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Understanding Multilingual/Multicultural Immigrant High Schoolers' Multilayered Identities and Imagined Futures

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Understanding Multilingual/Multicultural Immigrant High Schoolers' Multilayered Identities

and Imagined Futures

A DISSERTATION

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DISSERTATION APPROVAL

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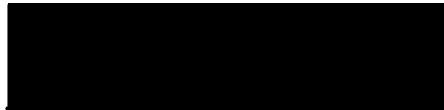
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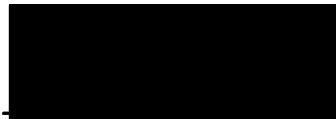
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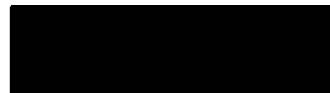
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Abstract

This qualitative dissertation study explored how multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' multilayered identities intersected and shaped their experiences and imagined futures. I used intersectionality as a social action theory (Hill-Collins, 2019) as a theoretical lens to examine how multiple aspects of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' identities, such as socioeconomic status (SES), race, ethnicities, immigration, linguistic, social, and cultural backgrounds intersected and affected their perceptions of self, in and out of school experiences, access to resources and support, and imagined futures. While there is an increasing number of studies about schooling experiences and inequities that multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers in U.S. public schools face, research on how the intersecting aspects of their identities influence their life, experiences, and futures is scarce. Multiple data sources were collected, including a podcast, semi-structured Zoom interviews, identity maps, and researcher notes, despite the COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions. Data were analyzed in iterative rounds using open and exile coding strategies. The complexity and challenges of intersectional analysis were apparent throughout the study. However, attempting to analyze the data and the writing process through an intersectional lens emphasized the importance and need for examining the intersecting aspects of participants' multilayered identities to better make sense of their overall experiences and future decisions. The findings were represented in chapters four and five under two main foci: They revealed that the six multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' educational experiences and imagined futures were highly influenced by the intersections of their gender, racial, linguistic, ethnic, social, cultural, SES, and immigration backgrounds. The study concluded that the participants' multilayered identities affected their gendered roles and

responsibilities, access to educational resources and support, sense of belonging, and imagined futures. The study also suggested implications for policy and practice and teacher education.

Keywords: multilingual, multicultural, high schoolers, immigrant, imagined futures, multilayered identities, marginalization, microaggressions, sense of belonging

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family —my lovely husband, **Bahadir**; my dear parents, **Nurdane** and **Ali Osman**; and my adorable siblings, **Meltem, Murat**, and **Melike**. You have always believed in me and have been my strength and inspiration source. I am forever grateful for your patience, encouragement, understanding, and unwavering support. It has not been an easy journey, but your presence and love helped me get through. This dissertation is a testament to your love and devotion, and I dedicate it to you with all my heart.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Education in the United States is a right, not a privilege. Federal laws hold schools accountable for supporting all students and families regardless of their backgrounds[1] (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, n.d.; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, n.d.). Yet, many researchers have drawn attention to and questioned issues regarding educational justice and equity concerning students from linguistic, racial, cultural, and/or socioeconomic backgrounds who were underprivileged by society (e.g., Kanno, 2018; Paris & Alim, 2017; Abu El-Haj, 2015; Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2010; Price, 2000, Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lareau, 1987; Anyon, 1981; Willis, 1977). Building on similar educational justice and equity concerns, I focused on multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers (first and second-generation immigrants) to explore how their multilayered identities impact their schooling experiences, available resources, and their thinking toward their futures. Using "intersectionality as a critical social theory" (Hill-Collins, 2019; Hill-Collins & Bilge, 2016; Crenshaw, 1983) as an umbrella term and approach and emphasizing the intersections of multiple aspects of the multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers from immigrant backgrounds, I developed the following research question:

What futures do multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers imagine for themselves?

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[1] See Title III & Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974.

This study was organized around three overlapping strands of inquiry: (1) in socioeconomic status (SES) and educational opportunities, I discussed how multiple factors of participants' socioeconomic background impacted the educational opportunities, support, and resources they had access to; (2) in language, culture, and identity, I examined how speaking English as a second language, and/or bi/multilingualism, cultural backgrounds, and aspects of their identities of these young women influenced their thinking toward their futures; (3) in immigration and colonization, I investigated how immigration status and colonizing practices shape the students' thoughts about their futures. With these sections, I aimed to inform scholarship on these young women's experiences and imagined futures by analyzing multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' thinking toward their futures. Hence, I strove to address the persistent inequities that multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers experience in the U.S. public school system –by examining their schooling experiences, resources, learning context, expectations from their teachers/school, education, and future.

Statement of the Purpose

I am especially interested in making meaning of how multiple dimensions of *multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers'* multilayered identities play out in shaping their plans for graduation, college, and beyond through an intersectional lens (Hill-Collins, 2019; Hill-Collins & Bilge, 2016). Institutional practices, ESL placements, teaching methods and practices, high-track college preparatory courses (AP courses), and available resources in schools collectively play a crucial role in promoting and inhibiting opportunities for college access/admissions and beyond (Kanno, 2018; Callahan & Shifrer, 2016; Lopez-Gopar & Sungrua, 2014; Kanno & Gromley, 2012; Deil-Amen & DeLuca, 2010). Placing newcomer

multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers into ESL classrooms and labeling them as ESL students until they "advance" in English and "exit" the ESL program does a disservice to immigrant students, particularly high schoolers. Immigrant high school students have limited time to fulfill the language proficiency requirements and enroll in high-track college courses before graduation, which is crucial for college admissions. For that reason, making meaning of the students' perspectives of the institutional structure, ESL programs, teachers, and school resources that prepare them for the future –their academic achievement, graduation, college, and their long-term plans – could also benefit and maximize the findings of the study and implications for teacher education scholarship and practices. In this study, I examined how specific school practices and approaches potentially became the source of injustices and inequities for immigrant high school students in their society and schools. I drew attention to and strove to make sense of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' lived experiences through this proposed study with participants from the New York Metropolitan area and inform teacher education. It is because I strongly believe that one way to break the ignorance, educational injustices, and inequities chain is to inform teacher education and prepare teacher candidates to better understand and serve their students.

From my reading of the literature, it is apparent to me that schooling experiences and future aspirations and visions of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers are often overlooked in the literature and research. Several scholars have studied multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' experiences in terms of college access and preparation for challenges and educational opportunities (Kanno, 2018; Deil-Amen & DeLuca, 2010). My proposed research study builds upon this burgeoning area of scholarship by investigating the students' imagined futures, including but not limited to college access,

preparation, in-school ESL placement experiences, and career-building opportunities. Working with multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers from diverse backgrounds and making sense of how the diverse aspects of their identities influence and shape their thinking and future goals is especially significant to me. Examining these components in their experiences can lead to seeing the big picture –how they make meaning of their education and end up with specific imagined futures. I aimed to delve into their experiences with these two sub-questions to the primary research question: (1) To what extent do linguistic background, socioeconomic status, immigration status, cultural lives, family expectations, identity, school resources, and support affect their experiences and future planning? and (2) How do the intersections of these elements play a role in encouraging and/or discouraging the students' future plans? Curious about these and many more questions in mind, I examined the data deeply, and I strove to make meaning of the students' perspectives on themselves, their identities, and their futures to better inform teacher education and challenge existing education policies and teacher preparation programs with a hope to lead to change. Thus, despite its small scale, I trust that my work will inform understanding of this student population and other systematically marginalized student populations as a model to see how school structure, power, and education policies and practices overlook their existence and unique needs.

In the context of this study, the construct of "future" includes dimensions of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' future, such as their thoughts, plans, and/or visions about high school graduation, access to high-track college courses, preparing for college, college admissions, graduating from college, personal and professional development, career planning, their long-term goals and ideas toward their futures and beyond. Limiting the construct of "future" to graduation, college preparation, and admissions may prevent us from seeing the

big picture. Thinking of the connection between students' educational experiences and imagined futures, I found myself wondering whether multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' linguistic background, socioeconomic status, immigration status, cultural lives, family expectations, teachers/schools' expectations, and support, and resources inside and outside school affected what they thought they could achieve, aspire, and imagine for themselves and how (if any) the intersections of these distinct components of their identities influenced their thinking toward their imagined futures. With these questions in mind, I strove to examine the multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' educational experiences/perceptions and their ideas toward their futures deeply to make meaning of how these components and other aspects of their identities impact the educational opportunities they have access to and how all these components impact their imagined futures in the U.S. context. Building on the analysis, I aimed to better understand the participants, inform teaching and teacher education, and challenge and promote change in educational policies and teacher preparation programs. Through this work, I strove to explain how school structure, context, available resources, power dynamics, and education policies and practices impacted students' perceptions of their identities, areas of growth, strengths, and imagined futures.

Background to the Study

Recent studies on diverse high school student groups and their "imagined/possible futures" suggest that college and career goals are influenced by the relationship between the socioeconomic backgrounds of high school students and their college plans and/or college access (Hardie, 2018; Kanno, 2018; Callahan & Shifrer, 2016; Kanno & Kangas, 2014, Deil-Amen, & DeLuca, 2010; Aynsley & Crossouard, 2010), gender and/or social class, and imagined futures (Hardie, 2018; Patel, 2017; Price, 2000). Also, several scholars studied the relationship between

the emerging adulthood/adolescence stage and/or social class and imagined/possible futures

(e.g., Fehily & Schlosser, 2020; Polovina & Josic, 2019; Bochaver, Zhilinskaya, & Khlomov,

2018; Arnett, 2016) while a few examined how immigrant youth's diverse backgrounds (e.g.,

socioeconomic status, citizenship, and gender) impacted their imagined futures/educational goals

(e.g., Kanno, 2018; Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2015; Gonzalez, 2015). These studies indicate a

growing interest among scholars in the imagined or possible futures of youth from diverse

backgrounds. However, limited research examines how multiple aspects of their identities of the

students' identities (racial, linguistic, sociocultural, socioeconomic, and immigration status) and

the available resources intersect and impact how they think about and shape their futures.

Moreover, few studies investigate how multilayered identities of multilingual/multicultural

immigrant high schoolers influence their perceptions about their schooling experiences and

thinking toward their futures. Hence, by examining the relationship between the specific aspects

of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' multilayered identities and how the

students imagine their futures, my goal is to make sense of their schooling experiences,

considering available resources inside and outside of school, expectations of their teachers and

schools, and their thinking toward the future.

Again, research on the intersections of schooling experiences, identities, and imagined

futures of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers is scarce. Several scholars studied

the challenges, injustices, and unequal educational opportunities that multilingual/multicultural

immigrant high schoolers experience in college access and preparation (e.g., Kanno, 2018;

Callahan & Shifrer, 2016; Deil-Amen & DeLuca, 2010). However, there is an emerging need for

further investigation to examine their intersecting and complex sociocultural identities in the

context of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' lives and available educational resources and opportunities for them as they construct their imagined futures.

Descriptive Terms for Multilingual/Multicultural Immigrant High Schoolers

I briefly share how this study's target student population has been previously identified in the literature. Some of these terms are used to emphasize the linguistic capital of speakers (Bourdieu, 1977), and others are coined through a deficit lens (e.g., Limited English Proficiency (LEP). These terms continually change or evolve based on different education trends or researchers' perspectives –how they view the target group of students.

To begin with, striving to be conscious about using terms, concepts, and/or practices and knowing that none of them is purely objective would benefit us all. At the same time, ignoring the influence of power and sociopolitical effects may harm the groups we value and work to serve better (Patel, 2016). It is essential to use a term considering the context since using an umbrella term may limit readers' understanding of this specific group of students (Chen, 2010). As a critical researcher/scholar, I strive to take responsibility for the terms and approaches I am using and be aware of the choices I make to avoid (as possible) being a part of the system that produces injustices and reflects this perspective on research. For that reason, below, I share what terms are commonly used in the literature to define individuals who speak ESL and then the term I prefer to use to describe the participants in my study.

Among many, "Individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)," "English Language Learners (ELLs)," and "English Learners" (ELs) are used the most in official websites and documents to describe the individuals who speak/learn English as their second language (see LEP.gov., n.d.; U.S. Department of Education, n.d.; NCELA, n.d.) and in the recently updated version of Title III-Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students

(LEP.gov., n.d.; U.S. Department of Education, n.d.; NCELA, n.d.). Parallel to that, from my understanding of the literature and search, Klopp's (1987) work was one of the first studies that the term "English Language Learners (ELLs)" was used in the literature. So far, many researchers and educators have used the term ELLs to describe the student population in their work, while some preferred to make slight changes to the term afterward. That is, throughout the literature, I have found that some researchers have used this term in their research over the years while others develop different terms questioning the previous forms either because they see it as a deficit way of describing the target student population or because it does not fit the student profile in their research context. While one of the early usages of the term student of "English as a new language (ENL)" among journal articles goes back almost a half-century back (Kreidler, 1972), the same term has been used in slightly different forms, as such, "learners of English as an Additional Language (EAL)" (e.g., Zaccaron & Xhafaj, 2020; Strand, S., Malmberg, 2015; Leung, 2001, Franson, 1999; Fishman, 1992). Besides, "English as a new language (ENL) learners/students" (e.g., Clayton, Clayton, Carpenter, & Ecks, 2019; Zheng, 2013; Chen, 2010) or "students who are learning English as a new language" (e.g., Baldwin & Ventresca, 2020; Clancy & Hruska, 2005) were also used by language scholars. For example, Chen (2010) emphasizes that ELL and ESL terms lack describing their participant who speaks another language as their mother tongue and learns English as a new language in the research context. Thus, Chen (2010) uses the term, English as a new language (ENL) learner, to describe the elementary student in their research, emphasizing that this term is more inclusive in describing the student's linguistic background and skills.

Besides, some researchers have changed the terms they used to describe the students over time. As such, while Kanno and Cromley (2015) prefer to use ELLs in their research with

students who are learning grade-level English, Kanno (2018) switches to English learners (ELs) in her recent study. Slightly different from Kanno (2018) and Kanno and Cromley (2015), Callahan and Shifrer (2016) call the students whose home language is other than English and who have been defined as students in the process of learning English by their school system, as English learner (EL) students. Furthermore, another widely used and embraced term in the field is "emergent bilinguals," coined by Garcia, Kleifgen, and Falchi (2008), highlighting that individuals already speak a language as their first language and become bilinguals learning/speaking English in their current context. Emphasizing their linguistic strengths with an equitable approach, Garcia et al. (2008) validate that the students' speaking a language other than English is an asset they bring into the learning process. Throughout my study, I will use the exact terms used in the literature or resources when I refer to and/or cite those sources. However, I prefer to use *multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers* for the young women participants in my study to highlight their multilingual/multicultural abilities as assets. Furthermore, to better make sense of their experiences, I use multilingual/multicultural newcomer high schoolers when pointing out the difference between the immigration status of two groups among participants: first-generation and second-generation immigrant participants since immigration status affects their experiences highly.

English Learner (EL)

EL is one of the most used terms to describe the linguistic background of students who speak English as a second language (ESL). In this section, I use the term ELs to share and discuss relevant data, studies, and discussions available in the literature and official data about students who are multilingual/multicultural newcomer high schoolers.

The most recent 2021 school enrolment table shows that 17,293,504 high school students enrolled in grades 9-12 in U.S. public schools at a national level (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). The most recent available data (2019) on ELs indicate that among 5,115,887 students enrolled in U.S. public elementary and secondary schools, 1,024,131 are high schoolers from grades nine to twelve and ungraded (NCES, 2021a). The number of K-12 ELs in the New York Metropolitan area is 332,375, including foreign-born and native-born students who fall under the "LEP" or "ELL" category (NCES, 2021b). So then, who are the ELs? How does the U.S. government define them?

Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), revised by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), defines an individual as an EL, who,

1) is aged 3 through 21;

2) is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school;

3) meets one of the following criteria—

a) was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English;

b) is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency (ELP); or

c) is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant— and

4) has difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language,

that may be sufficient to deny the individual

a) the ability to meet the challenging state academic standards;

b) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of

instruction is English; or

c) the opportunity to participate fully in society,

—adopted from (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA), n.d.).

As mentioned above, many students under the EL category hold distinct backgrounds, have varying strengths and needs, and are children of immigrant families. Below, I will share the definition of "immigrant" and national and regional data about individuals with immigrant backgrounds and briefly discuss the connection between the immigrant population with ELs.

Immigrant Students

The word "immigrant" is one of the key terms used in this dissertation. "Immigrants" are residents who are/were not citizens of the U.S. at birth consisting of naturalized citizens, lawful immigrants, refugees/asylees, legal immigrants (international students, individuals on work visas), and individuals without documents (Migration Policy Institute (MPI), 2021a). However, since not only foreign-born students but also students whose home language is other than English are categorized as ELs in government documents (see NCELA, n.d.), I include both groups of students (immigrants and children to immigrant families and/or first- & second-generation immigrants) as multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers students in this study. Below, I will share the number and share of the immigrant population compared to the total U.S. population since examining these statistics can help better understand the urgency and importance of this study's purpose.

First, the U.S. Census Bureau 2010 and 2021 American Community Surveys (ACS) data indicate that 45,270,103 immigrants residing in the U.S. hold 13.6% of the total population, with a 5.7% increase in its percentage and 19,767,316 in numbers compared to 1990 data (see MPI, 2021). Parallel to that, the New York Metropolitan area (N.Y. and N.J.) regionally shows a similar increasing pattern in percentage and numbers in the immigrant share of the population from 1990 through 2021. In total, 2021 data demonstrates that the number of immigrants is 6,562,337 in the N.Y. Metropolitan area and a 22.5% immigrant share of the population in percentage. While the number of immigrants was 3,818,471 in numbers and a 14.83% immigrant share of the population in percentage (MPI, 2021a). An increase in percentage and numbers in the total regional population's immigrant share is consistent from 1990 through 2000, 2010, and 2021.

Second, parallel to the number of immigrants, the number of foreign-born immigrant school-age children has also dramatically increased in the U.S. (MPI, 2021b). Figure 1 below compares the number of children and adolescents aged 6-17 in immigrant families (with at least one foreign-born parent) nationwide, comparing the 1990 and 2021 data.

Children in U.S. Immigrant Families:
Number and Share of the Total U.S. Child Population, by Age Group and State

1990	2021	Age Group Under 18 State United States

■ Share of children from immigrant families   ■ Share of children from native families

| Children with at least one immigrant parent: | 8,194,000 | Children with at least one immigrant parent: | 18,021,000 |
| Share of children above who were born in the United States: | 77.0% | Share of children above who were born in the United States: | 87.9% |

MPI   Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Data Hub
http://migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub

Figure 1. Profile of Children in Immigrant Families in the U.S.

Parallel to the regional data of the New York metropolitan area, the nationwide data shows an increase in the number and percentage of children from immigrant families (both first and second-generation). The number of children in immigrant families increased from 8,194,000 in 1990 to 18,021,000 in 2021. While these numbers do not provide first and second-generation immigrant student numbers separately, it illustrates the increase in the number of children from immigrant families from 1990 to 2021.

In this Introduction Chapter, I have shared an overview of the history of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers in U.S. schools, including the commonly used terms to describe the student population. I briefly summarized the study's background and rationale and discussed its purpose and significance, supported by national data on immigrant and English learner students. To guide the study, I asked the following primary research question with two sub-questions:

What futures do multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers imagine for themselves?

(1) To what extent do linguistic background, socioeconomic status, immigration status, cultural lives, family expectations, identity, school resources, and support affect the students' experiences and future planning?

(2) How do the intersections of these elements play a role in encouraging and/or discouraging the students' future plans?

In Chapter Two, I strive to critically examine the existing literature on multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers, their multilayered identities, and their imagined futures. I discuss the research gaps and limitations, available resources, and educational experiences that can influence the students' thinking toward their futures from my

readings of the literature. I present an overview of the literature around three overlapping strands of inquiry: Socioeconomic status and educational opportunities; language, culture, and identity; and immigration and colonization. I also provide an overview of the theoretical framework "intersectionality as social action theory" (Hill-Collins, 2019) and its core constructs.

In Chapter Three, I explain the study's research design and methodology, including the research approach, my positionality, data collection methods and sources, sampling method, and data analysis techniques and process. I also include a brief introductory text about each participant, a table on participant demographics, and a short discussion of the complex nature and challenges of an intersectional analysis, credibility and validity, accountability, and trustworthiness.

In Chapters Four and Five, I share the findings of the study based on data analysis and discuss them in relation to the research questions attempting to employ an intersectional lens. I discuss the findings under two foci. In Chapter Four, I focus on how multiple aspects of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' multiple aspects of identities influence their experiences under four emerging themes. In Chapter Five, I discuss the multiple factors that affect multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' sense of belonging, marginalization, and imagined futures under five emerging themes.

In Chapter Six, I discuss the conclusions under four main categories and their significance with possible contributions to the field, including the challenges and complex nature of attempting intersectional work. I also suggest implications for teacher education, policy, and practice and critically reflect on the study's limitations, recommendations for future research, and my final thoughts.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

With this study, I aimed to examine multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' educational experiences, schooling experiences, available resources, school context, and their expectations of their teachers, education, and future. I sought to discover how multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers imagined their futures and how the intersections of social class and educational opportunities, language and identity, and immigration and colonization played a role in this process. The research question that led to this study is,

What futures do multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers imagine for themselves?

With this research question, I strove to make sense of the intersecting aspects of the participants' identities and their experiences in order to understand how they impact the students' thinking toward the future. I began the literature review by discussing my theoretical framework in this study: intersectionality as a social critical theory (Hill-Collins, 2019). In this section, I discuss how intersectionality and its six-core constructs resonate with the purpose and goal/s of this study and how it can help better understand the complexity of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' multilayered identities, experiences, and future imagining.

Theoretical Framework: Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory

To further explore the complexity of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' aspects of identities, I use intersectionality (Hill-Collins, 2019; Hill-Collins & Bilge, 2016; Crenshaw, 1989) as an umbrella theory for my inquiry. I explicitly emphasize the need to examine the complexity, interplay, and interdependence of multilingual/multicultural

immigrant high schoolers' identities instead of analyzing these complex dimensions as separate and disconnected (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Thus, I build my discussion and analyses from the lens of "intersectionality as a critical theory" developed by Hill-Collins (2019) to examine how intersections of socioeconomic status and educational opportunities, language and identity, immigration, and colonization influence participants' multilayered identities, experiences and imagined their futures.

Intersectionality as a critical social theory is vital for my study since it puts resistance in the center and offers space for critical thinking and questioning while analyzing the complexity of identity and structural oppression systems that result in social injustices and inequalities for systematically disadvantaged/marginalized individuals. Hill-Collins (2019) shares the six core constructs of intersectionality as relationality, power, social inequality, social context, complexity, and social justice, all of which play a crucial role in better understanding and analyzing the experiences of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers (Hill-Collins & Bilge, 2016). Below, I briefly explain the six core constructs of intersectionality.

Core Constructs of Intersectionality

Relationality becomes one of the most indispensable core constructs of intersectionality for this study, mainly because it asks for "interconnections, relationships, and mutual engagement" (p.45). For example, relations significantly affect how systems of power (e.g., race, gender, class) are reproduced and maintained; student-teacher relations and peer relations highlight the interdependence and connection between the multiple aspects of the students' identities.

Power points that the relations between race, gender, citizenship status, sexuality, ability, and country of origin may not be wholly understood when analyzed separately. One can better examine the impact of intersecting power (or a lack thereof) relations on constructing social reality through an intersectional lens.

Social inequality. Intersectionality examines how power relations result in the reproduction of inequalities and social issues by refusing the concepts that show inequality as a reality and an unavoidable fact of living in a social world by approaching different types of inequality (e.g., racial, class, ability, sexuality, national) through an intersectional perspective.

Social context. With an emphasis on knowledge reproduction, social context emphasizes how the dynamics of interpretive communities shape knowledge. For instance, how two interpretive communities interpret race, gender, class, ability (and/or other systems of power), how understandings differ in distinctive social contexts, and define the value and rank of an approach or phenomenon (e.g., quantitative data over qualitative data).

Complexity. As one of the primary constructs, complexity is an indispensable part of intersectionality and emphasizes the intersectional investigation's dynamical, complex, interactional nature. Connecting distinct aspects of identity through an intersectional lens, for example, require more complex methodological approaches, strategies, and analyses.

Social justice. Social justice has always been at the center of intersectionality, emphasizing its commitment to ethics. However, a lack of commitment to social justice in many intersectional projects that fail to see it as a primary concern raises ethical concerns. It re-emphasizes this notion's place in scholarship and practices from a non-binary

approach. Therefore, as a critical social theory, intersectionality can help explore students'
experiences, thoughts toward their futures, expectations, and plans from a multidimensional
perspective.

Illustrating and profoundly examining the role of power from an intersectional lens, Hill-
Collins (2019) stresses how several components come into play in a popular sport and how
"fairness" and "equity" claims to weaken once relations of power are examined. Thus, I strove to
examine the interdependency and complexity of multiple components of participants' identities
by delving into participants' experiences.

Hence, this study is organized around three overlapping strands of inquiry to make
meaning of how these components interconnect with one another like pieces of a whole:

1. Socioeconomic status and educational opportunities;

2. Language, culture, and identity;

3. Immigration and colonization.

Socioeconomic Status and Educational Opportunities

Multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' socioeconomic background impact
how their potential is perceived and how much support and resources they receive from their
teachers and schools. Socioeconomic status often results in inequities in accessing resources and
support and puts individuals at an advantage or disadvantage. Socioeconomic status (SES) can be
described as,

> "the position of an individual or group on the socioeconomic scale, which is determined
>
> by a combination of social and economic factors such as income, amount and kind of
>
> education, type, and prestige of occupation, place of residence, and—in some societies or
>
> parts of society—ethnic origin or religious background." (APA, 2022)

Unlike social class, SES brings multiple factors from income, education, and housing to ethnic backgrounds into consideration when the SES of individuals is determined. All these factors influence multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' educational opportunities and access to resources and support. Therefore, while I often refer to the term SES throughout my dissertation, I use the term 'social class' from time to time since the literature and sources I built my case on used social class as their primary term.

To begin with, in her groundbreaking study with five U.S. public schools in different districts in New Jersey, Jean Anyon (1981) illustrates how teaching, quantity, and quality of resources, teacher quality, teachers' attitudes, and teachers' expectations of their students differ regarding the socioeconomic background of students and their families. Unfortunately, almost four decades after her study, the way schools function does not seem to have changed much. Even though all public schools belong to the same school system and follow a similar curriculum and are expected to serve all students regardless of their economic background, neighborhoods' political power and tax rates play a crucial role in how these schools perform, how teachers are qualified, how excellent, and abundant the resources are (Berliner, 2016). Thus, schools continue to put students whose incomes are below the federal poverty threshold at a considerable disadvantage and continue to reproduce socioeconomic disparities linked with capitalism through education policies, knowledge building, and communication methods in the classroom (Au, 2018). Hence, funding, teaching quality, resources, educational opportunities, and expectations of teachers from students vary based on the school's location, financial resources, and socioeconomic backgrounds of students (and their families), resulting in inequities for students from marginalized backgrounds. The situation may get even more critical with multilingual/multicultural newcomer high schoolers, regardless of their socioeconomic

backgrounds, since they often have a limited transitioning time into a new education system,
culture, school environment, and language as their second language as well as adapting to their
new life and imagining their futures.

Students' Backgrounds and Education-Related Achievements

Multilingual/multicultural first-generation immigrant high schoolers' socioeconomic
background can highly affect the available resources and education-related achievements and
their thinking toward their futures. Based on the nationwide and New York Metropolitan area
College Board SAT assessment reports in the last decade (2010-2020), test-takers' mean scores
vary regarding their linguistic background. Test-takers whose first language is only English
score higher in Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (ERW) than test-takers whose first
language is a language other than English (College Board, 2021a). For instance, College Board
2020 SAT report indicates that English-only test takers score highest in ERW with a 539 mean,
English and other language test takers with a 519 mean, and other language test takers with a
514. Likewise, between 2010-2016 (beginning with 2017, the income data of test-takers are not
included in the annual SAT reports), test-takers' income data shows an opposite correlation
between income level and SAT scores (College Board, 2021b). For instance, the 2016 annual
SAT report shows that test-takers with the lowest income (less than $20000 annually) score the
lowest in all test categories –Critical Reading, Math, and Writing—while test-takers with higher
annual income scored higher. Figure 2 below shows how test-takers' annual income is inversely
proportional to their scores; the higher the family income, the higher the scores.

Figure 2 shows that test takers from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds achieve lower SAT scores than those with higher annual incomes. Previous College Board reports also show that only 8% of students from low socioeconomic (SES) backgrounds took the SAT in 2005 (Spencer & Castano, 2007), while only 3% of these students got accepted from highly selective universities (Sacks, 2004). Not surprisingly, findings demonstrate that students from high SES backgrounds hold a more significant portion of college graduate degrees than before (Clark, 2010). Moreover, studies show that several other factors affect multilingual/multicultural first-generation immigrant high schoolers from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds regarding college admission and SAT scores. First, while colleges claim to hold policies to increase diversity, they often concentrate on ethnic diversity and lack incentives to remedy class inequality in college attainment (Spencer & Castano, 2007).

SAT	Test-Takers		Critical Reading		Mathematics		Writing	
Family Income	Number	Pct	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Less than $20,000	124,290	13	435	104	453	115	426	101
About $20,000 to $40,000	158,909	16	465	102	477	109	452	99
About $40,001 to $60,000	132,182	14	488	101	495	107	471	99
About $60,001 to $80,000	115,998	12	503	101	509	105	485	99
About $80,001 to $100,000	119,593	12	517	100	527	106	501	100
About $100,001 to $140,000	146,434	15	530	101	539	105	513	101
About $140,001 to $200,000	93,275	10	542	102	553	106	528	103
More than $200,000	87,482	9	569	105	586	107	562	108
No Response	659,426		482	126	501	131	473	125

Figure 2. 2016 College-Bound Seniors Total Group Profile Report

Second, most teachers are monolingual and middle class, and the school structure highlight and expect these values from all students. They often view multilingual/multicultural first-generation immigrant high schoolers from lower SES backgrounds through a deficit lens underestimating their capacity and skills (Vandrick, 2014), which may result in poor academic achievement and low rates of college attainment in the long run. Hence, college admission is becoming harder for multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers with socioeconomically and linguistically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Therefore, high-quality English as second language instruction and exposure to high-quality academic content is essential for all English Learners (ELs), especially for multilingual/multicultural newcomer immigrant high schoolers. Many are expected to excel in English, prepare for standardized tests (e.g., SAT), graduate, and have college enrollment in a limited time compared to their non-immigrant peers. Nevertheless, English instruction in secondary and middle school is not often capable of producing desired results since the hours of instruction are not adequate for students' linguistic needs, and teachers and curriculum are often not responsive to address their students' needs (Lopez-Gopar & Sungrua, 2014). Thus, ESL placements and course-taking approaches in schools, limiting students' exposure to academic content, continue to expand injustices towards multilingual/multicultural newcomer immigrant high schoolers (Callahan & Shifrer, 2016) and decrease their chances of graduating with adequate credits to qualify for college admission.

The Role of Teachers and Schools in Student Achievement. Teachers' and schools' resources, support, and positive teacher-student relationships are crucial to student achievement (Keegan, 2017; McCloud, 2015; Michael, Andrade, & Bartlett, 2007). This role may become even more critical for multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers because they are not only not born into the U.S. school system, but also many of them are new to the academic content, the dominant culture, language, school context, and/or educational resources and opportunities available. As a result, multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers may seek more support, guidance, understanding, and collaboration from their teachers than their native-born peers. While this is the case, low teacher expectations and bias toward multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers may leave their futures at risk in many ways, such as their transition process, academic achievement, and/or graduation

(Callahan et al., 2010). When educational expectations of teachers/schools are limited to

teaching English, preventing student dropouts, or helping students graduate (Callahan, 2005;

Callahan & Gandara, 2004), it may sound unrealistic to assume that multilingual/multicultural

newcomer high schoolers receive a quality education, support, and guidance for accessing

resources, opportunities, college preparation, career path and beyond. In this case, it is

essential for high school ESL teachers, especially those who work with

multilingual/multicultural newcomer high schoolers, to support students linguistically and

academically to prepare them for college-track courses. Existing educational injustices

towards multilingual/multicultural newcomer high schoolers continue and decrease the

opportunities they can obtain (Kanno & Kangas, 2014). That is, teacher bias and low teacher

expectations towards them prevent them from receiving the crucial academic, linguistic, and

social-emotional support they need to plan their futures and college preparation per se, and so

can limit their plans and high expectations of themselves and their education. Hence, while

schooling can be the only way to resist the existing system inequities, it can be a tool to

reproduce and sustain them systemically (Reay, 2010).

Socioeconomic Status and English as a Second Language

Socioeconomic status affects students' schooling experiences and resources from

immigrant and multilingual/multicultural populations. It influences how second language

learning is perceived differently regarding their socioeconomic status —financial, educational,

and cultural backgrounds (Collins, 2006). It plays a crucial role in defining people's views

towards bilingualism/second language learning; depending on learners' 'low' or 'high' SES

status, it may be perceived as valuable or problematic (Collins, 2006). This section shares the

conceptual framework and studies that nurture this study's social class (SES) and language

aspects. Beginning with the definition of social class and critical dimensions of social class by

Block (2014), I illustrate the impact of intersections of social class and learning English as a

second language on immigrant high school students' academic achievements, college

preparation/enrollment, and future goals. I begin the section with the definition of social class

as Block (2014) puts it,

> …social class is unlike dimensions of identity like gender, race, ethnicity, nationality,
>
> sexuality, and religion in that it is first and foremost about the distribution and
>
> redistribution of material resources. However, notwithstanding this base in the
>
> material world, social class is about a wide range of experiences in the day-to-day
>
> lives of people (Block, 2014, p.3).

Pointing to social class differences from other identity components, Block (2014) stresses how

social class plays an indispensable role in individuals' everyday lives by putting individuals at

an advantage or disadvantage regarding their access to resources. It influences individuals'

lives in multiple ways, not only how individuals are perceived, educated, and treated but also

how they learn, think, live, speak, and plan their future. Block (2014) also shares the critical

dimensions of class on individuals, which explicitly illustrates the variety of components that

either privilege or oppress individuals and influence their everyday lives and experiences.

These dimensions above seem crucial to understanding multilingual/multicultural newcomer

immigrant high schoolers' life and school experiences, the education they receive, resources

inside and outside of school, and plans. Therefore, it is worth emphasizing that to better

understand the participants, the interconnection between social class and learning English as a

second language should be made explicit. This perspective is partial in that, as I note in the

next section, cultural and social capital is also integral to social class-making.

Social and Cultural Capital. While discussing the multiple aspects of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' identities is essential to consider how their socioeconomic status, cultural, racial, religious, immigration, and linguistic backgrounds are viewed and validated in society. To better understand the relationship between these factors and the participants' imagined futures, Bourdieu's social and cultural capital theory and different forms of capital could help better examine how their complex identities and backgrounds turn into disadvantages when the dominant society views them through a deficit lens. Besides, different types of capital (e.g., social, cultural, and linguistic) affect multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' lives, experiences, access to resources, and imagined futures.

