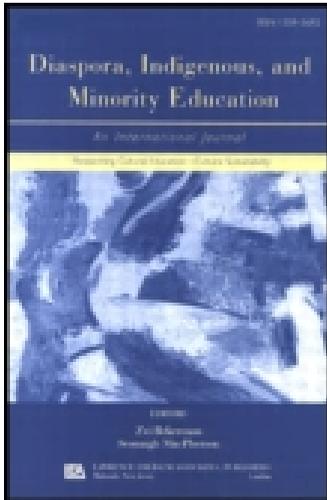


This article was downloaded by: [University of Toronto Libraries]

On: 25 April 2015, At: 13:44

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education: Studies of Migration, Integration, Equity, and Cultural Survival

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/hdim20>

Mis/Representations in School-Based Digital Media Production: An Ethnographic Exploration with Muslim Girls

Negin Dahya^a & Jennifer Jenson^b

^a The Information School, University of Washington, USA

^b Faculty of Education, York University, Canada

Published online: 15 Apr 2015.



[Click for updates](#)

To cite this article: Negin Dahya & Jennifer Jenson (2015) Mis/Representations in School-Based Digital Media Production: An Ethnographic Exploration with Muslim Girls, *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education: Studies of Migration, Integration, Equity, and Cultural Survival*, 9:2, 108-123, DOI: [10.1080/15595692.2015.1013209](https://doi.org/10.1080/15595692.2015.1013209)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15595692.2015.1013209>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms &

Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

Mis/Representations in School-Based Digital Media Production: An Ethnographic Exploration with Muslim Girls

Negin Dahya

*The Information School
University of Washington, USA*

Jennifer Jenson

*Faculty of Education
York University, Canada*

In this article, the authors discuss findings from a digital media production club with racialized girls in a low-income school in Toronto, Ontario. Specifically, the authors consider how student-produced media is impacted by ongoing postcolonial structures relating to power and representation in the school and in the media production work of Muslim and other racialized girls. From this standpoint, the authors interrogate how technological tools and particular media genres embedded in a postcolonial order impact the form and content of student media production in a school-based context. Focused on two in-depth examples from an ethnographic study, the authors question how Muslim and other racialized girls are portrayed in media they make and explore how that work is perceived and re/presented (or mis/represented) throughout the digital media production process.

INTRODUCTION

Digital media production training programs are common in North American schools and communities, particularly in under-resourced areas where access to technology is otherwise inaccessible (Jenson, Taylor, & Fisher, 2010). The purpose of these programs varies, and includes technical skill acquisition (Buckingham, 2008; Goldman, McDermott, & Booker, 2008; Jenson, Dahya, & Fisher, 2013, 2014), empowerment and creative self-expression (Goldman, McDermott, & Booker, 2008; Yates, 2010), and participation in popular media and culture (Buckingham, 2008; Jenkins, 2006; Jenkins, Purushtoma, Weigel, Clinton, & Robison, 2006). As young people produce media, and as that media circulates in school communities and networked publics (boyd, 2008),¹ additional questions about the authenticity of voice and representation of those

¹ danah boyd's (2008) notion of "networked publics" considers recording of information, replicability, and distribution of content, the ability to search for like-minded people online, and awareness of "invisibility" related to online communication.

Correspondence should be sent to Negin Dahya, University of Washington, Information School, 330C Mary Gates Hall, Seattle, WA 98195-2840, USA. E-mail: ndahya@uw.edu

multimodal productions have emerged (Buckingham, 2009; Hauge & Bryson, 2014; Jenson et al., 2013, 2014; Soep, 2006; Yates, 2010). Media education scholar David Buckingham (2009) has addressed a need for reflective and critical practices in media education research of this kind. In particular, Buckingham (2009) and others (Hauge & Bryson, 2014; Jenson et al., 2013, 2014; Soep, 2006; Yates, 2010) suggest that the use of digital and visual research methods with marginalized young people in particular requires in-depth consideration for power structures that influence participants' creative self-expression. Yates (2010) identifies the need to explore visual voice in youth media production "as constructed rather than given" (p. 280) and Soep (2006) addresses "multivocality" and the influence of other voices in youth media. Indeed, the focus of this paper will be on the construction of voice in youth digital media production.

The research presented here is based on a three-year ethnographic study in one under-resourced school, located in Toronto, Canada.² The focus of the study is on Muslim girls, a community who are subject to false assumptions and discriminatory representations related to Islam and the practice of veiling in particular (Haw, 1998; Kassam, 2007; MacDonald, 2006; Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2008; Rezai-Rashti, 1994; Ruby, 2005; Zine, 2000, 2001, 2006). This community is positioned within a historical context of colonial and postcolonial relations related to the perception of "the other"³ as oppressed (Ahmed, 2000; Loomba, 2005). In particular, because of this cultural and historical landscape between "the west" and "the rest" (Hall, 1992), it is important to interrogate the production process of digital and visual media projects with Muslim girls and to consider how they are represented through digital media within the context of their Western school communities. In this paper, we address power dynamics that impact what Muslim girls make and how that digital media work is re/presented and interpreted to and through educators and researchers. Approaching this work from the standpoint of postcolonial feminist theory allows us to consider the representation of Muslim girls and their construction of voice as embedded within postcolonial structures of power and othering. In the following section, we present the research design for the larger three-year study before discussing two in-depth examples from 2011–2012.

