From Social Servitude to Self - Certitude: The Social Organization of Resistance of Racialized Diasporic Women

Pour Ebrahim Alamdar, Negar*

Social and Political Thought Program, Department of Social Science, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto, Ontario M3J 1P3, Canada.

*Corresponding Author: Pour Ebrahim Alamdar, Negar

Abstract

The relationship between migration incorporation and resistance is a quintessential problematic replete with controversy. Notwithstanding the voluminous literature on collective or community mobilization, relatively little scholarship, conceptually and substantively, exists that analyzes the individual self-empowerment of racialized diasporic women. This research seeks to bridge this gap by addressing the efficacy of the exigent need for critical analysis of the stages and processes of individual resistance. My study analyzes the different levels of accommodation / resistance racialized diasporic women especially from Iran use to negotiate various institutions of socializing control. Conceptually, Distance and engagement in terms of deference and defiance are constructed relationally in order to provide a set of innovative perspectives and methodologies in critical diasporic studies.

Keywords Resistance, Migration Incorporation, Racialized Diasporic Women, Post-Colonial Thought, Self-Empowerment

Introduction

The relationship between agency and structure enjoys a rich intellectual history. Indeed, the relationship between agency, on the one hand, defined typically as consciousness, identity or self-concept and structure, on the other hand, often represented as the dominant culture and its concomitant ideological hegemonies of capitalism, modernity and neo liberalism, constitute a quintessential problematic in social and political thought.

This dialectical relationship, however, is mediated by institutionalized governmentalities. Acknowledging the intellectual limits of orthodox thought, diaspora studies, however, seek to make sense of the often ignored and yet meaningful symbiosis of consciousness and culture from various triangulated vantage points which point to the fluidity of lived experiences, the multiplicity of subjectivities and exclusionary “othering” processes. Although the nature of culture shapes and is shaped by the quality of consciousness, these relationships are not fixed especially since they are always related to various permutations of power.

The relationship between migration incorporation and resistance is replete with controversy. As Arabs and Iranians migrate to a Western society, they are confronted by a whole new set of choices and experiences making the adaptation process intricate and challenging [1]. Admittedly, the concerns of the diasporic individuals and communities are not new. But an application of Stuart Hall's [2] ideas about “cultural diasporization” to Arab and Iranian women within an anti-racist and anti-oppressive discursive framework is innovative and to date neglected. Indeed, in the post 9/11 culture where the marginalization of Muslim identity is commonplace, this study confronts directly the inter- and intra-community stereotyping, invisibility, harassment and discrimination of Arab and Iranian women. Indeed, what makes the case of these diasporas unique is the
essentialist notion that integrates Muslims, Arabs, fundamentalists, and terrorists in sweeping misrepresentation and prejudice, which effectively paints them into the position of a “dangerous” and inassimilable minority. Accordingly, Mohamed [3] points out that the women in the diaspora are continually required to negotiate their respective identities.

The marginalization of identity has been a hindrance for many to assimilate into the Canadian culture. The problems many face include stereotyping, invisibility, harassment and discrimination [4]. For many Muslim women, various prohibitive and/or restrictive incorporation strategies of institutions, ostensibly designed to homogenize, accommodate and acculturate, are contested terrains [5, 6]. This righteous ethnocentric consciousness prevails whenever the construction of identity, as a repository of distinct collective experiences, is “normalized” as “other” [7-11].

A narrative of identity transition reinforces the binary Canadian/Other as the mechanism of transcendence of difference and inequality, inserting “ethnic Others” into the national imaginary within embeddedness of the experiences of (dis) continuity [12, 13]. As Haddad and Smith explain, “to be Muslims is to belong to a kind of universal family, to share in a unity that depends on mutual cooperation” [14] vitiated, regrettably by imposed and subsequent reified shame and embarrassment of neoliberal discourses that erase, trivialize, categorize, and hybridize subjectivities [15-17]. How then is a diasporic consciousness constructed in order to emancipatory given the hegemonizing normativities of restrictive institutional practices of incorporation? The subtext of institutional practices derivative of wider ideologies reinforce exclusion.

