

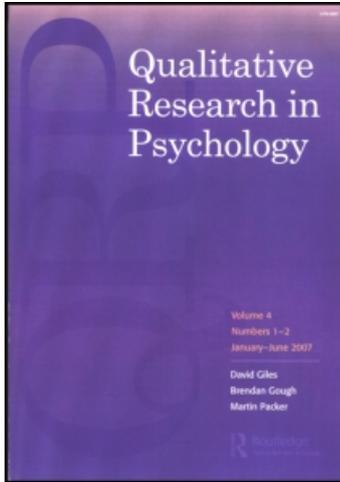
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### Everyday Hyphens: Exploring Youth Identities with Methodological and Analytic Pluralism

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## Articles

# Everyday Hyphens: Exploring Youth Identities with Methodological and Analytic Pluralism

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*Taking seriously the call for methodological and analytic pluralism, we advance three key assumptions of theory and method: 1) young people develop “hyphenated selves” in shifting social and political contexts and in everyday circumstances; 2) pluralistic methods and research designs have the potential to capture identity movement across time and space; and 3) a pluralistic approach to analysis, specifically using a dialogical framework, allows hyphenated selves to be heard and interpreted in a way that neither pathologizes contradiction nor privileges coherence but presents a skillfully woven narrative about the self. To take up these questions, we draw upon the visual and textual narratives produced by three adolescents participating in a longitudinal, multimethod study designed to document social and academic engagement among urban youth.*

**Keywords:** adolescence; identity; narrative analysis; pluralistic approaches; qualitative research

Critical youth researchers have documented the psychological imprint of oppression on youth identities and the resultant embodiment of contradiction, complexity and multiplicity as narrated by marginalized youth under siege, including immigrants, undocumented students, Muslim or Arab adolescents, youth of color, children in poverty, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) or otherwise marginalized young people (Abu El-Haj 2005; Bhabba 1994; Bhatia 2007; Cahill 2010; Sirin & Fine 2008; Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco & Todorova 2008). Indeed, bodies lived in conflict often speak through multiplicity, conflict, and splitting — what W.E.B. Du Bois called double consciousness (1903). These narratives, if social scientists are willing to hear their complexity, can teach us much about the dynamic multiplicity by which young people embody and reflect upon the multifaceted development of their lives. With this article we explore a palette of methods that invite narratives of multiplicity — what we have called *hyphenated selves* — in times of trauma and the everyday (Sirin & Fine 2008). That is, we explore methodological pluralism as a strategy of data collection and analysis to document how change and discontinuity, braided with a desire for narrative coherence and consistency, shape the stories young people tell about themselves, over time and space.

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## Theorizing Hyphenated Selves

Post 9/11, Selcuk Sirin and Michelle Fine (Fine & Sirin 2007; Sirin & Fine 2008; Sirin et al. 2008) designed a participatory study with/of Muslim American youth to understand how they made sense of their young lives thrust into political conflict. From that work, we sketched the concept of *hyphenated selves* to frame a “theoretical and methodological program of research to interrogate . . . [how] youths living in bodies infused with global conflict, . . . actively make meaning, speak back and incorporate as they resist the shifting contradictory messages that swirl through them” (Fine & Sirin 2007, p. 17). Drawing from research on multiple identities (Deaux & Perkins 2001), intersectionality (Crenshaw 1991), transnationality (Schick 2002), and hybridity (Bhabha 1994), the study of hyphenated selves invites researchers to document the social psychological work young people engage at the membrane *between* contentious political and cultural contexts and their own meaning making.

With self-report surveys, interviews, focus groups, and identity maps, we gathered evidence on the varied strategies by which Muslim American youth negotiated their identities post 9/11 in the New York metropolitan area (for more details see Fine et al. forthcoming; Sirin & Fine 2007, 2008; Sirin & Katsiaficas 2010; Sirin et al. 2008; Zaal, Salah & Fine 2007). By engaging with these multiple methods, all the respondents named the symbolic and actual violence of the War on Terror and Islamophobia on themselves and/or their families and communities. They varied, however, in how they re-presented their social psychological response to the political tumult. Some explained in words and portrayed in drawings the surveillance and scrutiny as functionally fracturing and splitting their identities, drawing and speaking of pain, fear, anxiety, and betrayal. Others sketched and spoke about living in two worlds, code switching and commuting between parallel worlds. Most interesting, however, was the discovery that young Muslim American youth described a “fusion” of identities, innovating what Homi Bhabha would call hybridity, which enabled them to invent new, layered ways of being in the world, drawing on the distributed fragments of culture, media, relations, politics, and desire in their midst. The data forced us to reconcile that young people vary enormously in how they absorb, resist, and transform these dynamic forces of symbolic and material violence; while a few embody the conflict, most develop innovative selves that connect sometimes conflicting domains of their many worlds in a seemingly coherent self that we call “hyphenated selves.”

With a shared interest in the complexity of marginalized identities, Ilan Meyer and Suzanne Ouellette (2009) gathered life stories from a sample of African American lesbian, gay and bisexual adults. Expecting to hear identities wrought with conflict they too were surprised, instead, to hear conflicting identities being negotiated *in the service of* developing a more coherent or unified self.

