Migration, Settlement and Acculturation Issues Among Second Generation Indo and African Caribbeans in Canada

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Paper Prepared for the Twenty-sixth Caribbean Studies Association Conference, St. Maarten, Netherlands Antilles, Maho Beach Resort and Casino May 27-June 2, 2001

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Over the period 1967 to 1998, Caribbean immigration to Canada was completely transformed in terms of volume and percent of national total because of the "Point System". During the period 1946 to 1966, the number of Caribbean-born immigrants entering Canada was 29,979 or 1.1 percent of total Canadian immigration. Between 1967 and 1998 approximately, 330,000 landed immigrants from the Caribbean entered Canada, accounting for 7.8 percent of overall Canadian immigration. For the first six years after 1967, Caribbean immigration into Canada averaged 12,000 per annum, with 1969 and 1970 being notable years in which the annual inflow was approximately 14,000. Over the same period, the Caribbean share of total Canadian immigration averaged 8.3 percent, that is to say that it was six times what it was in 1966 (Employment and Immigration Canada 1998).

To date, much of the research on Caribbean migration to Canada has treated the group as a homogenous cohort thereby neglecting the significant cultural heterogeneity within the Caribbean cohort (Henry 1968; Ramcharan 1972; Head & Lee 1975; Head 1980; Richmond 1989; Mendoza 1990; Richmond & Mendoza 1990). The existing research has also tended to use the migration, settlement, adjustment and acculturation issues faced by African-Caribbeans as the archetype to describe the general picture for the entire Caribbean cohort. Less research has also been done on the social, cultural and psychological issues faced by second generation Caribbean origin children who migrated to Canada in the 1970s (Da Costa, 1976; D'Oyley & Silverman, 1976; James 1990; James 1993; Gopie 1993). Most of the existing migration research on second generation Caribbeans tends to focus on their adjustment to the Canadian schooling system (Beserve 1973; Anderson & Grant 1975; Wright & Tsuji 1984; Solomon 1992; Henry 1994; Yon 1994; Simmons & Plaza 1998). This is somewhat understandable given the fact that education is one of the most important determinates of future mobility and acculturation for young immigrants. The purpose of this paper is to expand our understanding about the experiences of second generation Indo and African Caribbeans who arrived in Canada during the 1970s. The analysis will focus particular attention on this cohorts migration, settlement, adjustment, and acculturation issues in the Canadian milieu.

To accomplish this analysis the paper is divided into four sections. In the first section, a general overview of the data sources used in the paper is discussed in order to understand the need for disaggregating the Caribbean cohort into two groups. In the second section, Caribbean migration to Canada is examined for both Indo and African Caribbeans. Particular emphasis is placed on describing the different patterns of movement from the Caribbean for each ethnic cohort. The third section, examines the living arrangements and family structures of Indo and African Caribbean migrants once they arrive in Canada. Particular emphasis is placed in this section on describing the effects of "creolization" and the Canadian milieu on traditional Indo and African Caribbean family structures. In the final section, the life experiences of second generation Caribbeans is used to examine settlement, adjustment and acculturation issues faced by African and Indo-Caribbeans in Canada.

Data Sources

This paper is based on data collected in 1998 from a CERIS funded research project entitled: "Upward Mobility Among Second Generation Caribbeans Living in Toronto". In this project we used

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\(^2\) Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement (CERIS) is a collaborative project governed by a Management Board that encompasses Ryerson Polytechnic University, University of Toronto, York University, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, the Social Planning Council of
the life story approach to examine the migration, settlement, employment and mobility experiences of thirty second-generation Caribbean men and women who completed post secondary schooling in Toronto. The study sought to examine: (a) migration and schooling experiences of second generation Caribbeans in Canada; (b) the patterns of maintenance and/or transformation of established Caribbean family living patterns in Canada; (c) the employment and mobility opportunities for second generation Caribbeans; (d) the relationship between specific migration traditions and processes of household adaptation; and (e) the extent to which gender and culture continue to affect family and household divisions of labour. The main methodological tool used to compile data was life-story interviewing. Unlike most conventional in-depth interviews, the life-story approach seeks to capture the longer perspective of a person's life by, including its rhythm, cycle, and changes which occur. The combined stories and personal reflections of the interviewees allowed us to take a closer look at the settlement process in terms of family, neighborhood and community life, both for those who are negotiating the educational, social and occupational structures as well as those who have 'made it' – i.e. managed to attain their social and economic ambitions. The life-story approach, therefore, allowed us to examine in some depth the longitudinal changes in the structure of Indo and African Caribbean families living in Canada. The study also used data from the Public Use Micofiche files of the 1996 Census 3% sample.

The process of determining the Caribbean sub-populations is intricately linked to identifying the ethnic population from which respondents indicated belonging to. Undoubtedly reliability of ethnic origin data in the 1996 Census has been affected by instructions and data processing, as well as by the social environment at the time of the census. Each individual’s understanding or awareness of family background or length of time since immigration also affects a respondent’s consciousness about his/her ethnicity. Confusion with other concepts such as citizenship, nationality, language or cultural identity can also influence an individual’s consciousness and dictate his or her choice on the ethnic origin option. Hence, the choice respondents make can affect ethnic origin counts. This is certainly the case with Indo-Caribbean respondents to the 1996 Census. Their choice in how to identify themselves in the Canadian Census seems to reflect the “Creolization” process which they underwent in the Caribbean and the many generations which they spent in the Caribbean which removes feelings for being South Asian ethnicity which they might be carrying.

Choosing what to report and how determines what happens to a respondents classification on the Canadian Census and whether it is included in the count of Caribbean origin people used in this study. All those who checked African-Black; South Asian; or Other Caribbean are included in our sample. Despite our attempts to be inclusive however, the population of Caribbeans includes respondents who may have overlooked or chosen not to respond to the pre-coded categories, Metropolitan Toronto, and the United Way of Greater Toronto. CERIS-Toronto goals are: 1. Promoting research about the impact of immigration on the Greater Toronto Area and on the integration of immigrants into Canadian society; 2. Providing training opportunities; 3. Disseminating policy and program relevant research information.

Tables in this paper provide the inflated estimates. Some minor distortion may be evident in the figures, as Statistics Canada randomly rounds the last digit of figures in all cells to the nearest zero or five, as a step to increase the confidentiality of those enumerated. The census data collection procedure is imperfect. A certain proportion, estimated to be around five percent, of the total population is not enumerated, and under enumeration of certain categories of individuals such as young adult males and recently arrived immigrants may be twice this level or more, a fact which must be taken into account in interpretation of findings.
preferring instead to provide a write-in response. Not responding to the mark in option does not mean that these persons are de facto excluded from our Caribbean count because we have attempted to construct a wide net to capture as many Caribbeans as we could. The following is a brief discussion of how we went about creating our Caribbean ethnic origin variable for this analysis.