Informed by the discursive confluence of anti-racist feminist, post-colonial, critical race theories and interpretive sociology, this paper argues that any analysis of the identity (consciousness), culture (ideology) and the nexus thereof warrants a far more comprehensive inquiry into the mediating role of institutions of law, work, family, education and religion especially in reference to racialized diasporic women. This conceptual lens facilitates a more intrepid critique of the relationality of socialized modes of social and self-regulation as a serious substantive and generic site for investigating often overlooked and yet fundamental issues of resistance, for unravelling the connectedness of concepts and applied practices, and for questioning dominant modes of discourse. The inquiry investigates the prospects and challenges of diasporic trajectories by which consciousness is connected to transformative potentials of the self, that is, the differential capacity of women of the Arab and Iranian diasporas to negotiate issues of “conformity” to religion, custom and the imposition of racist, misogynist features of the host society.

In other words this study explores the dialectics of withdrawal and engagement with values of the host culture. Thus, this research seeks to bridge this gap by addressing the efficacy of the exigent need for critical analysis and representation of the voices of racialized Muslim women within the prisms of marginality and antagonistic encounters. The significance of this research also aims to examine whether the dominant culture provides conditions for the empowerment of the “othered” women. This analysis hopefully provides a much needed progressive corrective search for a comprehensive understanding of injustice based on intolerance, misogyny and racism which have long eluded mainstream analysis of immigration and settlement. This research seeks to attend to the contingencies of self-concept, skills and responses given that there has been relatively little inquiry into the relationship of identity, institutions and ideologies in an analysis of the agonal conditions of racialized Muslim women in Canada. In so doing, this study draws attention into other dimensions of the immigrant’s agonal life which have received less or no theoretical attention, namely how the migration process impacts on gender relations and how socio-cultural/political structures influence and shape their gender consciousness. It is evident that immigrants and refugees are exposed to a world of triple realities: the Iranian culture that informed
gender identity; the Canadian society with its distinct socio-cultural of gender and expected behavior; and, finally, what may be referred to as the “Iranian –Canadian” culture which draws its emergence and existence from the complementary and contradictory notions of gender within these two cultures.

A focus on the intersections of memory, imagination and identity would presumably enhance a new understanding to the relationship of hegemonic moments of interruption, referentiality, representation and recognition of servitude. The meanings and symbols of the dominant culture penetrate language and consciousness, transforming the self into a subject - individuals adopt versions of the truth for themselves such as “those other”. Cultural hegemony is a sophisticated and fine-tuned means of domination that succeeds in creating self- subordination.

Diasporic communities learn to repress, deprive and deny self-autonomy by advancing their own vulnerabilities and credulities. This study explores these experiences by focusing on different aspects of their cultural identity and the ways in which racialized diasporic women adjust and integrate into their host society amid a complex system of group categorization, cultural values, and political currents, that is, how they negotiate their resistance.

The inadequacy of any sustained analysis of the causes and consequences of injustices is not due to the often attributed phlegmatic unwillingness to grapple with controversy but rather to a perniciously cemented resistance to any knowledge that challenges the privileged ethos of empirical and theoretical practices which reaffirm the dominance of institutionalized hierarchies of power. What is missing in much of the conventional research is a discussion of negotiation as a strategy of resistance. These following interrelated themes will be pursued in this study: first, the relationship of recognition, representation and rights which ought not severed from the most fundamental issue of dignity. Second, and equally significant, the differential impact of ideology on identity especially as mediated by institutions of law, family, work, education, religion, etc.).

Arguments

This study provides a long overdue synthetic analysis of the identity – culture nexus as mediated by the pernicious impact of institutions in an attempt to address the lingering questions concerning the role of the dominant culture in creating conditions for the negotiations of a hybrid space in the lived experiences of diasporic individuals and communities. The process of redefining and affirming identity goes well beyond personal efforts and draws from the overall cultural character of this country. A caveat, however is in order: this inquiry challenges the reductionist, facile and obfuscating conceptions of the diaspora so characteristic of hegemonic conventional approaches with their “stir and mix” to migration. Similarly, the hypocrisy of privilege so well masked in its everyday practices and protected by other interlocking institutions limits the capacity to respond to injustice. Accommodations are emblematic of anxiety about the loss of cultural identity. The subaltern body is reduced to the uneasy status as ‘intruders’, admitted into the body politic only to be perpetually marginalized as transplants.