BACKGROUND

Muslim Girls and Education in Canada

Toronto, Canada's largest city, is home to a number of inner-city schools facing low achievement rates alongside other social and economic problems. The 25% of students who do not complete the needed high school requirements in the city are primarily from Aboriginal, Black, Hispanic, Portuguese, and Middle Eastern communities (Toronto District School Board [TDSB], 2010, 2011). Students who fall into these and other racial, cultural, or ethnic minority groups are described as "racialized," defined by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB, 2010) as "a group of people who may experience social inequities on the basis of their perceived common racial background, color and/or ethnicity, and who may be subjected to differential treatment in the society and its institutions" (p. 3). Muslim girls are one of many student groups who fall into the category of racialized students in Toronto.

²This project was conducted as a doctoral research project and the complete findings can be found in Dahya (2014).

³The notion of "other" will be discussed in more detail in the theoretical framework section of this paper.

Discrimination based on Islamic practice is an important factor in the experiences of Muslim youth living in Western society and participating in Western schools (Caidi & MacDonald, 2008). Research indicates that representations of Islam in literature and film (Hoodfar, 1993; MacDonald, 2006; Said, 1997, 1998) and in news (Caidi & MacDonald, 2008; Hoodfar, 1993) typically highlight extremist acts of terrorism and perpetuate the myth that all Muslims are primitive, violent, and criminal. Meanwhile, Muslim women who cover their hair or face are presented as oppressed (Abu-Lughod, 2002; Ahmed, 1982; Hoodfar, 1993; MacDonald, 2006). Related to these generalized negative public portrayals of Islam, veiled Muslim girls have shared stories about teachers who hold negative assumptions about them. For example, Muslim girls have described incidents of teachers who assume they cannot speak English and place them in remedial English classes without appropriate testing (Rezai-Rashti, 1994; Zine, 2000). In other examples, Muslim girls have discussed how bus drivers and members of the public “eye” them in ways that makes them feel uncomfortable (Zine, 2006). Similarly, researchers have documented how peers and teachers make discriminatory remarks towards Muslim students and demonstrate erroneous and often ignorant understanding about the religion and cultural practice (Haw, 1998, 2009; Rezai-Rashti, 1994; Zine, 2006). Exposure to these forms of discrimination leaves already marginalized students negotiating internalized feelings of ostracization in the school and community (Bunar, 2011; Haw, 1998).

Muslim girls in particular are often described within the limiting frame of their gendered, sartorial religious marker, the hijab.⁴ Martino and Rezai-Rashti (2008), education scholars writing on Muslim girls, show how discourses of those veiled in school and in media reinscribe essentialist and reductive notions of culture and ethnicity, and fail to explore how racism, sexism, and other factors converge in the life experiences of veiled Muslim women. In line with Martino and Rezai-Rashti (2008) is a growing body of research challenging public perceptions of Muslim girls as oppressed and acknowledging the need for greater attention to cultural, socioeconomic, and individual differences within this community (Bakht, 2008; MacDonald, 2006; Rezai-Rashti, 1994; Ruby, 2005; Schlein & Chan, 2010; Zine, 2000, 2001, 2006). Considering the importance of representation for Muslim girls in terms of how they are treated in school and in their local communities in the West, we sought to explore how Muslim girls portray their own interests and experiences through digital media production. Using the conceptual framework of postcolonial feminist theory, we maintain a focus on how representations of non-White and non-Western girls and women are constructed within historically White and Western structures of social power, subtly inscribed in youth digital media production practices and programming. In the next section, we clarify our use of postcolonial feminist theory as a framework for analysis in this research study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Postcolonial Feminist Theory

Postcolonial theory identifies ongoing social, economic, cultural, and political tensions between countries and individuals that have historically been either the colonizer or colonized (Loomba,

⁴*Hijab* is an Arabic word meaning *curtain* or *cover* and is used to describe the head covering or scarf worn by some Muslim girls and women.

2005; Mohanty, 2003; Said, 1997). One important boundary identified in postcolonial studies includes the construction of the “other” (see Ahmed, 2000)—that is, the distancing, exoticizing, and often demonizing belief or representation of non-White, noncolonial country persons and traditions (Narayan, 1997; Said, 1997). Ania Loomba (2005), Homi Bhabha (1994), Stuart Hall (1992), and Edward Said (1997), whose work is foundational to postcolonial studies, discuss the binary constructions of “us” versus “them” in terms of colonizing and colonized cultures and individuals. This relationship is characterized by a formulation of the other as lesser than or estranged from Western civility, in order to maintain the power imbalance resulting from colonial rule. Today, the division between “the west” and “the rest” (Hall, 1992) is also replicated in local communities in the Western world with diverse ethno-racial populations. In these contexts, people of color and other minorities are positioned against White or Western dominant norms, meaning that power dynamics circulating from global colonial histories can continue to be replicated locally (Loomba, 2005; Mohanty, 2003; Narayan, 1997).

Postcolonial feminist theory adopts the understanding of postcoloniality as permeating social relations, influencing the retelling and reconstruction of history and impacting individual identities, and applies it directly to the experiences of girls and women (Mohanty, 2003). According to postcolonial feminist theorist Uma Narayan (1997), Westerners impose predefined roles on third-world subjects,⁵ defining the locations they occupy and refining the expectations they come to live by. These imposing roles limit what information about individual perceptions are portrayed by the third-world subject and narrows the scope of what is known about how people from different and varied backgrounds experience the world. Narayan clearly defines ways the us-versus-them binary is fundamental to postcolonial theory and is manifest in everyday communication between people. She suggests that women of color are positioned in specific ways: as cultural emissaries, as mirrors for the justification of hegemonic norms through their assumed oppression (or the assumed oppression of their home cultures), and as authentic insiders representing a totalitarian “truth” about their home communities (Narayan, 1997). These imposed roles reflect a continued power-dominance relationship between women of color and the Western world.