We began by first using the visible minority indicator. This was a direct question asked on the Census about whether the respondent considered him or her self to be a ‘visible minority’ member. Visible minorities are persons (other than Aboriginal persons), who are non-Caucasian in “race” or non-white in color. Individuals were given the following ethnic group choices to include themselves: Black, South Asian (Indo-Pakistani), Chinese, Korean, Japanese, South East Asian, Filipino, Oceanic (other Pacific Islanders, Arab, and Latin American (visible minority).

The self-reported ethnic origin of the respondent refers to the ethnic or cultural group to which the respondent’s ancestors belong. The question has changed several times. Prior to 1981 it referred to respondent’s paternal ancestors. In 1981 respondents could choose either paternal or maternal ancestry. In 1986 respondents were allowed to give up to three cultural ethnic or cultural origins. In both the 1996 and 1991 Census the respondent was asked “To which ethnic or cultural group(s) did this person’s ancestors belong?” However, in 1996, the format of the ethnic origin question was changed. The 1991 Census question included 15 mark-in categories and two write-in boxes. The 1996 question did not include any mark-in categories. Respondents were required to write in their ethnic origin(s) in four write in boxes. The change in format to an open-ended question in 1996 is likely to affect response patterns especially for groups which had been excluded as mark-in response categories in 1991.

The data referred to in this study pertains to the respondent’s who stated that they had some Caribbean ancestry. An ancestor is someone from whom a person is descended and is usually more distant than grandparent. Ancestry should not be confused with citizenship or nationality. All persons were asked to report the specific ethnic or cultural group or groups to which ancestors belonged, not the language they spoke. For persons of East Indian or South Asian origins, they could report a specific group for example, “East Indian from India”, “East Indian from Guyana” or indicate the specific group, such as “Punjabi” or “Tamil”. Those who mentioned only Caribbean, are referred to as Caribbean single origin while those who mentioned another origin as well as Caribbean are referred to as Caribbean Multiple origin. In using this variable, there are three categories: Caribbean Single, Caribbean Multiple and All Other. The Black Caribbean count derived from the 1996 Census which is used in this study includes the following responses provided as write-ins in the ethnic origin/ancestry question: Barbadian, Cuban, Guyanese, Haitian, Jamaican, Trinidad/Tobagonian, West Indian, Other Caribbean not elsewhere included.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caribbean Born Population by Ethnic Origin</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>South Asian</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Other Visible Minority</th>
<th>Not Visible Minority</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean Single Ethnic</td>
<td>259,488</td>
<td>6,444</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>27,828</td>
<td>15,588</td>
<td>309,852</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From table 1 we are left with a number of inconsistencies which are difficult to come to terms with in light of previous estimates on the size of the Indo-Caribbean population in Canada. Birbalsingh (1997: 212) estimates that 80% of the total immigrants from Guyana and 60% from Trinidad and Tobago are Indians. From this figure he arrives at the figure of 91,649 Indo-Caribbeans who migrated to Canada between 1962 and 1992. He then adds another 10,000 to this total in order to take into account natural increase and illegal immigrants. His final count is that there are approximately 101,649 or about 100,000 Indo-Caribbean origin people living in Canada in 1996. What is inconsistent is the fact that when we examine the number of men and women who should have self identified themselves as South Asian single or multiple ethnicity and born in the Caribbean only 15,912 people have done so. This number is way off from Birbalsingh’s estimate of 100,000 people. The question becomes where are these people in the census. After examining the census question in more detail one could hypothesize that many Indo-Caribbean people do not see themselves as South Asians but rather because of the “Creolization” process many after migration might not consider their ethnic roots quite so clearly connected to mother India. On the contrary some may be taking a more ideological position in Canada that they feel that they are “Black” in a predominantly “White” country, hence they might report their ethnicity as African Caribbean. This is certainly what occurs in Britain among East Indians who report their ethnicity to be Black (Owen 1996). On the other hand, others might consider themselves to be neither Black, Chinese or South Asian but a visible minority person from the Caribbean. From table 1 there seems to be 46,296 persons of Caribbean-origin who are neither self-reported to be Black, Chinese or South Asian ethnicity. Even more fascinating is an even larger group of Caribbean origin men and women who claim to be not the member of any visible minority 46,440. This group might be composed of individuals who have European physical features or they may be people who clearly do not feel like they belong to either of the other three choices—Black, Chinese or South Asian and they don’t feel that they are a visible minority either. We are not sure who these people are in terms of their ethnicity but they do acknowledge that they were born in the Caribbean.

This raises the issues of coder reliability on the write in section of the Census and it also raises issues about identity politics within the Caribbean cohort as a whole and how this links back to the long history of colonialism in the region and what impact this had on individual groups and their consciousness about their ethnicity and origin. Some of the issues that perplex us as researchers is why are so many Caribbean-origin people claiming to not be part of the visible minority in Canada? This seems to be contradictory since we know from the 1990 Caribbean Regional Census that more than 95 percent of the population from the region are not of European-origin (Ryan 1990).

The lower number of Indo-Caribbeans in the Census suggests to us that there is an identity issue which may emerge from the Caribbean history or the way in which Indo-Caribbeans were

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Caribbean Multiple Ethnic</th>
<th>82,692</th>
<th>9,468</th>
<th>3,384</th>
<th>18,468</th>
<th>30,852</th>
<th>144,864</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Others</td>
<td>215,064</td>
<td>772,092</td>
<td>843,372</td>
<td>945,288</td>
<td>22,183,020</td>
<td>24,958,836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>557,244</td>
<td>788,064</td>
<td>847,260</td>
<td>991,584</td>
<td>22,229,460</td>
<td>25,413,352</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

integrated into Caribbean society in the post emancipation period. It also suggests that there is a difference in the level of consciousness about being from the Caribbean if one is a person of East Indian ethnic heritage. A combination of these explanations all seem to be important in terms of explaining why there seems to be such a large discrepancy between the number of Indo-Caribbeans that do live in Canada compared to the number that self-identify themselves on the census forms.

Caribbean Migration to Canada

Indo-Caribbeans who migrated to Canada since 1962 came mainly from Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. Some did come from Jamaica while a few others came from the Dutch speaking Caribbean territory of Surinam. The current wave of Indo-Caribbean migrants might be considered as a double diaspora because less than 165 years ago the first wave of indentured workers left India for the Caribbean and now just a few generations later their descendants have departed again in pursuit of better opportunities and mobility in Canada (Lokaisingh-Meighoo 1997).