We expected that these struggles [between Black and LGB identities] would leave Black LGBs conflicted and fragmented. . . . We found a struggle, for sure, but a struggle that helps unite rather than separate identities, a struggle that, for most respondents, seems to have led to a unified sense of self, appreciation for their various identities, and a clear sense of the stressful impact of oppression. (p. 103)

Meyer and Ouellette write on the desire and struggle to integrate what may seem like conflictual identities into a coherent sense of self enacted from within the same body.

Joining these and other scholars (e.g., Bhatia 2007; Cross 2010), we developed an interest in how young women of color in an urban U.S. setting make sense of and innovate

the everyday hyphens, and the methods that might allow researchers to co-construct and analyze hyphenated identities over time in contexts not necessarily punctuated by political trauma. We sought to investigate, with a pluralism of methods, the ways in which hyphenated selves are dynamically and dialogically produced in the thick and busy membranes of self and other during the everyday of adolescence. These “everyday hyphens,” when explored in a purposfully pluralistic sense, can reveal and re-present the nuanced in-between of self and other — the human desire and struggle for coherence against fracturing social forces. The question is not *whether* hyphens exist, but *where, how and with what* [cultural] resources young people contend and where, how and with what [methodological] resources researchers can gather up evidence of selves in a way that theorizes (and normalizes) complexity without defaulting to a fixed notion of identity or dissemblance of self.

### Pluralistic Methods

Building from Frost’s (2009) notion of pluralism, we explore how a theoretical commitment to hyphenated selves is facilitated by methodological pluralism. Drawing evidence from a large-scale, longitudinal, mixed methods project, we examined the textual narratives (in the form of interviews and sentence completion tasks) and visual narratives (in the form of “learning maps” and “identity maps”) produced by three young women in their tenth and eleventh grade years of high school. The larger project, New York City Academic and Social Engagement Study (NYCASES), was designed to document how immigrant and nonimmigrant youth in NYC contend with precarious economic, racial, and social contexts; how they engage with peers and adults in school and out; and how they negotiate their identities over time. Guided by an interest in hyphenated selves, we sought enactments of identities that were multidimensional and dynamic though these pluralized narratives.

### Pluralizing Narratives

. . . Narrative researchers listen . . . to the subject positions, interpretive practices, ambiguities, and complexities – within each narrator’s story. This process usually includes attention to the “narrative linkages” that a storyteller develops between the biographical particulars of his or her life, on the one hand, and the resources and constraints in his or her environment for self and reality construction, on the other . . . (Chase 2005, p. 663)

As Chase (2005), Hammack (2008), Gregg (2007), Thorne and McLean (2003), and many others have shown, narrative methods provide simultaneously systematic and idiographic ways of understanding how a person makes sense of the world around them and relates to and acts with others as a social being. We collected narratives with a spirit of methodological pluralism, relying upon a set of traditional word-based textual methods as well as visual methods to explore how these young women innovate multiple identities, affect and change over time and to theorize the “linkages” that Chase describes. In the interviews participants were asked about their social, academic, and emotional engagement. In the first year, the focus was primarily on youth’s identity negotiation in school and around academic life. They were asked specifically about their relationships with teachers, perceptions of the learning environment, and about the friends they had at school. The interviews in the second year probed young people’s wider social and cultural engagements to include both in school and out of school experiences. The scope of the interviews broadened to include family and community supports, experiences of discrimination, and future aspirations.

### *Mapping as Visual Narrative*

While interviews offer a textual technology for hearing how young people speak about selves and development, we are also intrigued by mapping, an older, underutilized psychological method as a vehicle for drafting a visual narrative of self that may include elements considered preverbal, affect-laden, metaphoric, and/or relational. Many would trace maps to the projective drawing assessments of the early 20th century such as the The Draw A Person Test (DAPT; Goodenough 1926) and subsequently the H-T-P (House-Tree-Person) technique (Buck 1948), as well as Winnicott's (1989) drawing prompts analyzed as a reflection of a child's struggles but also world view. These methods were developed as a practice to review a child's physical and psychological self, as well as the self in relation to others including the therapist (Hammer 1997). Parallel but undoubtedly intersecting in influence, throughout social psychology's history a number of scholars have considered the importance of "space" in individual's lives and have been interested in how people represent themselves in relation to spaces of significance. In the early part of the 20th century, Kurt Lewin (1936) outlined topological psychology in which the aim was to understand and interrogate the "life space," that is, all of the social spheres and relationships, that individuals inhabit. During the 1960s, French psychologist Denise Jodelet worked with Stanley Milgram to study how adults negotiate and experience the urban environment of Paris. Participants were invited to create hand-drawn maps of Paris based on their own experience and knowledge of the city. For Milgram and Jodelet (1976), it was not the geography of Paris that was paramount. Rather, they were interested in "the way that reality is mirrored in the minds of its inhabitants" (p. 104).

In a contemporary revision of Milgram and Jodelet's method, Young and Barrett (2001) found that in their work with Kampala street children, "the images produced were also useful tools in eliciting discussion with individual children as it provided a focus away from the researcher" (p. 145). Our use of an "identity mapping" technique served as an explicit invitation for respondents to represent their identity(ies) in space, as well as a creative way of asking participants to make visible their selves across place, relations and time (see Sirin, Katsiaficas & Volpe 2010). In our prompts to produce visual narratives (i.e., learning and identity maps), we made the leap from sketching an individual's relationship to physical space to an individual's relationship(s) with self and other in varied contexts (Futch & Jaffe-Walter, forthcoming).