The diasporic experience entails many changes, losses and the redefining of identity. There is a new sense of ethnic identity that takes shape with the awareness of differences, and it sets the immigrants apart from the new society [15]. While diasporic and immigrant experiences can be similar, they are not necessarily interchangeable. Diasporic perspectives strive to “intervene in those ideological discourses of modernity that attempt to give a hegemonic ‘normativity’ to the uneven development and the differential, often disadvantaged, histories of nations, races, communities and peoples.”[18]. A critical analysis of “gender and migration” urges an intrepid investigation of the extent to which migration transforms gender relations. For Dannecker, Man and Wong [19-21], oppressive gender relations, based on contested discourses grounded in patriarchal traditions, neocolonialism and their concomitant historical, cultural, political and economic contradictions, are tensions that
produce and reproduce intended and unintended consequences regarding the (de)valuation of gender.

For Moghissi [22], the formation of a collective identity, or diasporic consciousness and group solidarity is often a “response to [or reaction against] an inhospitable climate” within the host community rather and a genuine internal reflection of cultural remembrance or a shared culture (pp. xiv–xvii). For Muslim migrants the fear or threat of loss of their Muslim identity may create an intense sense of insecurity and instability which awakens in the diasporic groups a sense of cultural marginality and the need to fight against this marginality (ibid, xv). On the other hand, Pajouhandeh [8] focusses on patriarchy and its attendant double standards that uphold women as vessels of family honor as well as the threats and penalties of becoming a Western woman within the overarching theme of “the self in flux”.

My study analyzes the different levels of accommodation / resistance that racialized diasporic women especially from Iran use to negotiate various institutions of socializing control. By focusing on the tense interplay between discourse and subjectivity, the dialectics of culture and consciousness, contradictions and the possibilities of transcendence. Distance and engagement in terms of deference and defiance are constructed relationally in order to form the basis or “precondition of a politically engaged critique” [28].

Taking up Moghissi’s [7] general notion of cultural resistance as a refuge against class and racial discrimination, this study examines resistance as a transformativemovement of self-empowerment – a transition from “social servitude to self-certitude”. Interestingly, unlike the subtext of privilege, a narrative of self-resistance in the diaspora is missing or ignored. The literature may be rich in examining contested spaces [24] but certainly not the spaces of racialized diasporic Muslim women.

More specifically, this study analyzes conceptually experiences of integration and resistance within the framework of identity formation as formidable sites of struggle and accommodation. Conceptually, the idea of “in-between” characterizes the strengths and liabilities of their respective journeys in Canada. They are neither “here’ nor “there’ and they are “in” but not “of” Canada. But, relatively little exists analyzing how the migration process impacts on gender relations especially in terms of empowering race and gender consciousness. The following range of interrelated questions which avoid “essentializing discourses” [25], invite an exploration of how the diasporic experience opens up a multitude of paradoxes for identity formations that impact on race and gender.

- To what extent do racialized diasporic women construct and view their identities through the prism of their immigration experience? What “space” is constructed for the self and the self's relationship to the “host and home” communities alike. That is, to what extent are these women able to negotiate cultural and traditional bonds which make them being vulnerable to abuse and isolated from both the host and natal societies?

- What are the processes by which gender role identities are formed, internalized, and incorporated into a more emancipatory consciousness? Given the intersections of ethnicity, race, class, and sexuality and imposed gender relations what are the bridging processes and coping mechanisms used by these marginalized women in negotiating empowering transitions? In other words, how do these women break through the ideologically imbricated influences of both traditional and western values in negotiating a space that resists and complies, that distances or engages?

- Often ignored in extant scholarship, what are the costs (liabilities) and benefits (assets) of negotiated ‘adaptive strategies’ of transformation? To remedy this concern, how have these women explored the fluidity and hybridity of their identities? How do they negotiate their social and psychic locations in a nation where their religion, language and culture intersect with “foreign” Canadian values?
Specifically, how do Iranian women form and inform identities in relation to conflicting cultural narratives of subject formations in reference to traditional and western values? Admittedly, competing values underlie the treatment of immigrants in ways that undervalue the intrinsic importance of self-empowerment.