Table 2 shows that the migration pattern to Canada for Indo-Caribbeans is distinct from that of African Caribbeans. African Caribbeans began moving to Canada before 1962. The early migrants from within the African ethnic group were women recruited to be on the domestic labor scheme. These women were responsible for establishing a female led chain migration through which male partners, children and kin subsequently were sponsored into Canada (Silvera 1987). Among the Indo-Caribbean ethnic group a different pattern seems to emerge, there are no women who arrived before 1962 suggesting that Indian women were not initially being recruited as domestic workers. Between 1963 and 1967 this trend changes and a significantly larger number of Indo-Caribbean women (4 percent) enter Canada suggesting that they began to be recruited as domestics in much the same way as African women had previously. By contrast, there is a small number of Indo-Caribbean men (1 percent) who arrived before 1962 and no men who arrived between 1963 and 1967. Between 1968 and 1975 there is a significant increase (18 percent) in the number of Indo-Caribbean men arriving in Canada suggesting that a similar chain migration pattern was initiated by Indo-Caribbean women but then men took over the lead. According to Lokaisingh-Meighoo (1997) another group of Indian men qualified for landed immigrant status under the “Points System” legislation, these men arrived as foreign students, destined for post secondary institutions in places like Winnipeg, Calgary and Victoria. Despite this increase though, Indo-Caribbeans made up only (19 percent) of the total Caribbean immigrants arriving in the period 1968 to 1975 compared to African Caribbeans (31 percent). This trend reverses in the period 1981 to 1986 so that Indo-Caribbeans takeover the lead (23 percent) while African Caribbeans decline to only (12 percent). In the most recent period 1992 to 1996 there is a convergence of the two groups at (17 percent).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Period of Migration by Ethnicity and Sex</th>
<th>African Carib. Male</th>
<th>African Carib. Female</th>
<th>Indo-Carib. Male</th>
<th>Indo-Carib. Female</th>
<th>Other Carib. Male</th>
<th>Other Carib. Female</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before 1962</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
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The migration story to Canada for Caribbeans in the post 1962 period was somewhat similar for both groups in that a large proportion of African and Indo Caribbean women were primarily the instigators of family migration chains. Evidence of the important role of African Caribbean women comes from the reminiscences of Felix about his aunt who migrated from Britain in the 1960s and then she proceeded to sponsor other family members from St Kitts. Felix says:

My dad's oldest sister came over first, she left the Caribbean went to England and then came to Canada prior to when we came to Canada and when we first came to Canada we lived in her house for a couple of months before my parents got an apartment (Felix)¹.

Emigration from Guyana has been largely motivated by a history of intense racial antagonism under the Peoples National Congress government of Forbes Burnham. While violence eventually erupted among both African and Indo-Guyanese factions, the massacre of Indo-Guyanese at Wismar in Demerara in the mid 1970s by African-Guyanese supporters of Burnham and related racialized incidents remain as significant factors which influenced the migration decision for many Indo-Guyanese people (Dabydeen 1989: 253-4; Ramcharan 1983: 52). Guyanese government statistics indicate that on average 6,080 emigrants a year departed between 1969 and 1976, increasing to an average of 14,400 between 1976 and 1981. Figures for 1976 showed (43 percent) of the emigrants were headed to the United States, (31 percent) to Canada, (10 percent) to Britain, and (9 percent) to other parts of the Caribbean⁵. Deteriorating economic conditions caused emigration to increase sharply in the 1980s. Unofficial estimates put the number leaving the country in the late 1980s at 10,000 to 30,000 annually. Many of these emigrants were reported to be middle-class professionals, largely Indo-Guyanese, who opposed government policies that favored employment of

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64,584</td>
<td>45,828</td>
<td>4,536</td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td>12,672</td>
<td>9,756</td>
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Source: 1996 Canadian Census Public Use Microdata file individuals 3% sample.

¹. Pseudonyms have been used throughout this paper when referring to the interviewees.

⁵ Gopie (1993: 62) claims that Indo-Guyanese and Indo-Trinidadians as well as Indians in Jamaica were awarded minority status... entailing discrimination, disadvantage and exclusion but still holds that they have a freely chosen to leave the Caribbean and come to Canada, for reasons not unlike those of other immigrant groups- political uncertainty, fear, persecution and hopes of betterment and educational opportunities". This easy fluidity between claims of racial persecution and economic hardship reflects the complex interplay of race, nationality and class in the migration of Indo-Caribbean people.

The social unrest in Guyana acted as a catalyst for many Indo-Guyanese migrants. Our interviewees reminiscences about why it was their family moved was evidence of this. The common recollection among them was that their parents sought to leave Guyana because their parents wanted to escape the various shortages and limited opportunities for the family. Haniff’s sentiment about his village provides evidence of the social conditions in Guyana which pushed Indo-Guyanese professionals to seek avenues for departure. He says:

The common thing you always heard in the village from people there is that you are going across to Canada for ‘betterment’ and I think in those days what people perceived as betterment is a good job and living conditions are much better than what they are accustomed to e.g., running water in your house, toilet facilities even a better education so that you can be upwardly mobile so to speak. I find it funny in that I did not come from a family that did not have good jobs. My mother was a headmistress when she left. My father was an accounting clerk in the Sugar Estate office. (Haniff)

Emigration from Trinidad occurred for very different reasons than it did in Guyana, especially as the country entered the oil boom period throughout the 1970s and well into the 1980s. Trinidad was economically prosperous and stable employment was largely available to all groups irrespective of ethnicity. While some Indo-Trinidadians did leave for England during the early 1960s, there was not as great an economic or political pressure to leave the country, as was the case in Guyana in the early 1970s. Although the political party in power was predominately African-Caribbean, racial antagonism was not as volatile as it was in Guyana. As such, Trinidadian immigration to Canada reached a peak in 1974 and then sharply declined. It did not begin in large numbers until the mid 1980s when oil revenues began declining and the country was entering a slump. These declining economic conditions set off a significant increase in the crime rate and a general downturn in the social fabric of the society. The effect of the downturn in conditions was the migration of many skilled African and Indian Caribbeans (Ryan 1990). Most Indo-Trinidadian’s leaving the country during this period used the “Point System” to obtain landed immigrant status, a small minority did however exploit a loophole in the Canadian Refugee policy as a means to gain temporary admission to Canada.

The typical story about why African and Indo-Trinidadian’s sought to migrate to Canada were quite different than what we heard from our interviewees from Guyana. Among the Trinidadian interviewees, their families were reported to be moving in pursuit of a better life and educational opportunities not because there was some threat of civil or political strife. Lauren’s reminisce about what motivated her father to migrate typified the responses we heard from our Trinidadian interviewees. She said that her father initially intended to move to Canada to improve his education and then return to Trinidad. She says.