Postcolonial feminist theory breaks down the homogeneous category of *woman*. In its place is a discussion of woman/women related to “relations of ruling” (Mohanty, 2003) that guide complex configurations of class, race, culture, sexuality, and other factors impacting individual experiences of womanhood (Mohanty, 2003; Narayan, 1997). Postcolonial feminist theory works to unravel the different factors impacting student experiences without assuming that gender or any one socioeconomic, religious, or cultural factor serves as the foundation of student identities. As a theoretical framework for the digital media production work of girls in this study, postcolonial feminist theory provides a lens through which to consider how students positioned themselves in their digital representations (their visual and verbal voice). This theoretical approach illuminates how researchers, educators, and media viewers might misunderstand or misrepresent student media productions due to the imposition of their/our socially embedded postcolonial perspectives. Postcolonial feminist theory responds to the call for more reflective inquiry into the

⁵Uma Narayan (1997) describes third-world subjects as “individuals from Third-World countries temporarily living and working in Western countries, individuals born and who have lived in Western contexts but have social identities linking them to immigrant communities of color, and to individuals who are members of communities of color in Western contexts that have no sense of immigrant identity.”

power dynamics at play in digital media education and research outlined in the introduction to this paper.

METHODOLOGY

This paper draws on ethnographic research from 2009 to 2012 at Castleguard Middle Academy.⁶ As an ethnographic study, we aimed to develop a complex interpretation of qualitative data collected in the “everyday contexts” of students’ lives (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The focus of the paper is on data collected in the 2011–2012 year. The research team included both the authors of the paper and also three research assistants from Dr. Jennifer Jenson’s Play in Computer Environments Studio (Play:CES) at York University. The research team organized and facilitated digital media production and video gaming clubs at the school for three years.⁷ Dahya was an embedded researcher for the full three years of the study, and during 2011–2012 was in the school one to three days a week collecting data for her doctoral research. During this time, she engaged with students not only during set media programming but also during class time. Programming over the three years included after-school animation and video production clubs and lunchtime video gaming clubs. In 2011–2012, programs included a lunchtime girls media club and an after-school video production club. In addition, as part of this ethnographic study, Dahya spent a significant amount of time in the grade 4 classroom of the supervising teacher, Mr. Glendon, which included several of the Muslim girls involved in the after-school program. In 2011–2012, this research involved 52 students (20 boys and 32 girls), of which 13 were Muslim girls who wore hijab.

Over the year, students produced 44 digital artifacts. During this time, we collected 68 audio-video clips of students at work, documented day-to-day events in 89 pages of observational field notes, and conducted 14 interviews with Muslim and other racialized girls involved in one or more programs. Following Hammersley and Atkinson’s (2007) guidelines, field notes were initially broad in scope and documented behavior and dialogue, with precise attention to social context. Shorthand notes were taken throughout the day and detailed notes were completed following each school visit. Over time, patterns related to student behavior and interests emerged and became important points of focus in subsequent field note documentation. These observations and the research questions also informed the open interviews, conducted with students in Mr. Glendon’s classroom or the school library. Interviews were on average 30 min in length and audio-video recorded. All of the data was coded, indexing emergent themes from the text, and video and codes were solidified during intensive analysis at the end of 2012 (Chamaz & Mitchell, 2001; Glaser & Laudel, 2013). Conflicting events were noted as important to the research (Glaser & Laudel, 2013), in line not only with reflexive qualitative research methods (Ropers-Huilman & Winters, 2010) but also with feminist ethnographic research methods (Visweswaran, 1994). Code examples from the data included the following: barriers to completing production, ownership and

⁶The names of the school, teachers, and students have all been changed to protect the identity of the individuals and institutions involved in this research.

⁷The *Smarter Than She Looks* project was designed to intervene in the ongoing marginalization of girls with regard to technology access, led by Dr. Jennifer Jenson. Through *Smarter Than She Looks*, we invited boys and girls to participate in digital media play and production clubs and documented their engagement and practices from 2009–2012.

excitement over technology use, Muslim girls as reserved or shy, Muslim girls as confident or assertive, examples of discrimination, discussions about Islam, and a list of content themes from student-made digital media (e.g., social issues, school events, media/technology topics, career goals, mentors). The tensions between unique research moments identified in the data throughout the coding process are the focus of the grounded theoretical developments in this paper (Chamaz & Mitchell, 2001; Glaser & Laudel, 2013). These tensions emerged as notable when comparing data collected across methods and by comparing conflicting codes related to the digital media production process with the final digital artifacts produced.

Dahya is a self-identified Muslim woman of color (who does not veil). Rapport between students and Dahya was built over time as students worked closely with her on their digital media production projects and discussed important topics that came up during the school day. For example, one participant confided in Dahya about being teased and bullied on the playground, and feeling that she was unfairly reprimanded by a teacher for her response (which sadly also involved teasing and bullying another student). Muslim students in the grade 4 class were particularly open about their Islamic celebrations and holidays with Dahya during informal conversation throughout the school day. These off-camera conversations became an important point of reference compared to the absence of Islam in on-camera media work. In these programs, students were given the freedom to select their video content to foster iterative and emergent themes about their lives. The discrepancy between the evident presence of Islam from students off camera—captured in trace ethnographic elements of the research—and the lack of representation for Islam in student productions became most apparent in the third and final year of the study (2011–2012). Trace ethnography considers unfinished and abandoned evidence, such as occurs in the process of creating digital media, as important components of data collection (Geiger & Ribes, 2011). In the following section, we present two in-depth examples from this research that capture sociocultural factors related to voice and representation in the digital media production work of Muslim girls. Based on these findings, we present postcolonial theoretical implications related to this digital media production research.