In year one, as part of the interview, participants were asked to create a *learning map* to draw themselves learning something new. One of the main foci of the study was to explore students' academic engagement and the learning map helped us to understand their social and academic engagement in and outside of school. For year two, the interview included a sentence completion task that mimics a format familiar to youth who use online social networking services such as Facebook. The mapping task invited a more broadly defined *identity map* in which each participant was given a set of colored pencils and the following prompt:

Using the materials provided with this survey, please draw a picture of your many social, ethnic, and religious identities. This should be an illustration of how you see yourself as a person. You are free to design the image as you wish. You can use drawings, colors, symbols, words . . . whatever you need to reflect your multiple selves.

A point of methodological reflection/self-critique is in order. The map prompts used in NYCASES were inconsistent from year 1 and year 2, thus making comparisons difficult

in the specific domains of learning and identity. Moreover in the original research, after completing the maps, participants were only asked to explain the learning maps during the interview, not the identity maps. This reflexive omission would come back to haunt us, as you will see in the analysis section.

### ***Participants***

Five hundred and thirteen urban youth attending 15 New York City public high schools participated in two-waves of data collection during the spring semesters of tenth and eleventh grade of participants' high school education beginning in 2008. A subsample of 23 participants were selected based on their ethnic background and immigration-generation status to participate in semi-structured interviews, which also included the mapping and sentence completion tasks. From this subsample of 23 students, for this article we selected three students who had fully "complete" data points (interviews and maps for years 1 and 2). These three young women attended three distinct small public high schools in New York City and came from different ethnic backgrounds; two of the participants were recent immigrants, one from Tibet and one from China, and the third was born to native parents of Black, Indian, and Italian background.

Our selection of these three young women was not motivated by a desire for empirical generalizability but rather to illustrate with methodological variety and depth how a palette of qualitative methods can enable us to gain social psychological understandings of the complex negotiations of youth identities over time.

### ***Pluralistic Analyses***

The combined use of many forms of narrative inquiry represents a way to strive towards the capture of this multi-dimensionality using a systematic and theoretically informed approach. The models offer ways of exploring structural, linguistic and contextual aspects and the research process is considered from a critical perspective. (Frost 2009, p. 13)

Like Frost (2009), we were interested in unpacking the multidimensionality of youth identities "in order to gain the broadest and deepest understanding possible" of our data (p. 13). Frost's use of multiple narrative analytic techniques within a single method (i.e., interviews) allowed for "within-method triangulation that encourages the viewing of data from several different perspectives" (p. 24). We employed multiple analytic techniques *across methods* to locate points of inconsistency as spaces to further explore the dialectics of hyphenated identities, that is, moments of contradiction within the desire to tell of story of meaning and coherence. While recognizing the tendency in the field of psychology to pull for consistency within both narratives and identity(ies), we embraced such inconsistency alongside spaces of coherence. That is, we question the goal of triangulation as a process for establishing consistency within a person and across raters. Indeed, we worry that this epistemological commitment in psychology to consistency (in self) and triangulation or consensus (in analysis) has limited our discipline's view of the person, particularly the person at the hyphen of multiple social and cultural identifications. Recently, the meaning of triangulation has expanded to include "complementarity," that is that "different results reflect different aspects of a phenomenon" (Moran-Ellis et al. 2006, p. 48). Building from this notion of triangulation we thus approached our analysis with the intention to listen for a dialectic of coherence *and* inconsistency, presuming that inconsistencies would serve

as small fault lines, opening up the narrative and allowing us a glimpse at its core and sedimentary layers, connected and separated by everyday hyphens.

### **Analytic Practices across Methods, Time and Our Research Collective**

We analyzed the materials within person, across time, and through multiple data sources, using a set of theoretically driven codes drawn from our hyphenated selves framework. By creating an analytic conversation among interviews, maps, and open-ended prompts, we coded content, affect, relationships, and behaviors for:

- Narrations of multiple selves, voices or perspectives,
- respondents' descriptions of contrasts, conflicts, tensions and binaries in self and/or between self and other,
- explicit descriptions of high or low points in their development,
- the metaphors they relied upon,
- their references to and representations of others in their lives,
- lines of developmental continuity they sketch over time and place, and
- discontinuities they observe between "selves" over time and place.

Each participant had a thick data file that we reviewed multiple times. We did not want to privilege one data source over another with primacy effects, so we varied the order of analysis. We engaged in what we call *dialogic analysis*, creating conversations among ourselves, as the research team, using our own diversity (in theoretical and methodological training, cultural backgrounds, and lived experiences) as a resource, to excavate the rich archives of selves these young women presented. Dalal and Valerie would review the data together, reading the interviews simultaneously and viewing the maps, discussing their observations and carefully recording notes. Michelle and Selcuk would enter the interpretative dialogue, pressing for further analyses, and/or adding texture to what was already seen. Avoiding the seduction of triangulation and the search for technical inter-rater reliability, we sought critical deliberations in dialogic interpretive sessions rather than seeking simple points of consensus. As Smythe and McKenzie (2010) argue, "dialogical engagement among diverse perspectives can often be a source of new insights and understandings" (p. 230).