Social capital is about how an individual's connections, relationships, social networks, knowledge, expertise, and access to resources influence societal power dynamics and upward mobility. For example, multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' language skills, length of stay in the U.S., and familiarity with the education system, society, and culture affect their access to resources and support. These factors also affect how they are viewed in society, their experiences, and so imagined futures. Individuals with higher social capital have access to greater opportunities and privileges. Hence social capital results in inequities for individuals from underprivileged and marginalized backgrounds.

Cultural capital refers to the knowledge, skills, resources, and experiences the dominant society values, often causing inequities and devaluing the culture and richness of individuals from underprivileged and marginalized backgrounds. Cultural capital is the knowledge that society values, which may put multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers, especially the newcomer (first-generation immigrants) multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers, at a disadvantage since they are new to the land, language, and culture. Their efforts to integrate

into society, learn English (linguistic capital), and navigate the educational system could be overlooked due to their perceived differences and newness in their country. For instance, materials and possessions that signal the spending power of individuals; higher degrees, prestigious jobs, and familiarity with the dominant language, culture, and educational system, which is often used to measure one's worth and social status, can often turn into disadvantages for multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers from low-income backgrounds. Parents with higher cultural capital are familiar with the school system, have more access to available school resources and support, and engage with their children's education in a way schools define as desired and mainstream. Such a deficit perspective disadvantages immigrant parents and their children since their cultural capital is not validated and valued. I further discussed how Bourdieu's social and cultural theory and different forms of capital were apparent in the participants' lives by drawing connections between the theory and findings in chapters 4-6.

Socioeconomic Status, Immigrant Students, and Educational Opportunities

Many people think equal chances are available for all individuals in the United States (Vandrick, 2014), which may be another reason why few studies point to the intersections of social class and immigration and the linguistic background of multilingual/multicultural newcomer high schoolers. As hook (2000) cites,

> ...our nation [the United States] is fast becoming a class-segregated society where
> the plight of the poor is forgotten, and the greed of the rich is morally tolerated and
> condoned. As a nation, we are afraid to have a dialogue about class (p. vii).

As hook (2000) stresses, social class is not an openly discussed topic in the U.S. and causes societal inequities by creating advantages and disadvantages among individuals from different SES backgrounds. Hence, more open discussions and qualitative studies illustrating

how social class relates to speaking English as a Second Language (ESL) and immigrant high school ESL students' education are vital. While quantitative data in this field offers a lot of information to see the facts and figures about this student population, the need for more qualitative studies can provide abundant opportunities to create dialogues, hear the voices of the students from their perspectives and themselves beyond what the school system and educators think about them and dig deeper meanings within the data collected.

Social class in multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' education is becoming a more pressing issue (Darvin & Norton, 2014) with the increasing number of immigrant students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds (see chapter one). However, a limited number of qualitative studies explore the intersectional aspect of social class and immigrant status on students' academic achievement, schooling experiences, plans, and other school-related topics. In their small-scale study with two migrant Filipino high school students whose socioeconomic backgrounds hugely differ from one another, Darvin, and Norton (2014) found that these differences profoundly affected the resources, opportunities, and services that each multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schooler got through their education. Highlighting how immigrant students' economic, cultural, and social resources vary depending on their social class background, Darvin, and Norton (2014) emphasize that these differences are apparent in education. Social class plays a determining role in "how goods and services can be produced to serve market needs and how these roles and relations of power that enable such production are reproduced (Apple, 2004; Giroux, 2001; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990)." (p. 112). Darvin and Norton (2014) shed light on how students' social class status tremendously affected their education and position unequally in schools (and society). Hence, they suggest that by valuing the linguistic, social, and cultural resources immigrant students bring as transnational

identities, critical educators not only can help students build more powerful identities as individuals but also play a crucial role in disrupting the reproduction of social inequity in schools and society (Darvin & Norton, 2014). That is, critical educators, who are conscious of existing injustices towards immigrant students, should make these disparities visible and guide their students so that they persevere to liberate themselves from the "limiting situation" (Freire, 1970). Hence, multilingual/multicultural newcomer high schoolers can find a school environment where they can equip themselves to transform the disadvantaging conditions they face and use their education to break the social reproduction cycle and access the opportunities they seek to achieve their imagined futures.

From a similar perspective, in his study with working-class adolescents in England, Willis (1977) looked for an answer to his inquiry –what makes his participant students accept the working-class jobs and conditions in their context? Willis (1977) wondered what factors played a role in these students' decision to agree with the working-class conditions and job preferences they ended up with and not to free themselves from their limiting situation. A half-century later, I still find the school context, target population, and findings of Willis' (1977) study (with West Indies and Asian minority students of a single-sex grammar school in a working-class town) relevant to the current school system in the U.S. for multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers, especially for newcomer high schoolers. The school environment, teacher-student and student-student relationships, educational opportunities, and teachers' expectations of students shape multilingual/multicultural newcomer high schoolers' expectations of their education and futures is still a curious topic. Thus, with an inquiry into students' job choices and their function in social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1977),

Willis' (1977) work sheds light on factors and practices of an education system that reproduces a system that "working-class kids get working-class jobs" as the title of his book suggests.

Drawing on this work, my study focuses on how multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers think about their futures regarding career paths/choices, goals, and thoughts before and after graduation, and college-bound and non-college-bound plans through an intersectional lens. In the next section, I will delve into the role and impact of language, culture, and identity in multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' schooling experiences and thinking toward the future and how these two aspects interconnect.

Language, Culture, and Identity

Multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' multiple aspects of identities are in effect when examining their experiences. In this section, I discuss further how language, culture, and identity intersect and play a role in making multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' experiences and thinking about their futures.

Social Identity and Language Learning

The linguistic and cultural background and social identity (e.g., immigrants, ELs) of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers impact what resources and support they can get and how they may affect their academic achievements and thoughts toward the future. For instance, newcomer multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers have a shorter transition and adaptation period to familiarize themselves with the education system, dominant language, and culture than their younger counterparts (immigrant students who arrived at middle school age or younger). Thus, their access to the high track or advanced placement courses is limited since it is often unlikely that they exit the ESL classroom in a short time

(Kanno & Kangas, 2014), and it is especially problematic and disadvantageous for them on the way to college preparation and beyond. Cummins (2000, 1981, 1979) states that it takes 5-7 years for second language learners to reach proficiency (cited in Garcia et al., 2008), which may mean that multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers may get stuck in low-track courses that limit their access to higher education and decrease the chances of getting courses and credits required for college admission and a better future (Kanno & Kangas, 2014). Thus, long-term ESL placement and limited access to a college degree and opportunities in schools may prevent multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers placed in ESL classrooms from getting a college degree, which is one of the conditions to achieve a decent paying job and middle-class status in the U.S. (Kanno & Gromley, 2012). For instance, in their study with first-year college students, Kanno and Varghese (2010) found that the university (like many universities in the U.S.) where the participants attended required the potential students to have received four years of English instruction in high school and minimum three years of which should be in college preparatory courses. That is, the students who spend more than a year in ESL placement or arrive in the late years of middle school or high school are automatically eliminated from college eligibility. These policies and systemic failures leave many multilingual/multicultural newcomer high schoolers, whom Deil-Amen and DeLuca (2010) call 'the underserved third' – "lower SES, underrepresented minority, immigrant English language learner, and first-generation college students," unprepared for college requirements or career path (p. 28). With this phrase, Deil-Amen and DeLuca (2010) stress the impact of intersecting aspects of the students' identities and backgrounds, how systemic failures affect what students can receive and achieve (or not), and how those outcomes may shape their thinking toward their futures. That is, the intersection of their social identity, language learning needs, and various

aspects of their backgrounds can significantly affect their perspectives towards their investment into language learning and their imagination and goals for the future.

Besides, the identity of language learners –who they are– should be considered in the language learning process (Block, 2014); their backgrounds in terms of socioeconomic status, immigration status, available resources, language proficiency, and school context can all affect their experiences, expectations, and investment into their learning and future. For instance, in her study with six adult immigrant women in Canada, Norton Pierce (1995) highlights how social identity and language learning intersect and impact the participants' lives, experiences, and investment in language learning. Her work indicates that the participants' multiple aspects of identities influence their socializing and language learning efforts. Norton Pierce's (1995) approach to language learning as an investment is unique and valuable to understand language learners' struggles and sacrifices (especially newcomers) while learning the target language. These participants repeatedly mentioned how their identities changed once they arrived in Canada and continued changing over time. Despite their willingness to be a part of the society and efforts to learn English, displacements impacted how the host society viewed and appreciated their cultural, social, and linguistic capital. Not having had access to adequate opportunities to integrate into society and learn English, the participants in this study created their context to learn English and empowered themselves to survive in their hostland. Even though these participants were adults, their efforts and challenges while learning a new culture and language resonate with newcomer multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' schooling experiences. Thus, the conclusions from Norton Pierce's (1995) study suggest how an individual's social identity and status as a language learner affect the available resources,

opportunities, support, expectations from their education, and thoughts toward their future

goals. Next, I discuss cultural heritage and how it is apparent in individuals' lives.

Cultural Heritage

As social beings, we are born and live in a particular culture regarding time, place, and

social context (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012). In their book, "Is Everyone Really Equal?", Sensoy

and DiAngelo (2012) define culture as "the norms, values, practices, patterns of communication,

language, laws, customs, and meanings shared by a group of people located in a given time and

space" (p.15). It is complicated to define it easily as while the group members can easily define

some of these characteristics and practices; many are away from everyday awareness. While

ethnic aspects of culture like food, dress, and traditions are easier to identify, other cultural

aspects include values, modesty, altruism, courtesy, eye contact, cleanliness, and the concept of

'self' and respect is harder to describe. They are often invisible to the eye because they are

deeply seeded in our consciousness through intergenerational teachings and practices. This

intergenerational training in the norms of a culture can be defined as socialization. Through

socialization, we learn to make meaning, behave appropriately, and practice our culture through

observation, education, and guidance of intergenerational teachings and practices. Through such

learning, we know things and have definitions and perspectives on many aspects of life. We

know, for example, one is friendly or hostile, or disrespectful regarding what we have been

taught and normalized in everyday life through socialization. We know whether an individual

behaves appropriately, looks, and/or acts typically in society regarding these teachings. Informed

by these aspects of culture and through socialization, we make meaning of and perceive things

like gender, age, religion, values, and so on, and act in a certain —culturally appropriate way.

Considering all aspects of culture and socialization would help make better sense of these young

women's perceptions of selves in their home and host cultures, the dilemma, struggles, meaning-making, and experiences in between their dual identities, cultures, experiences in school, and home and society.

Language as a Sociocultural System and Teachers' Role

Respecting students' home language and culture (funds of knowledge) can support students in many ways and help sustain their identity/ies. Many foreign-born immigrant students speak another language other than English or a dialect of English other than standard English before they start school in the U.S. Thus, even though their home language might not align with the academic level requirements, it is evident that the students already have the necessary skills of communication in their native languages and can learn a new one. As Igoa (1995) states in her book "The Inner World of the Immigrant Child," students expect their teachers to be patient with them since they need support and guidance while adapting to a culture and language they were not born into. Again, teachers must understand how students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds widely influence students' sociocultural lives and practices. Although, in some cultures, teachers are viewed as role models, and their suggestions and feedback are highly regarded, teachers should be aware of their role as well as their students' sociocultural and linguistic differences and values since students may misinterpret certain attitudes and behaviors and vice versa (Igoa, 1995). Therefore, it is critical for teachers to find ways to know their students and their students' struggles, meet their students' parents, and find ways to validate and show their respect for their students' home language, culture, and values. They should strive to integrate those elements into their teaching, modify and scaffold lesson plans, support, and resources, and so build strong and caring relationships with their students.

Validating and Respecting Multilingual/Multicultural Immigrant High Schoolers' Social,

Cultural, and Linguistic Assets

The necessity, as well as positive outcomes for knowing students' backgrounds and

validating their cultural and linguistic values as assets, is well-known in the literature, especially

while teaching students from diverse backgrounds (e.g., Alim & Paris, 2017; Sleeter, 2012;

Villegas, Strom & Lucas, 2012; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009b, Moll et al.,1992). This is

also indispensable for newcomer multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers who are

only a few years away from completing their studies and whose schooling experiences are likely

to influence their thoughts towards investing in themselves (and their education), continuing

higher education, building self-esteem, setting higher goals, drawing a career path and/or

dropping out of school. Schools are where multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers

(so do almost all students) can reach fulfillment, construct identity, and realize their hopes and

dreams. However, diverse students can benefit from their schooling/education when their

backgrounds, values, home culture, and languages are valued and recognized to involve

themselves in their school context and education and feel they belonged to their school

community. Otherwise, depriving them of support and respect from their educators and peers

may negatively influence their identity construction, language learning, education, and thoughts

toward their future. As Morrice (2012) argues, "Much learning is concerned with recognizing

that their previous learning counts for very little and involves having to "unlearn" and let go of

much of who and what they were; it is concerned with subjectivity and with identity

deconstruction." (p.267). Hence, validating and respecting the students' backgrounds can

empower them, build confidence, and help deconstruct their identities.

Furthermore, seeing students' diverse backgrounds as assets would benefit the students themselves, their peers, and the classroom environment. For example, de Souza (2017) stresses that teachers in the U.S. would benefit from learning Mexican students' previous schooling practices and validating their 'funds of knowledge' (Moll et al., 1992); hence, teachers can develop and adapt their instruction methods to serve their students better. Similarly, Keegan (2017) states that it is essential to acknowledge that to increase immigrant students' sense of belonging (e.g., newcomers), teachers should view students' connection to their home countries as an advantage rather than a barrier, and Keagan (2017) adds that creating spaces for students to share their transitional experiences provides an opportunity for them to construct social networks. Besides, in schools where students get the opportunity to study in a culturally and linguistically responsive school environment, where English is not the only component for school success, they can be successful in holding into their native language and culture since they can find successful bilingual models in their school (Michael et al., 2007). In this school, valuing students' linguistic background and skills, teachers teach courses, support students' learning through Spanish, and build strong relationships to feel a part of the school community and promote their academic achievement. Otherwise, devaluing their home culture and languages can only increase the stress these students experience (Grossman, 1995, cited in de Souza, 2017) and may create adverse outcomes for their learning. Thus, teachers should validate and integrate students' cultures and languages into their teaching practices and lesson plans to get the most from their education and sustain their identities.

Moreover, teachers need to know their students and previous schooling experiences to avoid misconceptions and misunderstandings. Knowing their students better, teachers can create an informed, welcoming classroom environment for their students and address their needs. In

addition, developing informed strategies for students can help teachers build bridges between their students and support them in adapting to their school and community while preserving their cultural identity (de Souza, 2017). Furthermore, de Souza (2017) finds that appreciating immigrant students' efforts and knowledge helps them strengthen their self-concept and engage and learn more actively in the classroom. Thus, applying those strategies and various studies with newcomer and immigrant students, teachers working with multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers can begin learning about their students, skills, and areas that their students need support with and adapt their curriculum, lesson planning, and assessment to maximize learning outcomes, and so guide them through building their future. For example, in her study with Somali students, who hold a refugee background, Gichiru (2014) finds that the participants have not had an opportunity to receive formal education because of unequal opportunities and discrimination towards some ethnic groups in their home country.

Teachers can better serve and support students who strive to start a new life in the U.S. and help their students have a relatively smooth transition to learning English and navigating the school system and society by being aware of students' stories and backgrounds and using this knowledge to inform their teaching. Furthermore, supportive and inclusive approaches can help them better respond to educators' expectations in a formal school setting since they have never experienced one. Nevertheless, many immigrant families are often left to find ways to adapt to society and make a living in the U.S. (Gichiru, 2014), which probably increases the inequities in the highly stratified structure of the U.S. society. Therefore, access to essential support, resources, and opportunities is indispensable for all individuals and certain immigrant groups to make their transition and integration into the new environment relatively smooth, sustain their identity and imagine their futures.

Identity, Social Context, and Educational Opportunities

A deficit lens in schools toward multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers can exacerbate their existing challenges in terms of getting used to a new land, language, and society. My study takes place in urban school settings where the number of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers tends to be higher than in suburban and/or rural schools enrolled. Whitaker (2019) emphasizes that teachers need to create a welcoming and inclusive classroom environment in urban schools, especially when teaching students from different social groups. Approaching urban school teaching from a social theory perspective, Whitaker (2019) argues that urban schoolteachers often hold a deficit lens toward their students, describing their relationship as "us" versus "them" (also Apple, 1996). Unlike the successful models above, which underline positive teacher-student relationships and validate multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' cultural and linguistic resources, Whitaker (2019) analyzes how urban schools and culturally unresponsive teachers view their diverse student populations from a deficit lens, which often results in putting these students at a disadvantage. For example, such views and power imbalances between teachers and their diverse students that the teachers perceive their students, and their backgrounds and diverse asserts negatively can influence teachers' pedagogical choices and, ultimately, students' outcomes, achievements, and thinking about themselves and their futures (Hachfeld et al. 2015; Kumar et al. 2015 cited in Whitaker, 2019). Therefore, teachers should be aware that positive teacher-student relationships and validating their students' cultural and linguistic resources positively impact their sense of belonging. Accordingly, viewing their students through a deficit lens and devaluing their strengths would exacerbate the students' existing challenges. Hence, they may adversely affect their sense of belonging, academic achievement, and identity construction. Considering that socio-cultural

factors can affect ELs' academic achievement profoundly (de Souza, 2017), educators may increase their students' sense of belonging, disrupt the deficit lens towards ELs, and increase positive outcomes of schooling and school environment by making sense of their experiences (Kincheloe & hayes, 2007; Hermes 2005; Michie, 1999; Greene, 1994; Lawrence & Lightfoot, 1983 cited in McCloud, 2015). Lastly, teachers should be mindful of their significant role in creating and sustaining a welcoming school environment where their students feel safe and develop a sense of belonging. For example, in their study, Flanagan, Cumsille, Gill, and Gallay (2007) find that when students trust that their teachers are just and they value and respect their students, they feel more connected to the school community and develop a sense of belonging (cited in Keegan, 2017). Thus, by caring about their students and building social trust with them, teachers can significantly contribute to their students' sense of belonging to their school community (Keegan, 2017; Michael, Andrade, & Bartlett, 2007). Thus, they can provide a safe and inclusive environment where students feel they belong to the school community, sustain their identity, and positively impact their imagined futures.

Teachers' Role in Validating Students' Linguistic and Cultural Assets. Further, the 'othering' nature of the U.S. society and its adverse effects on immigrant students' well-being should be considered while discussing language as a socio-cultural system (Igoa, 1995). Hence, teachers need to be conscious of who counts as citizens/Americans and whose culture, language, and traditions are valued (Apple, 1996). In his book Cultural Politics and Education, Apple (1996) discusses how 'we versus them' binary oppositions come into play and disadvantage individuals from marginalized backgrounds. Apple (1996) argues that:

> The subjects of discrimination are now no longer those groups who have been historically oppressed but are instead the "real Americans" who embody the idealized virtues of a

romanticized past. The "they" are undeserving. They are getting something for nothing.

Policies supporting them are "sapping our way of life" and most of our economic

resources, creating government control of lives (p.7).

Stressing the ideology behind the lack of support, inequities, discrimination, and injustices

towards certain groups, Apple (1996) draws attention to the sources of the deficit views existing

in society and how binary perspectives damage individuals who have not embraced "we" in

society. These deficit views are also in play in schools, and teachers' awareness of these unjust

approaches is crucial to support students regardless of their backgrounds. Especially with

newcomer multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers, teachers' role in fighting against

these 'othering' practices and perspectives, providing resources and guidance regarding their

needs, and building caring and supportive relationships with them can have a positive effect on

how they see themselves as individuals, the expectations of their education, teachers and their

futures.

Another crucial point is the cultural mismatch between students and their teachers and

how teachers adapt and use the educational practices, curriculum, etc. (Lucas, Villegas, &

Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008; Irvine, 1999). When teachers are unaware of their students' assets,

backgrounds, and experiences –not knowing their students and parents, their strengths, needs,

and struggles—they may fail to value and integrate their students' assets into teaching,

relationships with their students, and their parents, and classroom practices, and so may not be

implementing equal and just practices that would benefit their students. Strategies and teaching

methods, as such, 'Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies" (Alim & Paris, 2017), Culturally Relevant

Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995), Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Sleeter, 2012), Culturally

Responsive Teaching (Gay, 2010), and Funds of Knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez,

1992) become incredibly indispensable in ESL classrooms and for any teachers teaching

newcomer multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers, especially in ESL classrooms in

the U.S. which predominantly consists of a significant number of culturally and linguistically

diverse students. Thus, ESL teachers and their approaches and relationships with their students

and their parents, what type of resources and support they provide, and how the ESL teachers

and school system are crucial for their students' academic achievement and sense of belonging.

Additionally, Bourdieu's framework of habitus suggests that displacement of social

contexts plays a crucial role in preventing newcomers, refugees, asylum seekers/asylees, and

multilingual/multicultural individuals from reconstructing their identity in their hostland and

putting them at a disadvantage (Morrice, 2012). That is, viewing the cultural and social resources

of multilingual/multicultural individuals through a deficit lens and measuring what cultures are

valuable and seen as assets and whose culture is the norm results in inequalities and injustices by

limiting the sense of belonging of these young women. Determining the value of a culture based

on the norms and etiquettes of the dominant society and undermining one's culture and people

by creating a hierarchy among cultures result in discrimination, microaggressions, and biases

towards these multilingual/multicultural young women and so plays a considerable role in their

perceptions of their multilayered identities and their imagined futures. Validating the linguistic,

social, and cultural resources their students bring as transnational identities, critical educators can

help their students feel they belong and disrupt the reproduction of social inequalities in schools

and society towards students from diverse backgrounds (Bourdieu, 1977; Darvin & Norton,

2014). That is, critically conscious educators can make these disparities visible and mentor their

students to persevere in liberating themselves from the "limiting situation" (Freire, 1970). Since

students' success is linked to teachers' willingness and ability to connect with their students and

learn more about their cross-cultural boundaries (Richards, Brown, & Forde, 2007), understanding and validating their students' home culture and language is crucial to make meaning of students' behaviors and avoid cultural stereotyping (Espinosa, 2005). Practicing Culturally responsive and relevant teaching and methods (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1999) and validating the multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1999) could increase their sense of belonging, identity construction, and microaggressions and biases towards them.

Immigration and Colonization

In this section, I discuss the impact of immigration/being immigrants on multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' educational experiences and thinking toward their futures. I emphasize that multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' immigration status profoundly affects their schooling experiences, available resources, and opportunities provided for them. I also draw attention to the role of schools and teachers in supporting their students from immigrant backgrounds.

Differing Immigration Backgrounds and Need for Differentiated Support

While studies about this group of students are limited, several other researchers share that students' immigrant backgrounds impact how they are viewed in society and their schools. For instance, Gichiru (2014) notes that refugees in the U.S. were left to figure out a way to adapt to society while their social and cultural resources are different from what is valued by the dominant society (Bourdieu, 1977), resulting in inequalities and limit the sense of belonging refugees experience. Multilingual/Multicultural immigrant high schoolers consist of a diverse group, and these students' experiences before and after they moved to the U.S. vary. Thus,

educators should chiefly familiarize themselves with the background, needs, and traumatizing

experiences (if any) of different groups of students from immigrant backgrounds to respond to

their needs effectively. In the study with Somali immigrant high school students, Gichuri (2014)

found that students suffered from long-term discrimination. As a result, many of them could not

obtain the opportunity to experience formal education back in their home country. This finding

stressed educators' huge role in addressing their students' needs, developing methods to serve

them best, and helping them connect with their new language, society, and culture.

Furthermore, distinctions between multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers'

backgrounds may require unique approaches and better-informed support systems to address

their needs. For instance, some immigrant groups who had to seek refuge in the U.S. may have

experienced trauma and threats to their lives in their home country (e.g., Turkish political

refugee students, Akay & Jaffe-Walter, 2021) and may need psychological support. Such

traumatic incidents may result in a "lack of communication skills, resistance to talking about

personal events, inability to separate who can be trusted or not and inability to properly manage

distressing emotions…" and some teenagers might isolate themselves, display resistance, and

disruptive behaviors (Katz, 2019, p. 60). Therefore, because of having been traumatized,

immigrant students with such backgrounds can find it very difficult to trust their classmates and

teachers, ask for assistance, and so on. Undocumented students may intentionally stay away from

conversations and keep silent because of the pressure of the current political and social

discourses (Figueroa, 2017). Therefore, it is vital to be aware that such immigrant students may

feel vulnerable and uncomfortable about such topics (Morrice, 2012) and may not seek help

when they need to communicate with the school staff and teachers. Morrice's (2012) work with

ten refugees in the U.K. offers helpful insights and findings to better understand some immigrant

students' challenges. In her study, Morrice (2012) argued that although the participants were linguistically and culturally diverse, they were professionals and well-educated back home, which was a significant part of their identity. However, using Bourdieu's framework of habitus, Morrice (2012) claims that displacement of social contexts plays a crucial role in preventing refugees/asylum seekers from rebuilding their identity in their new space and puts them at a disadvantage. Moving to the U.K. has been a radical shift for individuals whose aspects of identities were hardly validated and maintained. While recent immigrants struggle with the conflict between multiple dualities of identities, cultures, and languages, Zaal, Salah, and Fine (2007) note similar challenges that second-generation Americans experience in their research. Even though the participants of the latter group are not new to the U.S., since they are both willing to preserve their family culture, values, and religion and be treated as true Americans without being stigmatized or marginalized because of their background, they often go back and forth to find the balance between their multiple selves (Zaal et al., 2007). Similarly, multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers often need to negotiate and find strategies to navigate the school system, the dominant society, and culture, learn English, support their families emotionally and financially, and build their identities to think about building a future for themselves. The "must-haves" and the process of deconstructing identity and learning/adapting to the dominant society's language and culture can tremendously affect how the students view themselves, their education, and their futures.

Hostile Immigration Policies as an Indication of Nationalistic Agenda

Another crucial point that may significantly impact multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' thinking toward their futures and building a sense of belonging in the U.S. can be the hostile immigration policies as an indication of nationalistic agenda (cf. Jaffe-Walter, 2013).

This is especially evident during Trump's administration with laws and policies, such as the Muslim ban (Tharoor, 2021), building a wall between Mexico (Rodgers & Bailey, 2020), harsh precautions for refugees on the border –separating children and parents, and keeping them in the limbo under unhealthy and inhumane conditions (Amnesty International U.K., 2018)–, canceling the renewal of H-1 visas (Shear & Jordan, 2020), etc. Hence, seeing these anti-immigrant topics and hostile policies on T.V. and experiencing the post effects in their schools and society can become another struggle for multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers and any other immigrant groups and may affect their sense of belonging and thinking towards their futures (Abu El-Haj, 2015).

Many researchers highlight that schools function as sites that "...instill normative ideas of behaviors and identity, thereby transforming outsiders into citizens" (Abu El-Haj, 2010; Gilliam, 2007; Levinson, 2005; Anderson, 1996; Ong, 1996, cited in Jaffe-Walter, 2013). That is, students from diverse backgrounds, as such, multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers whose identities, cultural, social, and linguistic backgrounds vary widely, spend most of their time in structures where they may often feel "less normal" or "different" from many of the students who need to change and adapt. For example, in her study with Palestinian American high school students, Abu El-Haj (2015) critically analyses how these students share topics like a war on terror from certain perspectives, which results in silencing the young immigrant students. Such conscious/unconscious attitudes and practices of educators can affect their relationships with their students, their feelings about their identities, and their sense of belonging in the school and society. Additionally, connecting and addressing the needs of youth from immigrant backgrounds who often seek quality resources and caring relationships with their teachers and peers can positively influence multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' success and

sense of belonging (de Souza, 2017; Keegan, 2017; Valenzuela, 1999). Hence, it is crucial to examine how multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers interpret these relationships with peers and teachers, their schooling experiences, and their educational expectations.

Schools and Teachers' Roles in Multilingual/Multicultural Immigrant High Schoolers'

Access to Resources and Support

Despite the existence of the legal rights that support the students (e.g., Castañeda v. Pickard, 1981, Lau v. Nichols, 1974, No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), 2002, & Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), 2015), current ESL placements and services lack in addressing the immigrant students' linguistic and academic needs while they even perpetuate systemic inequalities putting the students at a disadvantage (Callahan et al., 2010). The need for schools and educators to provide college enrollment and financial aid information to multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers and their parents becomes indispensable not only because they need support in navigating the system like most parents but also because both parents and students will have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the options and resources that are available for them to plan for the college enrollment and more (Kanno & Cromley, 2015). Again, many teachers may be unaware of and/or unprepared to recognize the structural injustices towards multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers. Kanno (2018) finds that teachers are often not cognizant of the systemic injustices that put immigrant students in ESL classrooms at a disadvantage. For instance, Kanno (2018) found that the school's English Language Teaching (ELT) coordinator and the principal were aware of the school system issues for their multilingual/multicultural immigrant students. Still, they were not conscious enough to act, considering the competitive requirements and resources of the school. Kanno and Kangas (2014) reported that the participant teacher was unaware of the injustices their students were

struggling with and failed to provide enough support. The teacher even blamed students for not knowing what courses they were eligible to take and not advocating for their rights and needs. In contrast, his students stated that they did not even know whether they had the right to reject or demand any courses assigned to them. Hence, the need for teachers to step forward and be more cognizant of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' needs was apparent. The need to inform and support them in academic and linguistic, future-oriented, and school system-related issues in collaboration with the guidance counselor, principal, and ESL/content area teachers became increasingly indispensable.

Therefore, it is significant that teachers and schools be proactive in supporting their multilingual/multicultural immigrant students and address their needs to navigate the system, academic needs, and preparations (Kanno & Gromley, 2012). They need to provide high-quality support and guidance, collaborating with educators who hold their students to high expectations so that the "college education for all" policy can be achievable and realistic for these students (Callahan, 2005). However, it is critical to remember that the same education system disadvantages teachers by not providing enough training and resources to support their students and build positive relationships with them (Kanno, 2018). Therefore, for multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers to achieve their goals and receive a quality education, teachers, school staff, and school structure and practices must collaborate, adapt and develop their practices to better serve them.

Conclusion

In this literature review, I aimed to explore the factors that impact multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' educational experiences, plans, access to resources, and opportunities in their school context. Using intersectionality as a critical social

theory (Hill-Collins, 2019) for this study, I attempted to analyze three primary overlapping strands of social class (SES) and educational opportunities; language, culture, and identity; and immigration and colonization— to draw a holistic picture of the complex elements that can influence multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' education trajectory and their thinking towards their futures. In the social class and educational opportunities section, I discussed how the students' socioeconomic background impacts the educational opportunities, support, and resources they can access. In the language, culture, and identity section, I examined how speaking English as a second language intersects with multiple aspects of the students' identities and influences their thinking toward their futures and discuss the importance of validating the resources and diverse backgrounds that students bring into the classroom under language as a socio-cultural system section separately as well. Finally, in the immigration and colonization section, I discussed how the students' immigration status and colonizing practices impact shaping the students' thinking of their identities, goals, and futures.

To better understand and address multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' complex identities, the systemic barriers that immigration status, speaking ESL, socioeconomic status, and school context should be made visible. Practical solutions and approaches should also be developed and implemented in schools. Thus, educators, guidance counselors, students, parents, and school leaders can work collectively to resist the systemic oppression towards multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers. They can also minimize the disadvantages of the school context while breaking the cycle of social reproduction that limits the students' liberty of choice and opportunities.

Chapter 3: Methodology

I conducted a qualitative research study to understand and examine how multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers interpret and make meaning of their educational experiences and construct their worlds (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Since understanding the participants' experiences is central to the qualitative inquiry and knowledge is constructed rather than found, conducting qualitative research helped me make meaning of how the participants interpret their educational experiences and how their multilayered identities impact their imagined futures (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The qualitative research study also provided space to examine how multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers imagine their futures and how the intersection of three overlapping strands of this study —social class (SES) and educational opportunities, language and identity, and immigration and colonization—, affected their imagined futures. This qualitative study attempted to address the primary research question below:

> *What futures do multilingual/multicultural* immigrant *high schoolers imagine for themselves?*

I started the next section with the researcher's positionality. Next, I discussed how this study resonated with my personal and professional experiences with diverse student populations and my experiences of teaching and learning ESL/EFL in cross-continental educational settings. Then, I described and explained the study design and why and how I conducted the qualitative research study. Next, I described the recruitment of participants, including the sampling method, selection criteria, context, the data sources, and how they resonated with the theoretical framework and three overlapping strands of the study. Last, I explained the data analysis tools and process and discussed accountability, validity, credibility, and trustworthiness.

Researcher Positionality

Since no research is entirely objective and neutral, the impact of the researcher's positionality and perspectives on their research and research-relevant choices —research design, participant selection, data collection, and analysis, and findings—is essential to take into consideration (Foote & Bartell, 2011; Villenas, 1996; Fine, 1994). While I am aware that there was an unavoidable power imbalance between me, as a researcher, and participants, I strove to balance it as much as possible by building a good rapport, sharing my personal and professional experiences, and good intentions and goals with the participants throughout the research process.

My interest in this research topic goes back to my first formal education experiences. Studying as a student in a relatively underfunded primary and middle school in Turkey gave me first-hand experience with existing inequities in the educational system, especially for students whose annual income is at or below the federal poverty threshold. Despite the limited school resources, opportunities, support, and well-prepared/trained teachers there, I still felt lucky to have had a few dedicated teachers who were so caring and supportive and played a vital role in my school and career choices after graduating from middle school. These experiences highly affected my perspective and goals in teaching and made me wonder how schools and teachers could support and sustain social justice and equity for all students. To explore further, once certified as an English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher, I accepted a teaching position abroad. I started working with students from diverse cultural, socio-economic, and linguistic backgrounds in a secondary school in Senegal. Even though the school offered similar resources to all students, students' socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds varied, which urged my colleagues and me to adjust teaching materials and curriculum, develop fair assessments and differentiate support and guidance to highlight students' strengths and address their needs.

Moving to the U.S. because of political issues and experiencing an unexpected displacement can affect an individual's life. It affected mine. I have become even more interested in how young multilingual/multicultural immigrant individuals interpret their experiences, opportunities, and resources in U.S. schools and think about their imagined futures. Considering that many students rely on the school resources, teachers, and support for college planning (Hardie, 2018) and beyond, my experiences in Turkey, Senegal, and the U.S. led me to question how schools do function and what role they play in multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' experiences and imagined futures. To me, creating better schooling environments and support systems for all students, the need for qualified, caring, and continually growing educators with high expectations of their students is indispensable. Hence, by conducting this study, I aim to inform teacher preparation/training programs and so contribute to the scholarship and practices.

Study Design

I conducted a qualitative research study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) to examine and explore the educational experiences and multilayered identities of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' thinking toward their futures. For my study's goals, a qualitative research study was a great fit because it allowed me to deeply explore the experiences and perspectives of the participants. Accordingly, qualitative research is particularly suitable for exploring complex experiences and meanings that are hard to measure quantitatively (Creswell, 2013). Moreover, since my goal was to make meaning of participants' experiences, perceptions, thought processes, and factors behind their decisions and thinking toward their futures, qualitative research provided essential tools to examine their experiences.