FINDINGS

In these two examples, we offer a unique opportunity to discuss what is considered acceptable and normative visual and verbal discourse for and about the students involved in this study. In particular, we address how school norms and expectations, and the interests and goals of adults, shape student work in complex and nuanced ways. In addition, we address how researchers and educators influence the digital media production process of Muslim and other marginalized girls. In our analysis, we apply postcolonial theory to our findings to contextualize and situate the research in a broader social and political context.

In the following pages, we first provide an example of a digital media “success” story, referring to a photography exhibit organized by a teacher at Castleguard Middle Academy. The photography club was not organized by this research team, but did involve many of the girls who were in our programs. Due to the ethnographic nature of this study, we engaged in conversations with students about their experiences in the photography club. These conversations led to surprising observations about what appeared to be a successful media project. The authors then consider the events that occurred throughout this photography club from a postcolonial perspective to reveal

nuanced utterances of power between educators and students, and between media maker and media viewer.

The second example is an in-depth discussion of a network news broadcast club that we facilitated, focusing on three Muslim girls addressing the issue of racism in school. We compare the story they share in a video production to their conversations about religious discrimination in research interviews. We conclude the paper by discussing the importance of understanding how student digital media is made, considering what influences the production process and the outcome of that work.

A Digital Media Success Story: Surprising Outcomes Behind the Scenes

In November of 2011 we started a Girls Media Club (grades 6, 7, and 8). Girls self-selected into the program and were all from racialized communities, as was the predominant demographic makeup in the school.⁸ Eight girls attended once a week and were enthusiastic about learning to build their own blogs and to film and edit audio-video content to populate these personalized online spaces. In January 2012, the club unexpectedly dwindled from eight consistent participants to only one to two students attending our usual time slot. The girls in the club informed the researchers of a scheduling conflict. Many were also participating in a photography workshop organized by one of the grade 7 teachers in the school. The workshop was facilitated by a professional artist and photographer working with 123 Gallery, a small art gallery in downtown Toronto. The artist-facilitator came to the school for five weeks on Wednesday mornings to work with the students, teaching them how to use cameras, frame shots, and create an exhibit of photographs. The students were excited about the project, especially because 123 Gallery had arranged for a full exhibit of the photography work downtown once it was complete. Interested to know more about their experience with digital media as a whole, we asked students what they were doing in the photography club, if they were enjoying it, what they were learning, and what their photographs were about. These conversations began informally when we saw each other in school hallways or in between classes, and questions were later incorporated into research interviews. In this section, we provide an overview of student perspectives about the photography program and examine their comments in comparison to how the final public exhibit of their digital images was framed by the organizing teachers. We then analyze our findings from a postcolonial theoretical perspective.

In between classes one day, we asked two students, Ifrax (Somali Muslim, grade 7) and Jasmin (Indian Hindu, grade 7) about the photography workshops. Recorded in field notes, Ifrax and Jasmin explained that the program was organized by a teacher, would include the display of their work in a Toronto gallery, and that the theme of the photography workshop was *judgment*. However, Jasmine suggested that although they took a lot of photographs they did not necessarily learn much about photography. In a later interview with Ifrax and another student, Haboon (Somali Muslim, grade 7), both girls indicated that the theme of the photography workshop was

⁸Specific demographic information about each student is included as the examples are discussed. We did not make this a club only for Muslim girls because we wanted to conduct the study in the naturally occurring, multicultural context of the school, and to avoid further marginalizing of Muslim girls in the school as distinctly different or outside their school community.

actually *to be*. The reflections of Ifrac and Haboon on the project are provided in the interview excerpt below (February 29, 2012):

Researcher: So what kind of photos did you take? If you had to tell me what you did over those five weeks, could you describe it to me?

Haboon: If we broke it down . . . first we were supposed to do it individually, and see what, like, outside explains who you are. And then eventually we thought maybe we should do it as a group, so we did it as a group. And we just, like, gave all the pictures that we think are, I guess like, that make us individuals and we put them together.

Researcher: You put them together . . . like all of your different individual pictures as one big show kind of thing? [girls nod yes] And the theme was judgment, is that what you told me last week? Or, what was the theme?

Ifrac: Be.

Researcher: Be? Like being?

Ifrac: Like be yourself.

Researcher: Okay, did you like that theme? Did you get to choose that theme, or did you like that theme?

[Ifrac shakes her head no]

Haboon: I don't know, it's all right, I guess.

Researcher: How come? Like, what's kind of not so interesting about it?

Haboon: Um, the fact that outside was winter, and there's not that much things to do, there's not that much stuff I like about winter.

Researcher: Okay, so because of the season it was hard to capture something? [Researcher turns to Ifrac] What did you think about the theme?

Ifrac: I think it was okay. It's better than any other theme I could think of.

Researcher: Ya? I was gonna ask if you could think of something different, what would you have done? [3–4 seconds' pause]

Haboon: I don't know.

Researcher: Tough question. [2 more seconds' pause]

Haboon: What you know.