Soliciting varied interpretations of the available materials, across social and developmental theory, critical and traditional adolescent scholarship, and participatory and experimental paradigms allowed us to create what Maria Elena Torre (2005) calls a "contact zone" for interpretation. Dalal brought her experience with managing the broader NYCASES study and an intimacy with the data the others did not have. Valerie's previous experience with collecting and analyzing maps with diverse groups was helpful in the analysis and interpretation of the visual materials. Michelle's training in social psychology and experience with participatory action research helped us situate our analyses in relation to identity theory and social representations. Selcuk's knowledge of immigrant youths and applied developmental science was key to understanding the nuances of our participants' narratives. We aimed to analyze "not [through] a process of dialogue leading to integration but, rather, integration through dialogue" (Smythe & McKenzie 2010, p. 231).

We found our analysis conversations quite productive when trying to interpret the maps, for which we did not have every participant explanation as part of the interviews. A method that is particularly prone to the influences of the researchers' subjectivities, we spent much time discussing the meaning of the maps in relation to other data points, our interpretation of the imagery on the maps, and using the discussions about the maps to generate questions to further analyze the written data. We presented reflections from one

method and created a multimethod conversation to signal points of narrative consistency, coherence, and contradiction. Thus, we appreciate and extend Frost's desire to add "texture" to our analysis by attempting to understand how pluralism of *method* allows for rich analysis of how young people experience, embody, narrate, and re-present the ideological, social, linguistic, and intra-psychic spaces they occupy; and by recognizing that analytic dialogue between forms of evidence and between members of a research team, enables a thick analysis of complex lives held accountable to theory and a dense archive of materials produced by each respondent.

### Three Portraits and Voices of Hyphenated Selves

#### *Indira*

Interviewer: Think of a time when you were really into something you were learning in class. Can you describe a time that you felt that you were really learning or creating something in school that was meaningful to you?

Indira: Umm . . . doing my mastery statement. I was, I like writing a lot when I have to write about myself, 'cause it just, like, pours out my feelings and stuff, so . . . and I remember back then [in India] what I do and stuff, so it feels good. And when I write my mastery statement I write about myself and like, what school I went to and back, back then, and it reminds me of all the times . . .

At age 15, Indira lives in New York City with both of her parents. A young woman who was born in India, she is the daughter of parents born in Tibet. With qualification, she describes herself as a pretty good student and a "nerd" but denies being a "good good student." When discussing her school, a public high school designed to serve recent immigrant students, she echoes the sentiments we have heard in previous studies: she feels a sense of respect from the teachers and she enjoys the fact that all of the students are different, which makes them sort of the same (Fine, Futch & Stoudt 2005).

Indira: Well um, the good thing about this school is like some many like international people. So you like, understand each other more, and like other schools like all, not many White people in there. So yeah, and um, and there's a lot of my friends over here from before so yeah, its good, and the teachers are really understanding . . .

When asked how she learns, we hear about peers. Throughout her interview narratives, Indira elaborates her intimate relations with friends:

Indira: I don't know, like, we're always together. Like, when we go somewhere, we go together. Like, when we want to go have fun, we go together and have fun, if I want to go shopping, I'm like "guys, take me" [giggles] so when I want to go shopping they take me. They're like brothers and sisters.

Friends became family.

Her year one learning map (see Figure 1) presents the way she learns best: outside of school with a group of friends surrounding her with smiles, eyes that carry a sense of presence, encouraging her "Put your hands like this!" "You can do it!" "Let me teach you



**Figure 1.** Learning map produced in year one by Indira (color figure available online).

[how] to shoot.” As she explains, her friends are “teaching [me] how to shoot [basketball] and he’s trying to inspire me, ‘Oh you can do it.’”

In affective contrast, she narrates a home life filled with silences. When the interviewer asks who in her family talks about college and education, Indira responds, “My mom because my dad he doesn’t speak English so he doesn’t understand, that’s why.” She had marked on her survey that she does not speak English at home at all. Within her year two identity map, her family members are tagged by their roles while friends are elaborated with names and descriptors of “best!” The figure marked “Dad” has no mouth. In this map (see Figure 2) we begin to understand how politics, nation, culture, family, and friends create a layered landscape for Indira’s many selves.

By year 2 Indira represents herself as “doubled.” In the upper half of the sketch, her transnational self is strong, broad shouldered, colorful, and self-assured, surrounded by symbols of nation, love, and peace. Indeed, she is floating between the flags of Tibet and India. The lower half of the sketch is less colorful but heavily peopled with family, friends, and intimacy. Her transnational self carries a bag, and we see below that the bag is presumably filled with this collective of relationships, whom she seems to carry with her across nations.

A first-generation immigrant with strong roots in her Tibetan heritage, Indira was born in India before she immigrated to the United States. Her longing for home is echoed in the opening quote, where she discusses that she is most engaged in her school work when she is writing about herself back home, “in India.” Passionate about justice in Tibet, Indira described her involvement in a Free Tibet protest in New York City as the worst thing that had happened to her that year (eleventh grade) in school. When asked about the protest, she explains, “We, just, went individually. We didn’t go as the Tibetan club we went as friends together.” She alludes to deep, conflicting feelings about politics and Tibet. Aside from talking about an incident where she was suspended from school (something she mentions only tangentially), her talk about Tibet is the only time in the interview where she expresses anger and emotion. Yet this relatively unobtrusive thread of affect emerges again on the



**Figure 2.** Identity map produced in year two by Indira. (Names have been blurred to protect participant's identity; color figure available online).

sentence completion task; *If you really want to know me you should see me . . .* “when I’m mad.”