In addition, since the primary purpose of qualitative research is to comprehend how the participants make meaning of their lives and experiences, it allowed me to gather detailed information about each participant (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). With the qualitative research study, I attempted to address my central goal of collecting in-depth data while making the distinct features and the richness of each participant's stories and experiences in terms of three primary strands of my study: socioeconomic status, educational opportunities, language, culture, identity, immigration, and colonization. It is especially convenient for intersectional research because it provides tools and space to deeply explore the multilayered identities and experiences of the participants and the ways in which they intersected and influenced their thinking toward their futures.

Context: Urban High Schools in New York Metropolitan Area

The New York Metropolitan Area (New York and New Jersey) was listed as the second top immigrant destination in the U.S. with 6.5 million immigrants (see Chapter One), following California (10.6 million), which has the highest immigrants share of the total population (Batalova, Hanna, & Levesque, 2021). Therefore, it is not surprising that public schools in the New York Metropolitan area serve a highly diverse student population. My concern is whether multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers receive a well-designed and thoroughly planned education for their unique needs and imagined futures. In other words, whether the school structure as well as inside and outside school resources exist to help them prepare them for the future, including but not limited to graduation, high-track courses, college admissions, and beyond. Not limiting the schools to certain districts in the targeted region benefited my research for the better as it provided space for recruiting multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers from various backgrounds and school destinations.

Sample Selection

The target student population has three key criteria: high school students (1) identify as bi/multilingual and bi/multicultural (whose first/home language is not English or who speak English as a second language), (2) attend a U.S. high school (10th or 11th-grade level), and (3) immigrants or children to immigrant families. I selected the first six participants who met all three criteria. All three criteria were crucial to me since I was looking for experiences of children of immigrant families who moved to the U.S. as the children of immigrants or were born to first-generation immigrant families (first and/or second-generation immigrants) who speak a home language other than English.

Purposive and Snowball Sampling

Given that in some school districts, students may be placed in ESL classrooms regardless of their grades and age, I recruited participants who were 10th and/or 11th graders. 10th and 11th grades were mainly seen as a turning point for many students (and parents) to plan for college admissions/applications before senior year pressure begins (College Board, n.d.; Sundquist, 2018). Thus, it is a crucial criterion for this study since many college admission requirements ask students to have enrolled for at least three years in high-track courses (or AP classes) during high school (Kanno, 2018; Kanno & Kangese, 2014; Callahan et al., 2010). Achieving this goal may be challenging for multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers, especially those who are placed in ESL classrooms. Having limited access to high-track courses since their linguistic skills are considered more definitive than their cognitive skills (Kanno, 2018; Callahan & Shifrer, 2016; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2010) can considerably affect multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' schooling experiences and imagined futures. Hence, these three criteria were crucial for my study.

Recruitment of Participants

To reach out to potential students, I sent a descriptive email and the recruitment flyer to my colleagues and individuals in my network, asking them to disseminate the study information and the invitation to interested high school students who meet the participants' criteria. The flyer included the selection criteria of the potential participants and my contact information. I managed to share the flyer through the digital age communication trends through social platforms, such as the Teacher Education and Teacher Development Program (TETD in College of Education & Human Services) email announcements, the 'America Needs You' non-profit organization's Slack Platform, MSUNER website and ESL Teachers in the network, and LinkedIn Platform. With this flyer, my goal was to recruit a diverse group of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers, each from a different ethnic, cultural, and linguistic background. I aimed to reach as many people as possible through these platforms who would share the flyer with potential participants and gather a pool of potential participants. Thus, I could decide how many of whom could be included in my study, sustaining variety with the participants' backgrounds. Finally, I decided to recruit six participants who met all the selection criteria and each from different cultural and linguistic background.

In the second phase, when potential participants reached out to me with interest in participating in the study, I sent the consent and assent forms to the participants and their parents so that they could learn more about the research and ask questions (if any) before they signed them. Once I received both consent forms signed, I asked them to fill out a short survey using Google Forms to learn about their demographics and linguistic backgrounds (e.g., school location (city/region), grade, home/additional languages they spoke, years lived in the U.S.) and check their eligibility for the study (see Table 1). I continued to ask each participant to share the

flyer with other potential participants. Once I reached out to six participants from diverse backgrounds, I stopped recruiting more participants. While I had no specific gender requirements for my study, the first six participants who met all the selection criteria identified as women.

Participants' Background

With this study, I attempted to examine the intersection of multiple aspects of participants' identities, schooling experiences, and the imagined futures of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers attending urban high schools in different regions of the New York Metropolitan area. They generously agreed to participate in my study and shared their valuable time, life and schooling experiences, future planning, and dreams from their perspectives. Below, I shared a short introduction text about each young woman, Aisha, Amal, Crystal, Melissa, Mia, and Yulia, both in English and the translations of each participant's text in their home languages translated by the participant (see Appendices). After the interviews and analysis, I wrote a short introductory passage about each participant myself, considering the time they had already devoted to contributing to my study, completing the interviews, identity maps, and member check-ins. Hence, when I completed these introductory passages per participant, I requested them to review the text and edit, add, or remove any part of the passage. Once I received the revised version of each passage, I asked them if they could translate it into their home language so I could share both versions of the same text to highlight their bilingual skills and validate their funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992). They all agreed. Some took longer time to translate, some asked for help from their parents to edit their translations before sharing them with me, and some mentioned they sought no help translating the text into their language. I trusted that these short passages were crucial to providing a holistic understanding of these young women's multilayered identities and their connection with their imagined futures.

These passages also allowed space to highlight and validate their multilingual/multicultural backgrounds and skills. Below, I share a chart illustrating the six participants' demographic information following a short introduction (described above) about each participant.

Table 1:*Participant Demographics*

Participants	Race/Ethnicity /Cultural heritage	Home language(s)	Religious affiliation	School context	School type	ESL enrolment status	Grade level
Aisha	Tajik American	Tajik	Muslim	NYC	Public	No	11th
Amal	Sudanese	Arabic	Muslim	NY	Public charter	Yes, 5 years (now)	10th
Crystal	Mexican-American	Spanish	Christian	NYC	Public	No	10th
Melissa	Turkish	Turkish	Muslim	NJ	Public	Yes, 3 years	10th
Mia	Dominican	Spanish	Christian	NJ	Public charter	Yes, 5 years (now)	11th
Yulia	Russian-American	Russian	N/A	NYC	Private	No	11th

Amal

Amal had just become an 11th grader when I interviewed her in the Summer of 2021. She and her family settled in the U.S. in 2017 because of his brother's medical condition and the long treatment process. She attends a public charter high school in NY with culturally and racially diverse students, some of whom are students from immigrant backgrounds like her. Being a multilingual/multicultural individual, she describes her cultural heritage as Sudanese and speaks Arabic as her native language. She lives in a diverse neighborhood in NY, where she feels connected with her neighbors and feels like a part of the community. Before coming to the U.S. with her family, Amal lived in Egypt and went to school there from elementary to some years in

middle school. She describes herself as a Muslim and wears the hijab (veil). When she moved to the U.S., she enrolled as a 7th grader because she was defined as an "ESL student" while she was supposed to go to 8th grade. Amal has five siblings. Despite one of them being her boy twin, she described herself and her role in the family as the big sister of all of them. Amal is an honor student and athlete. She stays after school three days a week to practice as an athlete, works part-time during the week and weekends, and participates in voluntary organizations. She explains that her motivation to participate in my study is to help better understand bilingual and bicultural students' experiences.

Aisha

Aisha is an 11th grader who attends a big high school in Brooklyn in a culturally and linguistically diverse environment. She identifies herself as a Tajik-Muslim-American, sister, daughter, and good friend. Her parents are first-generation immigrants and moved to the U.S. almost two decades ago. She is multilingual and multicultural and speaks Tajik, English, and a few other languages. She notes that education and school success is significant to her and her family, and she works hard to take AP classes, plan for college, and work on Saturdays to learn about business. She thinks that understanding business is indispensable in the U.S. So, while she is undecided about her major now, she has already decided to take a business class. She loves painting, traveling, biking, and playing lacrosse, and she enjoys trying new food and learning more about psychology and business. One of the things worth sharing about her is that she is conscious and observant about her surroundings and manages a busy schedule both in and outside of school. She is ambitious, perseverant, and good at her multiple roles as a young individual. When I asked her what motivated her to join this study, she stated that "she enjoyed the idea of her diverse experiences as a bilingual student in the U.S. is listened to and viewed as

an asset and hopes that it will create a space for individuals from all walks of life relate to her experiences and learnings in some way.

Crystal

Crystal is a bilingual/bicultural public high school student in NYC. She began speaking and learning English once she started PreK and is fluent in Spanish. She had just turned into a 10th grader when I interviewed her. She shares that her school is a racially, linguistically, and culturally diverse and welcoming environment for students from all backgrounds. Besides, she describes her school context as multilingual and multicultural, where she is respected, welcomed, and supported by her teachers and older students. Born and raised in the U.S., Crystal describes her cultural heritage as being Mexican American. She lives in an urban neighborhood in NYC with her parents and her little sister, and the rest of her family, including her older brother, lives in Mexico. She visits Mexico every summer with the support of her parents. They want her and her sister to keep the connections with the rest of the family and learn about the language, culture, and society there better. She stays in a little village 30 minutes away from the city whenever she goes to Mexico. She prefers Mexico over America because of the weather, food, environment, and surroundings. It's not typical for you to see the everyday traffic, the ambulance or police car passing by every single day, but the sound of animals waking her up, the smell of fresh fruit and vegetables as soon as she walks out of her room. As she grows up and learns more about her culture, it reminds her about appreciating values in life and the opportunity she has to fly out for her roots.

Melissa

Melissa identifies herself as a sister, best friend, daughter, visibly Muslim multilingual/multicultural female student, animal lover, photographer, and a good reader. By the

time of the interview, she had just turned into a 10th grader year in a public high school in N.J.

She has been enrolled in the English as a second language (ESL) classroom since she started

school in the U.S. and exited the ESL classroom by the end of her 9th grade. One of her favorite

and close teachers is her ESL teacher, whom she describes as caring, understanding, and helpful.

She describes her school environment as partially diverse and her teachers and staff as very

supportive. She speaks Turkish, French, and English. Her family moved to a small country in

Africa when she was 4-5 years old and lived there for almost a decade until political issues in

Turkey affected her family's safety and business. They moved to the U.S. to seek protection. She

describes the U.S. as her third home country while also speaking fondly of her previous home

country in Africa, where she felt happy, social, valued, safe, and welcomed and loved

experiencing and learning about a different culture than her own for the first time. She has two

sisters and two close friends in school with whom she enjoys spending most of her time. She

shares that she is getting more aware of injustices globally, especially after moving to the U.S.

and volunteering in humanitarian projects to help people in need. She enjoys cycling, playing the

piano, technology, and exploring space.

Mia

Mia is an 11th grader, and she moved to the U.S. with her mother and brother five years

ago. Since then, she has been enrolled as an ESL student. She attends a public charter school in

N.J. with predominantly Latin American students. She is from the Dominican Republic and

describes her cultural heritage as Spanish. She is a bilingual and bicultural student and speaks

Spanish as her native language. Losing her younger brother in a traffic accident has made a

massive impact on her family, and her mother decided to leave everything behind and move to

the U.S. Her mom works as a hairstylist, and Mia goes to help her from time to time. Her older

brother works as a technician. She loves to listen to music, cultural celebrations, and birthday

parties and fondly shares her memories and good times when she joins any celebrations. She

enjoys being with people she loves, sharing food, and dancing to the D.R. music. Helping people

is essential to Mia; she already volunteers to help newcomers in her school. Recently, she has

also joined the soccer team at her school. She stresses that she wants to be a pediatrician because

she enjoys being around children and caring for them. Mia's motivation to participate in my

study was to be helpful to future students and me, as helping others is an essential component of

her family and culture (the Spanish translation of this passage is available in the Appendix).

Yulia

Yulia is an 11th grader who attends a private urban high school in NY with a majority of

multilingual, multicultural, and/or first-generation immigrant students. She decided to go to her

current school after experiencing the low attention and support and lack of close relationships in

the public schools she has been in. She was born and raised in the U.S. She is the only child of a

first-generation immigrant mom and a second-generation Russian American dad. Yulia describes

her cultural heritage as Russian. Yulia loves sharing about life, her Russian heritage, and the

differences she observes between Russian and American cultures. Yulia describes Russia as her

home and visits Russia every summer. Having long-term plans to move there in the future

permanently, she notes that visiting Russia brings her lovely childhood memories of good times

with her extended family and stresses how she appreciates the warm and close connections there.

She describes the U.S. as the home of opportunities. She feels fortunate and thankful for having

access to the tools and resources to fulfill her passion, pursue her career, and get a quality

education. She speaks both Russian and English fluently and speaks some other languages at

different levels as well. She loves art and music: she draws and paints, plays piano and guitar, and is interested in animes and make-up art.

Intending to provide some basic information about participants' context, demographics, and background, I believe these short introductions could help better make sense of the data analysis and findings from the data collected from the interviews, identity maps, podcasts, and researcher notes.

Data Collection and Sources

Shortly after I decided on the data collection methods and sources, Covid-19 Pandemic happened. Because of the Covid-19 Pandemic restrictions, I had to alter my initial data collection methods and sources: visit the participants in their school context and shadow them. Instead, I diversified the data collection sources regarding the participants' age. I attempted to differentiate the data collection methods by adding a podcast, an identity map, a series of interviews, and the researcher's journal and notes to make meaning of the participants' inside and outside schooling experiences, available resources, and thoughts toward their futures. Since I could not shadow or interview them in person, I improvised and relied on remote data collection methods collected via Zoom. Since they were high schoolers and three were emergent bilinguals, I decided to enrich the data sources and increase the amount of data I could collect from the participants. Hence, I added identity maps (drawing) and a podcast (listening) to multiply the strategies to gather as much data as possible rather than solely relying on interviews.

Semi-structured Interviews

I conducted a series of mixed semi-structured audio Zoom interviews (audio only because of ethical concerns working with young participants) with open-ended questions supporting

probes to make them less structured and sustain a natural flow. Except for the first interview, I used a somewhat structured version to collect the participants' demographic information (e.g., grade, age, home language, years in the ESL program, years lived in the U.S., and school name). I planned to conduct three interviews for approximately 45-60 minutes each unless participants asked for shorter or longer sessions. However, I ended up having four to six interviews with each participant ranging from 60 to 120 minutes. There were two main reasons for that outcome. First, even though I attempted to simplify the questions as possible to make them simple and easy to understand, considering the age and linguistic background of the participants, the interviews took longer than I expected.

I used open-ended interview questions because my goal was to keep the interviews as flexible and conversation-like as possible to build rapport and trust with the participants. Also, I aimed to explore more about the participants' lives, experiences, and imagined futures to decrease the pressure and power balance between the researcher and the participants (cf. Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For instance, my goal was to build rapport with the participants during the initial interviews. Therefore, I asked identity and culture-related questions like "Can you list five words that describe you as an individual? Can you list five places that were important to you growing up? Can you list five people that were important to you growing up? In the following interviews, I asked more questions to learn more about their schooling experiences, perspectives on available resources, and imagined futures. As such, "Do you remember an instance when you had to stop yourself using your home language even though you believed it was beneficial to use at that moment?' or 'Tell me an instance when you felt you could better explain a phenomenon of you could speak in your home language?" In addition to the interview questions, I used the interview time for the podcast and identity map talk (see more details

below). Hence, I used varying tools to maximize and differentiate the data collection tools to

enrich the data so they could reflect on their thoughts by listening and drawing, not solely

speaking about their experiences.

Podcast

I attempted to diversify the types of data collection sources by adding listening material.

Before the last interview with each participant, I shared an 11-minute podcast (see Shepherd,

2019), "Between two worlds," created by three multilingual/multicultural immigrant high

schoolers discussing their schooling experiences, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, challenges,

and parental expectations. I explained the podcast and asked them whether they wanted to listen

to it during the last interview and share their comments and thoughts about it with me or listen to

it before the last interview. I suggested these two options because they could have benefited from

taking their time to make notes and listening to them on their own with limited distractions

considering the participants' linguistic backgrounds differed. Adding a listening source, I aimed

to provide space for participants to benefit from their different language skills rather than solely

focusing on their speaking skills. I trusted that differentiating data collection sources would

increase the quality of data and help participants express themselves in multiple ways based on

my personal and professional experiences as a multilingual myself and as a language educator

who worked with multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers for years.

Additionally, since the podcast speakers were multilingual/multicultural immigrant high

schoolers like the participants and they were discussing their experiences, challenges, and

parental expectations, I found this podcast relevant to my study goals. I hoped the podcast

speakers' sharing their challenges and concerns would help the participants feel more confident

and comfortable sharing their experiences, opinions, and comments on issues in and outside of

school experiences. It was also especially crucial to me and my study since the Covid-19 Pandemic prevented me from shadowing them in schools and classrooms and meeting/observing participants in and out of their school environment. Despite these restrictions, the podcast provided space for participants to share and critique the issues they faced by commenting and discussing the speakers' experiences. Thus, by asking each participant to share their opinions about the podcast, I aimed to create a safe and familiar environment for them to increase the quality of the data and explore how they perceived the issues discussed, and talk/share as much as possible about essential topics like language, identity, inequities, etc. with feelings of safety and ease. In addition, the podcast helped participants feel more comfortable sharing their experiences with me as they could make connections with the speakers and discuss their experiences and challenges.

Identity Maps

I used "identity maps" (see Figures 3-6) to explore the multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' experiences and thinking toward their identity, experiences, and futures. I prepared a task for the participants so that they could bring their visualization skills to picture the connection between their identities and imagined futures (see Jaffe-Walter & Khawaja, 2022). While the visual methodology has been used in a variety of forms to collect data, I used identity mapping as a tool (see Futch & Fine 2014), similar to the scholars who used identity mapping in their studies with recently arrived immigrant youth to make meaning of their post-secondary experiences in New York City schools and Denmark (see Jaffe-Walter & Khawaja, 2022; Futch & Jaffe-Walter, 2011). Collecting data from the maps to gather in-depth data and make connections with students' identities, experiences, and imagination toward their futures, I aimed to enrich and diversify the data sources creating space for their non-speaking

and/or language using related skills like drawing, visualizing, and imagination. Singling out

certain skills (e.g., writing, language use & speaking) over others (no language-related ones)

could limit the way/s they prefer to use, especially newcomer multilingual/multicultural

immigrant high schoolers. As described by Futch and Fine (2014), "mapping as an inherently

narrative and dialogical approach that is premised on deepening the conversations between

researcher and participant in a way that privileges the inner thought processes and experiences of

the participant" (p. 73). That is, I believe that exploring and making the meaning of the

participants' perspectives and thoughts on their identities, schooling experiences, and future

imagining, drawings, and illustrations may help me get a holistic perspective on participants'

thoughts and how they interpret them through ways other than solely talking about them. Below,

I describe how I used identity maps in my study.

I asked each participant to create a simple map using drawings, writings, listings, and so

on, picture how they imagine their futures, and write the components they think affect (if any)

their decision-making process. I asked participants to draw an identity map only once throughout

the study, after the first interview, to help them reflect on and visualize their experiences and

perspectives. First, I described the identity map task to the participants. For this task, I asked

participants to draw an identity map by making a simple drawing to introduce their perceptions

of the multiple roles and identities that make them who they are from a holistic perspective.

Considering their age, grade level, and individual differences, I explained the task by watering

down the academic description (1), sharing an imaginative scenario to draw an identity map (2),

and showing some sample drawings from other published studies. I only shared samples of

identity maps with the participants who specifically asked for them and when I thought it would

be helpful for them to avoid limiting their imagination and creativity and instructing them how they should do one.

At first, I shared a version that I found more appropriate, academic language-wise: "Everybody is unique with their experiences, character, values, culture, language, etc., and they carry different selves within their body and mind. You may be a daughter, student, sister, friend, writer, bilingual speaker, or athlete. So, my question is, "Who is 'NAME' of the participant'?" However, after the first interviews, I realized that four participants could benefit from a further explanation, translation, and/or samples of the task to better understand what they were expected to do, in addition to the explanation above. I created a scenario with them to differentiate the instructions for their strengths and needs by reminding them how they introduced themselves in the first interview and talked about important places, things, and people for them. Then, I shared an imaginative scenario they may encounter: "You are applying for a big grant for your dream university, job, or business. You are asked to share a document with them to describe who you are, including the multiple roles you have, who you are from many aspects, the different selves about you, and your life. For example, being an immigrant, speaking several languages, being visibly Muslim, identifying as a Black woman, etc., makes you feel about yourself and how others view you in school, society, neighborhood, family, out-of-school places, etc. You are suggested to do it creatively, such as a simple one-page drawing rather than a 10-page personal statement. How would you describe yourself, so they see multiple aspects that make the unique "YOU"? They all wanted to take their time to think and draw one. Participants took at least two weeks to complete and digitally share their identity maps with me. We spent much of the interview time discussing their identity maps.

Researcher Journal and Notes

I kept a research journal, memos, and notes before, during, and after the research to be transparent about the process. I had been keeping notes about the whole research process in terms of gradual change of plans, limitations, struggles on the way, and rationale behind individual decisions about the research plan. Besides, I kept notes, especially before and after each interview. I aimed to record as many details as possible about each participant's reactions to questions, background incidents, and podcast (rather than solely their responses to the interview questions, etc.). By doing so, I strove to collect and organize complementary data from interviews with several participants to better analyze and make meaning of participants' transcripts and maximize the data I collected from an audio-only Zoom interview, podcast, and identity maps.

Data Analysis

The data collection and analysis process were continuous and concurrent (Merriam et al., 2002). I used open and axial coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1967) strategies to analyze all data sources. First, I transcribed the audio Zoom interviews using both Zoom's transcription services and Otter. ia app to ensure accuracy. I edited all thirty transcripts by listening to each recording several times right after the interview. I took observation notes during and after the interviews to support the while-interviewing data. At the same time, I took separate researcher notes after each interview that I found important to note down and that could support the interpretations of data analysis and findings.

To analyze the data, I used Saldana's (2016) coding manual for qualitative research as a guide. Beginning from the very first interview transcript, I immediately began working with the

data. At the beginning of the process, I used NVIVO, a qualitative data analysis tool, during the first rounds of data analysis to keep all the data collected in one place where I could digitally record, manage, and organize the data for each interview and participant and work on the transcripts for several rounds. However, after several interviews and working with NVIVO, I switched to manual coding as I found working on paper more liberating and accessible, even though it took longer than expected. I analyzed the data in several rounds using Saldana's (2016) coding strategies and coded within- and cross-case analyses (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). First, I grouped each participant's data (e.g., interview transcripts, identity maps, and researcher notes) and read each transcript. Then, I initiated the coding process by highlighting any relevant term, word, and/or phrase that sounds relevant to the purpose of the study and may help me answer the research question. I kept a record of all relevant and repeating words/phrases and was open to many possible codes at this stage. Second, once I went through all the transcripts and identity maps, I reread all the codes, comments, and memos (if any) and grouped the ones which could go together. Third, I worked on the emerging groups/themes, listed as many as they emerged, and compared them between individuals. Once these several rounds were over, I re-coded the long lists of emerging initial codes and groupings/categories. I narrowed them down to find the most relevant ones considering the purpose of the study, research question, and theoretical framework (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Challenges of Intersectional Data Analysis

> *"The researcher asks, are the theoretical constructs (still) useful or meaningful in explaining what I'm seeing? Does trying to make sense of my data challenge the theorists I'm using and require that I rethink that theory or combine it with others?"*
>
> *Jean Anyon (2009).*

While analyzing the data, I attempted to make an intersectional analysis by connecting the three major overlapping strands with the findings since it would allow me to see the emerging and repeated patterns of the data (themes & categories) and make connections between the participants. To shed light on the complex nature of identity and how it is constructed through the intersection of various factors such as culture, gender, immigration status, language, and race, I attempted to use an intersectional perspective to analyze the data. An intersectional analysis was exactly what could provide space and tools for a more nuanced understanding of how these intersecting factors influence the complexity of identity construction and the effects of multilayered identities on individuals' experiences and decisions. However, I struggled to navigate the challenges of the complex nature of the intersectional analysis. The biggest reason I could think of was that, as a naïve researcher, I knew little about how to "do" an intersectional analysis and how complex and challenging it could be.

Further, these challenges and struggles throughout the intersectional analysis process followed me to the writing of the analysis chapter. The theory of intersectionality as social action theory (Hill-Collins, 2019) was challenging in terms of complexity and indefinite possibilities for intersecting layers of oppression. Hence, the thinking and implanting process to lay out this kind of complex analysis and representation was challenging. Throughout the different phases of the dissertation process, I continuously asked myself, "How may I employ an intersectional approach to shape the research questions and analysis and organize the findings reflecting such complexity?" I attempted to make intersectional work's complex nature visible in every research layer, from research questions to conclusions. Rather than researching components of the identities of the participants separately, using intersectionality, I aimed to bring multiple aspects of identities and layers of oppression into every aspect of my work. I experienced challenges

throughout my dissertation process while implementing the theory into practice. While the theory suggested an intersectional approach throughout the research, focusing on bringing many aspects of identities together and laying out such a complex representation was challenging. Considering and deciding on what was crucial to discuss the complexity of the individual's background and how it affected their experiences, the writing process often required bringing different combinations of multiple aspects of the participants' identities and overlapping between certain components such as race, language, and immigration background became unavoidable. It is because an intersectional lens can get too complicated to implement and consider representing and delving into such complexity all the time with all the components. For instance, multiple components of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' identities affect their schooling experiences and imagined futures. Throughout the analysis and writing process, it became a huge challenge for me to decide on a manageable number of components that intersect and affect their experiences. Oftentimes, multiple components were in play, and I struggled to determine how to lay out this complex representation. My experiences during this study taught me that while being aware of the intersectional and complex nature of individuals is indispensable, some practical implementations and examples, and sample studies would help researchers bring an intersectional approach to each phase of their dissertation thinking and writing process and ease the implementation of the theory.

Accountability

I got IRB approval from the Montclair State University IRB committee and made any necessary changes regarding the ethics and privacy of the participants. In addition, I ensured that my research aligned with all the requirements for IRB approval before I reached out to any

individuals in my network, shared the study information and invitation, and/or met with potential

participants.

Validity and Credibility

I aimed to ensure validity and credibility through cross-checking, such as triangulating

the data, providing member checks, describing my positionality as a researcher, confronting my

own biases and beliefs, and engaging with the participants through building trust and sincere

conversations despite the COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions. In addition, I regularly met and

sought feedback from my critical friends, some of whom were counselors, doctoral students,

educators, college students, and my advisor and committee members (experts in power issues,

school structure, teaching EFL/ESL, qualitative research, critical research, and so on), before,

during, and after the research process. I benefited from their comments, critiques, and

suggestions to develop my research design and study overall.

Trustworthiness

My goal was to be as transparent with the participants and parents unless it did not affect

the purpose of the study. I first shared my positionality as an individual and a researcher so that,

despite the Covid-19 restrictions, I could create an environment to highlight our similarities and

build a trusting relationship and connection with the participants. Furthermore, to sustain the

triangulation of the data, I gathered data from a series of interviews, researcher journal/memos,

member checks, identity maps, and a podcast to enrich data sources as possible (cf. selection

practices, Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Covid-19 restrictions prevented me from observing them at

the school site, observing participants in the classroom environment, and interacting with them

face-to-face. Thus, I strove to highlight our similarities and create an inclusive and safe

environment to connect with them, starting from the first interviews. I shared a podcast to create an engaging conversation over issues and incidents inside and outside the school context to sustain prolonged engagement to better know one another and build that trust and connection early on.

Additionally, I described how I dealt with my own "biases" or beliefs pre-, during, and after collecting and interpreting the data. Also, I shared notes/memories from the research journal that I had been keeping before I conducted the study and kept till the end of the study. Thus, I could share the study's details and the process, as the surprises, challenges, and issues that I faced during the whole research process to be transparent with my interpretations and conclusions.

Chapter 4: The Role of Multilingual/Multilingual Immigrant High Schoolers' Multilayered Identities in the Making of Their Experiences and Imagined Futures

This chapter focuses on the complex lives and circumstances of six multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schooler young women participating in this study. I discuss the findings under two primary foci in chapters four and five. In this chapter, I focus on the role of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' complex identities in their experiences and imagined futures. I strove to draw attention to how the participants' backgrounds shaped their identities and experiences and influenced their future aspirations. Doing so allowed me to examine multiple aspects of the six young women's identities, these aspects' influence on who they were, and their experiences. This chapter serves as a foundation for Chapter Five, where I focus on how multiple aspects of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' identities shape the participants' experiences regarding their sense of belonging, access to educational opportunities, and engagement in school.

I begin this chapter by briefly outlining the thought process behind organizing the themes presented in chapters four and five. Conducting an intersectional analysis to explore the complex identities of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers was challenging and intricate. As a researcher with limited experience in intersectional work, the greatest challenge was incorporating multiple layers of complex and indefinite possibilities for intersecting layers of oppression. I attempted to include as many factors as possible, such as culture, gender, ethnicity, immigration status, language, and race to highlight the interconnectedness of these factors. However, I encountered several difficulties in organizing the themes and laying out such a complex preparation of findings in a distinct manner. First, I had to determine which aspects of the students' identities to include or exclude. Second, I often thought multiple aspects of their identities were crucial and intertwined. To overcome these challenges, I continued to question how best to employ the components of the theory to address my research questions and analysis regarding the complexity of the students' identities while at the same time addressing my research questions. Thus, I decided to write the analysis and findings in two separate chapters, each addressing the relationship between the participants' multiple aspects of identities and imagined futures.

In responding to the research question of what futures multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers imagine for themselves, four subthemes emerged: a) gendered lives and experiences in the family; b) living with dual identities, dual cultures, and dual languages; c) colliding worlds: the clash and negotiations between parental expectations and participants' imagined futures; and d) ties with the home country and imagined futures. By organizing the chapter using these four subthemes, I strive to present my findings relating to the six participants' imagined futures and how their identities shaped their aspirations. Despite the

challenges and limitations that I faced in analyzing and presenting the findings, I believe the themes presented in these chapters offer valuable insights into the complex identities and imagined futures of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers.

Gendered Lives and Experiences in the Family

All six young women had many responsibilities and roles in their families. All participants but Yulia had siblings and were assigned multiple roles and responsibilities concerning their familial obligations. The six participants were generally expected to help their parents with the housework (e.g., cleaning and cooking), care for their siblings, and assist them with schoolwork. They also helped their parents translate and interpret from English to their home language as needed, make phone calls, send/reply to emails, and perform other language-related and legal tasks. However, participants' socioeconomic status, culture, ethnicity, family size, and parents' familiarity with the system, language, and technology played a huge role in the type and number of roles and responsibilities the six young women shouldered. These roles and responsibilities were also situated within intersecting factors, which often stemmed from their parents' understandings of gender, ethnicity, immigration background, and socioeconomic background. In the following sections, I discuss how intersections of different aspects of participants' backgrounds affected the type and number of roles and responsibilities they were assigned.

Before moving on, it is essential to highlight that the six young women probably have traditionally defined gendered lives and experiences in contexts like school and community other than solely in the family. However, as described in the methodology chapter and study limitations, gender was not one of the primary foci of the study but emerged naturally from the data. Thus, interview questions and the podcast mainly revealed their gendered roles and

responsibilities in the family rather than school and community settings. Additionally, because of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, I could not shadow the participants in their school and community settings but had to adapt to remote data collection methods instead. Hence, I could collect data related to the family context only.

Intersections of Patriarchy and Gender in Shaping Gendered Roles and Responsibilities

Parents' sense of gender and patriarchy shaped the participants' gendered responsibilities and roles as older sisters, daughters, and young high school-age women aligning with the ethnic norms of their cultural community. When I use the term patriarchy, I refer to a system for maintaining class, gender, race, and privilege. Patriarchy concerns the gendered social relations of power that privilege heteronormative masculine identities. Regarding my participants' experiences and ethnic backgrounds, the gendered roles seemed to be enforced and sustained by the patriarchal system, societal and cultural norms, and expectations that define certain roles and responsibilities to women, like caregiving, housework, and helping siblings. These defined gendered roles seemed to devalue the six young women's aspirations and limit their opportunities to dream and pursue their own goals and futures, resulting in other forms of oppression and marginalization for these young women. Considering the gendered roles and responsibilities put on women from different cultures, races, socioeconomic backgrounds, and ethnicities, the six participants in this study seemed to shoulder the gendered roles and responsibilities their parents enforced. They considered it crucial for them as young women for their future roles. Below, I discuss the tension my participants experienced in their families because of their gender and how their cultural background and parents' perceptions intersected with those gendered roles and responsibilities.

In the cases of Amal and Mia, both first-generation newcomer multilingual/multicultural young women with older and/or same-age brothers, their gendered roles and responsibilities were even more apparent. Their gender roles were evidenced in Amal and Mia's to-do tasks, where they constantly compared their responsibilities and roles with the roles and responsibilities expected of their brothers. Comparing their roles and responsibilities with their brothers, who did not have the same (or the same type and amount of) responsibilities as they did, Amal and Mia's experiences showed how patriarchy and cultural and societal norms and expectations shaped and enforced a gendered role division at home. For example, Mia supported her mother (and her family) in language, technology, and system navigation, such as helping with the housework, assisting her mother in her workplace, and language-related tasks like translation, making phone calls, sending/replying to emails for her mother, saying,

> So…I help my mom with the house sometimes. I help her like (with) cooking. I wash the dishes, or you know, clean the kitchen. I help her, you know, with the calls that when she has to pay with a credit card…when she needs to call on, you know, for the insurance... What else? There are more things she wants my help, but I don't remember now. A lot of things… Oh, to clean the closets, to take out the things. And I take it all to wash the clothes like go to the laundry. What else?... sometimes I help her with the hair job (she means assisting her mother in the hair saloon). I help with the translations, both speaking (interpretation) and the papers (written translation). I basically do like it when they send that letters… I need to do all because she don't know like the technology and all. So, I need to do it. (Mia Interview, December 21, 2021)

Sharing the added responsibilities that her mother assigned her; Mia listed the tasks she was responsible for in her family. Living in a single-parent household, roles were already set for Mia.

As a child living in a single-parent household, she was expected to take on tasks like those that a spouse or second parent might take on. This work was compounded by the tasks assigned to Mia due to her fluency in the English language. After school, she had housework, helping her mother with her job, and other language-related work. Mia shouldered all these tasks along with her schoolwork as the only young woman and most fluent English speaker in her household. Mia's experiences also indicated how patriarchy shaped and enforced gendered roles and responsibilities at home. Comparing the tasks she shared with her brother, Mia pointed out the role division at home, describing his brother's roles and responsibilities at home, saying,

> …he doesn't like to like clean. He said that's not for men. He does (help), like, when we need it (him to) open a hole in the wall…when we were moving, he carried the things…He knows, like, a lot about electricity and mechanic…he works, so he pays for the internet, and he gives money to pay the rent. (Mia Interview, December 21, 2021)

By explicitly saying that her brother did not do certain tasks at home because "that's not for men", Mia pointed out the gendered roles and responsibilities that fell on her shoulder as a young woman, daughter, and sister in the family who was often expected and assigned the gendered roles and responsibilities. In contrast, her brother would not do housework and language-related tasks as they were not for 'men' but for 'women'.