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Using Indo-Caribbean Canadian authors of fiction and prose Birblasingh (1997) finds common themes as to why migration for this group took place. He notes that Indo-Caribbeans who migrated to Canada did so firstly because of educational and economic opportunities, and by the 1970s and 80s, disillusionment, anxiety, fear and an increasingly desperate need for safe refuge.
He moved to basically get an education for himself. He was a teacher in Trinidad before and from what I gather to be a teacher in Trinidad at that time you really just needed some 'O or A' levels so he came here went to university did his masters at U of T and then he started doing his Ph.D. at McGill which he thought he was going to complete and then return. That however never worked out as planned. He found that staying in Canada for our education and the family became more important than going back. (Lauren)

Caribbean Family Structure in Canada– Post Migration

The contemporary African and Indo Caribbean migrant family structure remains elusive to classify due to its complexity and variability. Indeed, complexity and variability are the distinguishing characteristics which continue to challenge accepted norms of family organization with changes in factors like migration. Both Indo and African Caribbeans who migrated remained integrated into their families through various systems of aid and, sometimes, even managing the family from abroad. Migration, extended the family network abroad rather than disintegrating the family. Those who left dependents behind were themselves dependent on family networks for the care and protection of their children. The dependence is reciprocal as the immigrants provide economic and other material support to the caretakers. The absence of close kin in Canada creates the need to improvise new living arrangements and family structures a reason why “fictive kin” are common in many immigrant communities and why men sometimes find themselves filling in as helpmates to their wives in childcare and other household tasks. A role in the home country that would have otherwise not been done (Chamberlain, 1995, 1997).

In our interviews, both Indo and African-Caribbean men and women reported that their extended family was the most important foundation which helped to facilitate the move abroad. Verol’s sentiments about her uncle who was the pioneer migrant to Canada helps us to understand the importance of how Caribbean family and kin structures helped others left behind to migrate abroad. Verol says:

My dad had one sibling up here so in the early years we used to see a lot of each other, that stopped in the end, but my mom has quite a large family and they pretty

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7 Since the period of formal slavery in the Caribbean, African men and women have been stereotyped by Europeans as irresponsible "savages" incapable of having monogamous relations or forming stable families. The colonizers' perception of the lifestyles led by African slaves rarely took into consideration the harsh and brutal conditions imposed by the plantation economies or the formal restrictions placed on men and women by the planters (Patterson, 1967). During the post-emancipation period it was not only the African Caribbeans who received the negative labels as having a dysfunctional family. The label came to be applied equally to the indentured labourers from China and in particular, India who were brought after the abolition of slavery to work the cane fields. Marriages, other than those made under Christian rites and law, were not recognized by the colonial authorities and, as a result, most children were classified as illegitimate, and most wives as concubines. Indeed the nineteenth century colonial authorities were obsessed by what they considered domestic instability, the low rates of marriage and the high rates of illegitimacy, both of which were regarded as clear threats to moral and social progress (Chamberlain 1998).
well all followed her. At one point, like three years ago they were all up here, everyone had come, one has actually moved back down. So we grew up with them a lot, cousins, aunts and uncles and some people I call aunty and uncle but they are really just close friends with my parents. We've always lived close by until a little while ago when we made the move out to Whitby. (Verol)

Migration is a powerful dynamic within Caribbean culture and the family (Marshall 1989; Chamberlain 1999). The ways in which the family supported and enabled migration, the role of migration in supporting the family and as a continuing dynamic within families has only recently engaged the research imagination of migration scholars (Richardson, 1983; Thomas-Hope 1992; Fog-Olwig 1993). Regarding the family and migration from the perspective of the Caribbean however, begins to shift the understanding of the family away from what it is perceived as abnormality, to points of cultural survival and retention.

A host of structural constraints and conditions confronted Caribbeans in their new Canadian environment and these helped to shape the kinds of family arrangements, roles and orientations that emerged among them. So did the norms and values they encountered when they moved to Canada. Caribbeans were not passive individuals who were acted upon by external forces alone. Although immigrants do not exactly reproduce their old cultural patterns when they move to a new land; these patterns continue to have a powerful influence in shaping family values and norms as well as actual patterns of behaviors that develop in the new settings. Practices and conceptions do not continue unchanged. They are restructured, redefined and renegotiated in the new settings. Caribbeans in Canada did however continue to draw on pre-migration family experiences, norms and cultural frameworks as they carved out new lives for themselves.

One of these for African Caribbeans was the common practice of leaving children in their home country in the care of a grand-mother, aunt or sibling. Many of our African Caribbean interviewees commented on the fact that they had been separated from their mothers and fathers for a number of years before being reunited. This pattern of “child shifting” was a common practice in the Caribbean8 (Roberts & Sinclair, 1978: 161). This was a notably different pattern for Indo-Caribbean families. From our sample and the Census evidence it seems that many Indo-Caribbean mothers remained with their children in Trinidad or Guyana and only migrated when the children were able to move as one and be reunited with their father. This pattern was certainly in contrast to the

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8 Since the period of Emancipation circa 1834 African Caribbean maternal grandmothers have been looked upon to take over child care responsibilities from their young daughters. One of the commonest ways this “child shifting occurs is when a daughter begins to establish a family while still resident in her parent(s) home. If she has to migrate to some other part of the country or internationally in search of work she is often unable to take her child(ren) with her and leaves them with her mother. It is often the intention that the children should spend only a limited period with the grandmother, that is, until the mother is satisfactorily settled in her new community. In most cases, however, the result is that the child(ren) remain in the grandmother's home for very long periods Sally Gordon (1987) notes that child-shifting is perceived as a domestic “responsive strategy” to economic circumstances whereby the costs and benefits of child rearing are relocated among households by shifting children from those less economically secure and less able to support them to those who are better off.
African Caribbean cohort. Some women and men made the decision to leave their children behind because the conditions for their migration were not favorable to their children.

Many of our African Caribbean interviewees recalled a family shift migration pattern. Mark’s recollection about his mother’s migration to Canada and his subsequent separation for four years was common. He says:

My mom came to Toronto in 1971 or ’72. She then applied for my dad and he came in 1973 or 1974. She was the first one in her family to leave Jamaica. She was looking for better economic conditions, maybe get a better job, a better education etc. I was a little baby when she left, I was only about nine months when my mother left. It was not until I was 4½ that I came to Canada. All that time I lived with my grandmother and actually I thought she was my mother. (Mark)

Foner’s (1994) work on Jamaican immigrants in New York City finds that new cultural and social patterns emerge among these immigrants as a kind of “creolization”9 process. If we think in terms of this second “creolization” process occurring among Indo and African Caribbeans to Canada we need to look at the blend of meaning, perceptions and social patterns that emerges. This blend, needless to say, is different for each Caribbean ethnic group, reflecting among other things, its specific cultural, social and demographic characteristics. At play are the complex processes of change as customs, values, and attitudes each Caribbean ethnic group brings from “home” begin to shift in the context of new hierarchies, cultural conceptions, and social institutions they confront in Canada (Foner, 1977, 1994). Indo and African Caribbean immigrants therefore do not become exactly like Canadians, nor are they any longer just like African or Indo Caribbeans in their respective home countries. New meanings, ideologies and patterns of behavior develop among them in response to conditions and circumstances they encounter in Canada.