What social forces (push and pull factors) influence their decision to either to resist, accommodate and/or negotiate emergence of enlightened consciousness from the complementary/contradictory notions of gender within the two cultures? How do they try to make various resistances their own (self-referential)? Alternatively, how do these practices enter the everyday world and assume oppositional perspectives?

Is counter hegemony an occasional shift in consciousness or an organic transformation?

What conditions the constitution of connections between the culture and consciousness?

In addition to post-colonial, anti-racist feminist and critical race theories, these questions, it is argued, may also be approached from Weberian social action perspective [26]. That is, this study uses the concept of “movement” as a typology [27, 28], which enables us to focus fully on the processes of and stages in the process of transformative empowerment noted in the above questions. We are led to discern major components and relations; to investigate both formal and informal links between stages; and to specify various contingencies affecting the nature of interactions located in these stages.

Movements, as stages of engagement and distance, are characterized by identifiable and organized sets of relations and social meanings [29, 30]. As they emerge from social interactions and as they are subsequently interpreted as meaningful, stages provide actors with a set of perspectives. In other words, actors construct knowledge of their different worlds by assessing situations and assigning meanings to the activity and to others as classificatory schemes. The idea of a movement consists of forms of sociation which impose some intelligibility on the actor's world. Consequently, staging a movement becomes an ongoing process of self-indication and self-validation. Stages are essentially procedures that individuals use in making sense of their immediate situations. With increased and continued interactions, these movement categories evolve so that stage identifications follow and are considered by others in future encounters. These categorizations establish routine rules for interaction and serve as directives for future involvements.

The social organization of any movement such as self-resistance consists of various processes and structures that typically plot biographies and relationships. They include different features of (1) the initial "getting connected" as a newcomer ("settling in"); (2) the "staying connected" to institutions as a "landed resident" or "citizen"; and, (3) the "disconnecting" from marginalized status or "reconnecting" to an empowered self (resistance and desistance). Actors create stages that in turn are used to justify degrees of involvements (ibid).

**Stage 1: Negotiating Identity: “Getting Connected” to Canadian identities, institutions and ideologies**

Informed by the scholarship of Irene Bloemraad and Thomas Faist, [31, 32] we inquire into how migrants confront of a whole new set of choices and experiences, how they represent themselves and relate to other similarly circumstanced others in light of assimilating pushes and traditional cultural pulls. The main burden of this argument posits that an adequate grasp of incorporation into Canada may best be attained by conceptualizing western as highly contested terrains. Hall [2] asks us to study culture and identity in terms of processes, focusing on the constant reworking of culture, on the handling of contradictions and inconsistencies, on the processes of learning and unlearning. I will examine the different ways in which identity
is negotiated and the multiple points of identification and positioning. How does hybridity respond to crises of cultural illiteracy, insecurity and instability [33]? Herein, language is fundamental. From Fanon, Bhabha, Said to Spivak, an inquiry into the representation and recognition of the language as well as modes of communications requires a careful critique of perils and prospects. Language restricts thought, imposes rules, inculcates desired norms and socializes conformity [34].

Stage 2: Staying Connected: Navigating Institutions

Violence and silence as contingencies of consciousness are conditions and consequences of social exploitation and self inferiorization. Immigrants connecting to institutions of law, work, education, media, family, etc, experience marginality and social servitude. Systems of privilege based gender hierarchy “and race prevail. [9, 35-36]. Disciplinary powers diffuse relational controls through a “calculated management of life” within multiple mechanisms of “a normalizing society” [37].

For instance, Canadian law, including the Multiculturalism Act, is related to diasporic identity, building moral regulation and the policing of racialized bodies. By sketching the boundaries of state racialized practices within the legal framework of multiculturalism, we can more fully appreciate how members of ethno cultural groups or racialized communities are brokered, excluded and develop a coerced consciousness.