Indira’s representations of self and others reflect two tensions of loss, longing, and disconnect: the silence and shame she experiences with family and the alienation/advocacy she embodies for Tibet. Both of these emotionally charged experiences presented in her interviews might have gone unnoticed if it were not for her depiction of doubled selves in her identity map. The map created a distinct context and contrast for the interview and survey material by highlighting her emotional travel between silence and encouragement; across nations and tongues; demands for justice for a nation, and perhaps a home, from which she lives in exile.

In our interpretive dialogues we discussed Indira’s decision to sketch two distinct selves: a relational, devoted self and a worldly, transnational self. She is the strong transnational figure in the upper half of the page, and also the stick figure referring to herself by name (blurred out to protect identity) among friends in the lower half of the page (see Figure 2). While Indira presents two distinct selves, we don’t want to leave her story without addressing the complexity of *how* these selves interrelate and how she lives at the hyphen. In her interview she describes the political protest as being the worst day of her current school year because she went alone; the isolation upset her. At school she seeks spaces to counter the feeling of alienation and finds the Tibetan students club a place for companionship and dialogue. When asked if she felt better talking about what happened at the protest with the Tibetan club, she remarked, “Yeah, ‘cause you can talk about it

‘cause they’re all Tibetans and the people that come over there understand and stuff.” In this space, her political and Tibetan selves mingle with her social and peer-oriented self. For Indira, navigating the hyphen occurs relationally. While she represents herself as both alienated and engaged, she has oriented her political and academic lives in conversation with absences that linger.

### *Kalinda*

Kalinda: Like in class I act one way, like outside I would act different, differently. Outside I’m more fun and like outgoing, but in school like –

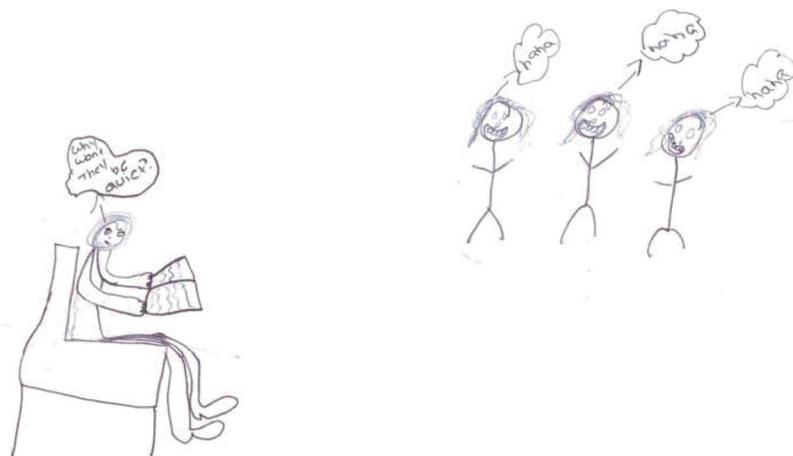
Interviewer: Oh, so there’s different sides of you. Outside you’re fun and outgoing and in class –

Kalinda: I’m outgoing also, I mean like quieter . . .

Kalinda was born in the US to native born parents from Black, Italian, and Indian backgrounds. A young woman keenly aware of and articulate about the geography of her multiple selves, her “selves” seem to be split on the surface. While Indira journeys from politics of protest to friends of support to a home of silence, Kalinda represents two slices of self geographically: her “inside” self who struggles against the silencing of family and peers and her “outside” self who is “more fun and like outgoing.” Through her words, images, and metaphors, she weaves a story of her struggles to get outside and her resistance to being kept in.

In her first year interview, Kalinda warns us that her school is boring and that the people there are what make it fun. She tells us that she is never by herself and talks about any work that she does at school is with her best friend. She says, “Yeah. I’m never by myself. Like when, like when I do activities, it’s always me and [my best friend] together.” However, she describes a group of freshman girls in her class who are always laughing and distracting her. In response, she moves to the back of the class to do her work alone. “There, and I sit by the window, and open it and do my work.”

It is not her preference to work alone, but when she must she is comforted by being as close as possible to “outside.” When asked to draw herself learning in the (year one) learning map task (see Figure 3), she depicts three girls with evil grins full of sharp jagged



**Figure 3.** Learning map produced in year one by Kalinda (color figure available online).

teeth — laughing. Kalinda is far removed and alone asking herself, “Why won’t they be quiet?”

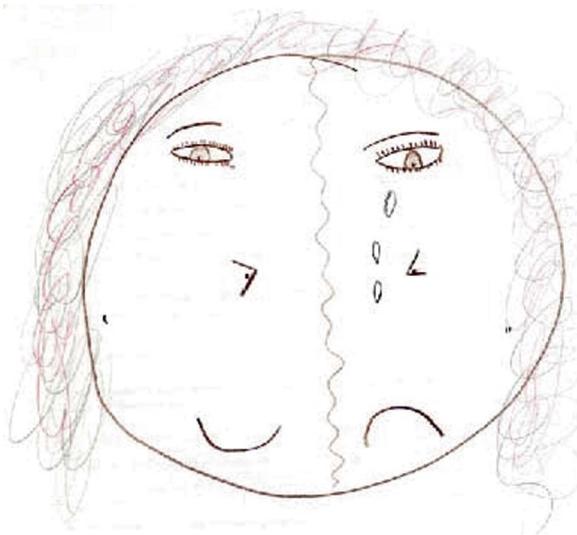
By her year-two interview, she tells us that girls have been spreading gossip about her being a “hoe.” She feels hopeless to curb the rumors. We asked whether this happened last year, she says, “Yeah. I don’t think I mentioned that. But I don’t care. That’s just at school like, outside of school like I’m fine, like I’m happy. When I step out of school, I’m so happy. I’ll be like thank God.” Silenced and tormented inside, Kalinda yearns to be outside where her other self can flourish. By year two, this split between inside and outside is now etched into her identity map (see Figure 4). She draws a face with a wiggly line down the center; one side is crying with a mouth frowning, and the other smiles with dry eyes.

