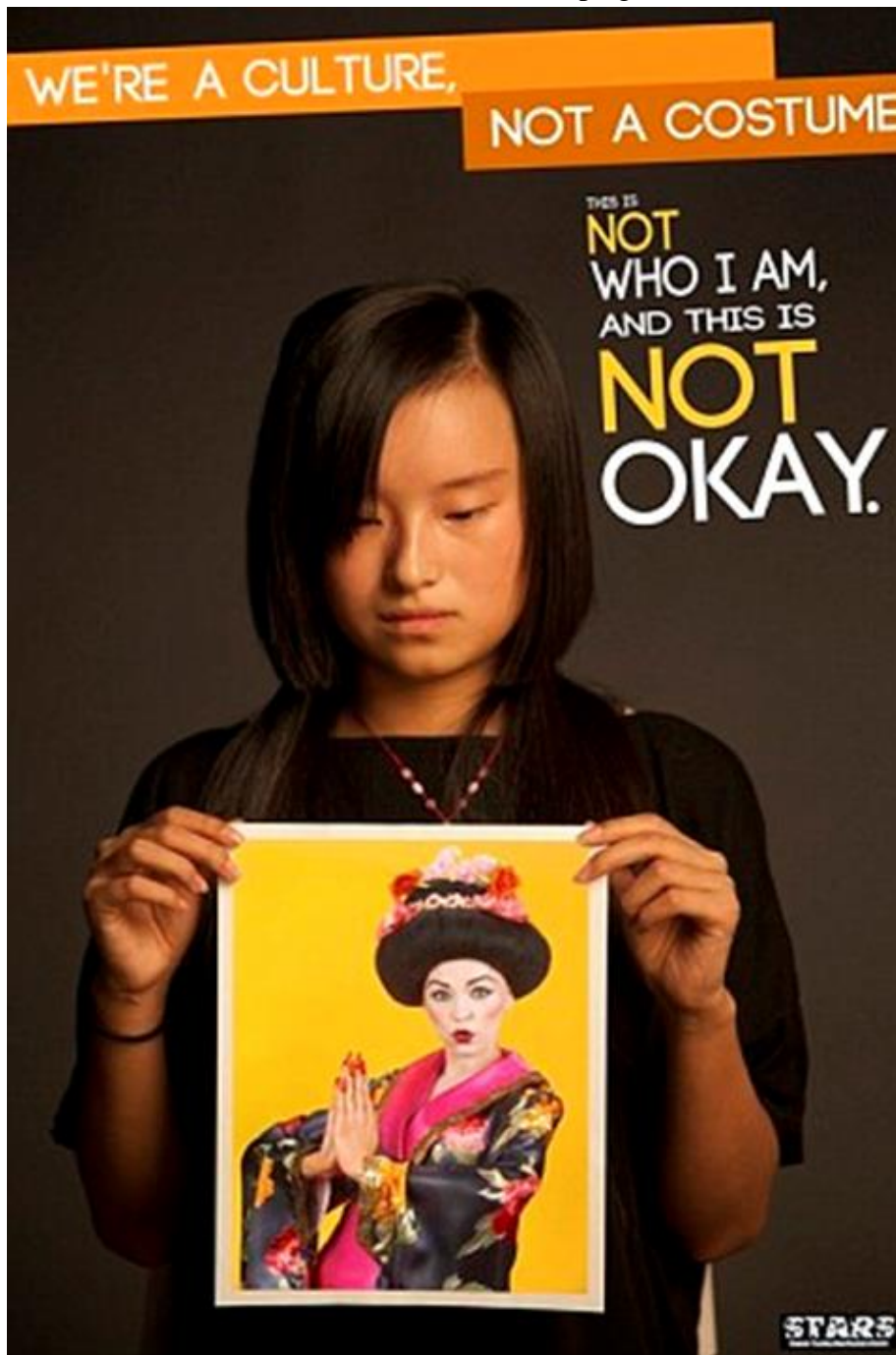


Figure 2.10. We Are a Culture, Not a Costume



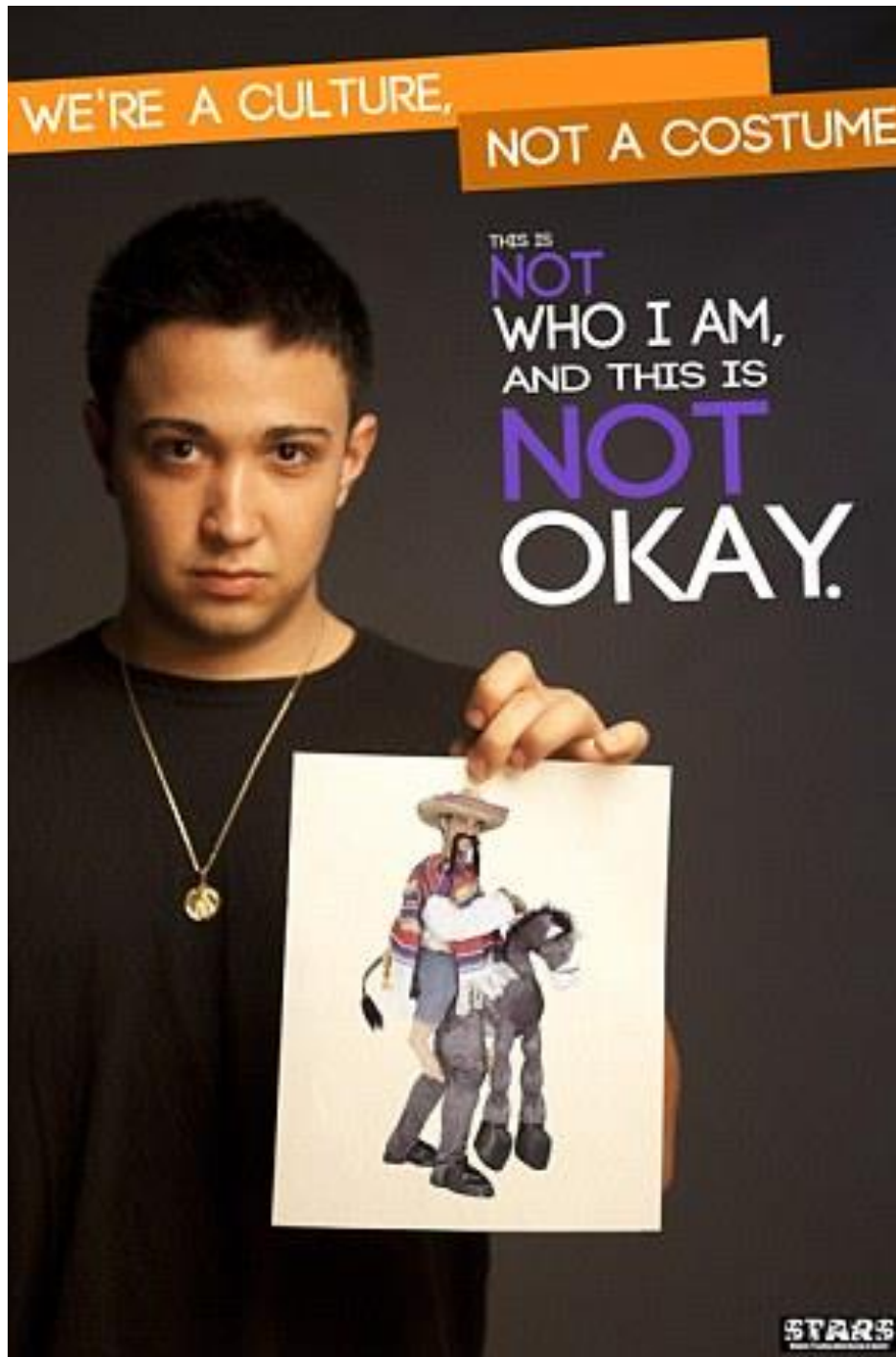


Figure 2.11. We Are a Culture, Not a Costume

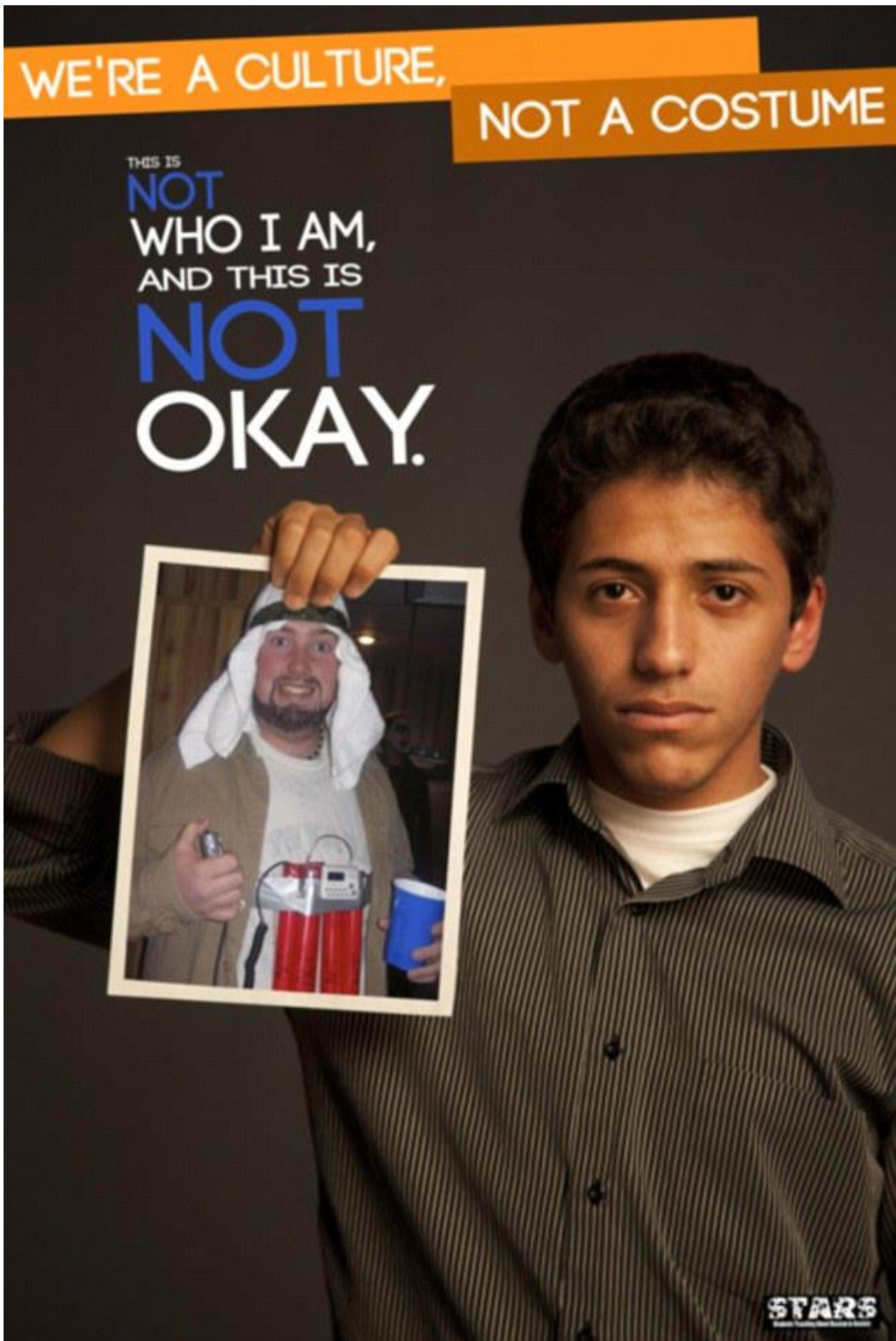


Figure 2.12. We Are a Culture, Not a Costume



Figure 2.13. The Reaction to the STARS' Campaign

### **The reaction of mainstream population to the anti-bullying outreach**

The mainstream population showed an unexpected negative response to these pictures and ridiculed them. Suddenly, the youth and adult populations of the North American white culture flooded the internet with comic replicas of these posters (Figure 2.13). This case provides bullying activists with evidence which disproves and rejects Olweus' research and finding on the irrelevance between the immigrant status and bullying (Olweus & Limber, 2007). The charade, which answered these youth's attempt to voice their complaint, is a classic case of cyber bullying. This is not the first occasion on which people have made a mockery out of others' cries for help. Amanda Todd made a video a month before she committed suicide, which she presented through a series of pleading messages which were written on Q-cards, and broadcast via the YouTube channel. Amanda Todd's silent scream was transformed to become a fun and creative activity for other youths. They imitated Amanda's video with their own created Q-cards and ridiculed Amanda's pain.