Stage 3: Disconnecting and Reconnecting: Negating Internalized Ideologies (Silence, Risk and Resistance)

Theoretical scholarship and empirical evidence will highlight how the lived real-life experiences of racialized diasporic women respond to institutional barriers. By “staying” or remaining as members of a new society, immigrant women experience a cultural transition often expressed in feelings of dislocation, rupture, and loss, which can produce anxieties about the new culture’s values and norms of exclusion. For Arab Canadian, there is a lingering feeling that full acceptance in Canadian society is futile [38]. Moreover, Hall [2] challenges the notion of the subject and the stability of identity to examine the ways in which Diasporas threaten or reinforce existing social and cultural hierarchies. A fundamental theme in Fanon’s [33] writings, however, is the need for transformations. But, change can be achieved only through the risk. His diagnosis and psychoanalysis suggest that, in every society a channel must exist for aggression to be released.

Passing through these stages is not an automatic process. The logic of this developmental model does not presuppose that once actors have begun to move in the direction of a certain movement, they will inevitably go through the entire range of stages. This interpretive framework downplays the notion of movement as fixed, static and self-maintaining systems constrained by strict rules. Instead, this perspective emphasizes the fluid, loose and continually emerging qualities of movement, the ongoing dynamic reorganizations and changing webs of interaction among its members.

The premise of this model suggests that there are a number of situational and subjective contingencies which the actors confront, interpret and select at various stages in the sequence. These contingencies are not objectively given. Participation in and commitment to a stage depend upon several specific adjustments that appear both as conditions and consequences of interactions (ibid). At each stage a number of tightly interwoven contingencies operate and assume different meanings [39, 40]. They do not operate "simultaneously but become important to the actor during different stages of her commitment to a movement. Instead of leaping from one stage to another, actors experience "contingencies". Three related contingencies are fundamental in building and maintaining movements (ibid):

- **Self-concept** -- establishing and situating meaningful identities. The influence of an individual's self-strength.
• **Skills of actors** -- interest alone is not sufficient to motivate change. Abilities and resources ensure continued participation (social and cultural capital).

• **Action and reactions of others** -- The response of significant others make up the social setting for one to act, serving to incite, to inhibit, to temper and to guide one's own line of action. This frame of reference aids in organizing perceptions and experiences.

The argument of this research is that resistance as a movement of the self is socially organized according to stages and contingencies. Moreover, identity, institutions and ideologies impact differentially on this movement of a more empowered consciousness from an imposed and internalized marginality. Resistance, as disconnecting from oppressive life chances to reconnecting to more authentic self-awareness, is contextualized in terms of responses to pernicious accommodations to conformity (getting and staying connected).

**Theoretical Framework**

Adopting a multiperspectival approach informed by the contributions of post-colonial thought, anti-racist feminism, critical race and interpretive sociology, this study argues that any analysis of the consciousness (identity), culture (ideology) and the nexus thereof warrants a far more comprehensive inquiry into the mediating role of institutions. In so doing, a more conceptually fruitful analysis of resistance will ensue. This approach attempts to disrupt common sense and highlight specificities of gendered and racialized resistance against neglect, abuse and violence. But as Patricia Hill Collins [41] admonishes, there is an overarching system that empowers a logic and structure of social, political and economic domination. Structures of domination become formulated around relationships of difference (gender, race, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, nationality and creed) to construct relationships of power and domination (racism, sexism, classism, ableism, homophobia, ageism, legal status etc.). These structures are not mutually exclusive -- they inform and feed off of each other. Collins, argues that by understanding different structures of domination as inter-locking and not as additive, a critical and inclusive understanding of power, domination and resistance can be achieved [41]. Within additive models structures of domination are understood to be dichotomous and as dislocated from one and other.

Clearly, resistance is a struggle over meanings that occur within discursive formations [42]. Although focused on the importance of spontaneous cultural movements, Hardt and Negri [43] ask quite poignantly, to what extent do ideologies form and inform to conflicting narratives of regulation and resistance? Quite importantly, how does culture hegemonize all forms of resistance? For Foucault, de Certeau and Hardt and Negri [44-45, 43], resistance is always already situated within a network of power relationships and thus resistive practices must make creative and adaptive use of the resources of the social.

Likewise, a Gramscian [46] framework considers subversive and counter hegemonic elements. For Gramsci hegemony and counter hegemony, related to subversion, are organic processes allowing opportunities for change in consciousness (ibid). But true liberation requires more than an individual consciousness but the creation of a new ‘integrated culture’ [46]. It cannot be reduced to thought alone given that much of what passes for thinking is a product of strategies of domination.

