Article

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McGill Journal of Education / Revue des sciences de l'éducation de McGill, vol. 44, n° 3, 2009, p. 405-433.

ENGAGING THE CANADIAN DIASPORA: YOUTH SOCIAL IDENTITIES IN A CANADIAN BORDER CITY[1]

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ABSTRACT. This paper is based on qualitative interviews undertaken with immigrant youth of African descent in Windsor, Ontario; it describes their sojourner lives across geographic borders and their final settlement in Windsor. The paper also offers narrations of the activities that enabled them to formulate friendships and the barriers and facilitators to the development of friendships across races. Critical findings reported in this paper reveal the ways that youth use resources in their travels to construct and negotiate their identities and to formulate new friendships. An important resource used by the majority of the youth was that of an imagined homeland, which consequently impacted on how they viewed and acted on the racial boundary critical in the formation of friendships in the Diaspora.

INTÉGRER LA DIASPORA CANADIENNE: LES IDENTITÉS SOCIALES DES JEUNES ÉTABLIS DANS UNE VILLE CANADIENNE FRONTALIÈRE[1]

RÉSUMÉ. Inspiré d'entrevues qualitatives faites auprès de jeunes de descendance africaine établis à Windsor en Ontario, cet article décrit leur périple migratoire à travers les frontières jusqu'à leur établissement en Ontario. Il relate également ce qui les a aidés à bâtir des liens amicaux ainsi que les obstacles et les éléments facilitateurs au développement d'amitiés interraciales. Des résultats importants soulevés dans cet article expliquent les manières dont les jeunes utilisent les ressources au cours du voyage migratoire pour construire et négocier leurs identités et établir de nouvelles amitiés. Il explore comment la majorité des jeunes créent un concept imaginaire de leur mère-patrie, influençant ainsi la façon dont ils perçoivent et agissent sur les frontières raciales fondamentales à la création d'amitiés au sein de la diaspora.

INTRODUCTION

Background to the larger study

This paper discusses data drawn from a larger study, *Intergenerational Links and the Civic Participation of Youth from African Communities* (Dlamini & Anucha, 2005), undertaken with youth between the ages of 16 and 24 whose families migrated to Canada between 1995 and 2005. The study was conceptualized

with awareness that over the past decade many of the people emigrating from the African continent arrive in Canada with diverse experiences of hardship caused by wars, poverty, and related problems. As a result of these experiences, ideas of how and when to participate in their new communities are narrowly understood, and their knowledge of governance is often informed by their negative experiences with repressive regimes from their countries of origin. Therefore, the study examined youth understanding of civic participation as well as the patterns of interaction that currently exist between youth and those with whom they relate.

Another component addressed in the study emanated from the realization that despite multicultural and other diversity-based policies, minority youth in general, and those of African descent in particular, still face barriers such as racial discrimination that limit their access to social and economic opportunities. Yet there are very few community programs that address the particularities and special requirements of youth from war-torn continental Africa. In fact, the tendency of many government programs has been to group all Black children together and to develop youth-related strategies and policies in ways that assume uniformity of experience. This study broke away from this trend to homogeneity in an effort to examine the unique experiences of these African youth and to begin to address how they can be meaningfully engaged in their new homeland, while at the same time taking into consideration how their previous experiences in their original homelands come to bear on their current undertakings.

In *Intergenerational Links and the Civic Participation of Youth from African Communities*, we asked the questions: How do youth from African communities imagine themselves as members of the local communities (e.g., their neighbourhood or even the city of Windsor) beyond the confines of familiar national boundaries, that is, their countries of origin? With what people and groups do these youth most closely identify upon settling in the new Canadian space? What role do their images of Africa and their experiences there play in the processes of new identity formation and community engagement? What social and political gains are associated with these identities and engagements? What are the local conditions that help shape identification as cultural histories and cultural politics? Youth answers to these questions were diverse, and illuminated the politics of identification and civic engagement, which moved from the use of homeland and cultural and personal histories to an adaptation of the political experience of migration plus the desire to incorporate social and cultural practices that are seen to be Canadian.

In *Intergenerational Links and the Civic Participation of Youth from African Communities*, we investigated ways that civic participation is linked to the development and deployment of both social capital (Bourdieu 1986; Putman, 1993, 2000)[2] and youth identity. We were also interested in learning why some interactions

produced social capital for youth and others did not. We soon realized that the production and utilization of social capital is strongly linked to youth social identities; that is, who they are as young people is central to how they are able to develop social capital and to access the resources and sites in which social capital is created and mobilized. As such, the purpose of this paper is to use identity-defining data to look closely at how recently immigrated African youth identities are constructed and negotiated within the Canadian context; that is, we discuss the data that explains how youth construct and negotiate their identities in the new Canadian space and how such constructions shape the relations they form with other youth both within and across ethnic boundaries. We frame our discussion through using the dialectical concepts of identity and diaspora.