In year two, we learn the struggle to get “outside” and to escape silencing doubles at home. Outside comes to represent her goals of freedom, exit, voice and a gendered maturity; home constricts all four.

When talking about her family, Kalinda states:

Like why can’t I be a woman? . . . Yeah. Like they [her parents] hold me back too much but . . . like that’s why I can’t really sit there and talk to them about everythin’ ‘cause they want me to be so perfect and I can’t, so if I can’t be perfect . . . to them it’s like, it’s just so bad, like they’ll just, they’ll just like, I just get so many penalties on there, I’ll be like oh no I’m not even gonna talk about it.

She goes on to say, “Like if I was . . . I don’t, but if I was to smoke weed or anythin like that and I wanted to talk them about it, I can’t. It’ll be to a point like don’t go outside, stay in, like that, so you can’t talk to them about it.” Her refusal to confide in her parents tracks to a fear of being punished, further contained at home, inside. Not surprisingly, when we look at Kalinda’s sentence completion task, we see that she finishes the sentence: *If you*



**Figure 4.** Identity map produced in year two by Kalinda (color figure available online).

*really want to know me, you should see me . . .* “outside.” For Kalinda, physical space is the landscape upon which multiple selves are distributed.

Interviews and maps suggest that walls lock her inside, while circulating air lets her breathe. The feeling of being outside is so vital to her that she opens classroom windows and explains that it is the only way to really know her. After hearing her words describe the frustration and divided self, the sadness in her hand-drawn face was more understandable. While Indira idealizes Tibet, Kalinda romanticizes exit as freedom.

Particularly striking, Kalinda’s marginality in year one (interview and learning map) become symbolically expressed as tattooed onto her body in year two (the identity map with a split face). In her first year, the conflicts around learning, the desire to feel the fresh air, and the restrictions placed on her because of her gender are understood as conflict with peers and family. Within a year, these tensions graft onto the skin. No longer simply a binary of external space, the struggle between inside and outside has become more complicated. Outside still represents freedom but inside represents a split contaminated by gossip, parents, and a sense of impending womanhood. Indeed there is no freedom, exit, voice or outside. Kalinda’s experiences hauntingly echoes Brown and Gilligan’s (1993) findings on young women whose selves go “underground” during adolescence. Unable to change her physical space to experience relief, we see Kalinda carving the spaces out of herself psychologically. Her continuity lies in the waves of splitting, even as the contents vary over time.

### ***Dazhong (see Figure 5)***

*(When looking over her sentence completion task)*

Interviewer: Is there anything meaningful about the different colors that you used? I think that’s interesting that you used pink and blue.

Dazhong: Like the blue, just regular answering questions, not very interesting. Red is very important issue. Like my personality. Maybe not as you guessed when *you look at my surface*. Like face. I look serious.

Dazhong is a young woman who came to the US from China and attends a dual-language public high school. Her friends describe her as quiet and serious, but she says underneath all of that she is very funny and not as serious. In her year-one survey she finishes the sentence “Sometimes I worry that I might not graduate high school because . . .” with the response “I do not speak and read English well.” As she struggles with English, she seeks out challenging situations – in Times Square and watching English movies — that will force her to practice.

For Dazhong, the dialectics of silence and voice play out linguistically and in her family dynamics. Though she lives with her parents and two sisters, Dazhong’s family life seems solitary and isolated. She does the food shopping and the cooking for her family and tries to have dinner ready when her parents get home late in the evening. She cares for her younger sister whom she describes as lazy and unmotivated in school. This dynamic shifts in the second-year interview when she explains that her father has disappeared with all of their money and that she has essentially given up on helping her younger sister.

In terms of school she also seems quite detached. Some of this comes from her experience in China. She explains that in her home country teachers usually aren’t close to students, or they are only close to the smartest ones. Although her explanation of how she participates in school makes it seem as though she is a fairly hard-worker she does not

ID: S150

Please fill out the page below as if it were a Facebook or Myspace page that represents who you are. Feel free to decorate or personalize it as you want.

facebook
myspace.com  
A place for friends..

About me: *No serious as my face, it's funny inside.*

My interests are: *watching TV, eating delicious food around the world.*

I am most excited about *eating*.