Researcher: What you know? Okay, what you would want to talk about if you had to talk about what you know?

Haboon: [pause] Um, my past years of being in school I guess, and what I've been taught and everything.

In this interview, Haboon indicates that she did learn about framing and fixing photographs but is disinterested in not only the theme but also in the way the project was designed to reflect the theme. Her comments suggest that to ask what it means “to be” was inadequately reflected in the photos that were taken outside and in winter, because there was not much for her to do or many ways to show her range of interests and activities in the limited outdoor winter setting.

In an interview with two other Somali Muslim girls in grade 7 who were involved in the 123 Gallery project, Itran expressed that she learned about camera lenses and taking photos, but that she was not clear on the topic or theme. Yabine clarified that the original theme was *individuality* but that as a class everyone decided that they were more interested in the theme of “be . . . like judgment, image, and the way you see other people and how people see you” (Itran: April 2, 2012). When asked what kinds of photos were taken, Itran said she could not remember; Yabine described a photo of a person looking down, expressing how she felt being judged.

The somewhat broad and perhaps multidimensional theme of “to be” was further emphasized during the final exhibit at 123 Gallery, where CTV News recorded a short 6:00 p.m. news broadcast that aired on the local television. In this widely displayed broadcast, the artist-facilitator who ran the workshop said:

We’ve been working on an identity-based project under the theme of “be,” which is the theme for the exhibition. This is their work exploring what it means for them to be, uh, now, in their current state, and who they hope to be in the future.⁹

The girls interviewed certainly did not indicate that the photos taken represented either their current state or who they hoped to be in the future. And while the five girls interviewed do not represent the opinions of all students who participated in the photography workshop, their comments certainly give rise to important questions about how much students (and perhaps which students) understood the topic they were assigned, and how much care they took to authentically represent themselves in the photos.

Quoted from the CTV News broadcast, the teacher leading the project talked about how much students were able to “look at their identity and accept who they are, and be respectful of each other’s own identities as well.” Students interviewed on TV for the broadcast did demonstrate pride over the quality of the photographs, and one girl discussed a photo with three hands of different skin colors on top of each other as, “three different races . . . showing us that, how we’re all connected in some sort of way” (CTV News Broadcast). Another boy described a photo of himself on a jungle gym delivering “a message that, you can like always be relaxed, even if you’re getting bullied and things” (CTV News Broadcast). Though this photography work appears to be an important form of expression for these students, the thematic words associated with the entire image collection, like *identity*, *acceptance*, and *respect*, were constructed by the adults involved rather than by the students. While there may be meaning in these photographs, especially when students have the opportunity to explain directly what they intended with each image, it is difficult to ascribe a thematic focus to the photos in the way the artist-facilitator and teacher did on the CTV broadcast.

In the example presented here, what was shown as reflecting what it means “to be” (to be a young girl or boy of color) on city-wide broadcast news was inadequately captured by the students in their photographs, at least so far as can be identified from the five interviews conducted in this study. Rather, these students were unclear about the theme and did not use the project to carefully and thoughtfully reflect their interpretation of “to be.” In the end, the news broadcast depicted the images of the girls and boys from the school, primarily on the playground outside, and “being” (it seems) no more than any average child. The pictures portrayed faces of the students, some veiled Muslim, some not, outside and on the playground—none of which carried any discernible meaning to the uninformed, outside viewer. The iteration of the theme “to be” by the adults involved positioned the students as in need of some explanation about who they are (“their current and future state of being”). As such, it is the educator perspective that framed a cohesive meaning to the images in the project, and that is the message sent to viewers on the six o’clock news.

⁹The researchers acquired a digital copy of the broadcast from CTV news. Further details about this broadcast (e.g., title, date) are withheld in this paper to preserve the anonymity of the school and students.

Postcolonial feminist theory identifies ways women of color are continually “othered” in the Western world (Ahmed, 2000; Narayan, 1997). In the case of the Castleguard CTV News broadcast about the photography project, the segment had been edited, altered, and modified by many adult hands before being viewed by the public. Although students took the photos, the news segment was created by adults with the power to curate the exhibit and edit the broadcast (including the teacher, the photographer, and the news broadcast team).¹⁰ The end result was arguably a representation of not only what students intended (an intention that is unclear based on student commentary in our interviews), but also one depicting adult perspective on how the photography project went and what the photographs represented. The relationship between the viewer and images in this case is one that emphasizes the need to explain who the subjects of the photos are to the outside world, which presumes a lack of understanding by the outside world, reaffirming the position of these students as outsiders themselves.

This kind of othering is described by postcolonial and feminist theorist Sara Ahmed (2000) as people of color being treated as strangers within a hegemonic norm. Ahmed (2000) states, “Strangers are not simply those who are not known in this dwelling, but those who are, in their very proximity, already recognized as not belonging, as being out of place” (p. 21). In the end, the meaning intended by students is changed in the process of production, structured and influenced by the agenda of the well-meaning adults trying to give these students a voice from their marginalized and disempowered position. This type of constructed voice, it seems, may only further embed them in their already disenfranchised social spaces. In the following section, we present another example of how the meaning of digital media artifacts created by Muslim girls can be reframed when considering the larger scope of data collected behind the scenes. Here, the problem of representation in student media is presented using an example from an after-school production club called the Castleguard News Network (CNN).