Engaging the Canadian Diaspora: Youth and the construction of identity

In order to understand the notion of *diaspora*, it is critical to explore the socio-historical origins of the term. Today, *diaspora* is often understood as a dispersion of any people across countries away from their original homelands. Until recently, however, this concept was often only associated with those whose scattering was a result of a historical trauma, such as the Holocaust or slavery. This link to the negative tradition of "forcible dispersion" (Cohen, 1996) and its various consequences came as a result of using the term *diaspora* to describe the Jewish experiences of expulsion from Israel, a history of exile that can be traced to 600 BCE. Although this traumatic tradition of diaspora has also been shared by other groups (including the African Diaspora), over time, the term *diaspora* has evolved beyond the "victim tradition" (Cohen, 1996) to also refer to any kind of migration that places a group of people away from the place where they had originally settled for generations. To transcend the first, negative tradition is to acknowledge the diversity of experiences as people disperse from a homeland to new places. Whatever definition emerges, *diaspora* suggests a bond of locality, culture, and common ancestry, which extends beyond the narrow boundaries of a group's country of origin. In this vein, it is now common to refer to the African Diaspora, Polish Diaspora, and so on.

Vertovec (1999) also offers a useful framework for examining diaspora as a social form, a type of consciousness, and a mode of cultural production. For Vertovec, to appreciate the process of diaspora, it is critical to acknowledge how its members continue to identify with and relate to a group despite dispersal, to examine the ways in which the diasporic community members frame their experiences and sense of identity through their transnationality, and to discuss the ways in which globalization reforms social and cultural phenomena. Rather than focusing on its definition, however, we are more concerned in this paper about the processes of diaspora. We are interested in demonstrating how groups – more specifically, youth – foster or otherwise cultivate those political and social connections that appeal to the "roots" or

the "homeland" in their narratives of who they are. Our examination builds on and develops Vertovec's second meaning of *diaspora* (acknowledging how its members continue to identify with and relate to a group despite dispersal); as well, the work is in accordance with Massaquoi's assertion that "Diaspora is an environment that fosters the invention of tradition, ethnicity, kinship, and other identity markers. It is a place where multiple African communities become a monolithic entity and ethnic differences are replaced with ethnic pride" (2004, p. 140). To us, like differential identities as defined by the quote that begins this paper, the diaspora is as much created by past and ephemeral events as it is dependent on future and as yet unknown circumstances. As such, it is critical to explore how youth learn to navigate this environment in ways that either creates distance and disconnection from or engagement with and a reconnection to the "imagined" homeland. By coupling processes of the diaspora with process of identity construction and negotiation it is possible to present a useful framework for understanding the strategic nature of discourses that circulate within and across psychological and social borders that situate African Canadian immigrant youth in marginal ways. The goal of this paper was to further this discussion.

There are vast amounts of literature that offer different definitions of identity within migrant communities; in this paper, however, we have focused on the definition provided in the works of Stuart Hall (1990, 1996). Like the concept diaspora, identity is a multidimensional term that embodies complex and fluid processes within any given historical period. Hall defines identity as fragmented, discursive, and contextual, stating that identities "are about questions of using the resources of history, language, and culture in the process of becoming, rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from' so much as what we might become, how we have been represented, and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves" (1996, p. 4). We use this definition to begin to understand the resources youth use to "become" engaged citizens in their new Canadian space, as well as how these resources interact with their past experiences in the countries in which they have lived. A key understanding here is that identities are always in a process of being constructed, and since they are never complete, they temporarily attach into discourses. Put differently, because identities are constructed within and not outside discourses, they need to be understood as being produced in specific historical and institutional contexts and sites.

Definitions of identity in this paper also follow Walcott's (2003) description of complexities of Canadian Black identity as an "absented presence…[located] between the U.S. and the Caribbean…a bubbling brew of desires for elsewhere, disappointment in the nation and the pleasures of exile" (2003, p. 27) – an identity that carries particular histories of resistance and domination. Walcott makes clear that while Canadian Black identity is informed historically by

distinction from and connection to the American Black identity, diaspora identification with elsewhere (in our case, the "homeland") also plays a key role in the process of creating Canadian Black identity.

Integral to the discussion of Canadian Black identity is also an exploration of both racialized identity and difference. To understand racialized identity, one must make the important distinction between "being black" (i.e., given a racial identity) and "becoming black" (i.e., relating to the racialized identity in a politically engendered way) (Dei, 1997). For our study, the notion of *becoming* black is critical to understanding how immigrant youths' identities are shaped; this process acknowledges meanings ascribed to social, cultural, and historical constructions of being black in a racialized society to access how youth negotiate constructions of race gender, sexuality, and class (Dei & James, 1998). Difference, meanwhile, is complex, fluid, and relational; its construction is informed by how individuals' characteristics relate to the norms of the society or community (James, 2000) and ultimately, is a site of power (Dei & James, 1998). While difference is fundamental to our very existence, it is also a means to divide social groups. For youth in particular, an understanding of difference allows for the development of "a 'resistant' identity and to link such politicised identity to social practice" (Dei & James, 1998, p. 93).