Three words to describe your feelings about school:  
*leaving place happy mix with challenge*  
*place makes good friend*

When it comes to school, write 3 random things that teachers do not know about you.  
*pronounce of Name. personality*  
*age.*

When it comes to school, write 3 random things that peers do not know about you.  
*age*  
*personality. skill of language*

If you really want to know me, you should see me when I am *speaking and eating*

Describe your school year in a Facebook status message:  
*It's small but competitive. the place where people can improve skill and grade.*

In five years I am afraid that I will be *alone and be unconnect with most of friend.*

These are places that are important to me (places, events)

**Figure 5.** Sentence completion task produced in year two by Dazhong (color figure available online).

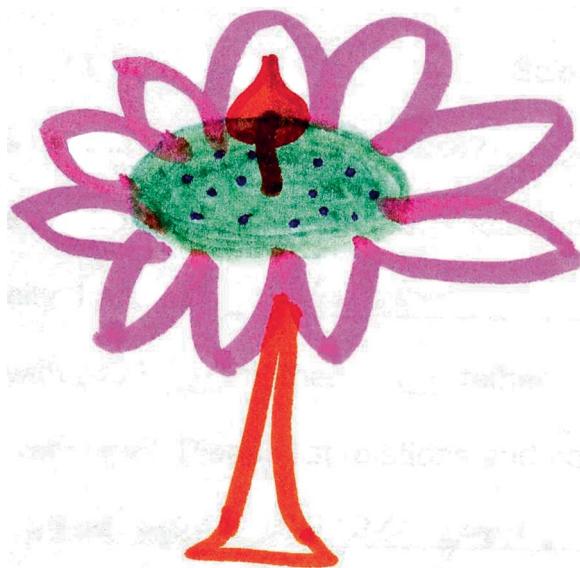
really seem to think so. The interviewer points to this seeming discrepancy, but Dazhong says that she could probably try harder. This mystery is even more apparent when we look at her year one learning map (see Figure 6). She depicts herself in various contained situations: at a party, using the computer, volunteering, shopping. Each situation is full of people, yet she draws boxes that separate these scenes as solitary actions. With another lens, however, we notice that each box represents an attempt to master English; each box holds a desire. She deliberately throws herself into strange situations to acquire English vocabulary.

Despite this multimethod portrait of solitude, her year two identity map (see Figure 7) signals a dramatic shift, something that might be explained a bit further by her year-two interview. Allowing her mystery to be revealed, her identity map is brightly colored and looks like a flower with something in the middle. It could be a part of the flower (stamen or pistil?), but it also evokes the imagery of a candle flame. The brightness and vivid colors contrast with the tones of the interview. The flame rising out of the center of the flower suggests something hidden inside. In her interviews, especially in year two, and her sentence completion task, she alludes to a different self that is hidden inside, a funny and less serious self that others often do not see.

This map produced in year two takes on a vivid, vibrant voice yearning to be heard. Like her presentation of self in her interview, she omits much information, leaving a bulk of the interpretation up to the imagination of the interviewer. For Dazhong her identity map presents a simple but brightly colored image that contrasts starkly with how she presented in her interview; as a blossoming, living and flowering plant conveys a sense of layered



**Figure 6.** Learning map produced in year one by Dazhong (color figure available online).



**Figure 7.** Identity map produced in year two by Dazhong (color figure available online).

coherence. Across contexts we can read her desire to know and be known, even as language and shyness interfere with her goals. The two methods had given us very different understandings of how Dazhong experiences her hyphenated-selves.

Throughout the interview we see some glimpses of this emergent inner self — a mystery. Sometimes a shy person who “feel[s] so unhappy, so quiet” when she does not speak,

she says she feels friendly and happy when she does. Language moves her and moves with her across different contexts. For Dazhong, voice and language appear to be the grounds upon which her multiple selves commute. Taking a cue from Ruthellen Josselson's analytic advice to "seek pointers to what is unsaid or unsayable" (2004, p. 14), we relied upon Dazhong's year two map as an optic through which we would re-trace the data archive. Looking more attentively for descriptions of a "hidden" self, the juxtaposition of maps and interviews suggested a circuitous journey from silence to voice, people to solitude, fading to bright colors. Dazhong's vibrant map left us with a sense of wonder, regarding if and how we had (mis)read her interview texts. This surprise, we argue, reflects Dazhong's subtle skills of negotiating power and agency, particularly with language and voice. A reexamination of her data, with a lens of agency, reveals interesting findings. Her learning map is centered on her self, particularly on her self as navigating a variety of contexts; an agent of movement and intellect. In her discussions of making others laugh and being the reliably cheerful friend, we can read either a superficial performing self or we can see hints of playfulness and agency, controlling the crowd. In the same way that Dazhong's identity map caught us by surprise because it essentially visually refuted our initial interpretation of her texts, we can use the map to "flip" our perceptions of her. Blending these two readings of her interviews, we see a young immigrant woman bridging family obligations and a struggle with language, feeling a desire to explore art and music, and a world beyond.

## Discussion

We end with reflections on how pluralistic methods and analytic strategies can support theoretical excursions into hyphenated selves.

### *Theorizing the Dialectics of Hyphens*

Across the data archives for each of these three young women, we come to appreciate the dialectics of hyphenated selves, that is, the varied lines of analysis through which each young woman chooses to tell her story. In distinct styles, each tells a developmental story of desire and disappointment; of engagement and retreat; of yearning and fear. These are the stories of adolescent development-in-context. We come to see and hear how everyday lives are lived on the fault lines of developmental, political, and contextual change and how young people make sense of the coherence of their many selves. Across the three narratives emerges a core dynamic of desire/struggle, which might be negatively called splitting — of politics and home, inside and out, silence and voice. We prefer to frame these dynamics as inherent to the ebb and flow of adolescent development and meaning making at the everyday hyphens of urban life in neo-liberal America.