### **The outcome of this visual content analysis**

Roland Barthes (1977) explains the inseparable unity of the photographic and linguistic elements of any message. The image and the words form a new hybrid message, which travels through the channels of communication between the source of a message and the audiences and recipients of the message (ibid). The poster advertisements are examples of the hybrid messages, which transfer the statement to the audiences more effectively than either the image or the text separately. In this chapter, every poster is designed and processed by the researchers and activists in the bullying prevention/anti-bullying organizations. Then, these organizations distribute the

carefully created advertisements through different channels to communicate with the youth audiences who are vulnerable to this social risk. However, the bullying awareness organizations disregard the importance of the social element in Barthes' system (ibid). These organizations overlook the diversity of the youth audiences to whom they reach out, and this neglect encumbers their views on their audiences. The creators of these advertisements ignore that their audiences are diverse based on their past social and cultural experiences.

Since a generic message can be translated and understood differently by people from different social, ethnical, political and ideological backgrounds, it is amateurish to assume a generically designed advertisement, which is directed toward the Eurocentric North Americans, would suffice to address the multicultural, multiracial and multinational society of this continent. The choice of the model in the mainstream anti-bullying advertisements creates sympathy for a specific type of victim of this social phenomenon (Lawrence, Fournier & Brunel, 2013; Chang, 2014). These victims share physical characteristics of a mediocre Eurocentric North American youth, such as light complexion, light hair colour, casual clothing, and socially acceptable thin body type.

The creators of these advertisements, however, are aware of the specificity of their choice for their audiences. In some cases, the advertisements and their messages become even more evidently directed towards specific audiences. For example, in the eye of the media, cyber bullying is the gravest type of bullying and it has killed and affected many young people. Therefore, the Kids Help Phone took it upon itself to share its message very directly with its audiences. This direct message, juxtaposing the indirect messages of other advertisements, grabs the audiences' attention more powerfully.



There are many officially registered anti-bullying, bullying prevention training and bullying awareness organizations across Canada, i.e. PREVNet, Stop a Bully, Bullying and Harassment Prevention (Canadian Red Cross), Pink Shirt Day, to just count a few, that attempt to eliminate, or at least control, the increasing rate of bullying incidents. But regardless of these organizations' efforts, the number of bullying incidents and yet worse the number of fatal bullying incidents and deadly youth quarrels are on the rise. To eliminate and/or control the bullying among youths, particularly when many anti-bullying organizations have exhausted their options to control this phenomenon, it is the time that the bullying experts question their methods and approaches to achieve this elimination. Based on this research, it would be advantageous if these activists look at bullying from an innovative standpoint and approach the subject from different angles.

The Euro-centric characteristics that the anti-bullying posters represent to send out their message of longing for a peaceful childhood and young adulthood, only include a limited number of youths who are affected by bullying and its harmful consequences. The posters designed by ethnic minority youths, produced and distributed by *STARS: Create Your Own Campaign Poster*, are excellent validations for this assertion. The *STARS'* posters show the ethnic minority youths' desire to be represented and their attempt to communicate their unique weaknesses to bullying. These posters loudly and clearly portray these youths' struggles with ethnic stereotypes and ethnic-bullying (Peguero & Williams, 2013). These youths show their audiences that the everyday bullying posters neither represent nor address their encounters with bullying incidents. Through their self-created posters, these minority youths demonstrate that they are different and they require unique methods of bullying awareness outreach and anti-bullying/bullying prevention training. Based on these posters, it is unrealistically optimistic to

expect the application of a generic bullying prevention method to conquer youth bullying. In a diverse society, such as Canada, one size cannot fit all. Not only do immigrant youths need tailored bullying prevention methods, but also the tailored methods need to be altered to fit the exact needs of each population reflecting, i.e. the population's ethnocultural background, length of residency in Canada, family status, etc.

In this chapter, I analytically reviewed a series of anti-bullying advertisements from bullying prevention organizations. I examined and studied each picture's messages and interpretations, which the creators of these advertisements intended to convey to their audiences. In the next chapter, I will study the cases which concluded in mortality, due to suicide or peer-homicide, among youth.

## **Chapter 4: Fatal consequences (suicide/homicide) of bullying**

Since 2011, Canada has witnessed a considerable number of intentional mortalities among youths. These fatalities, however, have a few critical differences depending on the deceased youth's affiliation with the minority or the majority population. In this chapter, I analyze each one of these cases using the news outlets and social media outlets. I question the differences between the circumstances surrounding these fatal cases, regarding the youth's belonging to the mainstream population or the minority populations.

Newspaper articles are the primary social methods of delivering news and messages to people, and they are among the most influential methods affecting people's mindsets and their decision making (Gangadharbatla, Bright & Logan, 2014). In many cases, society relies solely on the information it receives from different news outlets and social media (Jones, 2013). Through the application of the *textual content analysis*, I noticed that newspaper articles which covered the high-profile bullying cases that ended in fatality, share two factors: blaming the victim and whitewashing the concept of bullying. Here, I, qualitatively, analyze the newspaper articles covering three most famous teen victims, or potential victims, on the subject at hand.

### **Amanda Todd**

Emma Teitel (2012, October 23) writes a two-page article to misplace the blame from one victim to another. Teitel (ibid) defends Amanda Todd and explains how she was not at fault for being stalked, insulted and abused. Teitel (ibid), instead, holds Carol Todd, Amanda's mother, responsible for this tragedy due to her bad mothering. Teitel (ibid) defends Amanda's actions, just like a lawyer who tries to take the blame off her defendant when she is confident of



her guilt. Based on Teitel's argument, there is no doubt that Amanda has done something wrong which provoked a series of consequences, but she holds Amanda's mother responsible for taking her surveilling responsibilities lightly. This victim blaming redirects the audience's attention from the real guilty parties, Aydin Coban and Amanda's schoolmates. Aydin Coban is the online predator who distributed Amanda's nude pictures, followed Amanda from one school to the next, and drove Amanda to absolute loneliness and ultimately to suicide. Teitel (ibid) also justifies the bullying and the cruel actions of Amanda's schoolmates as youths' age-appropriate activities.