Within the larger study, in defining who they are, youth articulated multiple ways that point to how they see themselves and how they believe others outside their community see them, which ultimately informs how they understand what the new homeland has to offer. The new homeland presented here is Windsor, a Canadian border city located directly south of Detroit, Michigan. Windsor has a population of about 300,000; in 2002, Statistics Canada identified Windsor as the fastest growing city in Ontario, after Toronto[3] (Statistics Canada, 2005). Identified as the third most common settlement site in the province of Ontario, Windsor has experienced the largest percentage increase since 1996 in visible minority residents in Ontario (People for Education, 2005). Important for our discussion here is that Windsor's racial diversity is often compared with that of Detroit, a city with a well-documented history of racial conflict that climaxed with the race riots of 1943 and 1967 and initiated the so-called "white flight" to the suburbs (Fasenfest, Booza, & Metzger, 2004; Sugrue, 1995). Such overt incidences of racial conflict are considered remote from or even unimaginable in the psyches of Windsor residents. In the local southern Ontario region, historical narratives of slaves escaping to Canada and settling around Windsor play a key role in mainstream Canadian self-definition as a sanctuary from American slavery and racial discrimination, a notion that oversimplifies the complexity of the lived experience of Black immigrants, both then and now (Walcott, 2003).

This border location and favourable comparison with Detroit in terms of race relations are important for our discussion in that they act to mask the

discourses of racism and exclusion, consequently making it difficult for African youth to articulate their experiences of feeling excluded from the Canadian mainstream. The predominantly mainstream youth population, for instance, considers acts of racism inconsequential or trivial as this is something that is generally associated with "across the border." In the following section, an overview of Canadian immigrant youth studies is provided. These studies are sparse, thus pointing to the need for current work similar to the study we undertook.

Overview of Canadian immigrant youth studies

In general, research on African youth migration and settlement processes in the Canadian context is sparse. Youth studies of the past decade tend to focus on examining the problems faced by newcomer youth rather than on examining their processes of "becoming" Canadian. Some of the identified problems are specific to certain populations while others are not. For example, a study of Ethiopian newcomer youth in Toronto indicates that because of the need to support themselves, youth get trapped in jobs instead of pursuing their studies; suffer because of inadequate housing and health services, cultural incongruence, language, unfamiliarity with school systems, and discrimination; and are mainly under-employed (Beyene, 2000).

Other problems faced by immigrant youth in general relate to cognitive and emotional changes due to the absence of familiar language, culture, and community. Immigrant children and adolescents experience a cultural shock that causes emotional maladjustment. Many newcomers suffer from anxiety over the loss of familiar things (James, 1997). Kilbride, Anisef, Baichman-Anisef, and Khattar (2001) further state that language proficiency difficulties comprise one of the major struggles newcomer youth face in attempting to adapt and integrate into Canadian society. Among other things, these language proficiency issues exacerbate educational difficulties, create family difficulties, reduce employment opportunities, produce low self-esteem, and increase discrimination.

Seat (1997) states that, generally speaking, there have been a number of usual and highly intensive problems regarding developmental issues associated with the difficult processes of growth and independence for all adolescents. Accordingly, immigrant and refugee newcomer youth need to start a new socialization process, which naturally is a difficult task in a new place/country. In addition, they are required to meet new academic challenges: they have to learn a new school structure and fulfill parent/teacher expectations. They also have to gain acceptance into new peer groups, and develop new kinds of social competence. These challenges are also discussed by Kilbride et al. (2001), who argue that as newcomer youth negotiate between the new society and the culture that they once called home, they are confronted with a number of tensions that play out in different spheres (i.e., school, family, friends and peers, and the labour market). At other times, the tensions are a reflection of what immi-

grant youth often feel when they are pulled in opposite directions, between seemingly irreconcilable cultural standards or value systems and a desire to fit in. Exacerbating these issues is the discrimination that newcomer youth often perceive as being directed toward them, which further complicates and challenges their integration into Canada.

The issues of settlement and adaptation become even more complicated when one takes into consideration that newcomer youth from different ethnic groups, religions, genders, and cultural background have diverse experiences and, hence, different concerns and needs. As a result, the already complex difficulties facing adolescents, such as doing well in school, forging healthy relationships with family members and friends, developing a sense of belonging, and acquiring rewarding employment opportunities, become even more challenging when coupled with the settlement issues that are experienced by immigrant youth (Kilbride et al., 2001).

Other recent Canadian immigrant youth studies suggest the need to pay more attention to institutional barriers that limit healthy settlement processes and to how such concepts as diversity and multiculturalism result in marginalizing and exclusionary rather than empowering and inclusive practices. For example, in his discussion of what he terms a "Caribbean fragment in Toronto," Premdas (2004) argues against the policy of inclusion that has a hidden agenda towards assimilation: norms and values that are in tune with those of the dominant core of society are tolerated while "incompatible practices [are] jettisoned but with expectations of general compliance to the overarching mores and norms of the dominant society" (2004, p. 545). Premdas further argues that the host communities are unwilling to change their society to accommodate culturally diverse groups as they settle in the Canada (see also Bannerji, 2000; Rex, 1995; Walcott, 2003).