Making the News: Valued Narratives in an After-School Production Club

Based on media produced by students in the Castleguard News Network (CNN), we focus here on one video created by three girls in grade 4. We compare that video to the stories they tell about their own lives in an interview. This example highlights, we hope, the complexities of deriving meaning from digital media of this kind and the deeply engrained social and systemic structures that also permeate digital media production. In the CNN club, students were invited to create short news-broadcast style audio-video productions that covered real topics of interest within the school and community. These guidelines were left fairly open, and in our initial sessions we collectively brainstormed positive and negative topics that might be of interest for students to cover, ensuring that they had a wide range of ideas to work with. These ideas included the recent success of peers in a chess competition, environmental issues, vandalism, bullying, and animal cruelty or animal care. Despite many Muslim girls and boys being in the club, none mentioned Islam or religious discrimination as a topic of interest. We did not make Islam a point of focus to

¹⁰In this case, the teacher and artist facilitator were both White, not mentioned as a superficial assessment of their identities but rather to highlight that they were not part of the communities the students represented; and their whiteness (on public TV) reflects the very postcolonial dynamic we are arguing played out in this example.

avoid guiding student interest toward this topic or making Muslim students feel that they could not express other areas of interest in their lives.

In the following example, we have transcribed a short video that three grade 4 girls produced. We have selected this video as an example because of the contrast in the video production to the content of an interview with them. Two of the girls, Salima and Nadia, are Somali Muslim, and the other, Anara, is Ghanaian Christian. All three were in Mr. Glendon's grade 4 class and well known to the researchers. Anara is not shown in the video as she is the one filming, though they all worked on the production together. The full and final video is 58 seconds long and is transcribed in its entirety below. Visual descriptions of the scene are transcribed in brackets (CNN Video, 58 s, May 28, 2012).

[Mid-shot of Nadia sitting on couch in Mr. Glendon's classroom. She is wearing a grey hoodie with a white and pink GAP logo across the front, no hijab. She reads the script they have prepared from her lap.]

Nadia: Hi, I'm Maiden Mills and today we will interview Brittany Simmons.

[Camera shot widens. Salima enters scene, sits down next to Nadia. She is wearing a soft pink hijab and a bright pink jacket with white sleeves].

Salima: Hi.

Nadia: What type of bullying do you get?

Salima: Racism.

Nadia: Name one racism thing that happened to you.

Salima: When I went over the water fountain, a boy said, this is only for white people. [Camera zooms in on Salima and then back out to both Salima and Nadia]. And he says no black, and he pushed me and I fell down.

[Camera focuses back on Nadia]

Nadia: Did you ever stand up for yourself?

[Camera opens up again to include Salima]

Salima: Ya, I did. I just said, I said to this white girl, she and her crew, um, they start bullying me and, I said, I said, I had enough, I said leave me alone, I had enough, and I told the principal.

Nadia: Good job. That's the, that's it for today.

[Both girls give the camera a "thumbs up" sign].

The girls had attempted to film this segment several times with Salima and Nadia switching between the interviewer and interviewee roles. Each time, the interviewee told the same scripted story, relaying the narrative as though it was her own. This observation, as well as the severity of the incident, prompted one researcher to ask more about it. The following field notes summarize their reply to questions about the incident:

Salima and Nadia off camera told me the "white person" water fountain story never happened to them. Nadia said they know about it because of other people's stories and things they see, but not things that happen to them. (field notes: Monday, May 28, 2012)

Though unable to probe the girls further about their comments at the time, it was a salient moment that challenged the idea that what students were saying on camera in this club—designed to report on real events in the school and community—were a representation of their own experiences. That is not to say that their choice to present this story did not matter. It may have represented some of the more racially charged (rather than religious) discrimination they experienced as black and

Muslim girls, especially considering that they did not always wear hijab to school. We consider the degree to which common stories about racism, and in this case bullying, echoed in the cultural consciousness of these students to the extent that the stories resonated in their lives, despite not having happened to them in these ways.

The observations about this video production became more interesting during the data analysis stage of this research when we compared the content of the production to an interview conducted with Salima, Nadia, and Anara earlier that same day. That interview began by asking the girls about their media consumption and technology use in and after school, and asking generally how they spent their time in the evenings and weekends at home and in the community. From this conversation, Salima and Nadia mentioned that they spent a portion of their weekends at their Islamic school, which led to more questions about what they did there. The girls said that they liked their Islamic school better than Castleguard because they could pray and people were nicer to them there. This led to the retelling of particular incidents of religious discrimination they had faced. As one example, Salima described an incident of religious discrimination with her sister: “When my sister, she was walking past a non-Muslim guy. And after, he came toward her, no he went past her, and he stopped for a second, and then, ‘You’re in Canada, get that shit off your head’” (Salima: May 28, 2012). Nadia explained: “You know, at our religion class The wife is Somali and the husband is Arabic, and they don’t judge just because you’re Somali and stuff.” Nadia continued by saying, “One time I was at the park, and then this girl’s like this, ‘take off your’—it’s always at my cousin’s house—‘take off your blanket.’ [Nadia mimics the girl making fun of her, waving her hands in the air and saying] ‘Haha, I’m wearing a blanket on my head, or underwear’” (Nadia: May 28, 2012).