Changes in divisions of labor within families was apparent for both Indian and African Caribbeans. Survival strategies included men becoming much more active in child care, cooking and cleaning of homes than was previously the case in the Caribbean where the extended family might have filled in these roles. In Canada the atomization of the family from an extended network meant that men and women had to pull double duty. The constraints of both men and women having to work odd hours put added pressure on the family. For most families they developed work habits which assisted in child care. Despite some sharing of non-traditional duties women in both Indian and African households continued to be responsible for the majority of the child care and household duties while holding down full time employment. For Vishnu’s family the changes after moving to Canada meant that his father would have to cook and do child care while his mother worked during the day. This was a role that most Indo-Caribbean men who grew up in Trinidad or Guyana were totally unaccustomed to before migration made it a necessity. Vishnu tells us:

9 Creolization is a process starting from the very formation of slave colonies in the Caribbean, African and European cultural elements were merged, married, blended, or combined into a new and quintessentially Caribbean synthesis, a tertium quid to which the appropriately composite term “creole” is widely given (Burton 1997).
In the initial stages my dad worked an afternoon shift from about 3 - 11:30 in the night to care for the smaller ones during the day until they went to school half day. My mom was working also, we had to have the two incomes to make ends meet so we would try to save up to get a home. I used to help cook and clean, I felt it was fair. My mom left home at 6 in the morning to work down at Spadina in one of the garment sweat shops and it was a 90 minutes ride normally, on the bad winter weather it would be two hours one way. So she would leave at 6 am and come back by 6-6:30 in the evening. I knew that she would be tired so I tried to make the roti or whatever while my dad would cook curry or whatever he could before he left for work. So the family pooled together in that sense to help out. (Vishnu)

Despite the fact that there were changes in the divisions of labor within Caribbean immigrant families most of our interviewees recalled that their mothers and fathers continued to carry out some traditional roles much like they were in the Caribbean. The relationships that the interviewees reported having with their mothers was consistent. Most reported mothers to be strict, but very close and primarily responsible for schooling matters. For fathers there was more variation in responses. The Indo-Caribbeans recalled their fathers as being the patriarch of the family. All final decisions had to go through him. Both African and Indo-Caribbean fathers were reported to play a very low key social role in the family. These were certainly the experiences of Arlene. Each of them provides a perspective on the roles their mothers and fathers played in the family. What is apparent from their reflections is that there seems to be a continuity of traditional roles for Caribbean men and women in Canada. The roles were similar for both ethnic groups. Arlene says:

Dad sort of supported the family, he worked a lot, when he was not at 'work' he was at home working. He did more of the recreation and fun sort of side of it. My mom was the one who went to the parent teacher interviews, my was the one who came to see us when we were in school shows or extracurricular stuff like playing field hockey and stuff. My dad was always mostly working. (Arlene)

Living Arrangements and Family Structures in Canada

The living arrangements that Caribbean immigrants have established in Canada are the result of a combination of factors which include social class transformations, period of arrival, and transplanted customs (both African/Indian and some combination of both through the Creolization process). These are all factors which have their origin in the Caribbean and seem to be played out in Canada. From table 3 it might appear that African Caribbean families are loosely structured with an apparent absence of father headed households (42 percent of families are headed by female lone parents). This trend is by no means a sign of "disfunctionality" within African Caribbean families in Canada on the contrary, single female headed households are quite typical in the Caribbean for this
group. Lone-mothers in Canada may therefore be no more 'alone' than are mothers in the Caribbean because members of the wider kinship group are expected to, and often do, take on maternal, paternal and affiliative responsibilities as required by specific circumstances (Barrow 1996). For Indo-Caribbean families many of the patterns established during the Indentureship and Creolization period seem to have also been reconstituted in Canada despite differences in environment and support networks in each location. The typical Indo-Caribbean family in Canada is an extended household which consists of parents, children, grandparents and other extended blood related kin.

Although little tradition remains and “Creolization” is pervasive today, East Indian culture and social organization, personality traits and material values are markedly unlike those of African Caribbeans (Barrow 1996: 353). Contemporary Indian kinship traditions appear in many respects to be the mirror opposite of family and conjugal union patterns among African Caribbean people. East Indian patriarchal and Creole female centered families are reflected in marriage, sexuality, parenthood, illegitimacy and child rearing differences. The family as an institution and the close and enduring family bonds are the center of East Indian culture (Barrow 1996: 341). The typical Indo-Caribbean family living in Trinidad or Guyana today is likely to be an extended household with an older male as the head; the oldest man and woman who head the household are likely to be joined by legal marriage; the divorce rate is likely to be low because according to Hindu tradition -- couples are suppose to marry for life; children are likely to continue living with or near parents even after marriage; a significant proportion of Indo-Caribbean women are likely to be working and contributing to the household income; education is likely to be regarded as important an important element for mobility but at the same time older men and women are less likely to have completed secondary schooling; and the family is likely to have a savings arrangement whereby economic resources are pooled for the betterment of the whole family (Vertovec 1990 235).

Evidence of a continuity of this trend comes from table 3 where (45 percent) of Indo-Caribbean households have five or more people living together while only (30 percent) of African households have the same. The typical Indo-Caribbean household is headed by a male and female couple who are joined by legal marriage (62 percent) compared to (41 percent) of African-Caribbeans. Also interesting from the same table is that (17 percent) of Indo-Caribbeans compared to only (6 percent) of African Caribbean families live in multi-family units. These are households in which two or more census families occupy the same private dwelling.

|---------------|---------------|------------|------------|

10 The living pattern that African Caribbean people have established in Canada is reminiscent of diaspora communities in other parts of the world. Caribbeans in Britain for example exhibit features increasingly recognized as characteristics of our post-industrial, post-modern culture. These features include an emphasis on the individual's freedom and distance from the traditional collectivist or group. A high incidence of lone-parents (almost entirely women). The apparently low participation of men in the family and household (child-raring, emotional, financial and other material support to the collective unit)(Goulbourne & Chamberlain 2000).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married +</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Common Law)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never Married</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>49.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Single)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>97,236</td>
<td>80,496</td>
<td>5,832</td>
<td>5,292</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1996 Canadian Census Public Use Micro-data file individuals

### Table 4

**Household Type by Ethnicity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>African Caribbean Female %</th>
<th>African Caribbean Male %</th>
<th>Indo-Caribbean Female %</th>
<th>Indo-Caribbean Male %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married Couples</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common-Law Couples</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone Parent Family</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Family Household</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-family Household</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>97,056</td>
<td>79,884</td>
<td>5,832</td>
<td>5,292</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1996 Canadian Census Public Use Microdata file individuals 3% sample.