Teitel (ibid) goes further when she simplifies Amanda's experience with cyber-bullying as a case of teenagers accepting a "dare", and then juxtaposes it to her own childhood's memories of playing *truth and dare*. She disregards the fact that any action which leads to suicide is more serious than a childish game of *truth or dare*. Teitel even uses Amanda Todd's 8-minute video, which was a hopeless cry for help, against her, when she describes it as a confessional video, as if it was a proof for Amanda's feeling of guilt. Based on this article, what caused Todd distress and depression was "the event" of her exposing her 13-year old breasts (ibid). Even when Teitel mentions the subject of anti-bullying, she briefly and passively mentions that some "anti-bullying activists" and the House of Common suggested some activities to honour Todd's memory.

Teitel (ibid) questions the importance and the existence of the concept of cyberbullying, when she mentions Todd's case as "arguably bullied to death". She uses phrases, like the "crippling fear of political correctness," to lighten the situation and to cover her lack of understanding of the complexity of the concept of cyberbullying. While confusing the two phenomena of cybersex and cyberbully, Teitel uses the word *cyberbullying*, mistakingly, to discuss the cybersex phenomenon (Shaughnessy, Byers & Thornton, 2011). Even though these

two phenomena share some characteristics in some occasions, the two concepts are separate and different issues, with different consequences. Teitel claims that she “was a victim of cyberbullying—though [she] didn’t really think of it as such because the term hadn’t been invented yet, [and she] was also, undoubtedly, a cyberbully.” (ibid) However, her narration of the circumstances lacks any characteristics of cyberbullying and could be identified in some cases as cybersex among consenting teenagers. Later, Teitel put Todd’s action of “exposing her breast” as a *mistake* which could be prevented if Amanda’s mother, Carol Todd, did a better parental supervision.

In this article, Teitel blame the victims, Amanda<sup>6</sup> and Carol Todd, for the actions they did (or did not do) to prevent this bullying. In her equation, Teitel completely removes the fault from rightful bullies, such as Todd’s abusive schoolmates, who tortured and took advantage of her, physically, emotionally and sexually, as well as from the personnel in her schools, who exposed their students to predators, by creating easy to access Facebook pages. Aydin Coban used schools’ Facebook accounts to befriend other students and to circulate Todd’s pictures. Teitel ignores all these obvious and preventable sources and instead appeals to the fallacy that has been used repeatedly throughout the history of violence against women: Amanda and Carol Todd asked for it (Deming, Covan, Swan & Billings, 2013). Then again, Teitel’s entire article speaks about the *normal* middle-class North American families, with two storey houses and their children’s easy access to computers. Teitel, just like many other North American journalists, also leaves out the possibility of experiencing the bullying incidents for any other demographics of youths.

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<sup>6</sup> By attempting hard to take the blame away from Todd, and to show Todd’s innocence, Teitel points her blaming finger back to Amanda, who needs assistance to redeem her innocence.

In 2014, the Conservative government tried to hide its intentions and abuse extraordinary situations to strengthen their “unwarranted” surveillances on civilians, especially immigrants under the label of terrorism (Boutilier, 2014). Todd’s mother, Carol, fiercely showed her disapproval toward the Canadian government’s attempt to pass this legislation under the cover of cyberbullying (ibid). Even though the bill C-13 is known as the “cyberbullying bill” (Dyer, 2014), this bill has “little to do with cyberbullying” (Austin, Stewart & Clement, 2014). While the government has misled people to believe in the humanitarian nature of bill C-13, this bill would allow the governmental officials, such as the Police force, to have an “access to transmission data,” which allow them to track any data based on “reasonable suspicion” (ibid). The Canadian government has had a few unsuccessful attempts toward an unwarranted surveillance since the “post Sept. 11” paranoid fear of terrorism and xenophobic suspicions (ibid). Therefore, not only are immigrant youths not included in any anti-bullying movement, but the government abuses the anti-bullying regulations for North American youth, such as bill C-13, to enforce governmental bullying against them.

In their article, Nguyen and Tepper (2014) revisit Todd’s case, after her online predator was arrested and charged with various criminal allegations including child pornography, extortion and internet luring. The undertone of the article, once more, downplays the effects of youths’ bullying their peers and the faulty and insecure online systems of Canadian schools<sup>7</sup>, and instead put all the blame on a Dutchman called Aydin Coban. Every time that Todd changed her school to avoid her stalker, Coban feigned as a new student on Todd’s new schools’ Facebook pages, and befriended Todd’s new schoolmates to share her nude picture with them (CBC News,

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<sup>7</sup> Coban became Todd’s new peers Facebook friend, via the Todd’s schools’ official Facebook pages, every time that Todd moved to a new school.

2013). Although, undeniably, Coban is responsible for stalking, harassing and, eventually, causing Todd's suicide, Todd's schools' personnel are equally responsible for not taking enough precautions for their students' safety and security. Coban is charged for different criminal activities related to Todd and many other victims from around the world. Nguyen and Tepper (2014) calculatedly introduce this online predator as the sole guilty party in this case, but also blaming Todd, whose naivety made her an easy prey and provoked the solicitation by "expos[ing] herself" on camera. In this article, the phrase exposing herself, gives an overly sexual connotation to this immature act of attention seeking.

### **Rehtaeh Parsons**

In April 7, 2013, Rehtaeh Parsons committed suicide by hanging, as a consequence of her rape two years earlier; Rehtaeh was 17 years old at the time of her suicide (Gallman & Gast, 2013 August 9; Patten, 2013 August 8). In 2011, during an underage drunken party, four 16-year-old boys raped 15 year-old Rehtaeh Parsons, and one of them recorded the sexual assault entirely (Patten, 2013 August 8). In one of these recorded pictures, a "boy is smiling for the camera and giving the thumbs-up sign," while he is having sex with unconscious Rehtaeh (MacDonald, 2015 January 15). This recorded evidence became the foundation for two years of violent and intense bullying, which ended in Rehtaeh's suicide (Gallman & Gast, 2013 August 9). At first, Royal Canadian Mounted Police refused to arrest or charge any one of Rehtaeh's perpetrators, under the label of lack of plausible evidence. However, a week after Rehtaeh's suicide, the RCMP reopened her case, charged her perpetrators, and recognized her sexual assault and bullying (Patten, 2013 August 8). "It's sad and in a way it's a bit of relief that there may be some sense of justice done in this case," Leah Parsons, Rehtaeh's mother said after the

reopening of the case and the arrest of two perpetrators in this case. Even though the arrests were considered “bittersweet” for Rehtaeh’s grieving family, it offered them a sense of closure (ibid). Roland Wells, Halifax Chief Superintendent made a comment noting that “a young girl has died in what was a tragic set of circumstances, [and the community members] need to reflect on how [they] can come together in Rehtaeh’s memory and see what [they] can do to work together to support [their] youth.” At this point, police suddenly found new key evidence, such as videos recorded on the boys’ cellphones and computers, which they had not given any attention to for the past two years. With the confiscation of these evidences, police built a case through which these predators, finally, came to face the consequences of their actions. Rehtaeh Parsons’ case inspired a new legislation called Cyber-safety legislation in Nova Scotia. Based on this new law, “victims, among other things, [get a chance] to sue their alleged cyber bullies. If a bully is a minor, the bully’s parents can be held liable” (ibid).