In their interview, the girls described the religious discrimination they faced as racism, and it certainly is a form of racialized discrimination, but one that is distinctly different from the polarized Black–White racial discourse they chose to address in their afterschool CNN video. In part, this choice could have related to the third participant, Anara, also Black but not Muslim, though it should be noted here that Anara did not share any incidents of racial discrimination during her portion of the interview. Gender discrimination, however, was expressed by all of the students as a problem in their homes (primarily unequal distribution of chores between brothers and sisters), although this was not covered in their CNN videos either. So, while it is difficult to discern how and why there was a discrepancy between their own stories and that which they chose to portray in CNN, it is clear that what they did show was not a literal representation of their lives. These students opted to present an extreme and false (in the literal sense) incident of bullying around racism, rather than one representing their lived experiences of either religious or gender discrimination. The example they did use is a publicly and historically recognized problem (segregation), somewhat removed from the more nuanced and specific forms of discrimination these students had faced. This example highlights an important moment in the digital media production process for these students regarding why they chose to omit stories about their lived experiences, and why they selected to reproduce a now (sadly) common narrative of racial segregation instead.

Recognizing this discrepancy between their narrative disclosure in interviews and in their video productions, we also question the relationship the girls had with particular forms of technology, namely the video camera. The students seemed to understand the difference between filming for a research interview and filming for an imagined audience in the style of news broadcast, selecting their stories accordingly. One interesting question is to consider why the idea of creating media for a public audience in the style of the evening news did not seem like a forum to

discuss their real-world experiences of religious discrimination. The question we ask is about the continued circulation of stock stories of discrimination as an arguably more accessible or dominant form of discourse, and if these stories contribute to an ongoing sense of disempowerment for already marginalized students. Perhaps having access to such stories protects these students from having to discuss the very real examples that expose a form of discrimination—religious—not so readily accepted and received by the surrounding community. In any case, these examples portray a complicated picture of youth digital media production, highlighting the interplay between empowerment and disempowerment related to the historically situated marginal positioning of racial minorities and Muslim girls in the West.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this article, we have considered the information shared by participants by comparing data collection methods, including digital media production, with consideration for context. In the case of the 123 Gallery photo exhibit, media was produced on two levels: first by students taking photographs, then reinterpreted by the photographer leading the club, the teacher, and the news broadcasters covering the exhibit. In this example, there was a transformation of the meaning of the work at the two stages of production where the content took on different meaning in different forms (photography produced by students and news broadcast produced by adults). What is most important here is that in the second stage of production and presentation, in the public broadcast of this work framed by the adults involved, it is the students state of “being” that is misrepresented to the public. Meanwhile, the really important work of technological media production training that did appear to happen with some success, based on student commentary and the very concrete outcome of the good-quality photos produced, becomes secondary to the supposed “identity” work the students were asked to do throughout this project. The thematic focus was arbitrary at best with regard to what students actually documented and inadvertently produced an ongoing and postcolonial representation about these students having marginal identities that needed to be explained.

In the CNN news broadcast, there was a distinct difference between what the girls shared in the form of an interview and in their digital media productions. Most interesting in this example was the retelling of a known but fictional story bred in an anti-oppressive and distinctly anti-imperialist civil rights history. This story was presented in a medium that might actually reach an audience (shareable, distributable digital video), compared to narratives about the lived experiences of religious discrimination that the Muslim girls shared in confidential research interviews. In this example, we consider how much the social norms and power dynamics embedded within and associated with the digital media production program and the school impacted the narrative choices these students made. Our examples illuminate a need for further empirical study into the particular dynamics related to both social and technical constraints that inform student voice. The representative truth of digital and visual stories needs to be considered in context, and documenting the production process may be as important as the content of completed digital media artifacts produced in after-school programs.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the school involved in this project, the teachers who supported our work throughout our time there, and most importantly the dedicated, hard-working young women who participated in voluntary lunch time and after school digital media production programming as part of this study.

FUNDING

This work would not have been possible without the generous support of the Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

REFERENCES

- Abu-Lughod, L. (2002). Do Muslim women really need saving? Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its Others. *American Anthropologist*, 104(3), 783–790.
- Ahmed, L. (1982). Ethnocentrism and perceptions of the Harem. *Feminist Studies*, 8(3), 521–534.
- Ahmed, S. (2000). *Strange encounters: Embodied others in post-coloniality*. London, England: Routledge.
- Bakht, N. (2008). *Belonging and banishment: Being Muslim in Canada*. Toronto, Canada: TSAR.
- Bhabha, H. (1994). *The location of culture*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- boyd, d. (2008). Why youth social networks: The role of networked publics in teenage social life. In D. Buckingham (Ed.), *Youth, identity, and digital media* (pp. 119–142). The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Buckingham, D. (2008). Introducing identity. In D. Buckingham (Ed.), *Youth, identity, and digital media* (1–24). The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Buckingham, D. (2009). “Creative” visual methods in media research: Possibilities, problems and proposals. *Media, Culture and Society*, 31, 633.
- Bunar, N. (2011). Multicultural urban schools in Sweden and their communities: Social predicaments, the power of stigma, and relational dilemmas. *Urban Education*, 46(2), 141–164.
- Caidi, N., & MacDonald, S. (2008, June). uslims post-9/11. *Ceris—The Ontario Metropolis Centre*, 34. Retrieved from http://www.ceris.metropolis.net/wp-content/uploads/pdf/research_publication/policy_matters/pm34.pdf
- Chamaz, K., & Mitchell, R. (2001). Grounded theory in ethnography. In P. Atkinson, A. Coffey, S. Delamont, J. Lofland, & L. Lofland (Eds.), *Handbook of ethnography* (pp. 160–175). London, England: SAGE.
- Dahya, N. (2014). Mediating postcoloniality in education: Mis/representations of Muslim girls using technology (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- Geiger, R. S., & Ribes, D. (2011). Trace ethnography: Following coordination through documentary practices. *Proceedings of 44th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences* (pp. 1–10).
- Glaser, J., & Laudel, G. (2013). Life with and without coding: Two methods for early-stage data analysis in qualitative research aiming at causal explanations. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 14(2), Article 5.
- Goldman, S., McDermott, M., & Booker, A. (2008). Mixing the digital, social, and cultural: Learning, identity, and agency in youth participation. In D. Buckingham (Ed.), *Youth, identity, and digital media* (pp. 184–205). Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Hall, S. (1992). The West and the rest: Discourse and power. In S. Hall and B. Griebson (Eds.), *Formations of modernity*. Oxford, England: Polity Press.
- Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (2007). *Ethnography: Principles in practice*. London, England: Routledge.
- Hauge, C., & Bryson, M. (2014). Gender and development in youth media. *Feminist Media Studies*, 2–19. doi:10.1080/14680777.2014.919333
- Haw, K. (1998). *Educating Muslim girls: Shifting discourses*. Buckingham, England: Open University Press.