### Table 5

**Household Size by Ethnicity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>African Carib. Female %</th>
<th>African Carib. Male %</th>
<th>Indo-Carib. Female %</th>
<th>Indo-Carib. Male %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One and Two Person</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In terms of home ownership there are again substantial differences between the two Caribbean ethnic groups. Table 4 shows that Indo-Caribbeans (68 percent) are likely to be living in a home which they own. This compares to only (39 percent) of African Caribbeans who live in places they own. The differences in home ownership might be explained by a cultural preference which Indo-Caribbeans have for home ownership. Or it might be the practical matter of needing a home instead of renting an apartment especially since a significant proportion of Indo-Caribbeans have larger households. Another explanation for the difference between the two groups comes from Henry (1994), she found in her interviews that African Caribbean people living in Canada do not feel as comfortable or as permanently rooted to Canada. She attributed this feeling to the differential racialized treatment that African Caribbean people receive on a day to day basis in the Canadian milieu by the authorities and the media. African Caribbeans never felt welcomed or at “home” in Canada and so hence they might feel that by setting roots down in terms of home ownership they would inevitably be delaying their future desire to return to the Caribbean in order to complete the migration cycle (Marshall 1984).

Our African Caribbean interviewees seemed to be less likely to report their parents wanting to set down roots in Canada by purchasing a home. Rather there seemed to be a long term desire to continue renting instead of buying and setting down permanent roots. Randolf’s reminiscence about his fathers delay in initiating a home purchase in Canada was typical. He says:

My father never liked to take chances and because he saw himself as a pilgrim in this land, going back home you know. He bought a home only in the later years and so we were always in an apartment. We have lived in Ontario Housing and that was for about one year and then moved to an apartment and then finally to a house. There was a time there when things were really rough. Just the to have the finer things in life I think we are a little better off financially. We are making more, I don’t know if it is more compared to what they were making but I think we are doing a lot more than they did back then. (Randolf)

Farook on the other hand recalls that his parents strategized very soon after arriving in Canada to purchase a home. The value of home ownership within Indian culture is very strong (Barrow 1996). Vertovec (1990) found in his research in Britain that Indo-Caribbeans were very likely to have a family saving arrangement whereby economic resources were pooled for the betterment of the whole family—this was primarily targeted towards home ownership. The Indo-Caribbean migrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Three Person</th>
<th>21.2</th>
<th>20.8</th>
<th>15.4</th>
<th>13.6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four Person</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Person or More</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>97,056</td>
<td>79,884</td>
<td>5,832</td>
<td>5,292</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

from Guyana also seemed to have an additional reason to purchase a home in Canada since most regarded their migration from Guyana as a final move. This was in contrast to Indo-Trinidadian migrants who regarded their time in Canada as temporary and returning to Trinidad in the future was to be part of their cycle of migration. Farook informs us about his extended family’s home ownership strategy after they arrived in Toronto. He says:

When we first moved here in 1976 we lived in the city [downtown Toronto] and the neighborhood that we were in was a mix of Italians and Jamaicans. Actually it wasn’t just Jamaicans and Italians, there were Portuguese and West Indians The apartment complex housed four of my mom’s sisters so I had lots of cousins to play with. About two years later we moved to an established neighborhood in Scarborough with one of my mothers younger sisters and her family. A few years later they moved out to their own house and then we had the house to ourselves. (Farook)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6: Housing Tenure by Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>African Carib. Female</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Owned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renting Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1996 Canadian Census Public Use Microdata file individuals 3% sample.

Issues of Adaptation for Caribbean Families in Canada

A major question in terms of adaptation to the Canadian milieu for second generation Caribbeans was their success in the schooling system as this would be the major avenue to social mobility. The decision to move to Canada for both ethnic groups was often closely associated with aspirations to further educational opportunities for their children (Mendoza 1989; Henry 1994). There is considerable evidence that Caribbean children, particularly African ethnicity, have difficulty in the Canadian school system. A survey done of all secondary students in the Toronto area in 1991 revealed there is a high proportion of "underachievers" among Caribbean-born African students (Royal Commission on Learning, 1995). According to the same study, African Caribbean students, who make up 9 percent of the Toronto population, were significantly over-represented (18 percent) in the lower "basic" academic stream. More than one in three African Caribbean students (36 percent) is at risk of leaving high school without a diploma based on their marks and credit
accumulation in the core subjects of English and math. The drop-out rate for African Caribbean students who entered high school in 1987 and should have finished in 1992 was 42 percent.

In the context of these sobering findings in the previous paragraph, it is important to note that a significant number of African Caribbean-origin students are doing well in school: 55 percent are in "advanced" programs, 9 percent scored "high" in both English and Math, while 21 percent scored "high" in either English or Math. "High" was defined as having an average of more than 70 percent (Royal Commission on Learning, 1995). Richmond (1993) also provides evidence of achievement. Caribbean immigrants who came to Canada as young (pre-school) children and the second-generation children (born in Canada) within the Caribbean community in Toronto achieved levels of post-secondary education that equaled or surpassed the average. Richmond (1993) also notes that Caribbean immigrants who arrived when they were in their teens did less well because many were culturally not prepared to enter predominately White Euro-Canadian school environments where the curriculum was Euro-centric and the teachers taught with a White middle class bias. Students who presented themselves as different were often assumed to be problems, underachievers or ill prepared to make it within the existing system (Breserve 1976; Head & Lee 1975; Ramcharan 1975; Larter 1988; Ruth 1983; Richards 1987). As a result many African Caribbean students were streamed or tracked into lower levels. The effect of this practice of course was a self fulfilling prophecy of lowered expectations by teachers for African Caribbean students and hence the students came to have lowered expectations about themselves and their own potential (Coelho 1988; Solomon 1992; James 1990; Braithwaite and James 1996; Cummins 1997). Evidence of the streaming and tracking practice in Canadian schools came out in many of our interviews. Both men and women and reported experiencing the unfair practice in their junior years of highschool. The practice was most often reported by our African Caribbean interviewees. Most felt that teachers, principals and guidance counselors felt that they were genetically inferior in terms of their intellectual ability. As a result they had no reservation about streaming or tracking African Caribbean students into the lowest levels. Sentiments about how African Caribbeans were treated in the Canadian schooling system were highlighted by the story Alan told about arriving in Canada as a teenager. He says:

I remember when I first came to Toronto I did this test and got recommended to this vocational school and my parents put me in this school on the recommendation of the teachers. Just before I left Jamaica I knew I was a good student, I was studying for spelling Bee, I had just written Common Entrance actually at that age I was kind a special kid because they let me write a couple of 'O' level exams. I think that damaged me more than anything else, leaving Jamaica at that time. I was on the right track, I came here ended up in a vocational school and everything was like "What the heck is this" they were saying I could not speak English but I could write the damn thing. By then at that very crucial time you lose your skills and I did not suffer much but I could have been better if I had stayed in Jamaica. After about two/three years, grade 9, 10 and then I did a summer school which is a prep I got to go to Central Tech. Even after that I ended up in Central Tech but I don't know I ended up in a technical stream and after grade 12 for me to go in the academic stream they wanted to put me back in grade 12 again, I went to
them, I pleaded and I begged and I said "Don't put me there if I can't do it, it's my loss" and they finally put me in grade 13. (Alan)