A more insidious tool is reification [47], where the hegemony absorbs counter-hegemonic elements and presents them as their own. A new social re-composition of the subordinated self in all its forms as an effective force of self and social awareness emerges. Admittedly, identities are neither autonomous nor self-determining, but differentially feed into and support hegemonies. But, individual resistance alone runs the risk of misidentifying and thus masking the enemy. It is not a matter of whether there is resistance but rather how to determine the enemy against which to
rebel. Indeed, often the inability to identify the enemy is what leads the will to resistance around in such paradoxical circles [43]. Likewise defending the individual’s resistance obscures and even negates the real alternatives and the potentials for liberation that exist within different regimes of relations. Accordingly, the primacy of the concept of truth can be a powerful and necessary form of resistance (ibid, 155)

The essence of self-movement lies in the I becoming the character of being -- the will to power [48]. The connection of the inner peace (intrapsychic) to the outer peace (intersubjective) is the connection between individuals who behave morally and a morally responsible society. This alternative form of subjectivity and social formation is consistent with the development of the higher being and the affirmation of new value positions. From post-colonial thought, the concept of hybridity is that precise significant space.

Hybridity breaks through the essentialism and homogeneity and succeeds, as Bhabha [18] argues, in making the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process destroying mirrors and masks of fixed ideological constructions of otherness. He contends that only through the postcolonial perspective can this confrontation be successful. Bhabha’s [18] reflexivity of mimicry and its tools of the split subject, sly civility and hybridity disrupt authority” (ibid, 86, 88). Identity exists in a space not limited by binary oppositions and becomes an authority that recognizes the necessary relationship between self and the social. For Fanon [33], a personality change or a new way of being is “played out “as manoeuvres to understand the manifold and ever-changing ways of resistance.

For Said [49], these circumstances certainly make for survival and belongingness. Bhabha’s work explores the interstices - the space of overlaps and displaces difference - the "in between” [18] the "liminal,” the "interstitial" or the “third space” -- as strategies of self-hood. Post-colonial consciousness as “stunted consciousness” [50] and the conflicted "double consciousness" [51] is a process of being, becoming and experiencing the self and its “otherness”. For Gayatri Spivak, Michel Foucault, Franz Fanon and Edward Said [33, 49, 52-54], multiple identifications reflect the ambivalent nature of identity construction as echoed in the discourse of development and as always juxtaposed against the colonized mind in order to reveal the implications of hegemony.

The development of a cultural consciousness is a product of an ontological process that leads to a redefined sense of self-awareness among marginalized people based on a break from the imposed narratives that serve an oppressive social order. In parallel, I plan to employ anti-racist feminist and critical theories on race and racialization to examine the social psychological and physical impacts of colonial and racial violence on racialized in order to explain how structures of power and their manifestations come to be internalized and shape/orient the subjectivity of racialized people.

Hooks and Collins [55, 56] have investigated how representation – or the nefarious production and settling of knowledge constitute the dominant ideology. Consequently, as Bannerji and Nourbese Philip [57, 58] point out that racialized women occupy a structural position within the Canadian political economy that reflects their marginalization. For Ahmad [59], women’s experiences with racialization vary according to class location, the different ways different groups have been racialized, sexuality and personal history. While acknowledging the shared characteristic of women's experiences, Collins) [41] however argues that such experiences are not uniform, and that the existence of group interests does not mean that all women have the same experiences. For Nourbese Philip [58], the hegemonic role of culture in reproducing racism has led to several struggles over the access that people of colour have to cultural institutions and over cultural appropriation struggles over who has the power to define whom, when and how. According to Dua [60], women of color in Canada do not nor have they ever suffered oppression in precisely the same way as white Canadian women.
Methodology and Methods of Resistance

My methodology is informed by epistemological approaches to understanding the identity and place of racialized diasporic women especially Arab and Iranian immigrants. I adopt a combination of Smith’s and Bannerji’s [61, 57] relational/reflexive approaches. These methods argue that social analysis must begin from a particularly embodied location, in order to go beyond the immediate the mediation and organization of social relations and consciousness [57]. The interpretive also approaches direct this research project by providing a general proposal of guiding notions. Concepts such as identity and socialization assist in sensitizing researchers to move beyond concrete forms of empirical instances [62].