- Hoodfar, H. (1993). The veil in their minds and on our heads: The persistence of colonial images of Muslim women. *Resources for Feminist Research*, 22(3–4), 5–18.
- Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Jenkins, H., Purushtoma, R., Weigel, M., Clinton, K., Robison, A. J. (2006). Confronting the challenges to participatory culture: Media education for the 21st century. Chicago, IL: John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Reports on Digital Media and Learning.
- Jenson, J., Dahya, N., & Fisher, S. (2013). Valuing production values: A “do it yourself” media production club. *Learning, Media and Technology*. doi:10.1080/17439884.2013.799486
- Jenson, J., Dahya, N., & Fisher, S. (2014). Power struggles: Knowledge production in a DIY news club. In M. Boler & M. Ratto (Eds.), *DIY Citizenship: Critical making and social media*. Boston, MA: MIT Press.
- Jenson, J., Taylor, N. & Fisher, S. (2010). Critical review and analysis of the issue of “skills, technology and learning.” Report prepared for the Province of Ontario Ministry of Education. Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/research/Jenson_ReportEng.pdf
- Kassam, A. (2007). Locating identity and gender construction in a post 9/11 world: The case of the *Hijabi* girl. *Intercultural Education*, 18(4), 355–359.
- Loomba, A. (2005). *Colonialism/postcolonialism: The new critical idiom* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- MacDonald, M. (2006). Muslim women and the veil: Problems of image and voice in media representations. *Feminist Media Studies*, 6(1), 7–23.
- Martino, W., & Rezai-Rashti, G. M. (2008). The politics of veiling, gender and the Muslim subject: On the limits and possibilities of anti-racist education in the aftermath of September 11. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 29(3), 417–431.
- Mohanty, C. T. (2003). *Feminism without borders: Decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity*. Durham, NC: Duke.
- Narayan, U. (1997). *Dislocating cultures: Identities, traditions and third-world feminism*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Rezai-Rashti, G. (1994). The dilemma of working with minority female students in Canadian high schools. *Canadian Woman Studies/Les Cahiers de la Femme*, 14(2), 76–82.
- Ropers-Huilman, R., & Winters, K. T. (2010). Imagining intersectionality and the spaces in between: Theories and processes of socially transformative knowing. In M. Saving-Baden & C. H. Major (Eds.), *New approaches to qualitative research: Wisdom and uncertainty* (pp. 37–48). London, England: Routledge.
- Ruby, T. F. (2005). Listening to the voices of hijab. *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 29, 54–66.
- Said, E. (1997). *Covering Islam: How the media and the experts determine how we see the rest of the world*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Said, E. (1998). *Edward Said on orientalism* [DVD]. Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation.
- Schlein, C., & Chan, E. (2010). Supporting Muslim students in secular public schools. *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education*, 4(4), 253–267.
- Soep, E. (2006). Beyond literacy and voice in youth media production. *McGill Journal of Education*, 41(3), 197–214.
- Toronto District School Board. (2010). *Achievement gap task force draft report*. Toronto, Canada: Author. Retrieved on April 15, 2011, from http://www.tdsb.on.ca/about_us/media_room/Room.asp?show=allNews&view=detailed&self=25728
- Toronto District School Board. (2011, November 2). *Opportunity gap action plan*. Toronto, Canada: Author.
- Visweswaran, K. (1994). *Fictions of feminist ethnography*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Yates, L. (2010). The story they want to tell, and the visual story as evidence: Young people, research authority and research purposes in the education and health domains. *Visual Studies*, 25(5), 280–291.
- Zine, J. (2000). Redefining resistance: Towards an Islamic subculture in schools. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 3(3), 293–316.
- Zine, J. (2001). Muslim youth in Canadian schools: Education and the politics of religious identity. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 32(4), 399–423.
- Zine, J. (2006). Unveiling settlements: Gendered Islam phobia and experiences of veiling among Muslim girls in Canadian Islamic schools. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 39(3), 239–252.

Dr. Negin Dahya is an Assistant Professor in The Information School at the University of Washington, USA. Her research areas include gender and digital media production, postcolonial feminist theory, and serious play. Dr. Dahya's work centers on the intersectionality of social and technical factors related to the engagement of underrepresented minorities with and in technological domains.

Dr. Jennifer Jenson is Professor in the Faculty of Education and Director of the Institute for Research on Digital Learning at York University, Canada. She has published on gender, education, technology and digital games in journals such as *Feminist Media Studies*, *Gender and Education*, and *Simulation & Gaming*.