Rhonda also provides strong evidence on how the practice of streaming and tracking affected African Caribbean families in Toronto. She attended a Catholic all girls school run by nuns. Her experience was typical however of other interviewees who attended the public school system. Cindy's reflection also suggest that there was a critical need for immigrant parents to use their agency to monitor the teachers and administrations activity particularly as it related to the advice being provided to their children. Many White Euro-Canadian teachers internalized the racist stereotype that African Caribbean people were genetically inferior. As a result of having lower expectations for African origin people they often counseled young African Caribbeans to only strive to complete the basic non-academic stream of education. Issues of adjustment to Canada were made more difficult for African Caribbeans because they would have to overcome stereotypes from the dominant group which they may not have been aware of. Rhonda says:

In high school all of the girls in my class were either Level four or five. Level five meant that you were going to university. Usually when you were coming in Grade 9, this woman would recommend all of the Black girls go into Level four. What I would do is circumvent this counselor and deal with one of the nuns. I never dealt with the counselor because from the beginning I knew what the game was and coming from the family I did, the radar always went off. (Rhonda)

Rhonda also provides evidence of why it was necessary for parents to be actively involved with their children's education in Canada. She says:

I was doing a lot of pushing buttons as far as rebelliousness before high school. It continued in high school because I felt I had to being one of 6 Black girls at St. Joseph Highschool. It was a school that was run by nuns and because a lot of what they said was 'bullshit' in terms of religion, in terms of Black people and civil rights. The incident that I think about all the time is - I call it the 'Othello incident'. This was when we were being taught Shakespeare we did Othello. I had two racist nuns and the first nun would teach you English, my best subject, marked me down in my exam when I said that Othello was Black. I brought the paper home, my father was so upset he came to the school not even on parent/teachers night, he made a special trip. Anyway, they had this little thing and she ended up giving me the mark. (Rhonda)

One of the realities that both second generation Indo and African Caribbeans had to deal with was the overt discrimination and racism they encountered in schools and in their day to day activities in Canada. Although Caribbean immigrants had come from societies where distinctions of color, ethnicity, social behavior, speech, and education played an important part in determining treatment; in Canada none of these fine distinctions were of much significance in relation to the more dominant
issue of “race” and ethnicity. Learning to deal with the color, ethnicity and “race” issue was difficult for some because it went against their constructed notion about Canada as a place where opportunities for mobility were supposed to be available to everyone so long as he/she was willing to endure sacrifice and work hard. The reality of the situation, however, is that a color, ethnicity and “race” hierarchy exists in Canada and it was directed particularly at those who are a dark skin color and further away in appearance to the dominant White Euro-Canadian norm. For Indo-Caribbeans the discrimination they faced was focused on the fact that their ethnic appearance was East Indian. During the 1970s “Paki” bashing was at its height in parts of Europe and Canada. Many Indo Caribbeans in Canada bore the brunt of the name calling, overt acts of violence and negative stereotyping. Ansel recollection about growing up in Toronto during the 1970s provides evidence of the pain that many second generation Indo-Caribbeans experienced during the 1970s in Canada. He says:

In September of 1976 my parents bought a house in Scarborough and we moved on. That was a different experience because we changed school of course and I went to Westhill Collegiate which at that time was pretty much an all-White school. They were being bused from the Malvern area to Westhill. In many of my classes I was the only coloured person and I can tell you the first year there in 1976, there was a lot of harassment from other students, we were at the height of the "Paki" bashing at that time. Gym classes were probably the most dramatic scenes. I wasn't as familiar with Canadian sports, there was the opportunity in the locker room where teachers weren't present for people to flip wet towels and make their comments. Somehow I managed to do very good in school despite those drawbacks. (Ansel)

African Caribbean respondents also reported that they were subjected the ugliness of racism while growing up in Toronto. Similar to Indo-Caribbeans their treatment varied from name calling to overt acts of violence. Cliff's recollection about growing up in Toronto highlights the fact that African Caribbean children were also at the forefront when it came to racism. He tells us:

I remember when I was little being very unaware of racial polarity, I fit in the sense that I always had friends I was always an outgoing and popular little kid I do not recall very many conflicts. I think the first time I remember a distinct difference between myself and others I was probably about 11 or 12 and that's when I began hearing the "Nigger" word applied to others and then eventually applied to myself. It did take bit longer to get to me and I also think that's partly because of my unconscious assimilation so to speak. I say unconscious because I really did not at that time of my life understand any difference between wanting to fit in or naturally fitting in, it just happened. When I first remember being called “Nigger”, I do remember punching someone in the stomach right down the street here. (laughter) Subsequently it continued to happen, but I think it was more or at least my blind naivety leaves me to think that it was in jest than serious because at that age I do not know that people really understood what they were calling me. (Clifford)

Although the “Point System” ensured that many of the early Caribbean migrants were
qualified in certain skilled trades or professions, once these individuals arrived in Canada however, many were systemically blocked from positions commensurate with their qualifications because they lacked "Canadian experience". Their Caribbean qualifications and work experience were considered to be inferior because they were obtained in a "foreign" environment. This was a common memory for many of our second generation interviewees whose parents were often times frustrated and depressed by the fact that they could not access the jobs they had previously done or felt they were qualified for. Felix's mother who arrived in Canada in 1973 is a typical case of this systematic exclusion. Her teaching qualifications and experience in Jamaica were never recognized by authorities in the education department. As a result she had to settle for a much lower paying and unstable substitute teaching job throughout her working years in Canada. This of course meant that she could never earn the income or have employee benefits that potentially could give her family more financial stability. Felix tells us:

Well my father had done a lot of manual labor, but he also was a mechanic when he came to Canada - an auto mechanic. When he moved here he did a little bit of that. He did various kinds of jobs then got a job as a machinist at a large Swedish Company so he worked there for years and years. My mother who had more formal education than my father was a school teacher in Jamaica and when she came here at first, she found out the so called notions of Canadian qualification, so she supposedly had to update her qualification even though she taught for many, many years and was very experienced in that area. She ended up supply teaching quite a lot and augmenting her own education with courses here as well, but she really ever taught full time in Canada most of the time she taught supply. (Felix)

The effect of this racism and exclusion for both groups was the feeling that Canada was not really a welcoming society. Individuals and families had to learn to understand and deal with the pain of racism and discrimination. When confronted with these realities, some used the approach of passive resistance. Typically, this involved not acknowledging the racist person or the incident that was taking place around them. Others adopted a more direct "in your face" approach to dealing with racist or discrimination. These individuals and families confronted the incidents immediately as they happened. For others maintaining composure and confidence to carry on under these circumstances required that they use the historical reference point of their ancestors who had endured and survived slavery. By thinking in these macro-historical terms, whatever was taking place in Canada in terms of racism and discrimination could be rationalized as not being nearly as significant as what their ancestors endured.