In this paper, we build on this literature on critical youth studies, emphasizing the importance of examining the intersection between youth resources of self-identification and their resources and processes for developing social relationships. We believe that within these resources and processes lay the reasons for youth feelings of exclusion from the dominant core of society, which ultimately leads to lack of civic involvement. We begin our discussion by describing the methodology we used in the larger study and the analysis of the current work, and conclude with an examination of the data on youth identity construction and negotiation that is informed by related literature on diaspora engagements.

Methodology

The larger study, *Intergenerational Links and the Civic Participation of Youth from African Communities,* employed a multi-layered, qualitative methodology consisting of three interrelated and overlapping stages: a community forum to engage key youth stakeholders; profiling of organizations to determine what

spaces youth could access and their activities therein; and individual interviews/family interviews/youth forum. Throughout the study, we ensured that youth were actively engaged in all stages; that is, we ensured that youth were not just subjects to be "studied," but were involved in the research process as interviewers, planners, and facilitators of youth-related activities. The data in this paper are drawn from the third stage of the larger study, which consisted of in-depth interviews conducted with African youth aged 16 to 24 who had migrated to Canada over the past decade.

The selection of interview participants was purposive (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996; Ristock & Grieger, 1996), focusing on African youth, 16 to 24 years old, who had migrated to Canada over the past five years. We also conducted six paired interviews with youth and their parents/guardians in order to examine intergenerational relations.[4] Before beginning the interviewing, we worked with the youth interviewers to familiarize them with the research protocol. We also worked with these youth to unpack their personal positioning and to interrogate the meaning and process of cultural sensitivity in interviewing, elements that are crucial in conducting research respectfully (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Two of the youth interviewers were also recent immigrants to Canada and could speak the native languages of the majority of the youth interviewees, and the third youth was first-generation African-Canadian. A life history approach was used for the interviews because it allows for the location of youth life stories within a broader context (Goodson, 1992) and also allows for both youth and interviewers to "contemplate the effects of our actions, and to alter the directions of our lives" (Richardson, 1990, p. 117). Finally, to tease out strategies for youth cross ethnic engagements, we conducted a youth forum with a dozen youth with whom we had conducted in-depth interviews, which had, upon analysis, provided us with rich data that indicated a critical understanding and interrogation of youth diaspora negotiations.

Overall, 41 participants were interviewed: Ethiopia, 8; Ghana, 1; Kenya, 1; Nigeria, 2; Liberia, 1; Rwanda, 12; Somalia, 10; and Sudan, 6. To examine how youth from African communities define themselves, we designed interrelated questions, which, when presented, opened up conversation about self-identification between the interviewees and interviewers. With the first set of questions, we were interested, first and foremost, in knowing how these youth would describe themselves to strangers interested in getting to know who they are as young people. Another set of questions had to do with peer relations; that is, we asked youth questions about their choice of friends and whether or not they made social relations outside their racial and linguistic groupings. Appendix A offers the interviewer guiding questions.

The interviews lasted about an hour and half each. The transcripts were read multiple times by the researchers, and the textual data (i.e., participants' responses to the qualitative question) were explored inductively through using

thematic analysis. Meaning units (i.e., responses) were inductively tagged for common themes and placed into more general conceptual categories reflecting features that youth used to define who they were. This process was ongoing and required multiple instances of open coding before the final categories were achieved. Both researchers reviewed the coding; when we disagreed about where to place a response, a discussion took place until a consensus was reached. All necessary precautions were taken to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the qualitative data (Lincoln, 1995; Seale, 1999).

Thematic analysis of the in-depth interview data initially revealed that the youth used multiple means to define who they are, including geographic origin, cultural background, religion, migration experiences, personal values and behaviour, and educational goals and successes to date. All of these markers were used either singly or in combination with others, thus creating complex, fluid and sometimes ambiguous ways of self-identification, informing of how youth participated in their communities as well as their ways of forming relations within or across cultural and racial boundaries. As a result of these complex intersections, we soon realized that a much richer and sophisticated description of processes of identity construction and negotiation, which in turn led to the formation of peer relations and community engagements, could be reached by acknowledging the critical connection between geographic origin (i.e., the homeland) and each of the other markers we had identified. The analysis of these intersections ultimately indicated feelings of either belonging to or exclusion from the dominant core Windsor community, feelings that, in some instances, produced a sense of ambivalence for youth. Thus, our final markers of identity and diaspora contingencies included: A) multiple travels, B) connections to the homeland (including connections to the homeland, maintaining culture through the homeland, cultural integration and the history of dominance and resistance, need to share, and distancing from the homeland), C) identifying and navigating the homeland, and D) negotiating friendships. In the following results section, participants' responses are offered to demonstrate these markers of identity; pseudonyms have been used to protect the participants' confidentiality.