Michael Tutton (2014 April 23), who covered the legal elements of the controversial Parsons case, conceals his opinion under the illusion of objectivity through reporting the case solely based on the prosecutors and the lawyers involved, although his choice of wording exposes him for his readers. For example, Tutton’s (ibid) decision in using the word “teens,” in the first line of his article, represents this case’s predators as innocent and inexperienced youths. Using the word *teens*, suddenly downplays the gravity of these young adults’ actions, and portrays the case as a classic example of the idiom: Boys will be boys (Turner, 2012).

In August of 2013, CBC news attempts to simplify this fatal case as a teenage trouble. CBC’s (ibid) choice of wording to describe the perpetrators and the victim is very vital to the representation of this case. In the first few lines of this article, the reader is notified (ibid) that the boys who were perpetrators were in their teen years, and at the same time introduces Rehtaeh,

not as a victim, but as an active and responsible participant “who took her own life after she was bullied online”. This article pictures a youthful and unescapable case of high school bullying, and at the same time downplays the issue of the rape and slut-shaming, which were the most critical and fundamental elements behind this fatal case. Another vital information, which this article (ibid) decides to leave out, is the recorded videos of the night of the offence. Refusal to mention these videos, which later became the evidence for the arrest and sentencing of the offenders, once again, downplays the importance of the Parsons’ case for the audiences.

Despite all the refusal to recognize the case as vital, CBC (ibid) focuses on the political reaction that Rehtaeh’s case attracted. He emphasizes that Rehtaeh Parsons’ case became the initiative for “strengthening the Criminal Code” to “deal with these kinds of developing” (ibid). After statements by Rehtaeh’s parents, especially her father, Glen Canning, Rehtaeh’s case became the face of bullying awareness. Even in an announcement Prime Minister Stephen Harper noted this case as “a terrible tragedy that has touched not only the Parsons family but ... all Canadians who have become familiar with what has transpired and the kind of risk this presents to all of our children” (ibid).

### **Kiranjit Nijjar**

In September of 2011, 16 year-old Akash Wadhwa murdered his life-long best friend, 17 year-old Kiran Nijjar, and then consequently committed suicide consequently (Allick, 2011). Nevertheless, the media and people overlooked all these evidences which eloquently indicated dating/ friendship violence/bullying. Although the exoticism of Indian culture obscures the Canadian media’s sight, and Nijjar’s murder case becomes romanticized instead of being solved. Rosie DiManno (2011), as the main reporter of Nijjar’s case, briefly mentions Wadhwa’s one-

sided love toward Nijjar and her lack of romantic interest toward him. She also conveyed the Police announcement in regard to Wadhwa's 911 phone call confessing to Nijjar's murder. Soon the media's view on this case changes, and the minority status of the individuals who are involved overshadows the gravity of the action. Media start to portray Wadhwa as a victim by introducing him as a person who was bullied regularly and suffered from depression (Allick & Scallan, 2011). Media avoid mentioning to their audiences that the psychological and/or the social status of an individual is irrelevant to recognizing an individual as a bully. They also refuse to mention that in many cases the victims of bullying become the bully in other circumstances. The bully individual should be recognized based on her/his actions, the bullying definition, and the characteristics of the bully (Olweus, 1993). Thus, when the media and law enforcement authorities deal with cases of bullying which involve mainstream youths, there is no attention to if the bully has been a victim of bullying beforehand. Why then do these authorities make an exception when the cases involve the minority populations? Why do these findings seem irrelevant when a case involves immigrants?

In this case, Wadhwa imposed his romantic attraction on Nijjar repeatedly, and Nijjar declined his proposal every time. Wadhwa's persistent display of affection and his continuous threats to committing suicide pressured Nijjar emotionally and psychologically, but Nijjar's sense of empathy for Wadhwa restrained her from ending the friendship. Wadhwa's position of power, which was acquired through the repetition of psychological abuse and emotional threats, makes this case a classic example of bullying in action (ibid). In addition, being in the position of the bullied individual does not exonerate the person as the bully, since in some cases the bullied individual turns out to become a bully in different social settings (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton & Scheidt, 2001). Moreover, it is more likely for male individuals to take the

roles of both the bullied and the bully in different social circumstances, compared to their female counterparts (ibid).

Soon after Wadhwa killed Nijjar and committed suicide, the media followed by his peers and schoolmates decided against recognizing him as an aggressor and acclaimed him as a victim (Allick & Scallan, 2011). For example, Wadhwa's friends and schoolmates created a Facebook page following his death, two days after Nijjar's homicide, and dedicated it to both Nijjar and Wadhwa. This Facebook page, R.I.P Akash Wadhwa and Kiranjit Nijjar, introduced Nijjar and Wadhwa as two victims of the bullying without any focus on the details of this case (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/RIP-Akash-Wadhwa-and-Kiranjit-Nijjar/221923351195499>, 2011). Juxtaposing this to other cases of bullying, the violent action of a young boy toward a young girl was romanticized by Western media. Rosie DiManno (2011) was mystified by the action of this young man who "loved to death". This case is a perfect example showing how North Americans once more failed to regard the seriousness of youth violence and bullying among immigrant and minority youths. Every media puts copious emphasis on the intimate and loving friendship two teens shared, but neither media, nor the authorities, questioned the true nature of this friendship and the possibility of the bullying between friends. Daniels, Quigley, Menard, and Spence (2010) declare that many children and youth have become subjected to bullying by their friends, and even their best friends. Friendship on its own does not offer compassionate and loving relationships, although the friendship usually acts as inhibitor for the children and youth to come forward and report the abusive interaction (ibid).