Similarly, Amal, a Sudanese, first-generation newcomer high school student and the oldest child with a twin brother, shared the responsibilities and roles expected of her in her family, especially by her mother, saying,

> …so, she (her mom) asks me to look after my siblings, (help) with their homework, and even (communicate) with the teachers with emails and stuff like this. I mostly do that, but

when there is an email for my mom and stuff like that, she does (can) not read English or

speak…you know, all those (things)...(Now that) I stood up a little for myself because I

felt like this was going to be years of stuff. Now, I do have responsibilities in the house,

yeah. But, like, not as much as I used to. (Amal, Interview 5, July 29, 2021)

Sharing her long list of responsibilities in the family, Amal stressed the pressure from her mother

to sustain the cultural and ethnic roles and responsibilities. While she had a twin brother, Amal

often shared her frustration about him not being under the same pressure as her and not being

asked for help with those added responsibilities and roles in the family by her mother. In Amal's

case, her mother sustained the patriarchal, ethnic, and cultural norms and expectations. She

enforced the gendered role division by setting the multiple roles and responsibilities traditionally

expected of a woman (described in the quote above) on Amal but not her twin brother.

Such role divisions indicated how ethnicity, culture, and patriarchy shaped the

participants' gendered roles in their daily lives, and school lives as well as while they imagined

their futures. It was apparent that their given responsibilities and roles as young women were

gendered roles. I would argue that having certain gendered roles as young women in school,

family, and community could limit participants' perceptions of who they were, their identity, and

what they would dream of becoming in the future.

Intersections of Immigration Background and Socioeconomic Status (SES) Shaping Gendered Roles and Responsibilities

The multiple aspects of the six multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers'

backgrounds included in this study affected their responsibilities and roles in their families.

Additionally, participants' parents experienced their own intersections, significantly impacting

the type and number of responsibilities and roles they shouldered in the family. Thus, I felt it was

crucial to begin this section by first sharing certain factors related to participants' parents' immigration background, ethnicity, and SES, such as length of residency in the U.S.; educational background; and familiarity with the educational system, language, and society to better understand the patterns of the role division in their home.

The length of participants' parents' stay in the U.S. varied widely, ranging from as few as five years to since birth. First-generation immigrant students' (Amal, Melissa, and Mia) parents lived in the U.S. for five years or less. They were simultaneously adjusting to a new educational system, language, and culture with their children. However, second-generation immigrant students' (Aisha, Crystal, and Yulia) parents settled in the U.S. for at least two decades. Five received their B.A. and/or M.A. degrees in the U.S. These differences between their parents' SES and immigration background profoundly affected the number and type of responsibilities and roles for the six young women in the family.

Immigration Background. Amal, Melissa, and Mia were first-generation multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers. They were simultaneously exposed to the expectations and norms of the dominant culture, language, and society with their parents. Their experiences showed that these three participants often had to become the cultural broker (described in chapter two) between the world outside their homes and family. That is, they often took on the roles of guides and mentors, switching back and forth between parent-child roles and adding layers of responsibilities, resulting in feelings of tension, frustration, and stress. For example, while sharing her experiences as a first-generation immigrant student, Melissa compared her roles and responsibilities with a second-generation peer in her school. Explaining how Melissa shared how she felt frustrated and overwhelmed from time to time when she and her sisters were often busy with translation and other language-related tasks:

Let me give one of my peers in class an example. Her parents have lived here for 16

years. She was born and raised here…her parents prepared an established life for her

…Both work in different schools, so they are familiar with things here, unlike my

parents. She does not have to help her parents because they do not need it. They speak

English, too. But in my case, when the pandemic thing happened, we (meaning she and

her sister) made all the doctor appointments… I'm only 16 years old, and I shouldn't

have to think about these things at my age. But I made an appointment for my parents, we

went to appointments together, and I translated for my parents. I wish my parents could

handle their to-dos on their own like my friend's parents, so I do not have to do all these

things. But life sometimes brings different things for us. They (her friend and her parents)

never experienced what we had. (Melissa Interview, August 2, 2021)

Melissa noted the differences in everyday expectations with a same-grade second-generation

immigrant peer. She was frustrated that, unlike her peer, she had to become her parents' guide

and source of knowledge in the U.S. in addition to her existing duties and stressors as a student

and individual. Melissa wished her parents did not need her help and that she had fewer

responsibilities and roles in the family, the same as her peer. Her frustration indicated Melissa

was stressed and overwhelmed with the tasks and work she had to handle as a high schooler.

Similarly, the effects of parents' SES backgrounds and familiarity with the U.S.

education system and language were also apparent in Crystal's experiences, who was a second-

generation multilingual/multicultural high schooler. Creating a disconfirming case for the

second-generation young women group, Crystal's roles and responsibilities in the family varied

from housework to language-related tasks, unlike Aisha and Yulia's. That is, in the case of Aisha

and Yulia, their parents were the primary source of guidance in learning English, navigating the

education system, and familiarizing themselves with the dominant society and culture. In contrast, even as a second-generation immigrant, her parents were less familiar with the language and norms of the dominant culture; as a Spanish and English-speaking bilingual young woman, Crystal had added layers of responsibilities as the cultural broker for her parents/family. Crystal sometimes struggled to ask for help and guidance from her parents because her parents were new to English and were unfamiliar with the education system and the practices within dominant to guide her when needed. Crystal shared,

> They don't really know English, and it's sometimes difficult to ask for help. I mean, as I said, there's also a lot of people who speak Spanish, but for example, there's also people who are racist, so they don't like to help out people. Like, oh, you don't speak English, okay, then go away, over there. Or like, (they say) "I can't help you out or like this or that". And that sometimes, like, unfortunately, because you're kind of stuck in, for example, if there's a student that you actually want to learn, and, your parents, they don't know how to help you out, because they learned or they grew up with different ideas. And you have different ideas… it's sometimes hard. (Crystal, Interview, July 3, 2021)

Crystal's specific frustrations encompassed her role as a cultural broker and translator. Crystal was frustrated by her parents' challenges, who were learning English, and encountered discrimination when seeking help. These challenges were compounded by the fact that she and her parents did not have experience with the American education system, language, and culture. For Crystal, that meant added layers of responsibilities and roles in her family while navigating the education system and culture without much support. Like the three multilingual/multicultural newcomer high schoolers in the study, Crystal's frustration resulted from implied having to take on multiple responsibilities and roles to succeed academically, such as acting as a translator for

her parents, seeking out resources and support for her own, and balancing schoolwork with familial tasks. She and her family needed help and guidance accessing resources to better understand the U.S. education system and culture. Still, they were challenged by a lack of support and resources, and Crystal sought support from individuals other than her parents.

Socioeconomic Status (SES). Even though Crystal was a second-generation immigrant participant, her experiences were like first-generation immigrant participants regarding the roles and responsibilities in her family. One explanation for Crystal's nonconforming results as a second-generation multilingual high schooler could be her parents' socioeconomic backgrounds and the long-lasting plans to return to Mexico once they saved enough to build a decent life there. Her parents' socioeconomic backgrounds differed from Yulia and Aisha's regarding educational credentials and career paths. Yulia and Aisha's at least one parent got her college or higher degree in the U.S., was familiar with the U.S. education system, society, and language, and worked in higher-paying jobs compared to her parents. Their familiarity with the education system, societal expectations, and forms of capital (mentioned in Chapter 2) was higher than the rest of the participants' parents. Crystal's mother worked as a waitress, and her father worked as a mechanic. They worked six days a week for very long hours, making it difficult to invest in language acquisition and build a network outside their ethnic community circle. Crystal's parents saw their life in the U.S. as temporary, which might have caused them to postpone integrating into the larger society and familiarize themselves with the education system. Crystal's parents' socioeconomic backgrounds and unique situation as perceiving themselves as temporary profoundly affected the number of her responsibilities and roles in the family compared to Aisha and Yulia. Especially in terms of the level of support and guidance she could receive. This finding suggests that the more familiar the parents were with U.S. society, the education system,

and linguistic and social resources, the fewer the responsibilities and roles fell on these six young women.

The six participants' and their parents' backgrounds affected the number and volume of tasks they expected of them and pointed to an emerging need for support from their schools and teachers. They often needed and relied on teachers' encouragement and support, school resources, and support to address their linguistic and academic achievement-related needs. It was apparent that these added roles and responsibilities often caused frustration and left less time for them to work on school-related tasks. It is also crucial to acknowledge that the three first-generation immigrant young women had a limited transition time into a new education system, culture, school environment, and a language as their second language. They had to adapt to their new life and its requirements quickly while at the same time carrying the weight of the multiple responsibilities and roles to help their family.

To conclude, Aisha's and Yulia's roles and responsibilities in their families were fewer compared to the rest, and they had access to slightly more resources from their school, family, and parents. Aisha had some degree of home-related responsibilities, such as taking care of her siblings and helping with their housework. She was not expected to become the cultural broker in the family, though. Instead, four multilingual/multicultural young women became the source of knowledge and cultural brokers for themselves and their families when navigating the education system, dominant language, and culture in the U.S. They provided the support their parents and family needed. Their parents' particular ideas on gender roles added layers to their family responsibilities, which limited who they were and what they could achieve. Lack of opportunities to access resources and guidance for their needs added challenges to their responsibilities and roles as high schoolers. Their priorities included developing their language and social skills,

familiarizing themselves with the requirements and structure of the system, and excelling in school and their imagined futures. Taken together, if the participants in the study received support and resources for higher academic achievement and a sense of belonging, they might not have struggled and been overwhelmed as much.

Living with Dual Identities, Dual Cultures, and Dual Languages

In this section, I discuss how multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers described the role and place of their cultural heritage in their life and how they negotiated their cultural heritage, home language, learnings from their parents, and negotiating the home and host cultures' impact in their schooling and daily lives. The six young women in this study were familiar with and integrated their cultural heritage into their social and school lives at different levels. They often continued the legacy of the culture modeled by their parents. They often needed help negotiating their families' expectations and teachings of their cultural heritage within the U.S. culture and context. They constantly shifted from one culture to another and from one language to another, differentiating their behaviors and attitude to meet the expectations of each culture.

Shifting between Dual Cultures, Identities, and Languages

In this study, the six young women described living between dual languages, identities, and languages. Regardless of their birth country, they experienced a constant shift between the cultures and languages within different contexts. This continuous need to shift resulted in stress and confusion when negotiating their home and school culture expectations. Going back and forth between the cultures they were exposed to, the participants gained negotiation skills and habits to navigate their dual cultures, identities, and lives. Navigating between cultures looked different for each of the first or second-generation participants. However, first-generation

immigrant (newcomer) multilingual/multicultural high schoolers (Amal, Melissa & Mia). They felt more frustration and separation of dual cultural expectations and practices between the "school (American) culture" and their home culture compared to their second-generation immigrant peers (Aisha, Crystal & Yulia). The latter group of participants seemed to develop skills over time by shifting from one language to another whenever context and population changed. For example, Crystal, born and raised in New York, was learning English and familiarizing herself with the U.S. culture since she was in Pre-K. Code-switching since childhood, Crystal experienced dilemma and frustration having to constantly negotiate her dual cultures and languages in the U.S. and Mexico contexts, sharing,

> …because like weird!...the language... Like over there, I can't really speak English. And then here, I can speak Spanish and both. But then there's like pros and cons of it in America…Because it's kind of like weird here, in America. Because you don't know if you are going to be accepted as who you are. Because, I mean, America is really diverse and everything. But most times, it's like, you have people who like are racist, I guess…Like, being confused over when sometimes, like, I don't know, my own culture, and then I get confused when people ask, and then they're like, Oh, no, that's wrong (means language use and cultural practices). And I'm like, I don't really know. Like, my parents do show me. But there's a difference, like, they show me different ways."
>
> (Crystal, Interview, July 29, 2021)

Describing how she negotiated and practiced English and Spanish and the cultural practices and knowledge that each culture brought, Crystal pointed out how this duality sometimes confused her. She needed help to meet the expectations of each culture and language in their context. Highlighting the dilemma and frustration she experienced, Crystal often stressed when deciding

what she was expected to do, how to behave, and what language to speak when she traveled back and forth between the U.S. and Mexico. However, she could distinguish between the cultural, linguistic, and behavioral expectations of the two countries she lived in and emphasized the difficulties of determining when and how she could make the cultural shift in each context.

Similarly, another second-generation bilingual immigrant participant, Aisha, compared how she perceived, embraced, and negotiated her dual cultural identities, stating,

> I think a lot more upfront than (the) majority of Tajiks, but I still have like a side of me that's like I can't concern myself with the American because there's two inside of me that I cannot always just be completely different to the people around me that are American…because it's like I'm not comfortable with that…I have, like, more of the mindset of just "suck it up".. kind of ingrained in me in comparison to, like, if you're feeling this way, set boundaries for yourself, talk to the people around you… like, I've never really been taught that until school. So…even though I'm like pretty good at it, compared to, like, the other Uzbeks, I'm still working on it…But, mindset-wise, I'm kind of more American than Tajiks, but still not like American, American. (Aisha Interview, December 5, 2021)

Comparing and contrasting her dual cultural identities, being, thinking, and acting as she perceived being Tajik versus being American, Aisha went back and forth between these two identities, describing them sometimes as separate cultural identities but other times as hybrid identities. Constantly negotiating perceptions of her dual identities and dual cultures, Aisha stressed the existence and daily negotiations of cross-cultural exchange. Aisha experienced mixed feelings, of belonging and not belonging, in her home and school culture. Aisha's lived experience was impacted by the intersections of her home and school cultures.

Regarding differing ties with their cultural heritage (discussed in chapter two), two out of three first-generation immigrant students in this study lived in another country after they left their home country, but before moving to the U.S. Amal, who identified as Sudanese, moved from Sudan to Egypt before she started elementary school. While the country mainly required English in formal education, she had all her formal education in Arabic, her home language. Similarly, Melissa, originally from Turkey, moved to a West African country with her family when she was four. There, she got her formal education in French, which became her primary language of communication outside her home and her small circle Turkish community. She studied and lived there until she and her family left because the political oppression in Turkey affected their business and security there, and sought refuge in the U.S. When Melissa moved to the U.S., she started learning and practicing English as her second language (while she began to learn it as a foreign language before moving). The U.S. was her third country of residence. Before living in the U.S., Melissa learned several languages and lived in different contexts. While discussing her perception of culture, Melissa described how her ties with her home country (Turkey) were strong but complicated, saying,

> Since I did not live in Turkey long, I got the culture less. I mean, there are things that I took a little differently, a little less, compared to those who have lived in Turkey. But culture, yes, is a very important part of our lives, something that makes us who we are and has an influence on our life. (Melissa Interview, July 11, 2021)

When discussing her cultural heritage, Melissa exemplified the countries and cultures she was familiar with. She often compared the U.S. culture with her home culture. Most of her examples about "American culture" came from her experiences, observations, and perceptions of her school life. Like the rest of the participants, she often provided examples from her school, which

she perceived as a representative of U.S. culture. When comparing the home culture and U.S. culture, Melissa noted,

> As we see from our elders, many things are passed down from family to family. You know, like, respect for elders. It's definitely a cultural thing. I don't know if it exists in the U.S. culture, but in our Turkish culture, respect for elders is very important. Similarly, in Africa, this is something I learned there, too. Teachers are extremely respected. I don't know; we would respect our teachers a lot: One would not enter (the classroom) without knocking, would not speak or do something without their permission. When I came here, it was very strange and shocking to me that students entered the classroom without knocking, interrupting the teacher, or calling the teacher by (first) name…we would always put Mr. or Mrs. before their name. The teacher had a very important place for us in Africa…I can say that this is a cultural thing I took from Africa. (Melissa Interview, July 11, 2021)

Melissa compared her perceptions of respect in her ethnic culture and her perceptions of American culture in school (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012). She made meanings of American culture from her observations of teacher-student relationships and daily in-class practices from her school life. Comparing and contrasting her home and host cultures, Melissa's invisible aspects of socialization and aspects of her home culture shaped her perceptions of respect and schooling in the U.S.

The six young women's experiences and perceptions of their home and host cultures differed; their experiences indicated that they often felt 'different' in their school culture (aka U.S. culture). They could differentiate between these two cultures, and oftentimes they collided. They had moments when their culture was perceived as "different" by their peers and society.

Likewise, they had many moments they perceived the host culture as "different." Their

perceptions of themselves as different from others depended on their race, nationality, time spent

in the U.S., ties with their home country and culture, language, and so on. It seems they are

constantly learning, struggling, appreciating, comparing, and contrasting both cultures. As

language plays a crucial part within culture, perceptions of the participants' "English language

proficiency" in society greatly impacted their perceptions of selves and their belonging in the

U.S. Since the language and culture were interconnected, and a thorough comprehension of a

language required a deep understanding of the cultural environment in which it was employed

(Kramsch, 2011; Naiditch, 2018), participants with fewer opportunities and less exposure to the

culture (intentionally/unintentionally) struggled more with the culture and language shifts. That

is, while they all experienced negotiations between dual identities, cultures, and languages at

varying degrees, participants with less exposure to the host culture and the language seemed to

struggle more with the shifts.

The Role of Values in Building Imagined Futures

Values differ from one participant to another, from one culture to another. Cultural values

played a crucial role in shaping the participants' imagined futures, helping them define how they

viewed cultural and traditional "values". While the participants' cultural backgrounds and values

were similar, what values their families chose to sustain and encourage their children to hold

onto them differed to some extent. All six young women wanted career paths that would provide

them with an independent lifestyle, financial security, and resources to help people in need.

While their goals, and in what ways they would realize these goals, varied for each participant,

all but Yulia included helping people in need as one of her primary goals while choosing a

career.

The six young women showed similarities and differences in the ways and which their values played a significant role in shaping their imagined futures. All six participants incorporated values of their faith and cultural/ethnic traditions from their upbringing in their future decisions and imagining processes but in a variety of ways. They all attributed value to achieving successful school life and career and establishing a life in the host country. While their values were often informed by their unique cultural heritage and intergenerational teachings (see Table 1 for more details), comparing the values they held onto was interesting.

For instance, they all wanted to ensure first that they get a college degree and/or higher, have a decent-paying job, be independent, start a family of their own, and buy/build their own house either in their home country or in the U.S. Five of the participants' imagined futures (Amal, Melissa, Mia, Aziza, and Crystal) included helping people in need and from underserved backgrounds in differing levels. Mia, from the Dominican Republic, identified as a Latin American (and/or Hispanic interchangeably). Her mother's cultural values and teachings significantly shaped her decision on her future career. She noted,

> I want to be a pediatrician. So, I want to have like my own office. I want…all to be free. I want to work hard so that (for) people that don't have, you know, enough money, it will be free for them, they don't need to pay, you know, a lot of money… I want them (the prospective low-income patients) to be like, you know, happy when they are (getting) consulting from me for the(ir) problems. I want them to be…comfortable with me. Tell me like you know what happened to them, and I basically, I want to be like a friend for them, then you know than the doctor. (Mia Interview, December 21, 2021)

In this excerpt about her process of imagined futures, Mia brought up the values and principles, along with her parents' (mostly her mother's) expectations, related to helping people in need.

Considering her experiences as a newcomer in this country, with limited access to resources and help, Mia and her family generously offered help and support to people in need, specifically regarding linguistic and system navigation knowledge they learned throughout their time in the U.S. Mia also shared how the tragic loss of her brother affected her and her family deeply. They felt helpless during his time in the hospital, and she was not allowed to stay with his beloved brother in his last days as she liked. Having experienced such hard times and losing her brother, Mia decided to build a career as a pediatrician saying,

> …after the traffic accident, so he was in the hospital like 14 days… I, like my mom, was there. I was with my father, so he takes me to see him. He was talking to my mom like, you know…he understands well (what) my mom was saying, so he has a notebook to write there. He is the one he wrote like the doctors (who) were attending him…they wouldn't give him medicine. So, he told my mom like he was like hot. So, my mom bought him a fan and put it there. It was hard for her. It was so sad…things like (this) make you think that you don't want (it) to happen to other people, you know. That was too hard for me. (Mia Interview, December 21, 2021)

Mia described her and her family's sorrow when his younger brother was hospitalized. She shared how the experience of losing her brother led to her decision to become a pediatrician. By being a pediatrician, Mia could play a part in helping other kids survive. Her experience made a tremendous impact on her and her mother. After losing his brother, Mia decided to become a pediatrician, and she and her mother prioritized helping people in need. Thus, she could help other families and kids so they would not experience the loss she had.

Like Mia, Crystal integrated her willingness to help people into her future decisions. Crystal's parents also valued helping people. Crystal imagined herself as happy in the future if

she got a good job to maintain a good life for herself while also helping those in need, which would make her parents happy, too. Her experiences and mother's influence added to her imagined happy future as those would add more value to her life, making her parents and people in need happy. In her own words,

> I think my future will look like really happy, like, like, as an example, if I was like, 20, like in college or 19, 20, probably I, my younger self, would be really happy because I, I made my parents happy. Like, for example, if I was a pharmacist… they'd be really happy. And I get to have a good life, and I get to help other people. … That's like what I wanted. (Crystal Interview, July 29, 2021)

Crystal shared her dreams of a promising future, bringing into her perceptions of values like Aisha, Mia, Melissa, and Amal. These values included making her parents happy, meeting their expectations, and working hard not to disappoint them. Crystal found it essential to integrate her parents' expectations and perceptions of her cultural values into her imagined future, which would make her parents and so herself happy with her life.

For Melissa and Amal, values were crucial in their future planning. They both strove to build a future and decide on a career that would help people from refugee/asylee backgrounds and become role models for Muslim women. As first-generation immigrants who settled in the U.S. five years ago, Melissa and Amal were frustrated with the misperceptions about Islam and Muslim women in social media in their new land. As visibly Muslim young women, who lived only in Muslim-majority countries before settling in the U.S., they both felt uncomfortable with people's stereotyping questions about their faith and practices based on social media. Others perceived them to represent the Muslim community and asked them to explain or clarify complicated faith-related issues on behalf of a huge community. They often felt the passion and

urge to prove or model that they disagreed with the misinterpretations shown on social media. Both shared, as newcomers to the U.S., multilingual/multicultural newcomer high schoolers, and visibly Muslim young women, they wanted to represent visibly Muslim women as successful, helpful, and hard-working with promising careers, disproving the misconceptions about Muslim women. Sharing her frustrations, Melissa wanted to lead the change and become a role model to disconfirm such misconceptions, saying,

> I have recently started to see Muslim women in prestigious positions. It wasn't apparent to me before as I saw many women not working and had limited access to education and decent jobs… This is not what I want to see. I want to show people that Muslim women are successful and capable all doing many things… For example, I saw a very successful Muslim woman the other day on the news. Then I said, she did it, I can do it too. I want Muslim women to motivate one another and believe they can do it, too. I want them to be independent. (Melissa Interview, August 2, 2021)

Melissa emphasized how important it was for young Muslim women to see successful role models. Melissa was frustrated that she rarely saw role models that would motivate her to believe in herself to achieve her goals as a Muslim woman. She wanted to become a strong and successful woman and represent visibly Muslim women well for the young generations.

Similarly, as a young Black and visibly Muslim woman from Sudan, Amal felt privileged to have access to a higher level of education, resources, and freedom in the U.S. Thus, she felt the urge to become the voice of the silenced and vulnerable people, especially women, after moving to the U.S. Amal, regardless of a specific career or job, wanted to be in a position where she would represent women, voice their needs and strengths, and support them to be heard. Building her own experiences and observations as a newcomer, Amal's multiple aspects of

identities, including a first-generation immigrant, urban high school ESL student, and visibly

Muslim Black woman from Sudan, played a huge role in her imagined future. Describing her

desire to help people from vulnerable communities, Amal shared how her values and imagined

futures intersected,

> I always imagine, you know, helping immigrant kids to have a better education. This is
>
> something like that I imagined for my future doing it. The principles, the values that I
>
> keep in mind that, you know, it's my faith. I always want to help people who do not have
>
> enough opportunity. So, as I have some, I can help them. And also, it's about, you know,
>
> my background, my culture. I always want to help some people out. I want to be useful to
>
> my community… part of me wants to be a politician. Like, I like being a voice for the
>
> people. You know, that's one thing. I feel like it comes from my life or my
>
> background…These are some ideas that I had in my mind that I am thinking about my
>
> future goals. (Amal Interview, July 29, 2021)

Amal shared how her background and experiences shaped her future goals. She wanted to work

with people whom she could help with the resources and opportunities she had. Amal wanted to

be the voice of the voiceless, helping people in need and leading the change, and her desire to

become a politician indicated her willingness to turn these goals into action.

Thus, the multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' values from their home

and/or host cultures and countries differed. All but Yulia included them in their plans to some

extent. However, Amal and Melissa seemed to emphasize the vital role of their values in their

imagined futures. By reflecting on their experiences and identities as visibly Muslim young

women, Amal and Melissa hoped for careers that would help them realize their goals to beat the

odds of stereotyping Muslim women and voice the women and young girls worldwide. Thus, the

participants' perceptions of values and their role in their imagined futures indicated that values, mainly how immigration interrupted or impeded the process of learning values in family and participants' perceptions of selves and their imagined futures. It seems that these young women's experiences and learnings of values shaped their imagined futures to strengthen themselves as individuals and vulnerable communities. Conscious about how "race, class, gender, and similar systems of power are interdependent and mutually construct one another" (Hill-Collins, 2019, p. 44), the six young women's experiences in school and their multilayered identities made a significant impact on shaping their imagined futures.

Colliding Worlds: The Clash and Negotiations between Parental Expectations and Participants' Imagined Futures

In this section, I will discuss how these young women perceived their parents' expectations and negotiated them with their imagined futures through the intersections of gender, culture, and socioeconomic backgrounds. I will also discuss the factors and ways that participants and parents agreed on participants' future goals, how expectations participants and parents often took different directions, and how and whether the conflicts were negotiated.

The intersection of parental expectations, gender roles, learnings from home cultures, experiences of their own and their parents' experiences, and their search for authentic selves between the effects of dual cultures and countries influenced six young women's imagined futures. Their ties with their home countries and cultural heritages, their immigration status, socioeconomic status, their parents' closeness to their home culture, and the extent to including returning to their home country in their future plans widely impacted participants' imagined futures. The participants usually sought guidance and affirmation from their parents when shaping their imagined futures or striving to meet their expectations. They often carried empathy

for their parents, observing their struggles, pain, hardships, tiredness, working conditions, and their parents' efforts to provide a life with more opportunities than in their home country. By observing parental sacrifices, participants felt a sense of urgency to study harder and make efforts toward their education and imagined futures.

These young women's skills of empathy, resistance, and seeking affirmation of and happiness for their parents while imagining their futures were apparent in the analysis. Depending on the situation and what they were planning for their futures, participants displayed a combination of conformity, resistance, negotiation, and/or surrender when discussing and building their imagined futures with their parents. Interestingly, a strict division between first and second-generation immigrant participants was rather hard to observe. Everyone but Yulia, regardless of their immigration status and home cultures and countries, responded to their parental expectations by proving their reasoning as striving to follow their parents' desires them at the expense of leaving their own goals aside "for their own good".

Participants' experiences and their gender as daughters often added another layer to their imagined futures because of the expectations, restrictions, responsibilities, and roles they were expected to maintain within their families. For instance, stating the intersections of gender roles, being the firstborn in her family, a newcomer bilingual student in the U.S. Amal negotiated the roles and responsibilities that her culture and (especially her mother) asked her to sustain, as an older sister and daughter and the dreams and goals that she had been working to realize as a newcomer multilingual/multicultural high schooler in the U.S.

> So, she (her mom) asks me to look after my siblings, (help) with their homework, and
> even (communicate) with the teachers with emails and stuff like this. I mostly do that, but
> when there is an email for my mom and stuff like that, but she does (can) not read

English or speak…you know, all those (things)... I do a lot of things like her license stuff,

zoom meetings, like when she had them, I have like, you know, do them for then, and

when it comes to like my siblings, like going on their Chromebook. I mean, going on the

Chromebook during the quarantine, I had to like, like, look after them and stuff like

that…So I would say, like, there was the pressure like, you know, like, like going after all

those things. I was like, I felt like, especially don't get it, like I don't have, like,

something to myself, like all the time we (are) in the house and stuff…(Now that) I stood

up a little for myself because I felt like this was going to be years of stuff. Now, I do have

like responsibilities in the house, yeah. But like, like, not as much as I used to. (Amal,

Interview, July 29, 2021)

Amal's added responsibilities and roles stem from her multiple aspects of identities as a young

woman, an older sister, and the oldest child at home. Her mother's expectations of her as a young

woman, older sister, and daughter often stemmed from her efforts to preserve and sustain the

home culture. Clashing with her expectations for herself and her future, Amal created a third

space where she could negotiate her mother's expectations, such as helping with tasks like

housework, helping with the siblings' school and language-related needs, etc., with her

educational and future-related goals (Isik-Ercan, 2014). Amal continued to build a third space

regenerating the traditions and perceptions of how a young woman should act, mediating

conflicts, and becoming an agent of negotiation for her rights and imagined futures (Isik-Ercan,

2014).

In addition to her existing responsibilities as a student, a firstborn in her family, and a

newcomer developing her English language skills and learning to navigate the school system,

Amal's dad's and grandmother's (father's mother) expectations for her differed from her

mother's. While her father encouraged her to see living and studying in a U.S. school as an "opportunity," her mother expected her to conserve the roles that her culture puts on her as a female individual. She had a twin-boy brother, whom Amal perceived to be treated differently from her and did not have as many responsibilities as her at home. Thus, she pointed out that she had to step up and negotiate her home-related responsibilities with her mother, who was more concerned about sustaining the roles and expectations of a young woman in their home culture. Sharing her frustration with her mother's pressure to follow her cultural expectations from her and not being supportive of her school and academic achievements, Amal shared her frustration, saying,

> It's crazy. I will say she (is) like, in my future she (is) expecting like, get married or all those stuff, (but) like this is not in my mind. You know? Like, of course, there's a time for it, but like, not while I am in school like, you know, all those things like, because, you know, she can't like, he (her father) and my mom (are) a little different. My dad…said like, we come here. We have this opportunity, a big opportunity. But, like, I don't think she really believes like that like, like there's not a lot of support, school-wise (from her), you know? (Amal Interview, July 29, 2021)

Stressing how her parents' expectations of her differed, Amal was disappointed with her mother's lack of support regarding her school-related goals and future. Her mother's insistence on sustaining some cultural expectations from her as a young woman rather than supporting and respecting her as an individual upset her.

Similarly, but less apparent, Crystal shared how her culture, gender, and family expectations shaped her future plans, saying,

My mom…she's always talking about my career. So, my career, she's like, always try to

get something you want and something that's flexible for you. But, um, she's like, if

you're a doctor, you're not really going to get time for yourself, you're always going to

be in the hospital... you're never gonna really have time for yourself or your family. And

that's honestly true. She's always saying, and my grandparents also, they're like, get

something flexible for you. And, um, you want to get something, you know, you want to

have a family, you want to have like, a future, like a good future, doesn't mean like, Oh,

you have to work at McDonald's, you know? No, I'm just saying, like, you know, get a

good, you know, a flexible and good career that suits you. And that's gonna help you and

your family. (Crystal Interview, July 3, 2021)

Crystal's parents' expectations, gender, and cultural heritage influenced her future planning. She

found her parents' expectations and suggestions for a flexible career valuable and thoughtful,

thinking such a career would provide her with the conditions to make good money and care for

her family as a young woman. Experiencing a dilemma between her own expectations for her

future and wanting to follow her parents' suggestion for her "for her own good", Crystal

contemplated whether her interests and thoughts about her potential future plans were realistic or

"silly". Sharing what she was interested in for her future versus what her parents wanted and

encouraged her to do, Crystal's future plans leaned in her parents' interest.

One of the second-generation immigrant participants, A Muslim-Tajik American high

schooler, Aisha, shared how her career interests and plans clashed with her parents' expectations

of her. Describing her parents' expectations as "typical" for immigrant parents, Aisha

exemplified how she had to stand up for herself to show her disagreement with her parents'

education and career-related choices for her. At the same time, she agreed with them on some other future-related decisions, like marriage. Aisha expressed the pressure she experienced,

> I feel like yet them to pick their pressure is like bad on me because, like it makes me which isn't I don't want to do, but at the end, I always go back to understand and it's for my own benefit and either way that's what I wanted this is what I want for my future and it's like I don't see it in like a negative connotation, and also, I feel like the only thing that will be particularly negative is there are stereotypes of like immigrants moving to America and like becoming doctors and lawyers and pushing the highest level of education and make you crazy amount of money because that's not reality and it's not like like it's not like fitting everything into them like a little blog like having an immigrant daughter and being like okay before anything that happens, you already are like okay she's a doctor lawyer that's very common for immigrant parents, including mine, so if I ever mentioned anything about our degree, other than the doctor they get like really defensive immediately say no, so I don't even mention it is but it's definitely something that like I'll have to break it and eventually that I'm not interested in science I'm not interested in law and I'm not really sure exactly what like I'm still on determining a major life, but like I just know that those are not for me and I wanted to more like shadowing and like initiative positions in multiple locations for me to understand what I like or sort of what direction, I can take in the future for my career.
>
> (Aisha Interview, December 12, 2021)

Like other young women, Aisha constantly negotiated between her own and her parents' expectations of her and her future plans. She managed to stay firm about meeting her parents' expectations while at the same time standing up for the future she dreamed of. For instance, Aisha

crammed for two years for a highly competitive high school entrance exam because her parents wanted her to attend a prestigious school. She failed to pass the competitive exam in her first year. She continued to study and was accepted the following year. However, she felt she belonged to her current high school and did not want to pursue a career in medicine or STEM offered by the prestigious school where she was finally accepted. She stood behind her decision, and despite her parents' desire for her to attend the prestigious magnet school, she eventually decided not to go there. It was not an easy decision at the time for Aisha, but she was confident. She knew what she wanted. She was glad she could change her parents' minds by explaining what she believed was best for her, her mental health, and her imagined future.

Aisha also negotiated with her parents regarding her education and career choices. However, like Crystal, Aisha agreed with her parents' expectations of her on some particular topics. For example, Aisha's parents wanted her to start a family according to cultural traditions, which would coincide with her college years. Nevertheless, her parents' expectations made sense to her. Therefore, she was willing to agree with them and include them while shaping her imagined future.

> They want me to get married after college or towards the end of college, so it's like 22. They want me to get married at 20, like my mom, and at least make sure to be 20 or 21. I want to do (it) after I'm done because it's not something that I can time A and B, something that I like. I'm not even thinking about that right now, so I don't think I'm going to get married by 20 or 21 and like basically do what she wants me to do, which is my mom. My dad is pretty much on the same page as her about that. He wants us to get married young and like be able to see their grandkids. They want to see their grandkids grow and stuff like that, which makes sense. They want, like my grandparents, to see our

kids. So yeah, that's very common in Tajik culture for girls to marry. A lot of like Tajik

girls like me in high school, and I think it's just so wrong, but it's kind of like the clash

between the Tajik culture and American culture because even other nationalities think it's

crazy, they're like, wait, you are Tajik… are you going to marry next year? Am I invited

to the wedding? And I'm like no, bro, like it's not, that's not how it works, but it's very

common, so they just automatically assume when they think that. (Aisha Interview,

December 12, 2021)

Sharing the intersections and clashes between cultural, parental, and her expectations from her

imagined future, Aisha pointed out how she dealt with them daily. Whether the participants held a

first or second-generation immigrant status, they often negotiated what they dreamed for their

future versus their parents' expectations involving their differing perceptions of home culture.