One of the effects of the exposure to racism is the second generation Caribbeans have had a difficult time becoming "Canadianized" to the extent that they felt like they belonged in Canada. Some of our interviewees were better at it than others. Some reported that changing their accent, having mainly White friends, trying to act "white", while others reported slipping into their ethnic enclaves in order to avoid the painful nature of name calling or other overt acts of racism. Many of our second-generation Caribbean-origin men and women have adapted to Canada according to a segmented assimilation model. For the most part this has meant becoming acculturated into a white middle class lifestyle while at the same time maintaining elements of Caribbean culture. New meanings, ideologies and patterns of behavior have developed among second generation Caribbeans
in response to conditions and circumstances they encounter in their new "home".

Segmented Assimilation refers to the fact that immigrants assimilate to particular sectors of Canadian society, with some becoming integrated into the majority White middle class, while others become less assimilated (Portes and Zhou; 1993; Portes 1995). Evidence of this non-linear process for second generation Caribbeans was apparent throughout the interviews. The common pattern for both Indo and African Caribbeans was that they arrived in Canada and initially reported that their closest friends were other newly arrived immigrants of color. As time passed these individuals either ended up incorporating more "White" Euro-Canadians into their close circle of friends or else they "stuck to their own kind". The later an individual arrived the more choices they had as to decide to what degree they wanted to assimilate. The younger an individual was when he/she arrived also determined to a great extent the amount of assimilation they would experience. Younger people more readily while older children were more likely to experience segmented assimilation. For Horace who arrived at age ten he reports that when he first arrived he felt most comfortable among people of color. As time passed however he widened his circle of friends. He says:

Most of my friends that first year were people either West Indian or East African background. I think out of self-protection more or less people would not pick on you if you were in a group, we tended to hang out together, but after that certainly I made friends with other mainstream people who were more open-minded. In particular I remember one kid from the mainstream who was a very nice kid who when people would hassle us, sometimes he would say 'back off, leave the guy alone' and I certainly appreciated that. (Horace)

The situation was different for Karen who who arrived in Canada in the early 1970s and lived in a predominately "white" neighborhood. She had very little choice but to assimilate to the dominant cultures values, and way of life. She tells us:

Well, when I was growing up both here in the Toronto area and here in Peel my friends were unquestionably predominantly white or Caucasian and that was simply a reflection of the community at that time in the mid '70s to early '80s even this area was predominantly Caucasian Italian and you were only starting to get a filtering of dark-skinned people coming into the community, so when I reflect back on my class pictures there is maybe two or three dark skinned people in the class of 30 and then approaching the late 70s early 80s you start to get maybe 5, 6, 7. (Karen)

Living life as a border crosser in terms of segmented assimilation was often times very difficult for some of our interviewees. Many reported feeling inadequate in both worlds. Most indicated a strong desire to fit into both worlds. Anand reflected on his feeling alienated from his Indo-Caribbean culture because his Caribbean friends had labeled him as having become too "Canadianized" because he lost his accent and did not know the rules of some traditional sports like Cricket. He says:
Growing up a lot of West Indians used to refer to me as too Canadianize because of simply things like the first time I played cricket and I hit the ball and started running [laughs]. I've heard people say very prejudicial things and thinking because I do not sound West Indian that it would be fine to say these things to me for example saying things about statements like "We've got to send all these Jamaicans back to Jamaica" (Anand)

Others like Simboo however reported that they felt a desire to firmly locate their identity with in the Indo-Caribbean community in Canada while growing up. This community provided them with safety and a feeling of belonging. This community also had some links to the Sub-continental Indian diaspora community from both India and Africa. The cultural glue that bound these groups together was the fact that they practiced a similar Hindu or Muslim religion. He says

My dad is a Hindu Priest so on weekends I was always involved with him in attending various ceremonies that he was conducting. There was always that interaction with the Indian community, when I say Indian at that point from the parents' perspective is mainly West Indian Indians this provided a means of meeting people from your own background. You had your own little niche so to speak. As I grew older and went off to university plus my experiences in high school with people from different cultures I broaden that horizon. I think by and large my parents community is still mainly that West Indian community whereas mine is broader than that (Simboo)

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to expand our understanding about the experiences of second generation Indo and African Caribbeans who arrived in Canada during the 1970s. This paper examined the migration, settlement, adjustment and acculturation experiences of second generation Indo and African Caribbeans and found that there were some significant differences. Both Indo and African Caribbeans had many similar experiences in terms of migration and acculturation but they had different experiences which were moderated by the stereotypes and the differential racialization that each ethnic group was subjected to in the Canadian milieu. In general both experienced racism in their settlement and adjustment to Canada. This was particularly ugly for Indo Caribbeans who faced the era of “Paki” bashing which lasted from the early 1970s and continued well into the 1980s. For African Caribbeans they were subjected to the age old discrimination that was doled out to African Canadians and African Americans since the period of slavery. They entered into a milieu where they were thought to be genetically inferior in terms of intellect, morality and physical capabilities.

Both cohorts also had different experiences in terms of settlement and living arrangements in Canada. Many of these differences can be traced to the conditions the migrant families were faced with in Canada arriving in a situation where they could not reproduce the support networks that existed in the Caribbean. Differences can also be attributed to the fact that each group arrived in Canada with a certain degree of “creolized” having been socialized in the Caribbean, at the same time however each Caribbean ethnic groups arrived in Canada with a suitcase full of its own cultural baggage in terms of their “ideal” living arrangements, family structures, family values, and gender roles.
In terms of identity both ethnic groups agreed that they were Canadian but they still held onto aspects of their Caribbean heritage. Most understood that they have multiple layers for identity. Most also felt that this identity changed over time with age and maturity. Most also felt that they could never get away from their Caribbean heritage and they would not want to. Most said that they could not live in the Caribbean again. One comment made was about a “nationalism crisis” that many went through during the teen years where they were grappling for an identity and not knowing if they were Caribbean or Canadian. Many developed a strongly Caribbean identity while they were in their teens. This seemed to be a “finding” themselves stage of life where they felt alienated from Canadian culture.

From the evidence presented in this paper it is imperative that future Caribbean migration scholars to follow the lead of this analysis and desegregate the migration experience into distinct Caribbean ethic groups. By desegregating the story a more meaningful understanding of Caribbean migration experience can be more fully understood. By lumping the group together or only recognizing the African Caribbean group as the one with the “typical” story scholars run the risk of losing the great deal of the variation in immigrant experiences that took place in Canada for Caribbeans.
Bibliography