MARKERS OF IDENTITY & DIASPORA CONTINGENCIES

A. Multiple travels

In tracking migrant trends, we discovered that the majority of participants had travelled through three or more different countries before immigrating to Canada, and that Windsor was not necessarily the first settlement city once they arrived here. Therefore, it is not surprising that when asked how they would

identify themselves to strangers, many of these youth used their travel stories as pivotal markers of their identities. While travel stories began in a particular country, one that we may call the place of birth, many of these youth had spent almost half their lives travelling before finally settling in Windsor. For example, while only one participant identified Kenya as his country of birth, in telling their stories of identity, six youth mentioned that they had lived in Kenya at some point in their lives; however, five of the six participants did not identify themselves as Kenyans, partly because they had travelled so extensively and also because they were born outside Kenya. For many participants, living in these different countries was not temporary; rather, these were lengthy stays averaging about four years. Such travel patterns indicate that before arriving in Windsor, these young people had experiences of making lives for themselves in places outside their country of birth, places that we may refer to as "zones of comfort." The following two excerpts exemplify youth sojourner life outside Canada, while the third is an example of a sojourner life that combines Africa and North American travels before final settlement in Windsor:

> *Desta*: I was born in Somalia, in Mogadishu. There was a war there and when the war began, my family left from Somalia to Yemen. We lived in Yemen for five years and started going to school from the beginning [the first grade]. Then we lived there [in Yemen] for almost five years, then we left Yemen for Syria. In Syria we were in elementary school for one year. Then we left for Lebanon. There we completed elementary school and went to high school. We were in Lebanon for almost eight years. We lived in Lebanon [in] many different places. All along we travelled, looking for a way to live in a place that would accept us. Then the government of Canada helped us to come to Canada.

> *Jelani*: Yeah, I was born in Sudan, and then when I was young, because there's a war in Sudan, my family decided to move to Ethiopia. We moved to Ethiopia and we were there as refugees in a camp. And then we stayed for seven years in Ethiopia and we decide to move to Canada with immigration. So we moved here in Canada and now we live in Canada.

> *Kamaria*: Well, I was born in Rwanda. I lived there about ten years but when I was there, I used to go to live in other countries back and forth, like go to Congo a lot, because of the war, you know. And so, I came here in Canada when I was about eleven years old. And well, before I was in U.S.A. and then I came here one year after because I didn't like it there because my family wanted me to speak French and go to French school and they don't have it there. So we came here. I was in Kingston [Ontario] before and then we didn't really like it there so we came here in Windsor. It's been now five year since I'm here. And so now I'm, I like it here. It's better than everywhere I went in Canada.

> It's small but I like it here but now I'm in grade eleven and after high school I want to be a nurse if I [can] and go to university. I don't know where but, yeah. That's it.

For all youth in this study, the settlement in Windsor came as a relief from these travels and allowed them some form of political stability as well as a way of establishing themselves, creating social networks, and of existing in a space that enabled families to live meaningfully. Additionally, as the quote below indicates, even when compared with other diverse cities in Canada, Windsor is a positive place to live, and has a somewhat more active African community that embraces and allows newcomers from the continent to establish a sense of self and belonging:

> *Imani*: I think it's good, the African community is good. They have some sort of union. They have, they hold events and what not. And when I went to Montreal recently the, there, when I compare their, their communities to here, it's not the same. Here is more, everybody's more connected than, and everybody's, I think they're friendlier towards one another than there. Specifically the Rwandese community.

The following section examines the resources that youth tapped into in order to create a sense of belonging to the Windsor place as well as construct and negotiate their identities. A key role identified in the study is the way that the "homeland" was evoked as a resources youth used to create and navigate space, identity, and friendships.

B. The homeland

(I) CONNECTIONS TO THE HOMELAND

The data indicate that a significant resource of identification has to do with notions of the "original home," or the homeland; furthermore, association with these places informs youth development of relations between themselves and others. For some youth immigrants to Canada, the dialectic relationship between place and self provides a strong sense of who they are. The data in the study indicate that the youth are connected to their homeland in their new space, through kinship, culture, politics, and other identity markers. The following two quotes illustrate combinations of kinship, culture, and politics as important ways of connecting to the homeland and of establishing a sense of identity and friendship with others.

> *Wekesa*: For me, like you know, in my extra times I would love to get together with my friends, with Ethiopian friends. Talk about the country and know, like you know, listen to the news and stuff like that. And we talk about what we have to do for helping people, Ethiopian children to know about their culture, teaching the language, and teaching their culture as well as teaching about other cultures they have to respect and stuff like that. To me that's fun.

> *Imani:* I have a lot of African friends also. And we also like to share like life experiences and stories and stuff and kind of throw points back on each other and, you know, we get good criticisms from each other. And that helps us, – that helps me a lot, helps because they go through a lot of the same things I do because they also have African parents. And it's easier that way.

> *Sanaa:* Yeah, a lot of, a lot of people that I meet that, especially females that are Ethiopian – we have a lot of, like we relate in a lot of things because we can talk about. Like even, even though I might not remember a lot of back home, they can tell me stories and how their parents treat them now that they're in Canada because it's very similar to how my parents treat me at home, being a female, or whatever the case may be.

(II) MAINTAINING CULTURE THROUGH THE HOMELAND

There is also data that speaks to the way youth used the homeland as a reference for maintaining culture and building a sense of community and self as illustrated below:

> *Sefu:* Well, because participating in our community, it gives me an idea of who I am but also I find that it gives you a sense of being, who you are, because you feel the, you are, you identify yourself with a certain group who share same beliefs, maybe same background. So that also could give you a sense of identity.