Specifically, I have been doing considerable background work – from arranging institutional support; accessing various media sites (print, electronic and internet); archives of immigrant women serving agencies, researching scholarship in the areas; and working on the following sites of inquiry.

• Content analyses of blogs authored by racialized diasporic women over a six month period; electronic and newprint media coverage; social media postings; secondary sources housed in immigrant women serving agencies for ascertaining levels of support; Women’s journals, textbooks, popular magazines and newspapers; encoding and decoding events and activities within a phenomenological approach.

• In addition to analyzing the empirical manifestation of resistance, this study provides a “deep” reading of post-colonial theorists (Bhabha and Fanon), anti-racist feminist scholars (Collins) and interpretive and critical social thinkers (Gramsci). This inquiry draws on anti-racist feminist praxis oriented methodologies to interpret texts in an effort to undermine the monological and white male stream positivism. As Gadamer [63] asks. “But what kinds of knowledge and what kind of truth?” Triangulated procedures (noted above) will be incorporated to saturate empirically an understanding of the phenomenon of self-transformation.

• This hermeneutic engagement of texts also invites a juxtaposition of these schools of thought in advancing generic concepts that facilitate a fuller appreciation of servitude and certitude.

• Critical auto ethnography: a retrospective accounting and observations

As an immigrant woman from Iran fluent in Farsi, Arabic, Azeri and Turkish, and for whom English is a second language, I have relentlessly studied English for the last few years and have improved remarkably in my written skills with the oral skills lagging miserably behind. For most other Iranian women, however, language fluency and literacy remain serious obstacles that affect empowerment.

The autobiography is used as a self-referential tool to interpret previous experiences in order to understand class positioning. This dialogic autobiography, a critically responsive pedagogy, provides practical knowledge for living life dynamically and creatively. A critical auto ethnography or self-study displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the political.

Consistent with Smith’s [61] methodology of uncovering organized ways of knowing, configuring class and self-identity“ in terms of connectedness/embeddedness”, this exercise asks us to make public our stories, in an attempt to remind us of the impact of “being and belonging” which too many people for far too long, have tried to erase. The autobiographical approach is important because it not only authenticates and locates the “organic” position) [46] but clearly defines the organic intellectual as someone who is positioned to have experienced and is experiencing the particular consequences of living from a certain social juxtapositions. I am convinced that this self-reflective method of knowledge-making and understanding of the everyday world is more compelling and valid than the prevailing positivistic modes.
of inquiry. The latter falters in providing pedagogic thoughtfulness [64] that demonstrate how social and cultural forces shape practices of knowing. As Mariana Valverde [65] advises, the reflexive relationship between identity and practical consciousness is organized through a specific articulation of images, objects and words. Analysis too as a dialogic “social” event is equally interconnected and conditioned. The analyses are praxis oriented and seek to transcend values of certain canonicities replete with rhetoric, jargon, slogans and clichés.

Conclusions

Furthermore, this study highlights the differential impact of migration from the framework of both situational and structural analyses. This inquiry is important for analyzing the essential practices of self-empowerment through resistance. Beyond deconstructing the politics of recognition and representation, this investigation gestures towards a re conceptualization of authenticity as a commitment to resistance, and as Trotman [66] clarifies, an authenticity that moves beyond western thinking to begin the work of constructing alternate social realities. The authentic social construction of a different reality [67, 68] requires the creation and transformation of internalized hegemonic dominance.

In examining the violence –silence nexus as mediated by consciousness, the following needs to be further explored in raising awareness: the theme of the violence of silence. On the one hand, this violence has become both conspiring and legitimating. On the other hand, the silence of violence constitutes a form of intimidated compliance. What then are the implications of this unfolding drama of action, reaction and reflection? For Fanon [33], the answer rests with a transformative healing praxis. This study, therefore, moves well beyond liberal notions of social justice (foundations for citizen engagement), meaningful citizenship and dialogue as “deliberative communication” [69-71].

References