With certain expectations of their parents, such as education-related choices, participants often

stayed firm with what they wanted for themselves. However, they found ways to negotiate with

their parents' expectations, often within cultural norms, such as suggested time for marriage,

appropriate jobs for women as future mothers, and financially promising careers.

Thus, experiencing a constant conflict with their own and their parent's expectations,

these young women often strove to find a balance while still imagining their futures. Pressures

from multiple sources while negotiating their multilayered identities, learning a new land,

language, and system, and considering and observing her parents' hard work, sacrifices, and

expectations often confused and stressed participants. Showing a continuous effort in mediating

the clash between their own and their parents' clashing expectations, and considering multiple

pressures while building their own identity, affected their perceptions of themselves and their

futures and left them in doubt about their future.

Examining all six young women's frustrations and dilemmas that they were experiencing between their own and their parents' expectations, it was apparent that the six young women were aware of their parents' sacrifices and their parents' immigration decisions to move to a new land with a dream of providing them with a better life and opportunities (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008). Further, they knew their parents saw education as essential in their new culture, putting high expectations on their children and futures. Thus, they also constantly felt the pressure on their shoulders. Considering the multiple pressures these young women experienced, the importance of *relationality*, one of the constructs of intersectionality, becomes even more apparent. Asking for "interconnections, relationships, and mutual engagement", relationality sheds light on these young women experiencing multiple forms of pressure from multiple sources (Hill-Collins, 2019, p.45). Interconnections between their multiple identities as multilingual/multicultural first and/or second-generation immigrant young women and their own and their parents' expectations of them significantly affect what they think they can/cannot achieve. Considering the lack of support and resources available to them and how systems of power (e.g., race, gender, class) are reproduced and maintained in schools and society. The multiple pressures highlight the interdependence and connection between the multiple aspects of the students' identities and imagined futures.

To conclude, participants commonly sought conformity and negotiated their imagined futures with parental expectations. Observing their parents' struggles, high responsibilities and roles, and sacrifices for them, these young women felt the urge to comply with their parents' expectations to some extent while imagining their futures. Regardless of their socioeconomic status (economic, cultural, and social resources), everyone respected and appreciated their parents' working for long hours, struggling, and sacrificing for them to provide a decent living

for their family. The impact of these self-observations and perceptions was highly prevalent in their future imagining decisions. With those in mind, the six young women strove to make the most of "the land of opportunities". Each participant negotiated their future decisions with their parents at differing degrees of acceptance or resistance to some of their parents' interventions to their future-related decisions. Yet, they often sought their parents' welfare, consent, and collaboration while deciding their futures.

Ties with the Home Country and Imagined Futures

The participants' connections and ties with their home countries varied greatly regarding their immigrant backgrounds. As first or second-generation multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers, the reasons that they decided to leave their home countries and their parents' connection to their home countries differed. While some regularly visit their extended relatives back in their home country with or without their parents, some voluntarily or involuntarily do not return to their (and/or their parents) home country for different reasons, such as security, financial, or visa restrictions. To better make meaning of the connection between participants' imagined futures and their differing ties with their home countries, I will first share their differing ties with their home countries, then discuss their perceptions of the U.S. as the land of opportunities.

Visits to Home Countries

The six young women differed in their home country visit frequency and reasons. Four of them, Aisha, Crystal, Mia, and Yulia, regularly went back and forth between their home country and the U.S., while Melissa and Amal did/could not because of security, visa restrictions, and other reasons. As a result, they experienced challenges deciding whether and to what extent they

would involve their home country while building their imagined futures. The four participants, whose resources and visa status permitted them to travel back and forth between their home country and the U.S. annually or every two years. All were perceived as "rich" and/or "Americans" when back in their home country, and Crystal and Mia experienced/were warned about threats to their lives about the risk of being kidnapped or hurt for money. Amal and Melissa could not travel or leave the U.S. because of visa restrictions and other financial and security issues. Since each participant had a unique case about their home country, I will share how these ties are apparent in their future planning.

Amal, Crystal, and Mia planned to go back and forth between their home country and the U.S. and build a life and career between both contexts. However, parents' long-term plans related to their home countries also affected these young women's plans. For example, Crystal visited Mexico almost every summer with her sister. Her older brother lived in Mexico with her grandmother since her parents left Mexico to work in the U.S., which was planned for a temporary period at first. While Crystal's parents postponed their return/visits Mexico until they saved enough money for the family and the house they were building there, Crystal and her sister kept traveling annually to continue living their dual life and get used to moving back to Mexico someday to sustain their family, cultural and linguistic ties with their home country. However, Crystal's family constantly prepared her mentally to return to Mexico permanently once she got her college degree in the U.S. While Crystal was not born in Mexico, her ties to her home country were tight as her parents and extended family, especially her grandmother and brother, strove to ensure she did not feel "different". They constantly guided her to familiarize herself with cultural values, expectations, and traditions in Mexico and speak Spanish fluently. Her

strong ties with Mexico, the Spanish language, Mexican culture, and living in N.Y. since birth

led her to dream of a life between Mexico and New York. Crystal described her thought process,

> I picture myself in both places because I'm gonna be probably traveling back and forth,
> like (between) Mexico and New York. So, for example, if I were to be in New York, I'd
> be traveling to Mexico maybe every summer and probably every, like, December when
> it's like Christmas. So, I get to, like, I get to like, celebrate with my family over there.
> And I'm going to be older. So, I get to like travel back and forth wherever I want. And
> when I think (about it), I picture mostly myself in Mexico. So, I will be in Mexico with
> my family over there. Then, I be traveling, like to New York to visit some of my friends.
> Or some like family members I have here because I also have some, like family
> members. (Crystal Interview, July 29, 2021)

Describing her strong ties with her home country and having close family members back there,

Crystal kept living in Mexico in the picture. Thinking about her future, she imagined that she

would live a life between two countries. Crystal wanted to keep her ties with both countries

regardless of where her permanent residency would be.

While Crystal imagined her future life between Mexico and the U.S., Yulia, a Russian

American, second-generation multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schooler, planned to live

permanently in Russia someday, where her mother was born, and her extended family lived.

Visiting Russia regularly, Yulia's ultimate goal was to move there eventually once she ensured

her financial stability to afford a comfortable life there and complete her education in the U.S.

However, not having dual citizenship, Yulia was upset that she sometimes had hardships during

her travels between Russia and U.S. While one of her parents identified as Russian-American

and was born and raised in the U.S., Yulia felt closer to Russian culture regarding warm

relationships and closeness. She often shared that she looked more like an American and had an "American accent", but she felt more Russian inside than American. She felt closer to her mother's family, whom she would describe as "purely Russians". Feeling belonged and safe in Russia, she perceived Russia as a warmer place where she felt easier to connect versus feeling lonely and distanced in the U.S. Yulia's constant struggle with a lack of sense of belonging in the U.S. and her tight ties with Russia/Russian culture and extended family living back in Russia made a significant impact in her imagined future. She described herself living in her home country, saying,

> I feel much closer to all my mom's family and whom I want to see much more often. I mean, it feels more at home there overall. When I am 35, well, hopefully, then I'd already be living in Russia again, not really to focus on the business anymore, hopefully. I'd have like a comfortable amount of money. Maybe be in a band performing or, if not even doing that anymore, maybe even have a family. Who knows? (Yulia Interview, October 8, 2021)

Yulia described her long-term plan to settle permanently with her mother's family in Russia and realize her dream of joining a band or starting a family. While imagining life in Russia, she also thought of the financial side of it. She would make enough money in the U.S. to comfortably live the life she wanted. Yulia's imagined future included living in a context where she felt she belonged, with financial stability and a lifestyle she would enjoy.

Holding different ties with their home countries, Amal and Melissa drew a different picture than the rest of the participants. Their moving reasons, previous residency countries, immigration status in the U.S., and ties to their home countries were different since they both moved to the United States because of their security or health reasons. Melissa's family decided

to move to the United States when the extended political oppression in Turkey threatened their business and lives in Africa, where they had been residing for the last eight years before moving to the U.S. They left all their savings back there and moved to the U.S., the only country all family members had a valid visa to enter the country and use their passports freely to enter the country. They entered the U.S. only for a temporary period without savings and plans. After living in a culturally close and welcoming country, they suffered a hard transition because of psychological, financial, and health-wise hardships. Melissa's situation was unique in that they experienced the trauma of having had to leave their home country (a country in West Africa) because the Turkish government's persecution threatened their lives. They lost all their savings and sought refuge in the U.S., as visiting their home country and extended family was unsafe. Considering the traumatizing experience of leaving Africa and legally being unable to visit her home country, it was unsurprising to me that Melissa did/could not include her home country (Turkey) in her imagined future during our conversations.

Similarly, Amal and her family moved to the U.S. because of a severe health issue one of his brothers experienced. He needed a kidney transplant to survive, and after an exhausting search, a donor from the U.S. saved his brother's life, and they all moved here so he could get the necessary treatment and stay healthy in a well-equipped hospital. It all happened so suddenly for her family; they were not planning and preparing to settle in the U.S. and faced transition issues like Melissa. His father started his own small business as a hairdresser in their neighborhood. Her mother spent most of her time caring for her five siblings while working part-time to support the family until COVID-19 Pandemic hit the company, and she could not continue. Nevertheless, Amal chose to see the bright side of this sudden replacement for her family and was thankful that his brother was alive and they were all together. Amal's imagined

future often included investing in her second home country, Egypt, rather than her birth country,

Sudan. Amal shared her imagined future in Egypt, noting,

> I feel like I will achieve a house by that time. Not in here in Egypt, because right now I'm
>
> working on that I'm saving in to buy me (myself) a house like, yeah, housing, there is no,
>
> and I feel like um…I will go back to my country, that's in the future, and come back
>
> here, and that's how like, I vision my future. I mean, that is more likely now…I think a
>
> lot about that. (Amal Interview, July 29, 2021)

Amal stressed that many people worldwide, especially girls, might never have access to the

education and resources she had in the U.S. She viewed living in the U.S. and receiving support

from the school as a gift. Making the most of her education and getting an impactful career, she

often dreamed of becoming a role model and representing a strong, visibly Muslim woman. She

aimed to voice silenced communities and beat the odds about Muslim women in U.S. society.

These two young women did not have long-term plans to return and resettle in their home

country. Interestingly, both participants lived in another country for around eight years, from as

early as their kindergarten age until some years in middle school in a second country between

their home country and the U.S. Investing in her imagined future, Amal had been saving money

to build a school to support girls' education in Egypt. Amal did not think her home country

provided adequate opportunities and space for women. However, she feels she can have or create

that opportunity for many people, especially for girls in Egypt, so her future plans are mainly

about Egypt and the U.S. rather than their home country. Melissa's case could tell a lot about

how people and immigrants' different ties with their home sense of belonging and imagine

futures for them. Even though they were happy with their lives and felt they belonged in their

community back in Africa, they had to leave involuntarily with a threat to their lives. Thus,

Melissa and her family, despite their homesickness and willingness to go back to Turkey to see their extended families, the threat to their lives did not end, and she could not include her home country in her imagined future now.

The six young women's ties with their home countries differed so did to what extent their home countries were apparent in their imagined futures. To conclude, participants' ties to their home countries varied widely, and their ties highly affected the way in which they included their home country in their imagined futures. Crystal, Mia, and Amal, who had little to no restrictions but resources and visa status to travel back and forth freely and have close family members back in their home country, visited their home country regularly and held relatively strong ties with their home country. These participants planned to live between two countries and included their home country in their imagined futures. While Aisha planned to travel and keep her ties with her (and her parents') home country, Tajikistan, but planned to continue her life in the U.S., Yulia, a second-generation immigrant participant as well, planned to live permanently in her home country, Russia, once she ensures financial stability and can support herself independently there. Melissa, a first-generation immigrant and had threats to her life and freedom back in her home country, Turkey, and her visa status restricted her from going there. She had little/no intent to include her home country in her imagined future because of her unique situation and immigration status.

Imagining the Future: U.S., the Land of Opportunities?

The six participants, whether U.S. or foreign-born and/or immigrated to the U.S. voluntarily or involuntarily, viewed the U.S. as a land of opportunities. Their perceptions of the U.S. were often affected by their parents' views and affirmations about the resources and privileges in the U.S., education, and rights as residents/citizens provided them compared to

many people worldwide. They were observant and conscious about the sacrifices their parents made to bring them here or continue to endure the daily struggles they faced to keep making a living here. Even though they shared how hard sometimes for them to see their parents working for longer hours than in their home countries, experiencing constant financial struggles, linguistic and cultural shock, learning process, and efforts, participants in this study often described their living in the U.S. as a privilege and the U.S., as the land of opportunities. No matter whether they would live in the U.S. permanently (Aisha & Melissa), resettle permanently in their parents' home country (Yulia), or live between their home country and the U.S. (Amal, Crystal & Mia), the participants perceived their conditions, access to resources and education, democratic policies, freedom of being their authentic selves and freedom of speech as a privilege for themselves, their family, career and future possibilities.

Yulia described her mixed feelings about living in the U.S. and her willingness to live in Russia in the future. She shared her reasons for living in the U.S., comparing what each context meant and offered for her imagined future, saying,

> (U.S. is) the place for opportunities, rather than happiness… so I focus more on, like, my possessions, like my instruments, right? and school and just doing things, you know, like rather than just being my happy, genuine self, I guess because there's not enough room for that here. (Yulia Interview, October 25, 2021)

Noting the dilemma between the opportunities and access to materials to build the future she wants; Yulia saw her being in the U.S. more for the opportunities rather than being her authentic self. While she also added how her perceptions of the U.S. and the opportunities that she had access to are partly shaped by her parents' experiences and perceptions, sharing,

I mean, personally, I'd say my parents had a lot more lacks, a lot of things, all

together…I mean. My dad was born here. My mom's an immigrant. I say she kind of

puts more of that pressure on herself than on me and for studying. I mean, of course, my

parents still want me to excel in my studies cuz, like, they do something say like people

in other countries, they do not have the opportunity. If you do so, you have to take that

opportunity, you know. (Yulia, Interview 4, November 6, 2021)

Yulia stressed the dilemma between wanting to receive opportunities offered in the U.S. and

living in Russia within a culture she felt closer to and found more space for her authentic self.

Adding her parents' efforts and backgrounds and their perceptions about accessing to resources

and opportunities she needed for a better future, Yulia's perceptions of the U.S. as a land of

opportunities were affirmed by her parents. Thus, viewing her life in the U.S. as an advantage

and privilege compared to people living in other countries with fewer resources, Yulia's

imagined future of living in the U.S. until she was financially stable and independent to build a

comfortable life in Russia is shaped through these perspectives.

Figure 3. Yulia's Identity Map

Yulia is the only participant who drew a definitive line, a border between the two contexts while describing what each means to her. During the interviews, she emphasized the distant feelings of belonging she perceives in the U.S. while pointing out the list of resources and opportunities she could access compared to many people in other countries. Thus, despite seeing the U.S. as the land of opportunities that will help her develop the skills and credentials she needs, her profound perceptions and experiences of exclusion might have caused her to build the life she imagines in Russia.

Similarly, Mia, who settled in the U.S. almost five years ago, perceived the U.S. as a place with more opportunities and resources for her and her family than she would get in her home country. When I asked what the phrase "two worlds" in the title of the podcast meant to her, she described it as,

> I think… they (the speakers in the podcast) mean "opportunity"; because here, we have more chances to accomplish our goals than in our country. So, I think like, you know, living in two different countries…it is like difficult, it is difficult… And like people don't believe it because they are not facing all the difficulties, like… when we first, you know, come here like you don't know nothing and what to do and where to go. So, I think (it) is a big big big, very opportunity. (Mia Interview, December 21, 2021)

When discussing the podcast, where participants commented on the speakers' experiences (three high schoolers), Mia interpreted the podcast title, 'Between two worlds,' viewing the U.S. as more resourceful and fuller of opportunities than her home country. Similar to other participants, she perceived the conditions, resources, and education here as more prestigious and advantageous than she would get in her home country. So, she had more opportunities than the students back in her home country.

To conclude, regardless of the immigration background as first or second-generation multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers, school context, home country, home culture, and length of time they spent in the U.S., participants perceived living in the U.S. as an opportunity especially compared to their experiences and available resources in their home countries and other countries. In addition, their perceptions of the U.S. seemed to be partially shaped by both their perception of their parental experiences as first-generation immigrants in the U.S. and their parents' struggles, perspectives, and experiences in their home countries and the U.S.

Conclusion

Intending to respond to my main research question, *What futures do multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers imagine for themselves?,* I discussed the analysis and findings in light of my theoretical framework, intersectionality as social action theory (Hill-Collins, 2019). I discuss the findings under two primary foci in chapters four and five: 1) The role of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' multilayered identities in the making of their experiences and imagined futures, and 2) the role of multilayered identities in multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' sense of belonging, marginalization and imagined futures. I discussed each theme, supporting the findings with quotes from the data collected. In this part of the analysis, I will share the four subthemes that emerged within the first primary focus, *The role of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' multilayered identities in the making of their experiences and imagined futures*. The four subthemes are a) gendered lives and experiences in the family; b) living with dual identities, dual cultures, and dual languages; c) colliding worlds: the clash and negotiations between parental expectations and

participants' imagined futures; and d) ties with the home country and imagined futures. Below, I will discuss the similarities and differences between and within the participants.

The findings indicate that the six young women's multilayered identities impact their perceptions of selves and imagined futures in many different ways. First, all participants hold an immigrant background, either first-generation or second-generation immigrants. The five of these young women have added layers of responsibilities. In contrast, three newcomer multilingual immigrant participants had even more responsibilities as their parents needed their support in housework and helped with siblings' school-related work and language-related tasks. Thus, while they needed support and guidance navigating the new land, new language, and system, they became the support and mentor for their families.

Second, the six young women's ties with their home cultures differed. The four multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers were more likely to be closely involved with their cultural practices. At the same time, two second-generation immigrant participants were loosely connected with their cultural heritage for differing reasons. They often felt a separation between their home culture and school culture which often caused confusion and a lack of sense of belonging and confusion. Such differences resulted in constant culture shifts depending on the context, so they would not stand out in either culture or be "normal" there. Often, these shifts caused them to experience confusion with their cultural identity/ities. Other times, they led them to create a third space where they built a space hybridizing their home and host cultures and building their authentic selves.

Third, my analysis suggests a clash between six young women's expectations of selves and their parents' expectations. While they agreed on many issues, participants often perceived that these two worlds collided. Being observant of their parents' sacrifices and the opportunities

their parents strove to provide them, they often sought conformity with their parents'

expectations when imagining their futures. These young women often had added layers of

expectations of their parents because of their gender and the roles their culture puts on them.

However, they managed to stand up for their goals and imagined futures while constantly

seeking a balance between their expectations from themselves and their futures and their parents'

expectations.

Last, participants' ties with their home countries varied, and to what extent they included

them in their futures. While many could visit their home countries regularly, alone or with family

members, some had not returned to their home countries since moving to the U.S. because of

security reasons or visa restrictions. Some did not include returning or going back and forth to

their home countries, while some planned to settle in their home countries permanently as they

did not feel they belonged to the U.S. culture because of xenophobic and racist experiences. Yet,

all perceived the U.S. as a land of opportunity, especially compared to their experiences and the

resources available in their home countries and other countries. Therefore, they would work hard

to make the most of their education and lives.

Chapter 5: The Role of Multilayered Identities in Multilingual/Multicultural Immigrant High Schoolers' Sense of Belonging, Marginalization, and Imagined Futures

In this chapter, I build on the discussion in Chapter Four and focus on how the complex

aspects of the participants' identities affect their sense of belonging and marginalization and how

they relate to and shape their future decisions. In this study, the six multilingual/multicultural

immigrant high schoolers are busy with work inside and outside school. They often spend a big

chunk of their time within the school, with their peers and teachers, from one class to another, in

after-school programs and tutoring, school team meetings, practice, etc. School context and culture, peers, teachers, and daily events and instances highly affect their thinking, seeing, and making meaning of their multilayered identities, schools, and futures. A deep look into their identity maps shows how unique and different the maps are from one another in many ways, the same as each participant's perceptions of themselves and their experiences. Considering how busy the participants' schedules are considering the multilayered identities they hold as individuals, each participant's efforts, creativity, and hard work in their drawings while picturing their deep thinking, complex thoughts, and perceptions of themselves and people's perceptions about them (through the messages they receive in different spaces) are noteworthy.

I examine how the participants' perceptions of their multilayered identities and experiences shape their sense of belonging in and out of school under five primary subthemes: a) The role of multilayered identities and microaggressions in student engagement and belonging; b) U.S.=Fear: Intersections of gender, Islamophobia and institutional racism; c) Feeling Belonging: Intersections of race, culture, and language; d) Intersections of language, socioeconomic, and immigration status: Impact on equitable access to educational resources and building imagined futures; and e) Building a safe space within their communities. I share examples of microaggressions, discrimination, and exclusion and some participants' identity maps in connection with their intersecting aspects of identities concerning race, gender, language, culture, and immigration status. Instead of analyzing these complex dimensions as separate and disconnected elements, I will strive to examine the interplay and the interdependence of multiple dimensions of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' identity explicitly as possible (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). And finally, I will discuss how these factors impact their imagined futures.

The Role of Multilayered Identities and Microaggressions in Student Engagement and Belonging

All six participants experienced challenges, microaggressions, and discrimination at varying levels. For example, they got "looks" and experienced moments of exclusion within their school because of their race, ethnicity, cultural heritage, home country, immigration status, and linguistic background to some extent. Yet, when compared, it is apparent that some participants with particular complex aspects of identities, such as newcomer emerging bilinguals, Black and/or visibly Muslim participants experienced added layers of discrimination and exclusion than some other "white-passing" and/or "American-looking and sounding" participants.

"Do I Belong here?": Intersections of Multilingualism and Institutional Racism in Student Engagement

Amal, Crystal, Melissa, and Mia experienced language-related struggles and restrictions at varying levels regarding in-class participation and student engagement in school. Except for Crystal, all three have been learning English as a second language since their arrival in the U.S. They are currently enrolled in an ESL classroom while taking other classes with mainstream students. However, all three emerging bilinguals kept a low profile in the classrooms and participated less than they would like to do in class, fearing being judged and ridiculed because of their "accents".

Showing resilience and developing their own strategy to minimize the silencing effect of a lack of a holistic approach in their classrooms, each of these students found their own way to show their understanding of the topic and participate as much to some extent to prove their competency. Still, students' needing to find strategies to participate in class indicates a need for

teacher and school support and differentiated instruction practices. For example, to participate

more often, Mia prefers to write her answer on a piece of paper and give it to the teacher or use

the computer to translate some words that she needs to make a sentence translating from Spanish.

Amal prefers to discuss her answers with the teacher right after class or meets her ESL teacher to

seek guidance about topics or issues that happened in class and asks for language support to

express her responses and assignments better. Because of feeling embarrassed and being

perceived as incompetent in their way of speaking English, these three students developed a

defense mechanism by keeping a low profile and not participating in whole class activities and

discussions but using written or one-on-one moments with teachers or peers to show their

comprehension and competency. Frustrated that she felt embarrassed because she did not want to

be the one who could not explain or ask many questions, Amal's experience indicated how lack

of institutional support negatively affected her engagement in class, sharing,

> I mean, it happened to me before…I don't want it to become a thing. Yeah. that's literally
>
> like, every time thing in my head, like, you get into that, you know, every time when it
>
> happens, I'll be like, I still struggle with that, to be honest. Like, you know, it is just
>
> because (of these experiences) next year is worrying me. Yeah, American short stories. I
>
> am thinking about that. Because it's like, in geometric geometry, those are the things
>
> classes that are like, next year, I would need to explain more and do more because I know
>
> I will be able to, like, with all the people in this class and stuff like that. This is just like,
>
> don't make it in my accent too like, and I would feel embarrassed like, you know, I
>
> would rather, like, explain it to the teacher and like in Google document and stuff like
>
> that. (Amal Interview, July 21, 2021)

Amal wanted to ask more questions and participate more. However, she described how she felt embarrassed because of her negative classroom experiences, which indicated a lack of support for students from different linguistic backgrounds and few opportunities for marginalized students. She was worried about her classes next year, not because she thought they would be challenging but because she would need to speak in class and may experience microaggressions as she did before. Amal explained her anxiety with speaking in class, further sharing a flashpoint moment where a peer used a slur towards her and made fun of her "accent". Describing that moment, Amal explained how such an incident made her question whether she belonged to the school environment and whether she was a part of this community.

> ...the situation that…when we were talking about, like, where I come from, and stuff like this. And then when I was made fun of… (it was when I asked myself) *do I belong here?* This was, like, the first situation that happened to me. It was (when I was) in ninth grade, my first year in high school. I even had a talk with my principal…I still don't remember what exactly was said. It was like everyone around me said, he can't be saying that to you because it is a disrespectful word. And then, he made fun of my accent. He said I have an "accent"...Yeah. That's when I understood that it was not the school. That was the person. I understand because that was a disrespectful person…that was my situation, like, '*Do I belong here?'* (Amal Interview, July 8, 2021)

Sharing the moment that she felt isolated from the school community, Amal questioned whether she belonged to the school community. Such incidents indicated a lack of support for student engagement for newcomer multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers and institutional racism. Her peers' perceptions of her and her being an emerging multilingual/multicultural high schooler, first-generation immigrant, and visibly Muslim Black woman who lacks support

around gender, race, linguistic, and cultural background indicate institutional racism. Examining

the intersections of Amal's multiple aspects of identity, microaggressions, institutional racism,

and multiple pressures could offer a more holistic perspective of her experiences (Hill-Collins,

2019). In Amal's case, intersections of her race, language proficiency, immigration status, and

religion greatly impacted her experiences in her school. The hidden and open microaggressions,

racism, judgments, and pressures from peers made her question her belonging in school and U.S.

society. Such experiences can negatively affect their schooling, perception of self, and imagined

futures by producing complex social inequities (Hill-Collins, 2019).

Further, such moments of microaggressions, discrimination, and slurs negatively impacted

her sense of belonging and engagement in class and made her question whether she belonged to

the school. She had to deal with them by developing a defense system in a new education system

and society with a new language; she was in the process of excelling at expressing herself. As a

result, she decided not to stand out, keep a low profile in class, and keep working hard. Such

incidents, regardless of where and how they happened, hurt students who have already been

struggling in and out of school stressors as transnational multilingual youth.

Melissa moved to the U.S. five years before I met her in this study. As the daughter of

political refugee parents (aka, asylees), Melissa had a traumatic experience leaving her previous

country of residence (a West African country), where she had a high sense of belonging even

though it was not her birth/home country. They had a rough transition experience navigating

their new hostland, learning a new language and an education system, making a living, and

managing many other emerging requirements. Talking about her experiences, relationships, and

support systems in and out of school, Melissa was upset about how some of her peers'

perceptions of her being a visibly Muslim woman, an asylee, and emerging bilingual background

affected the way and time she needed to feel herself a part of her classroom and school

environment, building relationships and so building a sense of belonging. Melissa had difficulty

transitioning into her new school and learning a new language and school system simultaneously.

As a high school student, she was self-conscious about herself and her being an English learner

and an immigrant from a marginalized religion in the U.S. Describing herself as a shy individual

in school, Melissa kept a low profile for a long time as she feared that her "accent" would be

perceived as "funny, weird, and incompetent". When I asked her whether she would participate

more in class and feel more comfortable if she felt more confident speaking in English, she

confirmed, saying,

> Yes, probably. Because then my English level would be higher and I would participate
>
> more in class, but I don't… now. I speak a lot more in the ESL class. I really do. When
>
> the teacher asks something, I explain in detail. But, in some other classes, I feel shy, I
>
> keep a low profile, and I even don't speak with anyone. It depends on the class, really.
>
> (Melissa Interview 2, July 11, 2021)

Differentiating her class engagement in the ESL class versus the mainstream class, Melissa

points out how her comfort level with speaking in English and participation differed in different

classes. She struggled in mainstream classes, indicating that she felt judged and different from

native English speakers. When I asked her If she could explain more about how her comfort

level changed in different classes, she explained that,

> I feel uncomfortable around some students. Then, I stay away from them. I am worried
>
> that if I make a mistake, they will react to that mistake and say something embarrassing
>
> to me… It happens because I often think my English is not good enough to explain things

as I want. I prefer not to explain or participate when I can't explain as I'd like. (Melissa

Interview, July 11, 2021)

Worried about her peers' reactions and feelings of incompetence in English, Melissa preferred to

refrain from engaging in mainstream classes, where she often did not feel comfortable, compared

to her ESL class, where she studied with speakers of other languages. Melissa decided to keep a

low profile when she did not feel supported and included, unlike in her ESL classroom. Such

experiences resulted in low participation and could negatively affect her overall academic

achievement.

Furthermore, Crystal, who had never enrolled in an ESL program, shared similar

experiences with the first-generation immigrant participants. Her identity map pictures the

struggles she experiences when shifting between her home language and English in class. Her

class experiences closely resonate with the first-generation immigrant participants even though

she rarely shared any perceptions of exclusion as her way of speaking English sounds very

"American". For example, she shared her moments of struggle in the classroom, especially in

science classes. Like the other participants, she shared that from time to time in class; she wished

she had some space to speak in her home language, Spanish, with which she would feel more

comfortable and competent when explaining complex ideas and asking questions.

…there's been situations like that, where I, you know, sometimes felt like Spanish, I

would have expressed myself better. But, you know, since the teacher or that person

doesn't know Spanish, I have to explain to them in English…Sometimes, my teachers

ask, like, oh, what are you going to do? And then I'm like, Oh, I know this word, but I

don't know how to translate in English. And then I try to translate it from Spanish to

English, but it's difficult for me. So, my teachers, sometimes they ask like…What did

you eat, as an example? And then I'm like, Oh…I can't really explain that. You know,

I'm like, I wish they knew Spanish. Because, you know, it's, it would have been easier to

explain it. (Crystal Interview, July 12, 2021)

Crystal described how sometimes she struggled to describe a situation as she liked because they could not find the right words in English. She wished she had bilingual teachers speaking Spanish who could understand her when she used Spanish words in certain circumstances when she knew how to explain them in Spanish. While Crystal was fluent in both languages, she wished she could get some language support occasionally to increase participation.

For these participants, learning English and participating verbally in the classroom became a source of shame or struggle because their English speaking is perceived as "non-American" and "weird". Amal, Mia, and Melissa are emerging bilinguals who were all enrolled in ESL classrooms throughout the period we had interviews. In class, they often kept a low profile and chose not to share their opinions and answers to the questions and voiced their inquiries out loud because they either already experienced and/or feared that they would be ridiculed, made fun of, and got embarrassed in front of their peers. They shared their experiences and the flashpoint moments of feeling embarrassed and/or ridiculed during or outside of class time. These moments, microaggressions, and looks caused them to keep silent and not voice their opinions in-class activities and discussions. Over time, they hesitated to answer teachers' questions even though they knew the answer. Having been exposed to microaggressions and derogatory remarks decrease their participation, sense of belonging, and trust in some peers and teachers. Considering they are navigating a new land, language, education system, and many more things to learn at once, feeling unsafe and excluded within their school can hurt their self-esteem and self-confidence. It could result in second-guessing their skills and competency,

trigger previous traumatic experiences, and negatively affect their imagined futures. In addition to these struggles, the existing educational injustices, microaggressions, and institutional racism toward newcomer and multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers limit the opportunities and resources they need the most to build their futures (Kanno & Kangas, 2014).

The participants' experiences indicate that they often experienced racial microaggressions, linguicism, and institutional racism in school. In addition, despite their high cognitive skills to understand classroom discussions, questions, and topics, they need more differentiated support and instruction to ensure they make the most of their education. Such lack of support caused them to feel overwhelmed with finding their own ways to show their competency in class and struggling with engaging with peers, participating in class, and showing their understanding. However, since the newcomer multilingual students often needed extended periods to process their thoughts and translate their responses before sharing them in class, they felt embarrassed speaking out loud to ask for more preparation time or tools for help. Then, the teacher usually moved on to the next topic or question until they prepared their answer. Regardless of their length of time in the U.S. and learning English vary, multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers experienced frustration and moments of being stereotyped and feeling excluded by their peers because of their way of speaking English and/or linguistic background. Such experiences of racial microaggressions, institutional racism, and linguicism occur more often and intensely when seen through an intersectional lens regarding participants' multilayered identities and socioeconomic, cultural, racial, and linguistic backgrounds (Hill-Collins, 2019). In the next section, I will discuss further how such occurrences harm multilingual students' sense of belonging, perceptions of their competency, and imagined futures.

U.S.=Fear: Intersections of Gender, Islamophobia, and Institutional Racism

Visibly Muslim young women in this study experienced microaggressions and Islamophobic derogatory remarks in school and/or society. For example, Melissa often feared that her look as a visibly Muslim young woman might trigger hateful Islamophobic people around her. In addition, she was carrying fears from her traumatic migration to the U.S., exposure to the news, and racist and discriminating acts towards people from marginalized backgrounds in public places from social media. Thus, Melissa decided to build a safety net for herself by keeping a low profile and limiting her interactions with her peers, teachers, and school staff to protect herself from any possible threats in her first years in the U.S. Her experiences, perceptions of self and society, fears, comfort zone, and in and out of school are well-described in her identity map.
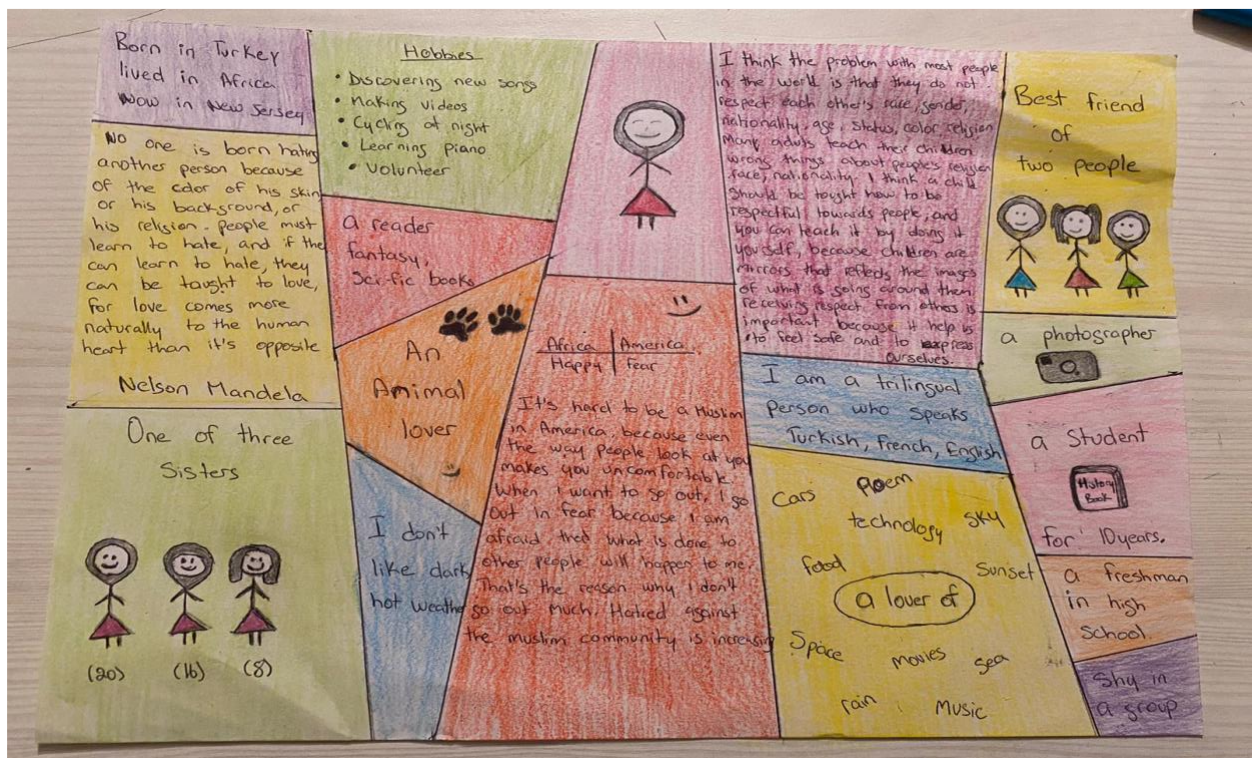

Figure 4. Melissa's Identity Map

In her identity map, Melissa was picturing the multiple aspects of her identity, including being an immigrant, a sister, and a visibly Muslim girl. In addition, Melissa included the messages she received in different spaces, like inside and outside-of-school community, family, and U.S. society. The division she made in the middle of the map where she described her feelings in Africa as happy and America as fear pointed out how she, as a visibly Muslim young woman, an emerging bilingual, and a transnational youth in the U.S., felt excluded and insecure in the U.S.