> *Zuberi:* The difference is the Rwandese community, I love it because that is where I was born and my personal interest is to maintain my culture, to practice my culture, to know where I come from and never forget.

> *Kamaria:* There are things, I wouldn't change anything from my past because I had a good life in the past and I don't regret anything from it. I liked everything I went through before, all the country I visit, from Africa till I came here. So I really, I don't think I would change anything.

(III) CULTURAL INTEGRATION AND THE HISTORY OF DOMINANCE AND RESISTANCE

Data also indicate that youth were interested in integrating what they had learnt in the homeland and in the new culture. For some youth, however, integrating the two cultures was coupled with the need to educate others – mainly the core group of white youth about Africa. As well, understanding the history of resistance and dominance seemed critical to some youths' identities:

> *Tendaji:* The only effect that I got is that whatever, whatever good that you learn, you know, whatever experience you had from the communities in Somalia or Kenya, you took that and you came here or you came to Canada and you could take a benefit from each year. You take a benefit from each year. You see the good of everything and you compare and

you try to make a great, a great community from that. You see the effect from this and that and you see the benefit from the Somali community in Somalia or Kenya, you see all that benefit and you try to put that together and try to make a good community in this country, whatever you are.

And

Tendaji: I don't feel that there's any racism or anything like that but history does have an effect on everybody. History has an effect on us. So, you know, me being black and African, I feel that I have to try extra hard. And I don't have to try hard but I try extra hard to make, to make not only myself look good or be a benefit to the community but also encourage all of the African and black people to try hard, you know. In the past, people have looked down on the black people in Africa so sometimes this nature of mine or this thinking stays in the mind of the people. Not everybody, I can't speak for everybody. But, of course, you have percentage in which people do think like that. So, you eliminate this mentality and this way of thinking by you yourself trying hard and by you yourself showing that you're dedicated and you're hard worker. And this, at times, changes the mind of people a lot. And also encourages all those other people who are black and African to try harder.

Imani: In my early years, something that probably changed me or helped me to see life differently would probably be genocide that happened in Rwanda. I was probably, you know, taught, taught me not to take things for granted, or people for granted.

(IV) The need to share

The comments emphasized in the following section show how the youth wanted to proudly share their culture with others so that individuals in the new community would understand their identities and /or experiences. As well, this sharing was also so that African youth could learn from and share in the new culture too.

Mchumba: Because sometimes, like I share my story, my experiences from back home and they're always saying to me, "Oh my gosh, how could you go through all that?" And that's healthy because my friends I have wanted to know like how . . .

Abeni: Some people are very misunderstood about the African culture. But I feel, like when I give them the information and they go like, "Oh my God, is that how it is?" I feel like happy and content that they actually know about the African culture now. *They know the real story about the African culture.*

Adogoke: Kind of relationship, like I've learned to understand more of their background. Everybody I hang out with, like, different African groups, different racial groups, whatever, I learn more and more about their background. *I'm really interested in learning, you know, them telling me more about it too.* So that's the kind of relationship, you know, I have more of an understanding of the thinking of different ethnic and different people around me.

Wekesa: I define myself or I would like *other people to know about myself which about my culture and my country, the history and my background because most people don't have knowledge and any historical things* because whatever they see from most commercials, and could be negative or positive, things from other people which they don't have real, any information, so I would love to tell other people that my culture, most important, which is my background.

Wekesa: These things are very important to me because that identifies myself which is my background, you know, presents myself. *So I would love to tell them because I want them to know like, you know, how, or what kind of culture do I have and I'm not a person like just with no background or no history.* So my history presents myself and my people. (emphasis added)

(v) Distancing from the homeland

These quotes show how the youth could also distance themselves from the homeland in an attempt to integrate into the new culture

Akinyi: I don't really care about my background. I know I'm Ethiopian, I'm black, I'm whatever, but I don't think, I don't think that, like I don't always think that they're going to be a racial, I mean racist to me. I don't, I just think positive. I don't care whether racist, whether they're racist or not. Because it's just stupid, I don't know.

Zuberi: Not really, know, because I try, my experiences in Rwanda, they was in Rwanda so when I moved here I tried to leave it back, like bad stuff that happened to me, I tried to leave it back so I could become a whole new person in Canada.

C. Identifying and navigating the homeland

While the information above suggests youth eagerness to connect to and use the homeland as a powerful resource for nurturing identities and friendships, an important question to consider is how, in the midst of all the travels undertaken, were youth able to identify/name their homelands? As previously stated, the data illustrate that the majority of participants in the study had lived in more than one country before settling in Windsor, yet individual youth invoked a country as an important locale informing their constructions of

self and others. Data indicate that a system of selection and omission existed in the way youth used the countries they had lived in, in efforts to construct identities and friendships.