If researches, media and advertisements considered immigrant youth as equal participants in the social movements and dilemmas, rather than ignoring, ridiculing and/or victimizing this population, Nijjar's school authorities, parents and peers would have noticed the signs of



friendship-abuse and bullying. Nijjar's relatives, friends and school personnel did not take Wadhwa's continuous *romantic* advances, his psychological and emotional manipulations seriously, neither did they respond to Nijjar's cry for help. The similar actions that are unacceptable for the mainstream population, such as stalking, inflicting of affection, and emotional/psychological harassment, become tolerable for in the case of *others*. Usually the outcomes of the evolving research field of bullying are not applicable to the cases of bullying involving minorities, since authorities label these cases differently and consider them based on separate rules and standards. Nijjar's long-term request for help was left unanswered, because based on the ubiquitous knowledge, both scientific and common-sense, the bullying activists, and consequently the legal authorities, consider immigrants neither as bully nor as bullied.

It is undeniable that Wadhwa was a victim of bullying and that his complaints went unnoticed for years. Nonetheless, he received attention when he became a bully to another minority youth. He received the status of a bullying victim, in a very superficial and fleeting manner, just to nullify his violent action (Allick & Scallan, 2011; <https://www.facebook.com/pages/RIP-Akash-Wadhwa-and-Kiranjit-Nijjar/221923351195499>, 2011; *ibid*). Through this nullification not only did Kiran Nijjar's unfortunate demise lose the limelight, but also did authorities and the bullying specialists exempted themselves from investigating and analyzing this case, since Aksan Wadhwa was both the victim and the aggressor.

### ***Is it bullying or random act of violence?***

Contrary to the Toronto police force, the judicial system and the news outlets' attempts to represent cases, such as Kiran Nijjar's, Hamid Aminzada's, and Michael Menjivar and Zaid

Youssef's, as circumstantial, accidental and gang related matters, the bullying activists need to study these cases more precisely and in depth. Unfortunately, though, the responsible authorities rather than examining these cases carefully and forensically, simply attempted to unravel these cases and hold someone responsible for them (Visano, 2005).

Aminzada was stabbed six times, during the school hours and at the middle of the school's corridor, and the only noise that someone heard was the sound of his lifeless body hitting the floor. Even then, the student did not give it any attention because he thought "it was someone doing it for attention" (Gallant & Ballingall, 2014 September 23). It is hard to believe that these students heard Hamid's body hitting the floor, and that he did not hear Hamid screaming murder after being stabbed six times (ibid). However, no one questioned the lack of interest that the responsible parties showed toward this case. Aminzada's family, similar to many other new immigrants in Canada, have a limited access to the dominant language and their new host country's laws and regulations. They neither questioned the authorities in regards to the school security, nor demanded the school personnel and the police to check Hamid's emails one by one in search of any signs of bullying. Aminzada's death was declared as accidental (ibid).

Michael Menjivar and Zaid Youssef's case has a chilling similarity to Aminzada's case, even being close in time approximation. These young men, similar to Aminzada, are from new immigrant families with limited resources. Menjivar and Youssef were shot to death during the school hours and adjacent to the school parking lot. Again, police declared the deaths as accidental, and no one questioned the school's authorities and personnel for their shortcoming in performing their responsibilities. Similarly, no one even questioned the possibility of bullying, and consequently authorities did not spend any time to take the precaution of examining and refuting the possibility of bullying for these two untimely deaths.

## **Finding**

I have studied every one of these cases carefully and examined the media's and anti-bullying activists' interpretations surrounding them. This assisted me to get a better grasp of each case and to question the relatability of these cases to their ethnic counterparts. Based on my finding, Amanda Todd's and Rehtaeh Parsons' cases would be buried under many other cases of bullying-oriented teen suicides, such as Ashley Cardona, if Amanda's and Rehtaeh's social standards were different (<https://m.facebook.com/pages/Ashley-Cardona-Stop-Bullying-Now-Campaign/395789340562672>, 2014). Amanda came from a Eurocentric, North American, middleclass family. She had a full access to a computer and internet, and when her schoolmates sent her harmful and insulting messages, these messages were documented for later court appearances. In addition, Amanda's mother is fluent in English, and language proficiency has given her the possibility of educating herself on her legal rights in claiming justice for her daughter. Therefore, although Amanda's suicide and her years of suffering was absolutely preventable, her death was recognized as a bullying related fatality. The minorities and immigrants with lack of access and/or knowledge to/of their communicational, financial, social and legal resources are doomed to stay victims.

Through the comparison among the fatal cases of bullying, it can be seen that while the North American-born youths have taken their own lives mostly by hanging, their immigrant counterparts were murdered by others. Bullying activists and media lose their full sight of the reality, when they focus their attention only on the middle class native-born North American youth population and portray the bullying as a North American social disorder. These bullying activists obscure their full sight of reality by looking at these youths through the monocular view of racial separation. Based on the recent murderous high school incidents among immigrant

youths, it is evident that the immigrant populations need urgent attention (Gillis & Krishnan, 2014 October 11). Juxtaposed to the North American-born youths who employ psychological and emotional bullying in order to harass and propel their victims to self-harm, and in some cases suicide, their immigrant counterparts employ physical aggression to dominate their victims. The anti-bullying campaigns and activists need to hypothesize the high rate of murders and deadly accidents among the immigrant youths, recognize the connection between the physical nature of the aggression and the populations' ethno-cultural minorities, and address the circumstances preceding the violent actions specifically, accordingly and directly.

In this chapter, I analyzed the newspaper articles focusing on suicide and homicide cases among Canadian youths since 2010. These news coverages demonstrate a noticeable difference in dealing with these cases based on the victim's membership to the mainstream or the immigrant populations. I question why the cases involving mainstream youths get more media attention and receive precise investigation processes, while the immigrant victims do not receive any attention from either parties. The sole difference among these cases is their methods of the fatality. The immigrant victims, in these cases, lost their lives to homicide and the mainstream youths committed suicide, which is closely related to their cultural, ethical and familial values. Nonetheless, the judicial authorities and news-casters need to investigate and attend all these cases regardless of their victims' ethnic backgrounds.

## Conclusion

If no one turned round when we entered, answered when we spoke, or minded what we did, but if every person we met ‘cut us dead,’ and acted as if we were non-existing things, a kind of rage and impotent despair would ere long well up in us, from which the cruelest bodily tortures would be a relief; for these would make us feel that, however bad might be our plight, we had not sunk to such a depth as to be unworthy of attention at all.