Since Melissa spent many hours on social media daily —like the rest of the participants, which became one of the primary sources, she got news and examples of microaggressions, discrimination, and Islamophobia worldwide. Her identity map pictured the messages she perceived in various U.S. places, from school to home and community to public spaces. One of the messages was from Nelson Mandela. The quote from Mandela emphasizes how embracing diversity and seeing each other's differences as a treasure is a way to eliminate racism and embrace one another's uniqueness. Sharing this quote, Melissa stressed her desire to be included and perceived as her authentic self by her peers and within society. Different from the other participants, Melissa's school shows more suburban features than an urban high school in terms of lack of diversity; only a few students are from non-mainstream home cultures, languages, and faith backgrounds. As a visibly Muslim young woman, she often felt alone, and her perceptions of herself as "different" grew over time. Looking "different" and holding a "different" background from most of her peers in school, Melissa's perceptions of feeling belonged and safe in the U.S. versus in Africa are pictured in her identity map as U.S.=fear versus Africa *Africa=happy.*

While Melissa's fear often stemmed from comments and experiences of people in her social circle and social media feeds, she experienced discriminated against or being stereotyped in and out of school. Throughout our conversations, Melissa exemplified how her fears of living in the U.S. limited her social activities and freedom, saying,

> I wrote fear in the identity map because I always fear going outside, even if not in school. Whenever I go out, I remember the Muslim families or individuals whom the haters killed. Whenever I go out, I think of them and fear that this same thing will happen to my family. The other day, a Muslim family got killed, in Canada, as I remember. All family members were killed, leaving a 9-year-old behind. It's just so hard. He was left alone. He lost all of his family members, his mother, father, grandmother, and sister. It is so hard. (Melissa Interview, July 20, 2021)

Describing how hate crimes against Muslim individuals caused anxiety for her, Melissa feared for herself and her family as the visible Muslim individuals. As a result, she decided to limit her time outside the home as she felt insecure and anxious.

All things considered, her feelings of insecurity, frustration, and alertness increased in and out of school. Melissa developed a defense mechanism for herself, keeping a low profile and staying indoors. However, when her mother was diagnosed with cancer during Covid-19 Pandemic, she and her older sister accompanied her during frequent hospital visits to support her emotionally and language-wise so she could communicate with the doctors. In addition to having experienced a traumatic immigration journey and feelings of insecurity and anxiety, Melissa and her family had to learn how to navigate the hospital system, insurance, and language-related needs per visit. While they were thankful to the hospital staff and doctors during these difficult times, Melissa remembered how her mother, a visibly Muslim woman, was mistreated and

looked down upon during some hospital visits. While she was not exposed to such mistreatment herself, considering her mother's situation, she was disappointed and not respected as a newcomer. Melissa's experiences as a visibly Muslim multilingual high schooler and recent immigrant to the U.S. shows how fairness and equal treatment for all claims in institutions and spaces conflict. The intersections of her gender, race, citizenship, and socioeconomic status helped me see the whole picture behind Melissa's fears and how they affect her experiences (Hill-Collins & Bilge, 2016). An intersectional approach provided space for a critical examination of Melissa's experiences and relationships between her multilayered identities and systems of power. That is, attempting to analyze Melissa's experiences through an intersectional analysis approach allowed me to delve into these overlapping systems of oppression without singling out any of these oppression systems (Guidroz & Berger, 2009).

The other visibly Muslim young woman in the study is Amal. While explaining her experiences in school, it was apparent that Amal found her school as an inclusive space for her and her faith-related practices as a Muslim. Despite having experienced microaggressions, being made fun of for her "accent," and receiving some peers' derogatory remarks as a visibly Muslim sports player, Amal perceived her school environment as inclusive and welcoming. Referring to two main instances in her school, Amal's examples of inclusion point a big clue about how teachers and school administrators can become supportive and inclusive toward their newcomer students. One of these flashpoints was that the school provided a space to perform her daily prayers in school during the lunch break. Another was when her school supported her joining the basketball team by altering the uniform unique for her needs and respecting her faith-related choices so she could keep her hijab (a head covering worn in public by some Muslim women, see Oxford Dictionary, 2022) and keep her earned accomplishment as the school basketball team

player. Despite the supporting acts of school, Amal often got looks and disapproving, discouraging, and judgmental comments from some peers as the only visible Muslim young woman player on the school basketball team. She received discouraging and Islamophobic comments that she would not get approval to play in the team with her hijab. Amal shared,

> I joined the basketball (team). I was like, because I am a hijabi (she uses this word to describe that she wears a hijab), like, you know, I was looked at (got looks) for wearing hijab, (when) playing basketball…(I heard people saying things) like, 'she can't do that' and stuff like this, I heard it. (Amal Interview, July 8, 2021)

Receiving discouraging and Islamophobic remarks from peers and microaggressions regarding her look as a visibly Muslim young woman negatively affected her sense of belonging and engagement (see Jaffe-Walter, 2013; Watt, 2011; Abu-Ras & Abu-Bader, 2008). However, Amal persevered. These negative and discouraging experiences did not stop her from pursuing her goal as an athlete and sportswoman. She awed everyone with her resilience and hard work. She proved her competency as a basketball player by getting to the school team and receiving an altered uniform as a Muslim woman player, which included a marching hijab that she could wear during the games. This incident also hints how institutional discrimination against individuals from different religious backgrounds. Her acceptance to the school basketball team proved her competency as a player. However, her peers judged and discouraged her because she wore a hijab. Looking deeply into how systemic injustices and institutional barriers connect with each participant's multiple aspects of identities can help us better understand the daily struggles and stress the participants go through in and out of school.

Like Amal, Aisha, who identifies as Muslim Tajik American, pointed out the unfair treatment of food because the school often failed to provide options for Muslim students.

Annoyed with having no/little food respecting her faith practices and choices, she felt excluded

and discriminated against, considering the variety of food options her peers from mainstream

backgrounds got for lunch. Despite the high number of Muslim students in her school, Aisha was

upset that her school did not validate Muslim students' food choices. Describing the related

school policy as unfair and excluding treatment for her and other Muslim students, Aisha felt

disrespected and excluded from the school community. She explained,

> I, literally, since I started coming to the school, I educate these people. Because I don't
>
> understand why none of them have heard about halal food before and understand that it's
>
> (a) very common philosophy is very like we live in New York, but that's beside the point
>
> is like every single day almost I'm, like, why is there no halal-wise, you know, options,
>
> vegetarian options…like two days ago they were like they call the meatless Mondays to
>
> like we have this new thing, called meatless Mondays… they're improving. They're like
>
> trying to make it according to the students' needs which I really like because before, I
>
> would literally found myself starving… there's a lot of Muslim students too who don't
>
> eat anything…it is not fair. (Aisha Interview, November 4, 2021)

Aisha was frustrated with the lack of inclusive lunch options for her and other Muslim students

who cannot have the food served in school. Comparing the food options available for the rest of

the students, Aisha found it unfair that the school did not provide food respecting their faith and

practices.

Besides the food issue, Aisha described her experiences as a young Muslim woman in her

school differently than Amal and Melissa. Among the three participants identifying as Muslim,

Aisha is the only young Muslim woman who is a second-generation immigrant, has never been

enrolled in an ESL classroom, and does not choose to wear a hijab. She was also the only one

who added Muslim as an identifier when introducing and identifying herself as Tajik-Muslim-American. Stressing how her religion was central to her life and openly and proudly practiced and talked about it, Aisha felt included in her school in some ways. One and foremost, Aisha's school has an association with Muslim students. Aisha recently got involved in Muslim Student Association (MSA) in her school, and Aisha felt lucky and belonged in her school as her school provided such a space for students from diverse backgrounds. Participating in an association where they organized discussions and activities, shared knowledge, and socialized, Aisha felt her faith and practices were respected and valued as an individual. By confirming her multiple aspects of identity, MSA helped her connect with other Muslim students who shared similar morals and ethical ideas and increased her sense of belonging in school. She explained how MSA increased her sense of belonging to her school, saying,

> I feel connected there because it's like they're people in my school who have the same like ethical ideas as me and morals. I feel connected with them because…they know me like more psychologically than any other person because my psychology and my thought process have mostly been religious based, so having that like to go back to is really nice. (Aisha Interview, November 19, 2021)

Describing how she connected with her peers at MSA, Aisha highlighted how having an inclusive space with individuals from similar backgrounds and mindsets helped her feel she belonged and was included.

The three participants identify as Muslim, and their perceptions and examples of inclusive and exclusive moments vary. Amal and Melissa are newcomer multilingual/multicultural participants and visibly Muslim young women (who wear hijab) whose perceptions of inclusive and exclusive moments and experiences often differ from

Aisha's. Amal and Melissa often felt excluded, discriminated and not belonged because of their look as visibly young Muslim women. Making a distinction between her feelings of safety and belonging in both contexts, Melissa stressed her insecurity and anxiety level in the U.S. Following the news and racist incidents in social media and interpretations of people around her, Melissa often hesitated to get involved in the U.S. society and feared that people could hurt her because of racist, Islamophobic, and xenophobic motives. Amal experiences microaggressions and exclusion as a player in her school's basketball team because of her hijab. As a Muslim student, Aisha felt excluded as a young Muslim woman because her school overlooked her food choices and needs. However, she felt included and belonged as she became a part of the Muslim Student Association in her school. Attending a big urban high school in New York, such an association may also indicate a higher number of Muslim students compared to Melissa's and Amal's schools.

Feeling Belonging: Intersections of Race, Culture, and Language

Everyone in this study experienced microaggressions and exclusion to some extent, either in their current high schools or previous (elementary/middle) schools, regarding their multilayered identities such as race, home country, accent, and cultural or religious backgrounds. While the type and frequency of these microaggressions vary depending on participants' backgrounds, they all have been discriminated against or received looks and/or thrown slurs at some point in their school lives.

As a newcomer and one of the few Turkish students in her school, Melissa remembered that when people first met her or when they wanted to talk to her, she was often assumed to be an Arab and that she spoke the Arabic language, which often made her frustrated. She shared her

frustration in her own words, saying, "I am not an Arab, and I do not speak Arabic, and I want people to know that I am Turkish; I speak Turkish, and yes, I wear hijab, but it doesn't make me an Arab automatically." Being stereotyped about her cultural background based on her look as a visibly Muslim young woman made Melissa frustrated and felt misunderstood and ignored.

Besides Melissa, Mia, Amal, and Crystal shared their unique moments of being stereotyped because of their appearance. Mia, from the Dominican Republic, identifying as Hispanic, shared a similar quote to Melissa's in her identity map about the struggles she experienced when people made assumptions about her based on her 'racial and ethnic background, which is Hispanic as she identifies. She shared in her identity map that "being Hispanic in the U.S. is hard because people do not know your past," by which she means that people's stereotyping and negative judgments are often based on their own experiences and perceptions with a few people from a vast and highly diverse LatinX community. In addition, the other first-generation immigrant participant and an emerging bilingual, Amal, shared similar experiences and discomfort with Melissa and Mia when her peers assumed things about her. For example, she shared a moment from a classroom conversation when a classmate asked her if she had a lion as her pet back in her home country, Sudan. Feeling uncomfortable and frustrated by not being able to discuss reality in English, she noted,

> ...students are so curious about stuff that they see in videos or talk about on social media…So it'd be kind of like, uncomfortable, like, especially if you haven't really seen it (if it is) based on a rumor. There was one time they asked…you got animals everywhere. Like, you can find them, like lions and stuff like that. That's not true. That's in Safari. (Amal Interview, July 21, 2021)

Tired and uncomfortable with her peers' never-ending questions, which were often just rumors or exaggerated videos on social media, Amal was frustrated not only because she got so many irrelevant questions and assumptions about her home country but also because of lack of language support when she wanted to explain in the way she could feel at ease language-wise. As an emerging bilingual, Amal felt incompetent while answering her peers' questions the way she wanted. She then continued how her peers saw some videos of African countries and people suffering from drought and were again pointed as if she was the representative of African countries and needed to respond to all inquiries about any African country.

> Oh, is that true? Isn't there (any) water? You don't have water in there? We do have… That's the only thing I speak about, not the animal thing…We do have water bases; their resources go through to people, like, you know, around, they go like, and go away from the third base, (it is) not (used) everywhere (though). So, I spoke and gave examples about it. So that's…the one question that I was like, totally explain(ed) it. (Amal Interview, July 21, 2021)

Being annoyed with her peers' assumptions about her life and experiences in her home country upset Amal. Despite getting too many questions and not knowing how to respond to some, as she had not experienced it or the question was based on social media, Amal often felt the urge to clarify these assumptions and misinterpretations. Feeling incompetent from time to time because she could not explain in English as she wanted and because questions were often about issues happening in the entire African continent frustrated her. During those times, she kept a low profile and participated less in class, negatively affecting her sense of belonging in the school community.

All these three participants are first-generation immigrants who are emerging bilinguals and have lived in the United States for five years or less. Interestingly, Crystal, fluent in Spanish and English and living in the U.S. since birth, shared similar stereotyping experiences about her background as a Mexican. For example, in her identity map below, Crystal identified as a Mexican American and included a sentence to show her frustration when people assumed that she always ate tacos (a traditional Mexican dish), stating that "just because I am Mexican, it doesn't mean I always eat "*tacos.*"

Figure 5. Crystal's Identity Map
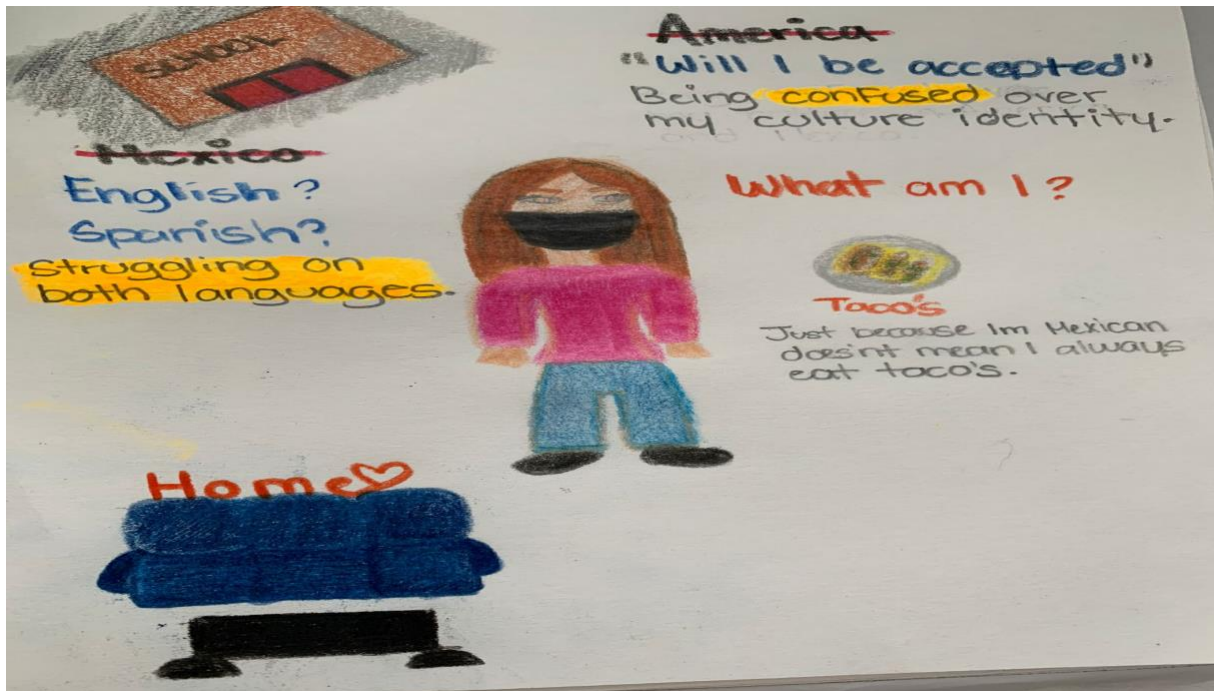
Crystal found it frustrating that people often assumed she always ate certain cultural food. She put it into her identity map as one of the messages she received, and the assumptions people made about her.

To conclude, participants' moments of microaggressions and exclusion differ regarding their multilayered identities, such as racial, linguistic, cultural, and/or religious backgrounds.

Even though the frequency and nature of these experiences of exclusion and discrimination differ, their examples of such moments are intense; it is apparent that they all have been discriminated against at some point throughout their school lives.

Intersections of Language, Socioeconomic, and Immigration Status: Impact on Equitable Access to Educational Resources and Building Imagined Futures

In this section, I will discuss how the participants describe the role of their school and out-of-school community in their perceptions of belonging and exclusion. Sharing their examples of diversity, inclusion, cultural heritage, microaggressions, expectations, and relationships, I will discuss their perceptions of belonging through the intersection of gender, language, socioeconomic status, and immigration status.

The Role of Cultural Heritage and Home Language in Building Connections

Participants shared mixed feelings about whether they felt they belonged and were included in their school environment. Regardless of their status as first-generation or second-generation immigrant participants, participants' school environments were diverse at varying levels, which often was one characteristic of their school that helped them feel they belonged in their school. One common component is diversity. High rates of school diversity positively impacted their sense of belonging through relationships, and having teachers and peers from similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds and having peers and teachers from diverse backgrounds help them feel close to one another and at ease. While one typical pattern for building relationships among all participants is that they feel safer and at ease with individuals from non-White backgrounds (or underprivileged groups), this pattern also has differences.

Four out of six participants mentioned having close friends from non-White backgrounds whose cultural heritage and home languages differ from theirs. For instance, among the four,

Melissa has two close friends whose linguistic, cultural, and religious backgrounds differ from hers. She enjoys learning about different cultures and building close relationships with peers from a different culture, religion, and language than hers. Similarly, after switching from a public school where she had peers with similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds, Yulia found her private high school environment, which consists of students from diverse backgrounds, more comfortable and safer to build close relationships. Compared to her previous (public) schools, Yulia found similar values like friendships, closeness, and sincerity, the same as in Russian culture. She felt more belonged and included within her new school circle. Aisha shortly described her close friends as individuals with progressive minds who were open-minded and understood the multiple aspects of her identity as a second-generation immigrant and multilingual individual. Amal described her close friends as individuals from diverse backgrounds and that she felt closer to them as they were all from minority backgrounds, so they understood her more. She felt connected and became friends with peers from similar backgrounds, in her words, "because they get us more" (Amal Interview, July 8, 2021).

On the other hand, Mia and Crystal built close relationships with peers with similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They built friendships by connecting with peers they found approachable and easy to communicate with and with whom they felt safer. Enjoying their time with their close school friends and speakers of their home language, Mia and Crystal felt part of the school community connecting with peers with whom they could talk about the same cultural traditions and food and felt understood.

All participants felt they belonged and were included in the diverse school environments where they could find peers from culturally, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse backgrounds and/or similar backgrounds. Regarding the peers they built relationships with and

felt close with, it is apparent that they all preferred to connect with peers from diverse backgrounds, often from non-white, marginalized/underserved, and/or first or second-generation immigrant backgrounds.

The Limiting Effect of Institutional Barriers on Accessing School Resources

Participants in this study resemble and differ from one another to some extent regarding their backgrounds and complex aspects of their identities. All participants in this study identified as women. Amal, Melissa, and Mia are first-generation immigrants, and Aisha, Crystal, and Yulia as second-generation immigrants. In terms of socioeconomic status, participants' backgrounds widely differ from one another. Analyzing as many components of their socioeconomic backgrounds as possible, including but not limited to the participants' parents' annual income, educational backgrounds, jobs, networks, neighborhoods, housing, and many other types of capital, is beyond the scope of this study. However, I share how participants described the available support, resources, and opportunities they could access to make the most of their education and build their imagined futures.

While all students needed and mainly benefited from the resources, support, and opportunities provided by their schools, four out of six participants highly depended on needing more/no access to out-of-school resources and support for their education and imagined futures. First-generation immigrant participants often relied on school resources and support available in school. They rarely had the opportunity to seek and/or get resources other than the ones freely accessible in school. Only Aisha got SAT preparation classes from a private tutoring center. Aisha's experiences and observations indicated that institutional barriers and unequal access to resources are present in her school, depending on the socioeconomic status and gender of students. Aisha, who identifies as Muslim-Tajik American, had similar experiences of exclusion

as a middle schooler in a public school in New York. However, unlike Yulia's source of exclusion (home country), Aisha experienced exclusion based on her family's socioeconomic status. When she passed the entrance exam for the school, which she described as one of the best schools in the area, Aisha's family knew they would not be able to afford a house in the school area, which was in a wealthy neighborhood. Knowing that their daughter's hard work on passing the exam would not help if they did not live in the area, her family asked for help from a family friend living in that neighborhood to use their home address to keep their seat in the school. Reflecting on her experiences during middle school, Aisha already made sense of existing systemic inequities for financially disadvantaged families and that her classmates were way wealthier than her family. Comparing the surroundings of her school, the types of houses her classmates would live in, and her peers' expensive possessions, Aisha felt 'different'. Despite deserving a place to enter and getting high grades throughout her school years, she did not belong to the school. Even though her family was having a hard time financially during those years, Aisha recalled becoming more self-conscious as an individual. She noticed the financial differences between her and her peers over the years by accepting and thanking them for the opportunities her family could provide for her and that she could manage to blend in school and with her peers. Describing herself as a highly observant individual, Aisha pictured her multiple aspects of identity and messages she received in different spaces in and out of school in the U.S. A deeper look at her identity map would help better comprehend her perceptions of self, her education, and her imagined futures.
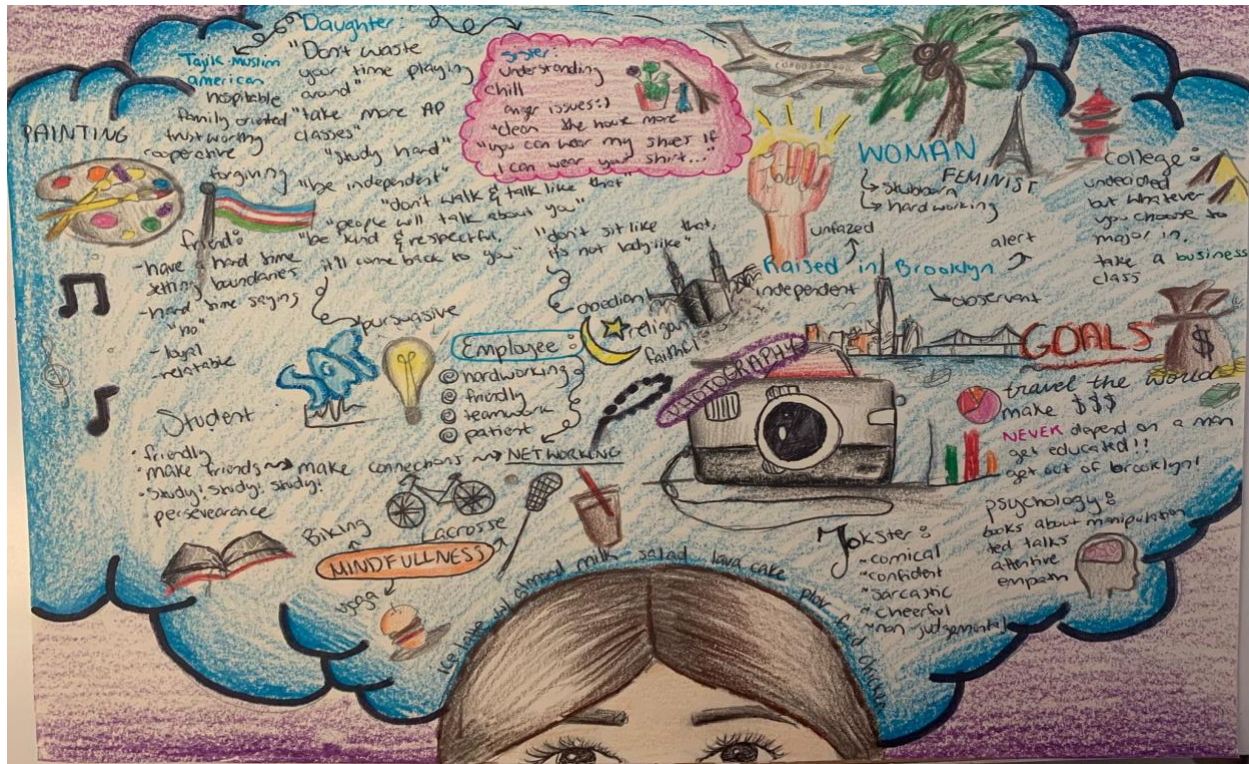
Figure 6. Aisha's Identity Map

Having experienced disparities in her previous schools and spaces, Aisha perceived her

current high school as more inclusive and welcoming. She suggested that students from higher

socioeconomic backgrounds and male students were more privileged and had more resources

than the rest of the students. Aisha described how male students could easily joke around and

build connections with teachers and school staff, like lunch ladies. Thanks to their close

relationships with teachers, they could ask for more resources and learn about current

opportunities. They could also get more food than any student was allowed, as many male

students had better relationships with lunch ladies. Pointing out the advantages male students got

as they joked around and how their actions were often tolerated, Aisha perceived these practices

as advantages for male students.

Moreover, sharing her observations on how some students' parents, who lived in the

neighborhood for years and/or had a social network within the school district, received more

access to information, opportunities, and connections than those whose parents did not have

access to such resources and networks could be better understood in her own words below.

> because I can have that relationship and bonds with certain staff, but some of it will not
>
> equate to how others have it because of their advantages, whether it be like their gender
>
> or their (socioeconomic) status, like a lot of people, their parents or their sisters or their
>
> siblings went to the (same) school, and they get treated differently…I don't feel like I'm
>
> at a disadvantage, but I know there are students at an advantage due to their backgrounds.
>
> (Aisha Interview, November 26, 2021)

As the daughter of an educator herself, whose mother worked as an administrator in a private

school, Aisha had access to help from her mother and her mother's social network --her

colleagues. She received free consulting, resources, college-prep information, tips, and answers

to her inquiries. Thus, she felt herself lucky that even though her parents did not have that social

network in her school or neighborhood like some of her peers, they could still provide the

resources and support she needed for her college applications and plans. Analyzing how social

capital could bring advantages and disadvantages to her and her peers, Aisha was aware of the

disparities within the school structure and how opportunities and resources differ for students

from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Bourdieu (1981) suggests that different forms of

capital—social, economic, and cultural (explained in chapter two), disadvantage individuals

from underprivileged backgrounds. As in Aisha's example, the higher the social capital, the

higher the opportunities and resources one can access. Hence, for many emerging bilinguals,

newcomers, and students from non-mainstream, non-white, and financially disadvantaged

backgrounds, the school system has and sustains injustices. Unfortunately, schools continue to

reproduce socioeconomic disparities through school policies, curriculum, and access to clubs,

tools, and other resources, putting students from disadvantaged backgrounds at a disadvantage (Au, 2018). Such systematic inequities marginalize students from non-mainstream backgrounds and negatively impact their perceptions of themselves and their imagined futures (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

Yet, Aisha described teachers' support and practices for the sports clubs in her school as tools for inclusion and equity. Providing resources and funding for students who could not afford to get involved with sports, she felt her school did a good job involving students from low-income backgrounds and offering free access to resources. Joining the Lacrosse team in her school, Aisha shared how her club teacher supported individuals who could not afford to join the school team. Aisha viewed her school's supporting students from financially struggling families to access such clubs and extracurricular activities as a step toward equal opportunity for all. Aisha knew what extracurricular activities and experiences on a high schooler's resume and college application positively impact college acceptance and help get more opportunities. Social class and economic disparities are rarely discussed in the U.S., and the American Dream suggests that any individual from any background has equal chances to succeed regardless of their background (Vandrick, 2014). However, the need for equitable support and resources for newcomer multilingual students and financially disadvantaged students needs to be addressed in our society. Long-term studies indicate a lack of support and resources in schools for students who need and depend on them the most (e.g., financially struggling students, newcomer students, emerging bilingual students) fails them and puts them at a disadvantage (see Anyon, 1980; Darvin & Norton, 2014). Considering the intersections of immigration, socioeconomic and linguistic statuses, the complexity of participants' identities highly influenced their access to educational opportunities and imagined futures and created long-term inequities for individuals

from underserved/marginalized communities (Hill-Collins, 2019; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017; Hill-Collins & Bilge, 2016). Such differences and power dynamics in accessing resources and the short- and long-term effects of such differences and inequalities on these students' experiences in schools and community are "savage" (Kozol, 1991).

In conclusion, participants' perceptions and inclusion criteria within their schools varied widely. Regarding the examples shared regarding feeling belonging or excluded, it is apparent that participants felt safer and part of the community if their school's diversity rate was high. Regardless of their immigration background, participants felt more comfortable and easier to blend if they had teachers and peers from similar backgrounds to theirs and/or from non-White backgrounds. The high diversity rate in peers' and teachers' backgrounds helped them build relationships at ease and close to one another, allowing them to know each other as their authentic selves and learn from one another without feeling judged or looked down upon.

"I don't take an AP class because I'm an ESL."

Another barrier in accessing school resources is the need for more language support, differentiation in reaching out to students from underserved backgrounds, and support for emerging bilingual students' need for their school success and future building. None of the participants but Aisha takes A.P. classes. While participants had different reasons for not taking an A.P. class, the two primary reasons could be categorized as they either did not know much about A.P. classes or did not think they would qualify.

Three participants enrolled in ESL classrooms mentioned they knew little about A.P. classes and whether they could take them. When asked what may have become a barrier for them, Melissa's response was hard to hear; "I don't take an A.P. class because I'm an ESL"

(Melissa, interview 2, p.18). Since settling in the U.S., she had been enrolled in an ESL classroom where students were often motivated to exit and show their competency to study in "mainstream" classrooms. These messages and encouragement got stuck with her, and she might have assumed that she could only qualify for opportunities if she exited the ESL class. Mia, Amal, and Crystal did not know much about them other than having heard of their existence from their peers but did not think of much or get encouragement for taking those classes. One reason behind their not knowing much about A.P. classes is that 2 out of 5 participants had just turned into 10th graders when we conducted the first interviews. Hence, they may have been busy getting used to a new school, peers, courses, and teachers and may have yet to consider looking for information or opportunities for A.P. classes.

Like Melissa and Mia, Crystal knew little about who and how one qualified for A.P. classes. They needed to know when to apply for one of the A.P. classes and how these could affect their college admissions. Mia shared her thoughts,

> …yeah… there's A.P. courses in my school. Well, I don't take them. They put it in your schedule, so I didn't have a choice, you know…Ms. Smith told me about it. She helped us with those things, so I had to take one class, and I did not do well during the Pandemic. But, like, I think, like my friends, they take it and say, that is, helpful for them. Well, I never asked about it. (Mia Interview, October 13, 2021)

Mia did not know much about A.P. classes and was not taking one. Her counselor and peers seemed to intrigue her curiosity and interest in A.P. classes. However, she needed more information and guidance about how taking an A.P. class would affect her grades and college applications. Like Mia, Crystal, a second-generation immigrant young woman with limited access to resources and support outside of school, knew little about the A.P. classes and was not

enrolled in any. She explained that one needed to have excellent grades to get an A.P. class, saying,

> Yeah, I could. There was, like, they got an email saying like, I could like, you know, join. But my friend also she's a freshman. She was (in) an A.P. class, I think. But I didn't. I'm not sure why I don't know if it's like randomly or is it? Because, like, oh, like, you have very good grades. And like, all you should try, you know, best. But yeah, I'm not really sure about that. (Crystal Interview, July 12, 2021)

Crystal heard about A.P. classes but was unsure of the eligibility criteria to attend those classes. She needed more explanation, guidance, and encouragement to try applying to A.P. classes. One explanation for why she knew little about the A.P. classes could be because she had just turned into a 10th grader when we conducted the interviews.

However, seeing this pattern among all first-generation immigrant students, Crystal indicated that multilingual students enrolled in ESL classrooms need more accessible resources and mentoring about A.P. class access, choices, and college-related preparations. Yulia's explanation for not taking an A.P. class differed from the rest. Yulia knew about the A.P. classes and how taking them could benefit her college-bound decisions. However, she had limited A.P. class options because her school had a small number of students at her grade level and often needed more students to start an A.P. class. Yulia explained why she did not attend any A.P. classes yet, saying,

> …we don't have many A.P. courses because there's so few students. If there was a variety, then there would be many classes, and that (each) would only have like one person per class, which wouldn't really work so. I think there's a total of maybe around

five options, and the only one I'm taking is A.P. psychology. (Yulia Interview, October 8,

2021)

Yulia described how her school's size affected the number of available A.P. courses in school

and explained the rationale behind her taking one A.P. class. Despite the small size of her school

and the number of students, Yulia's school provided one class for her.

In addition to a lack of access to A.P. courses and limited in-class participation, the

newcomer multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers needed more language support in

their school, which caused limited access to resources for their college preparation and imagined

futures. For example, Mia shared a moment when she felt she could have benefited from more

support to make the most of that opportunity as a prospective doctor. Her school invited a doctor

as a guest speaker on a career day. That visit excited Mia; however, that day left her disappointed

as she could not get the chance to communicate with the guest because of a lack of language

support for emerging bilinguals. She was frustrated and upset,

> When there are conferences (career day events), like, when important people sit with us
>
> and they talk about their career, I do not know how to explain a question (I wonder
>
> about). (That day) I felt frustrated because I really wanted to know about that
>
> person…somebody (who) has an important career that you don't see much. So you want
>
> to know what makes them, like, choose that profession or what they make, or how they
>
> came (up with) the idea (of becoming a doctor)... how they decide (that) I want to do
>
> this…(On such an occasion), I could ask them the question or write to them in the paper
>
> and give it to them, and maybe they will answer, like, send me an email or meet me, like,
>
> privately (she means one-on-one) or something like that. (Mia Interview, October 30,
>
> 2021)

Mia's experience and frustration hint at the lack of support in her school, especially in such opportunities, which mean a lot for her future goals and school success. Limited access to A.P. classes, in-class participation, and asking questions about their future and school success create inequities for emerging bilingual students whose primary means of support and resources are from school. Educators and schools should check in with their emerging bilingual students and differentiate the support and resources regarding their strengths and needs so that all students, regardless of their language proficiency, can still make the most of their schooling experiences and opportunities provided to them in school. As Mia suggests, one way to do this could be for teachers to consider asking written questions or using a shared document, such as Google Docs.