Adegoke, for example, was born in Liberia where, at age six, he lost his father to the civil war. Thereafter, he lived in the Ivory Coast with his grandmother for a couple of years; with his mother and grandmother, he eventually settled in Ghana for four years before migrating to Canada at age twelve. Adegoke identifies himself as *African*, uses phrases such as "in *Africa* they strive for you to do your best [school] work" and "people are more helpful in *Africa* than Canada". He has four close friends – two from "the country I am from, that's *Ghana*," one from the *Congo*, and another from *Lebanon*. He is very active in the community because of a family trend of community service in Africa, especially on the part of his grandmother, who, during the war, took in many strangers and cared for and fed the poor, the dying, and the disenfranchised. He is also a strong athlete and volunteers in a community centre, teaching younger children learn how to play basketball. He situates what he does within his cultural upbringing and because "when I came here, I didn't follow the lead of the people down here. I kind of worked my own way and continued what I did in *Africa*."

Adegoke's positioning and use of the African continent in many ways an-swers the question: What does it mean to be an African living in Canada? By identifying more with Africa than with any one country in which he lived, this participant has reconstructed for himself an idealized image and history of living in Africa, which in some ways appeals to the political conditions of being Black in Canada.

 What is further revealing is that Adegoke refers to Ghana as his home country, when, in fact, he was born and lived a third of his life in Liberia. Adegoke appears to be caught up in a situation where, on the one hand, his African origin positions him as different from the youth from the core dominant group of White Canadians, which he considers as a source of strength for who he is, while on the other hand, some parts of this Africa, in this case, Liberia, if invoked in conversations, would subject him to questions responses to which may position him marginally (as someone whose origins can be associated with violent "backward" political regimes). Adegoke's sojourner life began as a result of the seven-year civil war,[5] which killed his father and sent him, his mother, and his grandmother into exile. For this participant, the civil war makes Liberia a controversial place to invoke as a marker of social identity. Ghana, however, is seen as a place of sanctuary from which he can recreate narratives of survival, cultural metaphors, and valued traditions and practices.[6]

Further analysis of Adegoke's narrative reveals a rupture in the use of geography as a powerful resource of identity. The continent is sometimes presented as one unified entity in which countries like Congo, Ivory Coast, and Lebanon[7]

are all collapsed under the name "Africa," and it is from this entity "Africa" that the participant can invoke positive cultural experiences as well as create a network of close diaspora friendships. All that is African is nostalgically presented; Africa becomes a symbol of unity and strength where different countries become monolithic, and ethnic differences are replaced by nostalgic gratifications. Such a rupture in the use of geography is in tune with Clifford (1994) when he asserts that diaspora groups maintain sentimental links to the "homeland," while at the same time creating identities that are more than just an extension of this homeland. In this regard, the homeland is as real as it is imaginary.

While on the surface, participant Adegoke's selective use of countries appears to be odd, in essence, the data in this study demonstrate idiosyncratic uses of geography by youth in the construction of their identities. Akinyi was born in Ethiopia, but because of the war she moved at age fourteen to London, England, where she lived for about four years before migrating to Canada at age eighteen. She identifies herself as Ethiopian, states that she developed a sense of self and community when she was in England where she "used to go to church, too, and we used to be involved in [the] Ethiopian community, the youth group, because there's a lot of people in London, England. There's a lot of Ethiopians, so it's more a bigger community." Chiumbo was born in Somalia, but when he was six, the civil war broke out, and he and his family left for Zimbabwe where they remained for about a year before migrating to Ottawa. Several years later, the family settled in Windsor. He identifies himself as Somali even when he states: "I don't remember very much about it [Somalia] or that transition from Somalia to Zimbabwe. I was about six, five years going six." His family settled in Ottawa because of other family members who were already established and working there, "and it was easier to be around our relatives or an already established Somali community."

To Akinyi, England is limited in its usefulness for self-identification beyond the associations she developed within the Ethiopian community while living there. Ethiopia, on the other hand, provides her with a way of defining herself as well as offering a sense of community and belonging. In a similar fashion, for Chiumbo, references to Somalia enabled his family a state of being accepted in a foreign space because, upon settling in Canada, other families had regrouped and created a diaspora-country-based community. Chiumbo may be identifying himself as Somali simply because he was born in Somalia and because he lives in a predominantly Somali community in Canada. Such use of geography to construct identities occurs despite or, as others will argue, because of the devastating wars that caused the displacement of the participants and their families. To both these participants, by providing strategies for the formation of diaspora relations and identities, the geographic locale where they were born represents, to borrow from Massaquoi, "an idealized womb of nurturance and safety" (2004, p. 143).

D. Negotiating friendships

The data in this study reveal that geographic places of origin also informed the processes of establishing relationships with other youth. When asked who their friends were, the backgrounds of these friends, and their reasons for choosing to develop these friendships, 17 of the 30 youth interviewed clearly identified people from the African continent as their close friends; the others said they had "all kinds of friends" ..."Canadian-born friend"; of these, two identified their friends by race as White. The following quotations are examples of typical responses to the question: How would you define your friends?

> *Zuberi*: In Canada, I have friends from other communities like Congo, and those are second generation. Those from Rwanda, some are second generation. And the ones, the ones that are from Canada, they're first generation.[8] I met them at school, you know, and we go to school together.