*William James (1890/1950, 293-294, cited in Williams, 2012)<sup>8</sup>*

Similar to the bully’s etymological journey, from a positive meaning of sweetheart to the negative connotation of pimp and aggressor (Onions, 1966), the act of bullying has undergone a series of developmental, social, and technological modifications. Bullying, which once was viewed as any child’s milestone, has turned out to be one of the most hazardous and threatening phenomena in children’s lives. Due to technological advances, the bullying, which once tended to attack an individual in a series of disjointed episodes and in closer proximity, now has turned into a constant cyberattack on the victims of this phenomenon. The most harmful aspect of cyberbullying is the nonstop and unlimited accessibility that it offers to its predators. Cyberbullying holds its victims constantly vulnerable, even when they are not physically present in person and/or online.

Olweus (1993), the father of bullying prevention movement, characterizes bullying based on a set of features and characteristics which differentiate bullying from other aggressive

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<sup>8</sup> The rage that James mentions is what many immigrant youths experience since they are bullied by peers and school personnel while being ignored by justice system and anti-bullying activists.

activities and incidents. These characteristics are the imbalance of the power between the two parties involved in an aggression episode, the predators' intention of harming, intimidating and/or dominating their victims, and the repeated directory of aggressive actions toward the victim (ibid). The imbalance of the power can be considered based on the physical strength, the physical, social and/or mental ability, and the number of the aggressor individuals involved. Cyberbullying is a perfect example for the social imbalance of power, since the bullies become united to shun, humiliate and/or shame the victim, regardless of the bullies' sizes and their other physical abilities. In cases involving immigrant youths, the fluency in dominant language can become the foundation of the imbalance of the power (Valentine, Sporton & Bang Nielsen, 2008).

This thesis argues that due to the global migration and the increasing number of immigrants in North America, it is crucial that definition of bullying and its methods of intervention and prevention undergo fundamental revision. Since the current definition of bullying does not suffice to address a complex phenomenon in the present *multicultural* society, the bullying prevention system requires new guidelines to cover every member of this diverse society. How do we expect one generic formula to solve the bullying dilemma among all youths, when there are fundamental differences among different cultures? For example, ordinary concepts such as competition and success are viewed differently based on the Western individualistic view on success compared to the Daoist view on accomplishment.

Another reason that necessitates the revision on bullying characteristics relates to the youths' technological advancement. The youths' access to the internet facilitates committing acts of bullying, since cyberbullying offers an extended number of bystanders. These bystanders easily become the means to strengthen the bully through circulating, reposting, retweeting and/or

sharing the aggressive and harmful bullying messages against one or a group of people (Kowalski, Limber, Limber & Agatston, 2012). For example, when an individual likes or share a harmful message through Facebook, although she/he has not personally created the message, she/he transform into the agent of bullying (ibid).

Although the viral messages increase the possibilities and the intensities of the bullying incidents, they assist investigators by creating the possibility of accessing the hateful cyber messages for future inquiries. Cyber messages become documented in social media sites for later citing, and they are recorded permanently even if the author deletes them. Despite the common beliefs of many internet users, deleting the messages does not in fact discard the message permanently; although the author deletes her/his messages on the cyber page, the message becomes archived instead of deleted (De Cristofaro, Soriente, Tsudik & Williams, 2012; Weber, 2013). Despite the possibilities of accessing the documented cyber messages, however, many school authorities and governmental officials refuse to investigate further to retrieve messages in most cases of bullying (Gallant & Ballingall, 2014; Tutton, 2014; Boutilier, 2014; Patten, 2013).

Despite the accessibility of cyberbullying messages, investigators and researchers have ignored many fatal cases involving Indian, Afghan and Arab immigrant youths and left them without any inspection. The refusal to study every case without prejudice leaves a great number of the bullying victims in the dark, since many evidences then remain uncovered. Disregarding the evidences which might carry indications of occurrence of the bullying for the minority and immigrant youths dismisses the possibility of finding any proof. The authorities disregard bullying in the cases involving immigrant youth populations, and instead address these aggressive cases with other labels, such as racism, ethnic discrimination, and ethnic practices (ibid, DiManno, 2011).

Since many anti-bullying activists and researchers refuse to recognize immigrant youths with darker skin-tone as victims/perpetrators of bullying, many individuals and organizations follow this mindset and exclude the immigrant youth populations from youths they count as affected by bullying. The researchers, the advertisements and even the immigrant-authored literatures have ignored, dismissed and/or blamed this population. This lack of systematic recognition strengthens through pairing with these youths' parents' cultural views on the bullying. For example, Iranian immigrant parents have their own styles of parenting based on their cultural beliefs and values. These beliefs and values, however, are formed based on different elements, among them are the parents' diversification and acculturation, as well as the length of time they have resided in the host country (Patel, Power & Bhavnagri, 1996).

In chapter 2, I explored and analyzed a number of novels and short stories, authored by first-generation Iranian immigrants. These literatures assist this thesis on the one hand, to present an example of what youth and adult immigrants experience in their new host countries, and on the other hand, offer readers a glance on Persian cultural and ethnic lifestyle. In some cases, the cultural parental disciplines, i.e. the extreme parental control in the most personal aspect of children's lives and/or pressuring their children into complying with their religious and cultural beliefs, become qualified as acts of bullying, based on Olweus' definition of characteristics of a bully (ibid). In these cases, the youths do not report bullying since they have experienced bullying at home throughout their entire lives, and are desensitized toward being the victims of violence.

Furthermore, new immigrant parents, e.g. those with Persian backgrounds, who migrate to US or Canada, suddenly find themselves in the host country's lifestyle, which is socially, culturally and financially different from their home-countries' (Amirrezvani & Karim, 2013;



Dumas, 2003; Satrapi, 2004). The immigrant parents who experience culture shock, occasionally experience personality transformation (Dewaele & Stavans, 2012). Experiencing culture shock, in some instances, affects the new immigrant parents negatively and becomes the cause of the occurrences of abusive episodes (Myers, 2014). Then again, some other parents view the act of bullying as a milestone in every child's life. These parents believe that every youth needs to fight her/his own battle toward growing up and maturing (Pottie, Dahal, Georgiades, Premji & Hassan, 2014).

In some other cases, parents do not report cases of bullying happening to their children due to the lack of access to the dominant language and the unfamiliarity with the system and bureaucratic procedures (ibid; Terriquez, 2012). These cultural, social and familial aspects partially explain why this population does not report bullying as much as their North American-born counterparts, despite the statistical data confirming that immigrant youths become the victims of bullying and harassment more than their North American-born peers (Pottie, Dahal, Georgiades, Premji & Hassan, 2014).