Hence, students take the time they need to shape their questions and concerns in addition to speaking up in front of the entire school. In addition, guest speakers can receive and answer questions from any interested students whose enthusiasm will not be overlooked because of a lack of language support or differentiated participation methods. Thus, students from diverse linguistic backgrounds find a safe space and equitable support to get opportunities like other students. Overlooking multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' linguistic needs and teachers and school administration's lack of empathy with the struggles about speaking to an audience negatively affect the support and opportunities they can get in school (Kanno, 2018). In addition to being under pressure to prepare for college preparation tests (e.g., SAT) and enrollment same as their English-speaking peers, multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers are also expected excel in English to exit the ESL class in a limited time. Considering that English (ESL) instruction in secondary schools does not often produce desired results because of inadequate hours of instruction for students' linguistic needs (Lopez-Gopar & Sungrua, 2014), school policies should suggest ways in which multilingual/multicultural

immigrant/multicultural immigrant high schoolers receive support and tools they need to make the most of their education.

In conclusion, while participants' school context, length of time spent in the U.S., their immigration background, and year in high school differ, they raise a common issue, a lack of language support and differentiated approaches to multilingual students' needs. These emerging bilingual youth's needs as high school students should be noticed. It is apparent from their proposed solutions that their schools did not support them as they expected, and the possible support and resources for their success and involvement were not there when they needed them. Schools as institutions are responsible to all students regardless of their racial, social, cultural, linguistic, and immigration backgrounds. They have to commit to their students' success and provide safe spaces where they belong and are a part of the school community. The school, where knowledge reproduction is sustained, is the social context where the participants spend most of their time and build relationships. Hill Collins and Bilge (2016) emphasize how the dynamics of interpretive communities shape knowledge concerning race, gender, social class, and language (and/or other systems of power). Participants differing experiences in school contexts show how their multilayered identities are perceived differently in different contexts, yielding social injustices and inequities. Critically conscious educators, aware of existing injustices towards newcomer multilingual students, should make these disparities visible and guide their students so that they persevere to liberate themselves from the "limiting situation" (Freire, 1970). By fully supporting their students, teachers can equip them with critical consciousness, equitable resources, and opportunities to achieve their imagined futures.

Building a Safe Space within their Communities

One common topic raised among participants is how they build a community out of school. By saying community, I examine the people and places they mention as vital to them and how and where they feel themselves a part of and/or included. There are distinctive patterns among participants' sense of belonging and/or feelings of isolation/exclusion within their in-school and out-of-school communities. They felt either belonged to or were more isolated/excluded in one community than the other. The participants had varying ways of building and connecting with their out-of-school community, which was, interestingly, a source of support for some and frustration for others. These differences could be related to their gender, immigration status, and socioeconomic status. For example, four participants held a higher sense of belonging within their out-of-school community. In contrast, they experienced being judged, ridiculed, stereotyped, and excluded in their school at varying levels, primarily by their peers because of their non-mainstream "looks", home countries/cultures, and ways of speaking English (e.g., accent, intonation, sentence structures and so on). Below, I will discuss their preferences when building a community and the factors that impact their choices of community members.

Differing Preferences when Building a Community

All participants are involved in at least one of the community-organized activities, such as after-school/weekend programs, socializing, interfaith and intrafaith events, and volunteering activities. Some describe "community" as a group of individuals from their home culture/country, while some describe individuals from a different cultural background to theirs. Four out of six participants have built close relationships within their community consisting of people from the same cultural heritage. Some describe their community as a tight-knit group of people from whom they seek and receive resources, mentoring, and guidance in various areas,

from education to job opportunities. They often trust the members of their community when navigating the U.S. system, college, career choices, job opportunities, language, and social support, and the need for suggestions. Participants like Aisha and Yulia preferred to build a community with people outside their cultural heritage and home language circle but with individuals whose perceptions of values and mindsets are closer and more agreeable to them than those from their home culture.

Building a Community from Similar Backgrounds. Four of the participants sought and received the support they needed for different issues from their community whose members share the same/similar cultural, linguistic, racial, and religious backgrounds. Their community provided social networks, and accessibility helped navigate the school and U.S. system and provided language and translation support and resources. Everyone agreed that their close circle community played a considerable role in assisting them in building a sense of belonging in the U.S. These communities were often the ones they identified themselves with. They felt included and safe around them. They often spent most of their time within these communities and spaces, such as religious buildings (e.g., churches, mosques, cultural foundations), volunteer activities, cultural days, free time activities, and so many other occasions. They often described their community members as the safest, most helpful, and most understanding. Individuals with whom they could exchange knowledge and ask questions safely, celebrate cultural and religious traditions and holidays, and help one another without fear of being judged because of their language, socioeconomic status, race, and immigration status. Often, they became an extended part of their family. Inside and/or out of school, these communities often provided the resources and supported their parents and/or school could not.

For example, Crystal built a close community in school with peers from similar cultural heritage and language in her school. In addition, her out-of-school community was surrounded by individuals who shared similarities in terms of culture, language, faith, and interests. She felt safe socializing with them and cared for and seen (self-defense and church community). By sharing,

> …we learn self-defense; it's really important. And in that environment, they're always caring about children…they make you feel really welcome. And…at church. When I go to church, they always care about me. They're always asking, for example, How's it going?... at church… it was nice. And in the community around me (my apartment)…I always say hi, because it's a nice way to, you know, respect your neighbors. And it's nice to know there's someone out there for you. (Crystal Interview, July 3, 2021)

Crystal emphasized what these spaces and community members meant for her and how she felt safe, accepted, and belonged around them. Crystal also described how one of the community members, her godmother, from a similar ethnic and linguistic background, continuously provided guidance and help to navigate the U.S. school system and educational opportunities. She shared how her godmother's mentorship and advice helped her get the support she often could not get from her parents and school, sharing an instance,

> … she's always encouraging me to do stuff for like myself, for example, like, a couple weeks ago, she sent me a message, saying, "Hi there, how are you like, there's just this new event you should sign up with. It's like this food cycle stuff, and I signed up. And like, it helps you like it also helps for your resume." So, she's like, "It's gonna help you out for like college, you know, you're still young, but like, it's good to start up…And then, she's like, you should join. And then I signed up…I got accepted… It's really cool,

like field trip stuff like they do, and they share. So, it's like, it benefits me. And I learned,

so it's like, she encourages me with that. And, um, she's a good person…she works. She

travels. She's a reasonable person. She's always, you know, motivating my sister and me.

(Crystal Interview, July 12, 2021)

Crystal explained that her godmother became a reliable and vital resource outside the school

community. Her godmother, a college graduate familiar with the U.S. educational system, would

share her experiences and wisdom with her to help her with her college preparation and imagined

future. Apparently, Crystal valued her godmother's presence and support and saw her as a role

model who could work, travel and help people.

Similarly, when talking about her peer group with peers from her ESL classroom,

Melissa described how this small community helped her with feeling belonging and safe and

practice and improve her English skills, saying,

In my second year at school, I made friends with 3 ESL classmates. Two of them were

Latin American, and one was from Korea. We were together. We hung out all the time.

We had a great time together. My English improved a lot with them. I often felt

uncomfortable around native speakers, but around them, I never felt offended when they

corrected my English. Because they made me happy, they helped me. I helped them too.

We formed a beautiful group. (Melissa Interview, July 5, 2021)

Melissa explained how she constructed her safe space with her peers, who shared a similar

background regarding being a newcomer immigrant and multilingual individual. In her small

community of four, each held different backgrounds in terms of race, ethnicity, and culture.

However, they enjoyed spending time together, and as multilingual individuals enrolled in ESL

classrooms, they felt safe and comfortable helping and supporting one another in developing their English skills.

     Yulia and Aisha's Cross-Cultural Community. Aisha and Yulia differed in their choice of community members and description of their out-of-school community compared to the rest of the participants. They chose to spend their time and engage within a community different from their cultural, linguistic, and immigration backgrounds. Aisha and Yulia shared similar feelings of exclusion and not belonging perceptions in their out-of-school community (the U.S. society and/or the community consists of individuals from their home culture). However, they stressed that they built an out-of-school community with a mix of individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds in their school, workplace, volunteer/extracurricular activities, and/or faith-based social activities. Those spaces were where they felt the safest, most comfortable, and accepted as their authentic selves.

     Yulia and Aisha chose to build a community from her schoolmates and social circle through the different activities she joined. Aisha's perceptions of being judged and criticized because she did not fit the cultural norms of a 'young woman' regarding her outfit, career choices, and attitude resulted in her putting distance from individuals from a community where she shares her cultural heritage. Having dealt with constantly being watched and criticized, Aisha perceived her cultural community as a source of frustration. Social gatherings made her anxious and self-conscious as they constantly pressured her to act a certain way. For instance, describing the gender-based expectations of the home culture community, Aisha pointed out the clashing intergenerational expectations, which often ignored the identity she was building as a Tajik-Muslim-American. Thus, feeling constant discomfort around the community members, Aisha chose to build a community, both in and out of school, whose members were from diverse

backgrounds and with whom she felt safe, included, and accepted as her authentic self. Building

on her experiences and perceptions of a desired community she enjoyed being a part of Aisha

built her community with individuals with a growth mindset with whom she connected through

common points like faith, culture, and multicultural background. She described her discomfort

being around individuals from her cultural background, who were judgmental, saying,

> …when I was 13 years old, I was always afraid of, you know, doing something wrong
>
> because there were always neighbors watching me… If I hung out with my friends, like
>
> in my neighborhood, my neighbor, or something, you would walk around the block.
>
> Somebody would call my mama and say, like, Oh, she did this. She did that, I would be
>
> so scared because I wouldn't do anything, but they would, like, see small little portions of
>
> it, and it just scares me. So yeah, I became like really self-conscious because of that.
>
> Because of that…we moved here to this neighborhood. This neighborhood is very
>
> mixed…Russians, African Americans… there's just like everybody. And Italians…(a)
>
> really good neighbor, she is Egyptian, I would like really her because she's also
>
> Muslim…I really like, you know, because I can like be myself, and I could just like be
>
> comfortable do whatever I want. I like I don't have to be worried about people like
>
> staring at me or like what I'm doing. (Aisha Interview, November 4, 2021)

Aisha described how uncomfortable and judged she felt when she was around a community from

a similar cultural background. She felt self-conscious about her look and how judgmental her

community could get about her choices. Not wanting to deal with such stress, she found it safer

and more comfortable to be away from them and build a community outside of that circle with

individuals she shared other commonalities and values. She described the community and

individuals she enjoyed spending time with and learning from one another, saying,

… I have one really good friend, and he's Yemeni, and he's Muslim, and like, that's

pretty much all I have right now. I still have friends, like, say hi, bye to, (but as) a close

friend, yet it's just him. But I like it because, like, we're both Muslim, so it's like it's like

good vibe…we both know exactly what we're talking about. (Aisha Interview, November

4, 2021)

Other than the Muslim Yemeni friend she had from school with whom she could talk easily and

feel understood. Besides, she joined a community program consisting of mentors she met

regularly to study with other high schoolers from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. She

felt safe and comfortable, and she appreciated that they were Muslims, and they were open-

minded with a growth mindset with whom; she joined the young peace group, an interfaith group

with members from different faiths. She shared,

..The big sister's association that I'm working with organized it…we went to a good

Jewish place, like, it's kind of like an activity center type of thing…They were very

welcoming with us and were like, you know, just like really kind…The guy there, the

organization member from, the Jewish guy, he's from Israel, he was very open to like our

ideas and our side as the Muslims, we were very open to their ideas, so yeah, just ended

up working out. (Aisha Interview, November 4, 2021)

The community she built consisted of individuals not only Muslim but also from diverse

religious backgrounds with a common feature: a growth mindset. She became friends with

individuals in and out of school and joined groups where she felt safe, respected, and understood.

Putting distance from people who were judgmental and made her feel uncomfortable and self-

conscious all the time, she built a group with individuals who validated her faith and practices

and were open to different perspectives and integration into the U.S. culture, which she described

as individuals with a "modern mindset" in another conversation we had. (Aisha Interview, December 5, 2021)

Regarding Yulia's choice of community, one important consideration was that she often mentioned that she did not feel she belonged much in the U.S. She often mentioned that she could not find sincere relationships with family members and friends in Russia. Looking for similar feelings, Yulia built her community with friends from diverse backgrounds in her school. Her school was a small urban school with many students from international backgrounds whose cultural backgrounds she found close to her home culture. While she often described herself as an introvert, Yulia found the two crucial elements she sought in her relationships: closeness and sincerity. She thought their culture was like Russian culture in that sense, which helped her feel close to them. She spent time after school and joined social activities with them. She described her close-knit community and how she felt around them, sharing,

> … They're just easier to get close to…We have lots in common. So, they're just nice to talk to. I mean, when I'm with them, I always feel very happy just being myself, which is nice. Sometimes we talk about our interests, and sometimes, we could do things together, like drawing to play games. And it's just a very light and easy relationship with all of them, you know it doesn't ever feel like, I mean friendships weren't supposed to be like a burden, but sometimes there's people that can have the heavier feeling to talk with them. And I just don't really have that with them. (Yulia Interview, October 8, 2021)

Yulia described the close community she built with her classmates. She was glad that she and her classmates valued sincere and close relationships, and they felt it was easy to communicate with one another. All added up, she enjoyed her time with her friends and felt comfortable, belonged, and understood within her small community.

Participants' preferences and motives for building a community made two groups. Four participants built a community with individuals sharing similar cultural heritage and perceptions of values. With whom they could speak their home language and could discuss topics and issues from their home countries, cultures, and food that they were familiar with. Yulia and Aisha felt excluded from individuals in their home culture for varying reasons. They then built a community of their choice where they felt included and comfortable with individuals from diverse backgrounds other than their cultural heritage and language but with similar perspectives, morals, and perceptions of values. The six young women experienced confusion in their permanent or temporary hostland regarding feeling unwelcomed and excluded in different spaces from time to time. Not having access to opportunities and safe spaces in the U.S. to build a sense of belonging (Kayama & Yamakawa, 2020) could result in psychological distress and depression among adolescents (Wei et al., 2010; Schwartz et al., 2006). Hence, the students' community-building efforts with individuals they felt safe, included, and understood were crucial for their mental health, academic and personal growth, and imagined futures.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the five subthemes that reflect how participants' experiences of or others' perceptions of their multilayered identities — but it is not the existence of the identities themselves that do this; it is the meaning-making by those who have power or access to power— and microaggressions played a central role in their sense of belonging and imagined futures: a) The role of multilayered identities and microaggressions in student engagement and belonging; b) U.S.=Fear: Intersections of gender, Islamophobia and institutional racism; c) Feeling Belonging: Intersections of race, culture, and language; d) Intersections of language, socioeconomic, and immigration status: Impact on equitable access to educational

resources and building imagined futures; and e) Building a safe space within their communities. No matter how long they lived in the U.S. and learned English, four participants experienced stereotyping and felt excluded by their peers in school because of their language proficiency and way of speaking English. Regardless of their linguistic background, everyone experienced microaggressions, discrimination, and stereotyping at varying levels. Participants experienced exclusion and felt that they did not belong in their school. Such experiences also negatively impacted their engagement in class and made them question whether they belonged in the school. All participants had moments of insecurity and fear related to society's deficit perceptions of their identities and institutional racism. The two visibly young Muslim women feared racist, Islamophobic, and xenophobic motives because they had already experienced or witnessed them on social media. Hence, they kept a low profile in school and society. Some other participants experienced microaggressions and racist remarks because of their language proficiency, stereotyping, and hostile acts towards people of their cultural heritage and/or home country.

Additionally, participants' perceptions and inclusion criteria within their schools vary widely. They often felt a greater sense of belonging if their school was diverse and connected with peers from similar backgrounds to theirs and/or from non-White backgrounds. As multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers, they often struggled with and expected more from their school as, for many of them; school was the primary resource and space they could get the support and resources they needed, get to know themselves, build a community, and shape their imagined futures. They also built a community outside of school where they seek to support and guidance, socialize, and feel included. While some made a group with individuals from similar cultural heritage and home country, some built a diverse community whose

individuals hold a different background than theirs but share similar perspectives, morals, and values.

Finally, participants' perceptions of safety and sense of belonging in and out of school vary widely. All participants struggled and felt unsafe at varying levels in their school or out of the school community. Participants' being first or second-generation immigrant young women, multilingual/multicultural Black or people of color, and/or identifying as a member of a religion marginalized in the U.S. (two of them) greatly influenced their perceptions of their experiences. That is, aspects of their identity, such as gender, culture, language, immigration status, and/or religious background, are significant in how they envision their futures. Regardless of their immigration background, participants experienced feelings of insecurity, judgments, and/or moments of microaggressions to some extent within their out-of-school community.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Implications

I came to this study concerned with social injustices and inequities for multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers in the U.S. context. Having worked with high schoolers from diverse backgrounds for almost a decade in cross-continental and cross-cultural educational settings and as a first-generation immigrant, visibly Muslim woman, I wondered how multilingual/multicultural youth from immigrant backgrounds navigate the language, culture, and education system in the United States. I wondered how the existing education system perceives and serves the youth and how they perceive their multilayered identities in connection with their imagined futures. I wondered what aspects of their multilayered identities and backgrounds, such as cultural heritage, race, language, gender, socioeconomic status, and religion, impact their perceptions of themselves and how they are

perceived in the U.S. and at home what they believe they would achieve or not. This study investigates how six multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schooler young women's multilayered identities play a role in their imagined futures.

I conducted this study directly responding to the limited literature centered around the connection between high schoolers' multilayered identities and their "imagined/possible futures". Many studies draw attention to the relationship between college and career goals of students, gender and/or class, and imagined futures (Hardie, 2018; Patel, 2017; Price, 2000) and the socioeconomic backgrounds of high school students and their college plans and/or college access (Hardie, 2018; Kanno, 2018; Callahan & Shifrer, 2016; Kanno & Kangas, 2014, Deil-Amen, & DeLuca, 2010; Aynsley & Crossouard, 2010). Scholars also researched the relationship between the emerging adulthood/adolescence stage and/or social class and imagined/possible futures (e.g., Fehily & Schlosser, 2020; Polovina & Josic, 2019; Bochaver, Zhilinskaya, & Khlomov, 2018; Arnett, 2016). However, only few studies examined how immigrant youth's diverse backgrounds--multilayered identities (e.g., socioeconomic status, citizenship, and gender) impact their schooling experiences and imagined futures (e.g., Kanno, 2018; Gonzalez, 2015; Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2015). Additionally, several scholars conducted studies on the challenges, injustices, and unequal educational opportunities that multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers experience in college access and preparation (e.g., Kanno, 2018; Callahan & Shifrer, 2016; Deil-Amen & DeLuca, 2010). Despite the growing interest among scholars in imagined or possible futures of youth from diverse backgrounds, the need for a more complex investigation of how multilayered identities of the students (racial, linguistic, sociocultural, socioeconomic, and immigration backgrounds) is apparent. There is a need to do further research on how the multilayered identities and the resources they can access intersect

and impact their schooling experiences and thinking toward their futures. By examining the

relationship between the multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' multilayered

identities and how the students imagine their futures, my study brings a more complex

perspective to understanding the lives that they are dealing with here and to make sense of their

schooling experiences, considering available resources inside and outside of school, expectations

of their teachers and schools, and their thinking toward the future through an intersectional lens.

My study also offers a window into the possibilities and challenges of using intersectionality as a

tool for analysis.

    Despite the claims of equal education rights for all students regardless of their

backgrounds, the literature overwhelmingly questions and draws attention to the inequities and

injustices that persist for students from marginalized backgrounds, including immigrant youth,

emerging bilinguals, emerging citizens, and racially social, economically, culturally, and

linguistically diverse backgrounds (e.g., Kanno, 2018; Paris & Alim, 2017; Abu El-Haj, 2015;

Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2010; Price, 2000, Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lareau,

1987; Anyon, 1981; Willis, 1977). What is not often explicitly investigated and discussed in the

literature is how intersections of multiple aspects of identities of individuals from marginalized

or underprivileged backgrounds play a role in multilingual/multicultural immigrant high

schoolers' future plans. This study suggests these young women's multilayered identities are

complex and intertwined. Simply separating certain aspects of their identities instead of bringing

them together results in a deficit and a limited understanding of their experiences and how they

imagine their futures. The complexity of the identities of the six young women in the study

shows how many aspects of their backgrounds are in play in many facets of their lives, their

experiences in and out of school, their perceptions of themselves, and how they are perceived in

society, how they perceive their cultures, languages, beliefs, and future plans. This study points out that transnational youth, regardless of their immigration backgrounds (first or second generation), live and experience dual cultures, languages, countries, and lives. The duality is apparent in many aspects of their lives and their multilayered identities as daughters, siblings, students, young women, society members, and individuals.

To investigate the six young women's experiences and unearth the injustices and inequities, I organized this study around three overlapping strands of inquiry: (1) social class, and educational opportunities, (2) language, culture, and identity, and (3) immigration and colonization. I used intersectionality as social action theory (Hill Collins, 2019) to examine the complexity of their multilayered identities and how they play a role in their imagined futures. I documented their schooling experiences, accessible resources and support, multilayered identities, racial, socioeconomic, cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds, and expectations from themselves, their parents, teachers, their education, and their future. My analysis sheds light on the complexity of their experiences, layers of oppression, and marginalization of this youth and how all play a huge role in their perceptions of selves, aspects of their multilayered identities, and they are imagined futures. Separately examining and discussing their multilayered identities as disconnected elements fail to provide a whole picture of their multilayered identities, experiences in and outside of school, family, school, and future decisions and aspirations.

My analysis indicates that the six multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers differed from each other yet were like one another in many ways. Their school contexts/cities/states and the layers of marginalization and injustices of the young women differed regarding how their racial, socio-economical, religious, cultural, and social backgrounds were perceived in society. Notwithstanding these differences, they all experienced

microaggressions, discrimination, and exclusion at varying degrees and forms. They also experienced living dual cultures, languages, and lives and constantly questioned and built their multilayered identities, belonging, and imagined futures in their schools, homes, and communities. Examining and integrating the complexity of multilayered identities is critical to better understanding and making meaning of the connection between their in and out-of-school experiences, sense of belonging, and imagined futures. Regardless of the constant negotiations and challenges, they showed the courage, passion, hard work, and resilience to realize their dreams while maintaining a sense of conformity with their parents. They persevere and aspire to make the most of their education, future, and life.

In the following sections, I discussed four prominent themes that emerged from my analysis: a) Navigating the multilayered identities and imagined futures; b) different forms of capital and equitable access to resources in schools; c) marginalization and multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' engagement, sense of belonging and imagined futures; and d) intersectional work: a complex and challenging process. I will also provide implications for theory and practice and share the potential contributions of my study to the literature, the limitations of this study, recommendations for further research, and my final reflections.

Navigating the Multilayered Identities and Imagined Futures

> *Multiculturalism is not just about knowing and appreciating different cultures, it is also about developing a sense of identity that allows individuals to navigate the different cultural norms that they encounter in their daily lives.*
>
> *Francois Grosjean, 2010, Bilingual: Life and Reality*

The six multilingual/multicultural young women's nuanced experiences of navigating gender, culture, and immigration are crucial to better understanding how these elements intersect and shape their identities and imagined futures. Unmasking the multilingual/multicultural high schoolers' multilayered identities is crucial to sustaining a holistic look at the nuances of their lives. Labeling them as ELLs or with any deficit term (see Chapter 1) by lumping them together as one big homogenous group exacerbates the existing injustices and deficit views on them. It ignores the uniqueness and complexity of multiple aspects of their identities. It does a disservice to the students whose needs, backgrounds, challenges, and skills vary widely. By doing so and/or not changing it, schools cause the multilingual/multicultural students' unique skills, assets, and backgrounds, and so their students as individuals, unseen.

Conversations with participants, their experiences, and identity maps indicated that their identities were multilayered, and their identities and experiences shaped their imagined futures. That is, their immigration background (first or second-generation immigrants), ties with their cultural heritage, and gender shaped their lived experiences, perceptions of self, and aspirations of their education and future at varying levels. In this section, I share how they navigated their multilayered identities and how these identities and experiences shaped their imagined futures.

The Intersection of Gender, Culture, and Immigration in the Six Participants' Lives

The intersection of gender, culture, and immigration significantly impacted the six multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' added responsibilities and roles in their family. In terms of immigration, all participants, but Aisha and Yulia (both second-generation immigrant participants), were expected to act as cultural brokers for their families when navigating the U.S. education system, dominant language, and culture. Becoming cultural brokers meant developing their language and social skills, familiarizing themselves, and helping

their parents with the U.S. education and health system while keeping their GPA high and getting skills and experiences to prepare themselves for competitive college admissions and their imagined futures. Delving into the complex experiences of the six multilingual/multicultural young women, the analysis showed that the participants faced added challenges and responsibilities as children of families from immigrant backgrounds.

Gender and culture played a unique role in these young women's lived experiences, expectations of their parents from them, and their imagined futures by creating a duality in their perceptions of identities, cultures, and languages. Parents' perceptions and learnings of gender roles are often shaped by their cultural upbringings and practices in their home countries. Conforming to these teachings and practices often resulted in added responsibilities, roles, and dilemmas for these young women as big sisters, daughters, and young women, which could limit who they are and what they can achieve. Parents' culture and gender-related expectations of their daughters and future choices often clashed with these young women's expectations of themselves as individuals with dual cultures, languages, and identities. This duality in their lives often presented its own set of challenges for these young women, such as language and culture shifts in an out of school and seeking conformity with their parents' expectations of them and their own expectations of their futures. They had to balance their dual identities, cultures, and languages, often leading to a clash of expectations between their family, home culture, and the dominant society and culture in the U.S. They were often caught between the expectations of their families, home culture, and dominant society and culture, which resulted in microaggressions, exclusion, and discrimination because of their multilayered identities (I will explore these issues more in the next section titled 'marginalization and

multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' engagement, sense of belonging, and imagined futures).

Colliding Worlds. The six participants developed the understanding and skills to manage and separate these two worlds, building bridges and creating a balance between the norms and expectations of home and school culture. This theme was apparent to some extent in all participants' lives, being more apparent in some participants than others. It could indicate parents' ties with their home cultures and perceptions of gender roles. For instance, Amal had to negotiate her responsibilities and roles at home with her mother, seeking some degree of conformity to be able to realize her education and future-related goals as a young woman living in the U.S. She agreed to carry on helping with the housework, helping her siblings' homework and any language related tasks for family members. In return, she could study for long hours at school, participate in volunteer work and continue her practices in school as the school volleyball team player. Her need to negotiate between family expectations and personal goals also revealed the cultural aspect of gender roles, as her twin brother was not asked to help with those responsibilities, according to Amal. Hence, she could balance her parents' expectations, continue her education, and realize her future goals. Aisha, like Amal, had to balance her parents' expectations and resist some while fulfilling others. Initially, as her parents suggested, she studied hard to get a medical degree. Still, upon admission, she ultimately changed her interests, rejected the offer from a prestigious high school in that field, and enrolled in a school that aligned with her interests and was less stressful, despite resistance from her parents. However, she sought conformity with her parents, agreeing to help with housework, siblings' homework, and other gender-related cultural expectations of her family, like marriage age and plans. Despite having very different backgrounds, such as immigration (first or second generation), cultural

heritage, ethnicity, and home country, these young women's gender and culture-related roles showed similarities.

While the multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' perceptions of values and their role in their imagined futures varied, they all wanted to ensure that they built careers that reflected their values to some extent. Although all six participants' values were apparent in their lives to some extent, some centered their values more prominently in their future plans. Crystal and Mia aimed to build a career that would allow them to help people in need while balancing their work and family life; Amal and Melissa aimed to beat the odds of stereotyping Muslim women and voice the women and young girls worldwide, becoming a powerful and successful model for other women from similar backgrounds. Aisha and Yulia wanted to prove their skills and become independent as women. Participants commonly sought conformity and negotiated imagined futures with parental expectations. Regardless of their socioeconomic status, participants respected and appreciated their parents' sacrifices and worked to make the most of "the land of opportunities" by considering their parents' welfare, consent, expectations, and collaboration (see Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008). The impact of their cultures played a significant role in differing levels of acceptance or resistance to some of their parents' interventions in their future-related decisions.

Overall, my analysis highlights the complex and nuanced experiences of multilingual/multicultural young women and the importance of understanding the intersection of gender, culture, and immigration in shaping their identities and imagined futures. My analysis emphasizes the importance of recognizing the impact of cultural values and family expectations on the six young women's future planning. It is crucial to delve into the unique and complex experiences of multilingual/multicultural high schooler young women as they navigate their

identity, gender, and culture to better make sense of their experiences and the impact of their backgrounds on their imagined futures. An intersectional perspective underscores the importance of understanding these complexities by providing insights into their challenges and strategies to navigate their complex and often opposing identities. It also provides support and resources for these young women to navigate and succeed in a world that often fails to recognize and appreciate their unique, multilayered identities and lived experiences.

Different Forms of Capital and Equitable Access to Resources in Schools

> *'The public schools of this nation are not the only institutions that have historically rendered poor and minority children invisible. They are just the ones that we are presently obligated to deal with".*

> *Jonathan Kozol (1992, p.30). Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools.*

In this section, I focus on the role of different forms of capital in participants' access to educational resources in schools and their imagined futures. What forms of capital and to what extent were apparent in the multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' lives and experiences varied? Depending on their backgrounds, different forms of capital, such as cultural, social, economic, and linguistic, impacted each participant's access to educational resources and supported them in building and realizing their imagined futures differently. In connection with how the participants and their parents' multiple aspects of backgrounds were perceived as valuable by schools and society, participants' experiences with accessing resources and supporting schools differ. The findings suggested that the participants did not receive equitable access to resources and support from their school as they needed. Each participant's school context, linguistic, socioeconomic, and immigration backgrounds differed. However,

institutional barriers existed for all these young women in different ways. The disparities within the school structure and context and the distribution of opportunities and resources differed for students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. The schools and society's deficit views on the multicultural/multilingual immigrant high schoolers and their parents' backgrounds result in failures to address their needs. Such a deficit lens can constrain their access to resources and support they need for their education and future related goals. These "intersecting power relations produced complex social inequities" (Hill-Collins, 2019, p.49) and added layers of barriers for the participants. In the following section, I examine further the different forms of capital that I discussed in the literature review and the extent and the ways in which they were apparent in each participant's experiences.

The Influence of Different Forms of Capital on Participants' Experiences

Different types of capital in these six young women's lives play a huge role in understanding them, their experiences, and their imagined futures. By different forms of capital, I discuss participants' and their parents' different forms of capital, such as socioeconomic (social and financial capital), linguistic, and cultural. While they are all from immigrant backgrounds (first and second-generation immigrants), their access to different types of capital varies widely, playing a huge role in how accessible the resources are for them (Bourdieu, 1980). In this section, I will discuss what forms of capital and to what extent they are apparent in each participant's lives, and what they taught me about their experiences and ways of thinking about their futures.

The Intersection of Socioeconomic, Social, and Cultural Capital in Aisha's and Yulia's Access to Resources. Aisha, a Muslim-Tajik American second-generation immigrant high schooler, observed disparities between herself and her wealthier non-immigrant peers

regarding their access to various types of capital, including socioeconomic, social, and cultural capital. Despite her mother's role as an educator providing her support and guidance in navigating the school system, Aisha found herself at a disadvantage regarding college preparation-related resources compared to her peers whose parents' social network in and out of school sustained privileges for them. Nevertheless, Aisha had access to multiple school organizations and her parents' mentorship on navigating the system and unspoken rules of society schooling, cultural and linguistic capital, college preparation, building social networks, and future planning. Overall, Aisha's experiences reveal the complexity and interconnectedness of all different forms of capital and their impact on her experiences. However, Yulia, a Russian-American second-generation immigrant high schooler, had slightly more advantages than the rest of the participants in this study in terms of accessing different forms of capital. She had support and guidance from her parents and school about navigating the school system and college admissions. Her parents' network, educational and financial resources, and experiences in the U.S. provided her with the social, cultural, linguistic, and economic capital she needed to prepare and build for her future.

The Intersection of Linguistic, Cultural, and Socioeconomic Capital in Amal, Mia, Melissa, and Crystal's Access to Resources and Support. Amal, Mia, Melissa, and Crystal faced institutional barriers at the intersection of linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic capital affecting their access to resources and support. The lack of support for first-generation immigrant students in schools resulted in limited information and essential resources for AP classes, hindering their access to potential benefits for college admissions. This raises concerns about school support for first-generation immigrant students who highly depend on schools to navigate the education system. Further, regarding linguistic capital, for instance, for Melissa and Mia, lack

of language support meant fewer opportunities for them to engage in school and society and access opportunities to build their resume for college preparation and career plans. These young women struggled with a one-size-fits-all learning environment ignoring their linguistic needs, such as differentiated instruction. Their experiences underscored the need for institutional values to be removed for newcomer multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers.

Additionally, the impact of social and economic capital was also apparent in the schooling experiences of the participants. Mia could not afford to participate in after-school activities crucial to preparing for college admissions and a higher GPA. Amal had responsibilities outside of school but had access to free extracurricular activities, college preparation programs hosted in school, and college trips. Melissa had access to her social network through her community, where she could get mentorship and guidance on navigating the school system, society, and career-related goals. Thus, the lack of financial support and adjustments for the participants who needed more support and resources from their school further emphasizes the need for schools to provide sustainable resources and support for newcomer multilingual multicultural immigrant high schoolers to navigate the school system and build different forms of capital.

As this study suggests, the participants depended on school resources, guidance, and support to varying degrees. Schools need to prioritize addressing the needs of their students. Doing this can include increasing funding for after-school programs and extracurricular activities to support their educational and future related goals, transportation, and additional tutoring services after examining their needs and investing in technology and other tools that can help increase their in-class participation. Failing to provide equitable resources and support the students' needs, the school system sustains injustices and inequities and widens the "opportunity

gap" (Ladson-Billings, 2005). Schools continue to reproduce socioeconomic disparities through school policies, curriculum, and access to clubs, tools, and other resources, putting students from marginalized backgrounds at a disadvantage (Au, 2018). As Jonathan Kozol puts it, "urban schools are in trouble not because of who attends them, but because of what is inflicted upon them (1992, p.31)." While public school systems should provide all students from all backgrounds with a safe space and equitable opportunities, the practices and failures to support all students. Such inequities reproduce and sustain the injustices which systematically disadvantage students from non-mainstream backgrounds and negatively impact their perceptions of themselves and what they may become (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017; Reay, 2010). Thus, the analysis of my study emphasized the importance of supporting multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers, considering their intersections of different forms of capital to provide equitable access to educational resources and support they need to build their imagined futures.