### *An Analytic Conversation between Visual and Textual Narratives*

This study confirmed our interest in developing mapping as a tool for narrative inquiry within a broader palette of plural methods. Not bound by words, maps are constructed from the experience and imagination of the *respondent*, not the researcher. They provide a visual narrative for examining how young people represent, internally and to the world, complex selves animated both during times of political crisis and everyday growing up. While text-based methods are often particularly problematic for immigrant youth, or those

working across languages and dialects, we would argue that in an era in which young people are overtested and primed toward “right answers,” researchers need to worry about the invisible static attached to word-based methods for all young people. Words, in the forms of surveys, interviews, or sentence completions, especially when these methods are administered in schools, have been colonized by testing and by dominant ideological concerns with correct answers. Surveys, interviews, and sentence completions are wildly different, and yet in each case respondents are asked to respond to researchers’ prompts. Thus they all constitute what we would call ‘reactive’ methods — methods in which youth are invited to respond to the categories predetermined by researchers. Hybrid designs, integrating reactive, and *constructive* methods allow participants to guide researchers through the thicket of identities across contexts and relationships, over time.

### *Inviting Pluralism from the Participants Through Constructive Methods*

Turning now to reflect on pluralism in analytic strategies, we draw from a most influential essay by Ruthellen Josselson (2004). Josselson writes on the “Hermeneutics of Faith and Suspicion” that *how* we engage with narratives — what materials we take at face value and when we dare to theorize over the words of respondents — is central to the interpretations we make and the theoretical insights we draw. She argues that researchers may choose to interpret texts toward *restoration* or toward *deconstruction*. A stance of restoration or “faith” seeks to understand a narrator’s experience of events at the level of their subjectivity. Data collection and analysis reflect what Josselson calls a “faith” in what respondents are conveying “in the form of a message” (p. 3). Much of the writing on respecting respondents’ “voice” comes out of the tradition that honors the language and privileges the interpretation provided by the respondent. As an alternative, a stance of deconstruction or “suspicion” encourages researchers to craft a theoretical analysis of “meanings presented to the interpreter in the form of a disguise” (p. 3). Here researchers work to uncover, interrogate and theorize hidden or shadowed meanings in the narrator’s account. Josselson distinguishes these analytic strategies as legitimate but deeply divergent, with different theoretical, political and ethical commitments.

If Josselson argues that faith and suspicion are difficult to align epistemologically, Frost encourages researchers to pursue varied analytic strategies in the same work in order to thicken the analytic layers. While their arguments depart in significant ways, both contest psychology’s search for essentialist, coherent, fixed identities (or interpretations of them, at least), and reject methods that triangulate only in the service of confirmation.

We find both Josselson’s and Frost’s invitations for analytic depth to be refreshing, and with this article we hope to press the conversation a bit further. Josselson and Frost encourage “lens-shifting” by researchers, and with the introduction of mapping as a constructive method, our design enables *respondents* to shift their lens on how they choose to represent their identities. Of course, respondents may always act with agency, regardless of method, but identity maps become a fertile space for respondents to narrate, experiment, imagine, and perform varied selves for analysis. While there may be many opportunities during the analytic process for a researcher to shift their lens, it is almost always at the level of the researcher that such a shift occurs, rather than at the level of the participant. Pluralism at the level of method provides another point of entry for the participant into the analytic dialogue and thus may even serve to help ground the observations. Maps introduce material that may be preverbal, affectful, unconscious, and filled with pain and desire, repositioning respondents as subjects, experts, and witnesses to their own lives and dreams.

### *Engaging Pluralism During Analysis Through Dialogic Analytic Communities*

Our last reflection draws on the work we did together, in analyzing the data archives for each participant. As may be clear, Selcuk and Dalal initiated this project with a number of colleagues from NYU. Valerie and Michelle joined the project later for the purposes of helping the team develop an analytic strategy for working with the qualitative material. When we saw the call for papers on pluralism, we took advantage of the opportunity to collaborate more fully.

As an analytic community, we held ourselves accountable to the theory of hyphenated selves and held ourselves wide open to the varied narratives gathered. That is, we sought to code the materials the young people produced and spoke, and searched theoretically for the ways in which they tried to make sense of the static and untamed elements in their stories. As we collectively digested the material, we sought a shared, deliberative analysis but not a quick consensus. The point was not to come to easy agreement but rather deep deliberation. If only one person held out with an interpretation that others did not confirm, we typically avoided integrating that point into our analysis. On the other hand, if one person offered up information that was distinctive, for example, when Dalal recognized that Indira positioned herself in both halves of her drawing, the conversation took a catalytic turn.

Again we make no claims to empirical generalizability of our findings but do want to suggest that the kind of process we undertook yields what Fine (2006) has called *theoretical generalizability* — when the implications of one study that provoke a theoretical reconfiguration in a field of study. Our most significant finding may be that conflict and contradiction flourish in the lives of youth and can populate a narrative, often draped in the rich desire to tell a good story bound by coherence.

### **Conclusion**

“Indeed, if the social world is multi-dimensional, then surely our explanations need to be likewise.” (Mason 2006, p. 20)

The youth whose stories we have presented here have shown us how hyphenated selves travel from global politics to everyday lives, and from the intimacies of interior life back out to social relations and politics. By crafting research designs that invite young people to reveal/express/invent their many selves we are able to gather up thick descriptions of desire and uncertainty, yearnings and investments, fear and attachment, that permeate the porous membranes of self and other. More than generalizing to any specific population, we have aimed to use this article and the stories of these young women to provoke new thinking about methods for researching and analyzing the dialectics of self and other. These young women have been generous in displaying and sharing their multiplicities; now the challenge is for psychologists to generate methods worthy of the complexity of what it means to grow up human.

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