Therefore, it is necessary to take into account how the personal complexity coupled with effects of migration has affected these parents' views on the subject of disciplining children. This diversity in parental standpoints and behaviours is another evidence for the necessity of a more sophisticated system in order to battle bullying successfully. Nevertheless, the immigrant youths who migrated to their host countries with their families, especially their parents, do not commit suicide, due to the cultural values, the religious beliefs and the familial relationships (ibid). Dismissal of the bullying dilemma might turn into social and communal violence and homicide, rather than the more domestic consequences, such as suicide.

In some famous bullying cases, such as Rehtaeh Parsons and Amanda Todd, the predators faced the consequences of their actions. In these cases, the authorities investigated the cases more carefully, looked for the evidences more cautiously, and studied and deliberated these evidences with more determination, before making any decision. This precision was partially because the authorities in charge of these cases dealt with parents who expected adequate answers and had access to the resources required for obtaining those answers; among these resources are access to the dominant language, and financial, political and social resources. These parents who were from the middle class social strata, not only were aware of the social and judicial systems, but also they were not hesitant to apply this knowledge to reach to satisfying answer.

On the other hand, in cases, such as Kiranjit Nijjar's and Hamid Aminzada's, parents were unfamiliar with the cultural, systematic and political processes in their host countries. The new immigrant parents, Indian immigrants in these cases, neither recognize the signs of abuse and violence, nor know the judicial procedure to obtain justice. Furthermore, it is culturally frowned upon to get involved with the children's and youths' quarrels. Furthermore, Persian, Indian, Afghan, Arab immigrant youths do not consider suicide as an option to fight the bully. Some factors, such as familial dependency and concerns, the cultural and religious values, and stigmas, rule out the option of suicide as a means to solving problems (Pottie et al., 2014). In these cases, the bullying and the abuse become prolonged and the fatal consequences become homicide rather than suicide (Gallant & Ballingall, 2014).

The combination of all these cultural differences, social injustices and limited communications leads to an ongoing dialogue between Bhabha's view on the state of *state of unhomeliness* (1994) and Hall's theory of *hybrid identity* (1990). Bhabha believes that

immigrants would never see their host country as their new home, and they would not feel at home until they return to their home-countries, while Hall believes that immigrants in a new country attain a hybrid identity as the time passes. Based on Hall's idea, marginalized immigrants tend to construct identities for themselves, which are a combination of their home and host countries.

### **Immigrant youth representation in media and advertisements**

For decades, the media has represented immigrant youths through unlikable, unsophisticated and stereotyped characteristics (Carsey & Warner, 1998; Lorre & Prady, 2007- ). This unflattering representation becomes the first and/or the most effective impression many North American-born children and youth receive as the response to their question of what an immigrant looks like. These representations of immigrants in media not only characterize these populations as intellectually subhuman, but also advocates treating them as such (ibid). While these representations put many immigrant youths in eminent danger of being harassed and bullied, the anti-bullying and bullying awareness organizations consciously or unconsciously ignore these individuals from their campaigns and advocacy against bullying and victimization of youths.

The combination of the misrepresentation of immigrants in media, their negative images in literatures, and their lack of representation in the advertisements against bullying conveys the messages of hatred, and portrays immigrant youths as deserving recipients for different types of bullying. Nonetheless, the anti-bullying advertisements do not solely influence the North American-born populations; they also influence the immigrant youth populations. The lack of existence of the immigrant and the minority youths in these advertisements affects the immigrant

youth's perspectives on what the victims of bullying look like. This viewpoint restrains these youths from categorizing themselves among the victims of this phenomenon. These youths do not observe themselves entitled as beneficiaries for the bullying rules and regulations in their schools.

Through the application of the qualitative content analysis method, I described three picture advertisements from three anti-bullying organizations: *Stop a Bully*, *Kids Help Phone*, and *Jaguar Educational's Bullying Hurts Series*. I provided my interpretations of symbols and images which the advertisement creators selected carefully in order to pass on her/his messages. I focused specifically on the factors through which the advertisements portray and represent youths who are involved with and affected by the bullying phenomenon. Usually an advertisement communicates with two groups of audiences: those who wish to be similar to the advertisement's models and those who share similar characteristics with the advertisement's models (Haltinner, 2014). These pictures are problematic since they only represent and portray members of the dominant culture, and their focus on a portion of population of Canadian society omits the multicultural populations of youths.

Many immigrant youths have displayed their desire to be considered as bullying victims and to stand against this youth-oriented phenomenon. In one instance a group of immigrant youths portrayed their desire to be included through partaking in a project called *STARS: Create Your Own Campaign Poster*. This project attempted to give voice to a few immigrant youths to present their views on what the bullying meant to them. However, this project faced a strong resistance from the mainstream population, since these youths displayed their concern with immigrants' misrepresentation in bullying prevention advertisements. Some members of the

mainstream population, though, perceived this display of dissatisfaction as threat to the social equilibrium and reacted majorly to these advertisements (Goldstein, 1988).

In order to find an effective method to control bullying, bullying awareness activists need to obtain a novel perspective on this deteriorating issue and to consider cultural diversities as an important factor to study this subject. For example, although many North American-born youths commit suicide by hanging to escape the brutal episodes of bullying (Gallman & Gast, 2013; Reeves, 2011; Gillis, 2013; Nguyen & Tepper, 2014), suicide is not an option for many Iranian, Indian, Afghan, Arab, etc. immigrant youths, based on cultural and familial backgrounds (Pottie, Dahal, Georgiades, Premji & Hassan, 2014). In these cases, the bullied individuals continue to suffer from psychological, emotional, physical, and in some cases, sexual abuse, for an extended period of time, and occasionally the abusive actions lead to fatality and homicides (Sulkowski, Bauman, Wright, Nixon & Davis, 2014).

The Education discipline plays a key-role in educating children and youths regarding the concept of bullying. Through the application of workshops and meetings with students and their teachers, the bullying experts can teach the signs of bullying as well as the methods of prevention and treatments. Also, through these workshops children and youths, immigrant youths specifically for the purpose of this research, will learn and practice effective methods of communicating and problem-solving in a safe and respectful environment. The communication would help youths to learn about others and to observe each other without layers of stereotypes created by unfamiliarity and ignorance.

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