My study also highlights the crucial role of schools in supporting the academic and personal development of students from diverse backgrounds, particularly those who face multiple layers of disadvantages due to their language, socioeconomic status, and immigration backgrounds. The findings of my study are consistent with previous research that has shown that schools can either reinforce or mitigate existing social inequalities (Au, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2005). Schools that fail to provide equitable resources and support to all students, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds, perpetuate and widen the "opportunity gap" (Ladson-Billings, 2005) and limit the future prospects of these students. On the other hand, students from non-mainstream backgrounds face institutional barriers to accessing school resources and support is also consistent with previous studies (Kanno & Kangas, 2014; Vandrick, 2014; Callahan et al., 2010), which highlight the ways in which language and immigration status can limit students' access to academic opportunities and resources, as well as their interactions with

teachers and peers. Moreover, the deficit lens that schools and society often hold towards students from non-mainstream backgrounds can exacerbate existing inequalities and limit students' perceptions of themselves and their prospects (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017; Reay, 2010). Therefore, the contribution of this study is twofold. First, it adds to the literature on educational equity and social justice by highlighting the crucial role of schools in supporting the academic and personal development of emerging multilingual/multicultural /multicultural immigrant high schoolers. Second, it underscores the need for schools to consider the intersections of students' different types of capital to provide equitable access to educational resources and support. By doing so, schools can help to mitigate existing social inequalities and empower all students to achieve their goals and build their imagined futures.

In this section, I have shown how different types of capital impacted newcomer multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' experiences and revealed the institutional and systemic barriers they faced as they tried to access various resources. My study suggests that newcomer multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers depend highly on access to access to school resources and guidance. Thus, providing them with equitable support and resources significantly contributes to educational equity and social justice. Emphasizing the need for schools to consider the intersections of students' linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds to provide equitable access to educational resources and support, the analysis in my study indicates that schools can help close the opportunity gap and address the inequities in education and support the academic success of all students in achieving their goals and building their imagined futures.

Marginalization and Multilingual/Multicultural Immigrant High Schoolers' Engagement, Sense of Belonging, and Imagined Futures

> *Before we can agree on what American identity is made of, we have to concede that as an*
>
> *immigrant settler society superimposed on the ruins of considerable native presence,*
>
> *American identity is too varied to be a unitary and homogenous thing; indeed the battle*

within it is between advocates of a unitary identity and those who see the whole complex

but not reductively unified one (Edward Said, 1993, p.xxv).

Participants experienced microaggressions and exclusion at varying levels regarding their

multilayered identities, such as racial, linguistic, cultural, and/or religious backgrounds. The

frequency and nature of these negative experiences differed; however, they all were

discriminated against at some point throughout their school lives. For instance, Amal, Melissa,

and Mia experienced stereotyping and microaggressions because of their language use and

"English accents." All three young women were first-generation immigrant

multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers studying in U.S. public schools for around

five years (at the time of the interviews). As emerging bilinguals (see chapter two), they were

new to many things at once; the three high schoolers were already under lots of pressure to

familiarize themselves with the new land, language, and education system. In addition to

receiving limited support, time, and resources in class to show their language and course content

competency, they were also ridiculed for their "accents" by their peers. Amal described being

mocked and thrown slurs by a peer in class because of her way of speaking English. She also

shared moments of being stereotyped and ridiculed about things people saw on TV and asked her

questions, which made her uncomfortable. Receiving comments and too many questions about

whether she had wild animals as pets or whether there was water in her home country, Amal was

frustrated that her peers would make assumptions about her home country, culture, and

experiences. Those moments made her question whether she belonged to the school. Melissa

shared moments of feeling ashamed of participating in class and speaking up because she felt her

peers did not understand what she was saying. She had a hard time engaging in-class activities,

even though she wanted to. Mia had similar experiences with Amal and Melissa in terms of class

engagement. She often felt ashamed speaking up and struggled to participate as she was not offered enough time and support to answer the questions and share her opinions in class. Mia often had to find her own strategies to successfully demonstrate her skills and competency in class, such as using a translation device (if the teacher allowed it), asking for help from peers, writing her answer, and sending the answer to the question/s as a written note to the teacher. These young women experienced microaggressions, were discriminated against, and were "othered" because of being multilingual and the way they spoke English. Such discriminative experiences negatively affected their classroom engagement and belonging in school.

The Role of Intersections of Race, Religion, and Gender in Marginalization

The three participants, identified as Muslims, Aisha, Amal, and Melissa, experienced added layers of microaggressions and institutional racism because of the intersections of race, religion, and gender. Among the three, Aisha preferred not to wear a hijab. Amal and Melissa were visibly Muslim young women (they wear a hijab). In this study, these two young women were the target of microaggressions, Islamophobia, xenophobia, and institutional racism in and out of school, which highly affected their engagement and belonging in school and out of school. Aisha was frustrated that, as a practicing Muslim, she often struggled to have lunch in school because of a lack of food choices respecting her faith. Amal, as a visibly Muslim Black high schooler and school volleyball team player, heard discouraging words from peers that "she would never be accepted to the team" and "she couldn't play as she wore hijab". Melissa was annoyed when her peers assumed she was "Arab" because she wore a hijab. She also described her experience within the U.S. with the word "fear". Melissa was often anxious and fearful outside of her home after seeing Islamophobic and xenophobic news and stories from her peers and close friends on social media. In addition to her traumatizing journey from Africa to the

U.S., Melissa was often scared that as a visibly Muslim young woman, she could be the target of attacks and/or hate crimes, the same as victims whom she read/listened about. The multilingual/multicultural Muslim young women experienced added layers of microaggressions and institutional racism because of multiple aspects of their multilayered identities.

Despite the negative experiences and exposure to microaggressions in and out of school and the significant limitations and losses they caused, all these young women aimed to turn these experiences into strength for their future careers. Amal and Melissa planned to become successful and independent role models for Muslim women and youth, and Aisha, Mia, and Crystal aimed to pursue careers in the medical field so they could help people from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. Having experienced struggles with finding the help they needed, they were willing to give back to the community by persevering and working diligently to provide help and support to all people in need.

It is apparent that participants' multilayered identities and the microaggressions they experienced played a considerable role in their engagement and belonging in school. They were discriminated against because of their language, gender, religion, and race. They often kept a low profile as a defense mechanism and made fewer connections with peers. The intersectional lens offers a multidimensional examination to analyze the real effects of such experiences of microaggressions, institutional racism, and linguicism could be better analyzed when seen through an intersectional lens regarding participants' multilayered identities and socioeconomic, cultural, racial, and linguistic backgrounds (Hill-Collins, 2019). For example, the first-generation immigrant visibly Muslim young women were exposed to exclusion through Islamophobic, xenophobic, and racist slurs, which negatively affected their engagement and belonging in schools and imagined futures. Schools should be aware of their students' needs, struggles, and

hardships and take action to provide a safe and welcoming environment for all students from marginalized backgrounds rather than continuing to overlook them.

My study contributes to the literature by employing a multidimensional perspective and examining the complexities of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' multilayered identities, schooling experiences, and imagined futures. My study's findings emphasize the need to provide safe, inclusive, and supportive school environments for multicultural/ multilingual immigrant high schoolers by making sense of their multilayered identities and the layers of challenges and exclusion they experience in schools. Understanding what they are going through and their backgrounds from a more complex perspective would also help us see that they are not only immigrants, they are not only ESL or multilingual students, they are not only newcomers but the nature of their complex aspects of identities and how these complexities are apparent in their daily lives. Supportive and inclusive school environments would increase multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' sense of belonging and engagement in schools and help address microaggressions and xenophobic schooling experiences of the students.

Further, my study highlights the multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' complexities, struggles, and experiences from an intersectional lens and suggests creating supportive spaces and informed teachers and school policies. Highlighting the tremendous impact of institutional racism, Islamophobia, and microaggressions on students' school engagement and belonging, my study draws attention to the need for inclusive and equitable educational programs which promote equity, inclusion, and recognition of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers. By validating these young women's

strengths and addressing the challenges, struggles, and exclusive practices that they experience,

my study emphasizes the need for support and resources from teachers, schools, and policies.

Intersectional Work: A Complex and Challenging Process

"The researcher asks, are the theoretical constructs (still) useful or meaningful in

explaining what I'm seeing? Does trying to make sense of my data challenge the theorists

I'm using and require that I rethink that theory or combine it with others?"

Jean Anyon (2009).

Shedding light on the complex nature of identity and how it is constructed through the

intersection of various factors such as culture, gender, immigration status, language, and race,

these findings have important implications for future studies using the lens of intersectionality. It

provides space and tools for a more nuanced understanding of how these intersecting factors

influence the complexity of identity construction and the effects of multilayered identities on

individuals' experiences and decisions.

The most challenging side of the theory of intersectionality as social action theory (Hill-

Collins, 2019) is the using the theory in complex ways that acknowledge the multiple and

intersecting layers of oppression and that there are infinite possibilities. Intersectional analysis is

still uncharted ground, and studies using intersectional analysis are still scarce. It was a

challenging experience to delve into the theory and continuously ask myself, as the researcher,

how I may employ the components of the theory to address my research questions and findings.

Intersectionality, as social action theory, has a complex nature. The complexity of the theory

should be visible in every layer of the research, from research questions to the analysis of the

findings. Rather than researching components of the identities of the participants separately,

using intersectionality, I aimed to bring multiple aspects of identities and layers of oppression into analysis and findings. I have experienced challenges throughout my dissertation process while implementing the theory into practice. While the theory suggests an intersectional approach in almost every step of the research, it was challenging to focus on bringing many aspects of identities together. Considering and deciding on what is crucial to discuss the complexity of the individual's background and how it affects their experiences, the writing process often requires bringing certain components over the others to be able to write. The whole process of deciding what aspects of all individuals come together and write a section about was one huge challenge. My experiences during this study taught me that while being aware of the intersectional and complex nature of individuals is indispensable, some practical implementations and examples, and sample studies would help researchers bring an intersectional approach to each phase of their dissertation thinking and writing process and ease the implementation of the theory.

Implications for Policy and Practice

From my discussion and analysis, I suggest several implications for policy and practice. One implication is the importance of increasing the recruitment of multilingual/multicultural teachers of color. As the literature suggests, the number of multicultural/multicultural immigrant high schoolers is high. Increasing the number of teachers from similar backgrounds might help transition multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers into their new land, education system, and language (Yoon, 2013; García & Sylvan, 2011; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Teachers from similar backgrounds can increase their sense of belonging and confidence as they would see role models for themselves from similar backgrounds. As my study suggests, the students often sought close relationships with their ESL teachers or teachers and peers from similar or close

backgrounds. However, participants' experiences in the study indicated that the number of teachers from similar backgrounds in their schools is low. None of the participants had a teacher who spoke their home language, which was particularly unsupportive for newcomer emerging multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers. Considering that they have only a few years to excel in English for college admissions to familiarize themselves with the education system and the culture, recruiting more teachers from similar backgrounds to the students can increase their sense of belonging by providing more accessible resources and support from educators and/or staff they feel connected with.

Second, my analysis points to institutional racism, Islamophobia, microaggressions, and discrimination against the students that were apparent in their schooling experiences. One way to prevent these negative experiences for the students is to implement anti-racist policies and school practices that support the students and initiate a school-wide effort to promote change. Providing regular training for teachers about culturally relevant pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 2014, 1995), culturally responsive pedagogies (Hammond, 2015; Gay, 2000), culturally sustaining pedagogies (Alim & Paris, 2017), and individualized instruction methods like Universal Design Learning (UDL) (Rose, & Meyer, 2002) and differentiated instruction (DI) (Tomlinson, 2010). These pedagogies and practices can help increase teachers' critical consciousness, transform their existing pedagogies, and emphasize the importance of ongoing training for teachers about anti-racist and socially just pedagogies. Such practices and policy support for teachers can help them provide equitable support and resources regarding their multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' unique strengths and needs. Also, teachers' consciousness can help them view their multilingual/multicultural students, families, and communities as assets. Hence, such

perspectives and training can positively impact multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' academic achievement, sense of belonging, and future planning.

Third, labeling students as Els/ELLs/ESLs in schools brings a deficit lens on students, prevents them from being seen beyond ELs, and ignores the nuances of the richness of their lives and unique identities. Developing strategies and changing school structures to unmask the multilayered identities of the students is crucial for schools and educators. For instance, creating opportunities and making necessary changes in school structure and system so that multilingual/multicultural learners' assets are sought, and they are officially named as guides/peer mentors to provide support to their peers who are new to the U.S., language, and school and share the same home culture and language could be one way to highlight their unique skills. They can be the source of knowledge, support, and guidance, especially for the newcomer multilingual/multicultural students from their home culture and language, by peer mentoring and helping them navigate the school system and support in different issues that they seek help from the school. Instead of seeing them as long-term language learners and limiting their access to leadership, mentoring, academic and inclusion opportunities, schools can make changes in the school system to develop a peer mentoring system by creating a holistic approach to investigate the multiple assets of their multilingual/multicultural students and focus on creating spaces for them to highlight their skills and put into practice in different occasions. For instance, by creating a peer-mentoring system, schools can initiate a program where multilingual/multicultural students are seen as the experts and mentors for same and/or lower-grade peers in terms of language, school culture, school subjects, sports, and any other areas they are/want to be seen as experts and offer support for not only peers but also in organizations that schools build partnerships with. By matching them with peers, new students, and organizations,

their skills, experiences, and knowledge are highlighted and put into practice, and their help and support are sought and appreciated. Such a peer-mentoring system would help the newcomer multilingual/multicultural students and the mentor multilingual students to gain confidence, feel their assets validated, build on their skills, and feel seen beyond as ELLs.

Fourth, schools can make community partnerships a part of the school structure and proactively seek connections with diverse community organizations to sustain a collective culture in nurturing and supporting their students. By partnering with community-based organizations that serve families whose backgrounds resonate with their students, schools can actively support their students and families to access community resources and connect positively with the school (Akay & Jaffe-Walter, 2021) and create a welcoming environment for their students and families and professional development opportunities for the teachers (Bajaj & Suresh, 2018). Thus, they can better understand and address the students' and families' needs and struggles and connect with and serve them better. Furthermore, considering that the multilingual/multicultural students have unique backgrounds and some of them (e.g., asylees, refugees) have experienced trauma in their homeland, partnerships, especially with local and international immigrant/refugee serving organizations (e.g., International Rescue Committee (IRC), the Hebrew Aid Society (HIAS), Church World Service (CWS), Center for New Americans) and which can provide multiple resources and support such as translation, interpretation, psychological support, settlement, and case management services to the students and families. Also, by forming partnerships, schools can create professional development opportunities for teachers and staff to foster cultural awareness and sensitivity, promote trauma-informed practices, and transform schools into trauma-sensitive and safe environments by better

understanding their students and families, building trust, improving communication, and engaging the parents and families in the education process.

Finally, teachers and schools can provide safe spaces for students to discuss their unique challenges in school. For example, providing students space in school with students and teachers from similar backgrounds to discuss issues related to experiences of discrimination and microaggressions, peer pressure, and their needs as multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers (Sleeter, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2014). Such inclusive environments can help them share and address the issues they experience in and out of school that hurt their sense of belonging to the school and cause feelings of exclusion (Hammond, 2010). Furthermore, regular meetings with easy access to caring teachers, mentors, and/or counselors where they can openly discuss their experiences of microaggressions, exclusion, xenophobia, and institutional racism and collaborate to seek solutions with no fear of judgment can help them feel understood and value, and so belonged (Diamond & Gomez, 2004). Thus, it is crucial to provide safe and inclusive spaces for multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers to openly discuss their unique challenges and seek solutions. In addition, having access to caring, supportive, and equity-minded teachers who receive ongoing training about better serving their students, making meaning of their students' backgrounds, needs, and strengths, and incorporating culturally responsive pedagogies and practices can help promote a high sense of belonging and inclusion. Also, partnering with community-based organizations and local and international immigrant/asylee/refugee serving organizations is crucial to better understand and know the diverse backgrounds, assets, and richness of the students and families and address and provide resources and support for them their unique needs and struggles.

Implications for Teacher Education

Building on the findings of my study, I suggest several implications for teacher education scholarship and practices.

First, considering that the intersections of their multilayered identities reveal the layered injustices and inequities for multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers, it is crucial for teacher education to invest in deepening the research and practices to prepare and train teachers who would serve these students. Since these young women face complex forms of discrimination in society, teachers need to acknowledge and validate their students' intersecting backgrounds regarding their race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, ability, and socioeconomic status. Also, considering that experiences of marginalization can have huge adverse effects on students' academic achievement, social-emotional well-being, and educational and career-related decisions, teacher education scholarship and practices should deepen the research and focus on the students.

Second, teacher preparation programs (TEPs) can adjust and develop a curriculum, including courses to promote culturally and linguistically responsive teaching practices. Understanding and valuing the diverse backgrounds of their students and incorporating this knowledge with appropriate pedagogies, teachers should be equipped with 21st-century skills to teach in supportive and inclusive ways with attention to their students' identities, cultures, languages, and experiences. For example, teacher candidates can be trained to better understand cultural and gender-related expectations of different cultures on young women and how these expectations shape their educational and future-related goals. Additionally, TEPs should provide training to equip them with tools to connect with their multilingual/multicultural students, parents, and diverse backgrounds. For instance, teacher candidates can participate in and observe

one-on-one meetings with newcomer students and their parents with the necessary language

support and tools in real school settings. Such experiences and observations in culturally and

linguistically responsive school environments can help teacher candidates better prepare for their

first year of teaching and help them better connect with their students. Make sense of their

students' multilayered identities, and how they impact their sense of belonging, schooling

experiences, and imagined futures, teacher candidates can develop action plans and employ

differentiated instruction to address the needs of their students. Well-equipped with practical

tools, pedagogies, and experiences, teacher candidates can better prepare, serve and connect with

their students, see their multilingual/multicultural skills and strengths as assets, and view their

students' multilayered identities and their effects on their experiences and imagined futures

through an intersectional lens. Also, TEPs should highlight the need for language support and

differentiated instruction to meet the diverse needs of their students. Teachers should be trained

to provide necessary support and individualized instruction to address the needs of their students.

Third, teacher education programs should ensure that some periods of clinical internships

of teacher candidates take place in urban settings where racially, linguistically, and

socioeconomically diverse students and multilingual/multicultural students are effectively

served. Hence, they can practice and observe early on how schools work with the students and

experience and develop strategies for their future diverse groups of students. Unlike elementary

or middle school students, knowing that multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers

have fewer years to prepare for college admissions and their imagined futures if they come to the

U.S. in the last few years or during high school years is crucial. Hence, effective and strategic

preparation and training for prospective teachers can help the teachers better understand and

better serve the students.

Fourth, preparing and training prospective and in-service educators with the knowledge of current pressures and exclusion practices of institutions, policy, and society on multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers is essential. Therefore, TEPs should promote social justice in education by helping teachers develop critical consciousness so they can examine how power, privilege, and institutional barriers result in systemic inequities for multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers and students from marginalized backgrounds. To do so, TEPs should equip in-service teachers and teacher candidates to develop themselves as critical scholars, activists, and practitioners who stand by their students, act to prevent microaggressions and discrimination against their students, and so help increase their students' school engagement, sense of belonging and support their education and career-related goals.

Overall, TEPs and teacher education scholarship and programs should ensure ongoing investment in research to deepen scholarship and practices to prepare teacher candidates who are socially just and equipped with skills and tools to connect with their multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers. Also, TEPs should provide internships in diverse urban school settings, adjust and enrich their curriculum by promoting more culturally and linguistically responsive practices and training, and educate and train the teacher candidates to see how systemic injustices affect their students from marginalized backgrounds and challenge these exclusive and marginalizing practices and policies that harm their students' sense of belonging and imagined futures.

Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study are subject to several potential limitations: sample size, the language of communication, and online data collection tools.

First, the small size of the multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers from a specific location, the New York metropolitan area, will hinder the generalizability of the findings. How would the findings be affected if I recruited more participants, contacted potential participants from different states, or conducted a nationwide study? Since the current number of participants is relatively small and restricted to a specific group of the population, the findings may only represent some students among the target population.

Second, I conducted the interviews in English with all participants except Melissa, who spoke Turkish as her home language, the same as I do. Knowing that I speak Turkish, she preferred to have the interviews in Turkish as she felt more comfortable expressing herself. Considering that three of my participants are multilingual/multicultural newcomer high schoolers enrolled in ESL classrooms, I did my best to bring my personal and professional expertise and experience as an ESL teacher and multilingual individual by avoiding jargon, technical terms, and long questions and suggesting they use translators or ask me to explain any question in more details so we could communicate smoothly. I also did my best to ensure they felt safe and comfortable during the conversations, using the drawings and podcast responses to cross-reference the findings from the interview data. However, regarding their age and linguistic backgrounds, there is always a possibility that despite my efforts, they may have needed more clarification or may have felt they could explain better in their home language they could.

Finally, while my initial plan was to visit the participants in their schools and community settings, I had to change them due to COVID-19 restrictions. I conducted this study via online interviews, which may have affected the quality and depth of the data collected, limiting the ability to observe participants in their school and community settings. For instance, gender was an unanticipated finding of the study while examining the participants' roles and responsibilities in their families. It would be interesting to observe the participants and explore their added roles and responsibilities in their school and community settings. While I added different methods like podcasts and drawing to enrich the data rather than solely conducting interviews, it would be interesting to see to what extent I would elicit details of their lived experiences and how these experiences impact their sense of belonging and imagined futures.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings and my experiences during the dissertation, I have several recommendations for further research. First, because relevant studies in the literature are scarce, there is an emerging need to further investigate the unique experiences and challenges faced by the students. More research is necessary to delve into the lived experiences of multicultural/multilingual immigrant high schoolers in different locations with more participants and longitudinal research.

Second, further research examines the connection between multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' multilayered identities, microaggressions, and institutional racism on their sense of belonging and academic and future related goals. This research can explore specific interventions such as teacher preparation, clinical internships, inclusive school environments, and support systems tailored to the needs of these high schoolers. By gaining a

deeper understanding of these complex interactions, researchers can provide evidence-based recommendations to better the school environments, educational experiences and outcomes for the student populations. Thus, researchers can contribute to the literature by drawing attention to the role of negative experiences in and outside of school on student populations from diverse backgrounds.

Third, further research can explore strategies and institutional barriers for building safe and inclusive school environments to fully serve multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers. Such research can focus on effectively addressing microaggressions and discrimination, discouraging and traumatizing effects of Islamophobia, xenophobia, and institutional racism on multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers which play a considerable role in participants' sense of belonging and perceptions of self, mental health, academic achievements, and imagined futures. Finally, expanding on my research, more small and large-scale research should be conducted nationwide to further examine how intersections of gender, culture, religion, language, immigration, and/or socioeconomic status shape the responsibilities and roles of young multilingual/multicultural women and how the intersections of their multilayered identities impact their imagined futures. More research with different groups of multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers from similar backgrounds and different school contexts and states may bring more perspectives to supporting and advancing my research.

Final Reflections

What did I learn from my participants and the process? Working with these resilient and inspiring six multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers was an eye-opening experience

for me. Examining their experiences deeply to make sense of their multilayered identities, their struggles and challenges in and out of school, and their search for their identities and dreams has been a journey full of learning and lessons.

This study taught me that multilingual/multicultural immigrant high schoolers' experiences are complex and varied and require a multidimensional perspective to understand how the intersections of their identities and backgrounds impact their experiences and future related decisions. More research with more participants from marginalized backgrounds from multiple states and using different and longitudinal data collection methods and strategies would make their own experiences known and understood.

Despite the participants' resilience, hard work, and perseverance, the adverse effects of exclusion, xenophobia, Islamophobia, microaggressions, and institutional racism were apparent in their lives. The schools often failed to create inclusive, culturally responsive, supportive, and equity-centered educational programs to address the unique needs, struggles, and challenges of discriminative motives against these multilingual/multicultural high schooler young women. Providing supportive environments, teachers, and schools would serve the students who highly depend on teacher and school resources and support to realize their goals and dreams. Since such negative experiences significantly impact students' academic success, sense of belonging, and mental health, it is an indispensable duty of teachers and schools to address these issues through equity-centered and inclusive policies and practices in schools.

As a social justice and equity advocate in education, a visibly Muslim woman, and educator and scholar, I cannot emphasize enough how crucial it is for teachers, researchers, teacher educators, and school leaders to see the complexity of the intersections of multilayered identities in schooling experiences and imagined futures for all students, but particularly students

from marginal marginalized backgrounds. Collectively, we can make a difference by acting intentionally as equity-minded critical educators and scholars and truly "SEE" the unseen. By validating their backgrounds and strengths, we can address the exclusive practices they face in schools. By acting whole-heartedly to serve students, we can increase their sense of belonging and faith in their imagined futures. By taking an intersectional approach, voicing more multilingual/multicultural high schooler young women's experiences, we can better understand the complexities their multilayered identities bring. We can also inspire the needed changes and improvements in schools, teacher education, and policies and serve all students from diverse backgrounds.

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APPENDIX

Translations of Participants' Introductory Passages in their Home Languages

Amal (in Arabic):

كانت أمل قد تحولت لتوها إلى طالبة بالصف الحادي عشر عندما أجريت مقابلة معها في صيف 2021. قررت هي وعائلتها الاستقرار في الولايات المتحدة في عام 2017 بسبب الحالة الطبية لأخيه وعملية العلاج الطويلة. تذهب إلى مدرسة ثانوية عامة مستأجرة في نيويورك مع غالبية الطلاب المتنوعين ثقافيًا وعرقيًا و / أو الطلاب من خلفيات مهاجرة. كونها ثنائية اللغة وثنائية الثقافة ، تصف تراثها الثقافي بأنه سوداني وتتحدث العربية كلغتها الأم. تعيش في حي متنوع في نيويورك ، حيث تشعر بالارتباط بجيرانها وتشعر وكأنها جزء من المجتمع. قبل مجيئها إلى الولايات المتحدة مع عائلتها ، عاشت أمل في مصر وذهبت إلى المدرسة هناك من المرحلة الابتدائية إلى بعض السنوات في المدرسة الإعدادية. تصف نفسها بأنها مسلمة وترتدي الحجاب. *"ESL* عندما انتقلت إلى الولايات المتحدة ، التحقت بصفتها طالبة في الصف السابع لأنه تم تعريفها على أنها "طالبة بينما كان من المفترض أن تذهب إلى الصف الثامن. أمل لديها خمسة أشقاء. على الرغم من أن أحدهما كان توأمها ، فقد وصفت نفسها ودورها في الأسرة بأنها الأخت الكبرى لهم جميعًا. أمل طالبة شرف ورياضية. تمكث بعد المدرسة خمسة أيام في الأسبوع لممارسة الرياضة ، وتعمل بدوام جزئي خلال الأسبوع وعطلات نهاية الأسبوع ، وتشارك في المنظمات التطوعية. تشرح أن دافعها للمشاركة في دراستي هو المساعدة في تقديم فهم أفضل لتجارب الطلاب ثنائيي اللغة وثنائيي الثقافة.

Aisha (in Tajik):

Оиша хонандаи синфи 11-ум аст ва дар як мактаби бузурге дар Бруклин дар муҳити фарҳангӣ ва забонии гуногун таҳсил мекунад. Вай худро ҳамчун тоҷик-мусалмон-амрикой, хоҳар, духтар ва дӯсти хуб муаррифӣ мекунад. Волидони Оиша муҳоҷирони насли якум ҳастанд ва тақрибан ду даҳсола пеш ба Иёлоти Муттаҳида кӯчида омадаанд. Вай як фарди бисерзабона ва гуногунфарҳанг буда, ба забонҳои тоҷикӣ, инглисӣ ва чанд забони дигар гап занад. Оиша таъкид дорад, ки таҳсилот ва комёбӣ дар мактаб барои ӯ ва хонаводааш муҳиманд ва ӯ барои гирифтани дарсҳои AP (Ҷойгиршавии Пешрафта), нақшаи таҳсил дар донишгоҳ ва кор дар рӯзҳои шанбе барои омӯзиши тиҷорат (бизнес)

кӯшишу заҳмати зиёд ба харҷ мебарад. Ба фикри ӯ, дарку фаҳмиши тиҷорат дар ИМА зарурӣ аст. Дар ҳоле ки вай ҳанӯз дар бораи ихтисоси худ ба як қарори қатъӣ наомадааст, аммо таъкид дорад, ки новобаста аз он ки чӣ ихтисосро интихоб хоҳад кард, ки дарсҳои бизнесро аз худ кунад. Вай наққошӣ, гардишгарӣ, дучархаронӣ, лакроссбозиро дӯст дорад ва аз чашидани хӯрокиҳои нав ва мутафовит лаззат мебарад. Вай ҳамчунин ба бештар омӯхтани равоншиносӣ ва тиҷорат (бизнес) майлу хоҳиш дорад. Аз хислатҳои хуби Оиша, ки арзиш доранд ин ҷо номбар кунам ин аст, ки вай хеле боэътибору огоҳ ва ба атрофи худ мушоҳидакор аст ва бар илова речаи сермашғулияти худро ҳам дар дохили мактаб ва ҳам берун аз он бомуваффақият идора мекунад. Вай дар зиндагӣ бомақсад, суботкор аст ва ба сифати шахси ҷавон нақшҳои сершумори худро хуб анҷом медиҳад. Вақте аз ӯ ангезаи ба пажӯҳишот ҳамроҳ шуданашро пурсон шудам, изҳор дошт, ки "ӯ дӯст дорад ба таҷрибаҳои вай ҳамчун таҷрибаҳои хонандаи дузабона дар ИМА гӯш диҳанд ва ба унвони саҳми арзанда баррасӣ кунанд ва умедвор аст, ки ин барои афроди ҳар қишри ҷомеъа фазоеро фароҳам меоварад, ки ба таҷрибаҳо ва омӯзишҳои ӯ робита дошта бошанд.

Crystal (in Spanish)

Crystal es una estudiante bilingüe de bachiller en una escuela pública en la ciudad de Nueva York. Comenzó a hablar y aprender inglés cuando comenzó el pre-Kinder y desde luego habla español fluido. Acababa de convertirse en una alumna de décimo grado cuando la entrevisté. Ella comparte que su escuela es un ambiente acogedor y racial, lingüística y culturalmente diverso para estudiantes de todos los orígenes. Además, describe su contexto escolar como multilingüe y multicultural, donde es respetada, acogida y apoyada por sus profesores y alumnos mayores. Nacida y criada en los EE. UU., Crystal describe su herencia cultural como mexicana-estadounidense. Vive en un barrio urbano de Nueva York con sus

padres y su hermana pequeña, y el resto de su familia. Su hermano mayor, vive en México. Visita México todos los veranos con el apoyo de sus padres. Quieren que ella y su hermana mantengan las conexiones con el resto de la familia y aprendan mejor sobre el idioma, la cultura y la sociedad allí. Siempre que va a México se queda en un pueblito a 30 minutos de la ciudad. Prefiere México a América por el clima, la comida, el medio ambiente y los alrededores. No es lo típico para ti ver el tráfico diario, la ambulancia o el coche de policía pasando todos los días, sino el sonido de los animales despertándola, el olor a frutas y verduras frescas tan pronto como sale de su habitación. A medida que crece y aprende más sobre su cultura, le recuerda apreciar los valores de la vida y la oportunidad que tiene de volar en busca de sus raíces.

Melissa (in Turkish)

Melissa kendini abla, arkadas, kiz evlat, uc dil bilen, cok kulturlu, musluman, öğrenci, hayvan sever, fotografci, iyi bir okur olarak tanimliyor. ABD'de okula başladığından beri ikinci dil olarak İngilizce (ESL) sınıfına kaydoldu ve 9. sınıfın sonunda ESL sınıfından ayrıldı. En sevdiği ve yakın öğretmenlerinden biri ilgili, anlayışlı ve yardımsever olarak tanımladığı ESL öğretmenidir. Arastirmamiz basladigimiz surecte, Amerikanin New Jersey eyaletinde 10uncu sinifa basladi. Ogretmenlerini ve okul cevresini destekleyici olarak tanimliyor. Ingilizce, Fransizca ve turkce biliyor. Ailesi, 4 yada 5 yasindayken afrikada kucuk bir ulkeye tasindi ve turkiyedeki siyasi sorunlar ailesinin guvenligi ve isini etkileyene kadar neredeyse on yil orada yasadi. Guvenlikleri icin Amerikaya tasinmak zorunda kaldirlar. ABD'yi üçüncü vatanı olarak tanımlarken, aynı zamanda mutlu, sosyal, değerli, güvende hissettiği ve memnuniyetle karşıladığı ve ilk kez kendi kültüründen farklı bir kültürü deneyimlemeyi ve öğrenmeyi sevdiği Afrika'daki önceki memleketinden sevgiyle bahseder. Okulda zamanının çoğunu birlikte geçirmekten hoşlandığı iki yakın arkadaşı ve iki kız kardeşi vardır. Özellikle ABD'ye taşındıktan

ve ihtiyacı olan insanlara yardım etmek için insani yardım projelerinde gönüllü olduktan sonra, dünyadaki adaletsizliklerin daha fazla farkına vardığını paylaşıyor. Bisiklete binmeyi, piyano çalmayı, teknolojiyi ve uzay araştırmalarını seviyor.

Mia (in Spanish)

Mia está en el grado 11 y se mudó a los EE. UU. con su madre y su hermano hace cinco años. Desde entonces, ha estado inscrita como estudiante de ESL. Asiste a una escuela autónoma pública en N.J. con estudiantes predominantemente latinoamericanos. Ella es de la República Dominicana y describe su herencia cultural de ella como española. Ella es una estudiante bilingüe y bicultural y habla español como su lengua materna. Perder a su hermano menor en un accidente de tráfico ha tenido un gran impacto en su familia y su madre decidió dejar todo atrás y mudarse a los EE. UU. Su madre trabaja como estilista y Mia le va a ayudar de vez en cuando. El hermano mayor de de ella trabaja como técnico. Le encanta escuchar música, celebraciones culturales y fiestas de cumpleaños y comparte con cariño sus recuerdos y buenos momentos cuando se une a cualquier celebración. Le gusta estar con las personas que ama, compartir comida y bailar la música de R.D. Ayudar a las personas es esencial para Mia, y ella se ofrece como voluntaria para ayudar a los recién llegados a su escuela. Recientemente también se unió al equipo de softball de su escuela. Ella enfatiza que quiere ser pediatra por qué disfruta estar rodeada de niños y cuidarlos. La motivación de Mía para participar en mi estudio fue ayudar a los futuros estudiantes y a mi, ya que ayudar a los demás es un componente esencial de su familia y su cultura.

Yulia (in Russian)

Юля ходит в одиннадцатый класс в частной школе в Нью-Йорке с большим количеством многоязычных, мультикультурных и студентов-иммигрантов в первом поколении. Она решила пойти в свою нынешнюю школу когда увидела как трудно привлечь внимание и близкие отношения в государственных школах, которые она посещала. Она родилась и выросла в США. Будучи единственным ребенком матери эмигрантки в первом поколении и отца американца во втором поколении, Юля описывает свое культурное наследие как русское. Юля любит рассказывать о своей жизни, её русское наследие, и сравнивать все что она видит между русской и американской культурами. Юля считает Россию своим домом и приезжает туда каждое лето. С планами переехать туда в будущем навсегда, она отмечает что посещение России приносит ей прекрасные детские воспоминания о хороших временах с ее семьей, и что она ценит тесные связи которые у нее там есть. Она описывает США как дом возможностей. Она благодарна за то, что у нее есть доступ к ресурсам для реализации своей страсти, продолжения карьеры и получения хорошего образования. Она свободно говорит на русском и английском языках, а также немного говорит на некоторых других языках. Она любит искусство и музыку: рисует, играет на фортепиано и электрогитаре, увлекается аниме и макияжем.