> *Kirabo*: ...Well, most of my friends, most of them are from Africa and most of them are from Sudan. The ones that are...my friends, their parents are from Sudan, some of them are Nubian, some are from Zaire and Zanzibar. Some of my friends are from [Detroit,] Michigan, and some of them are from Denko and most of my close friends that I have here, they're from Zanzibar, but they don't live here. They live in Michigan.

We were also interested in knowing how youth would define the friendships they had with these friends, why they chose to nurture these friendships, and the kinds of activities they did together. There were many activities that youth said they engaged in with each other, ranging from sports to movies to just hanging out. Twelve of the 17 youth with African friends identified commonality of culture and values as the central reason for choosing the friends they chose. At the same time, lack of knowledge of the "other" culture limited the development of cross-ethnic relationships, as demonstrated by the following quotations:

> *Adisa*: Well, I've made a lot of friends. A lot of my friends that I've met were through some of the community organizations I've gone to since I came here in Canada.

> Q: How do you define your relationship with them?

> A: Well my relationships with them are closer like *because we do share the same culture*, the same values. So we tend to relate to each other better than I would a person, a Canadian-born [White] person.

> Q: Do you find it easy to make friends with people like you?

> A: Yes, I find it easy because, like I just said, *we share the same values, they're like me*, so they understand the feelings I have at certain times and they understand what I'm going through because they're in the same

situation.... Well, I don't find it easy to make friends of people of other races because at time, a lot of times, I find it hard to relate with them. *They do not understand my culture.*

Zuberi: [In terms of having non-African friends] not really, because I do not know how their culture is. I don't know what type of people they are.... but when I see a Rwandan kid like me, it's easier. I am just part of them right away because I know where he is from and *I know his culture and background.*

Adisa: Well a lot of youths from other racial groups, let's say White Canadian youths, *their values are totally different* because the very few White friends I've had around here, I go to their houses and I see the way they insult their parents. I know that I cannot do that. [There is pretty much a] much different context here. They do not have regard for their elders, and back home in Nigeria, we're taught to have respect for your elders.[9] So in that context, it's different.

Imani: I feel it is easier to befriend people who are from the same race as I am because we have some things in common and we share the same appearance and the same problems. Also, other races from other countries besides Canada and America are easier to befriend because they have the same views about this country and America.

Those youth who stated specifically having White friends mentioned openness as key to creating cross-ethnic relationships. At the same time, however, of these two participants, one youth denied the existence of differences while simultaneously pointing at openness as key to facilitating the creation of these relations:

Anan: Yeah, I find it easy to make friends with people from other races. I am open. I don't see them being any different than me. So it is easy to create friendships with them.

Conclusion

The results of our analysis indicate multiple markers used by youth to construct and negotiate their identities, consequently, diaspora contingencies. Three key resources were used by youth to identify themselves as well as to begin to be engaged with each other and with those from the mainstream. The first resource youth used was multiple travels, whereby they wanted others to engage them through conversations about the travel experiences they have. Another resource that was used by youth was the common history and politics resulting in experiences of loss.[10] A third resource used was the homeland. We discovered that the homeland was used in multiple ways depending on, for example, who the youth wanted to engage with and the reasons for this engagement. As indicated in the previous section, overall, the homeland was

a source used to maintain homeland culture, enhance integration between old and new culture, deal with the history of dominance and resistance, and to share with and teach others.

These data illustrate that these common markers/resources – geography (the homeland), culture – were all used by youth to construct and negotiate identities, as well as to create and navigate friendships. The uses of these resources, however, had their own complexities and ambiguities. The first complexity results from the way in which the African continent, the homeland, is understood in the new home, Canada. First, as demonstrated in literature (see, for example, Dlamini, 1995; Sorenson, 1990) and as articulated by the participants, the majority of core Canadians are either ignorant or misinformed about the African continent. In the media, for example, images of starving African children are dominant, and in general, Africa is most often presented as a backward, underdeveloped place worth the civilizing mission. Additionally, the recent wars, such as the Rwandan genocide, have sealed the image of Africa as backward and barbaric. Media images that are focused on a starving and dying population because of droughts and diseases such as the rampaging HIV/AIDS adds to the already tainted African image. Such presentations of the African continent present ambiguities for those youth who want to identify themselves and create friendships by making reference to the homeland. For some youth, this ambiguity is addressed by distancing themselves from the homeland in attempts to integrate into the new culture. Others deal with this ambiguous space by selecting countries in Africa that have somewhat positive global associations (e.g. Ghana), from whom they can draw memories of survival and triumph; still, others recreate a nostalgic past of this conflicted space. Such variations in use of and addressing the ambiguities inherent within the associations with Africa force us to ask the question: What does this appeal to the "roots" and the "home" country of origin mean within the Canadian context?

The appeal to the "roots" or the homeland means that the youth are recognized as possessing a "culture," or, to paraphrase one participant, that they too, have *a background and a history.* For these youth, the importance of history and background has greater significance than just where they've come from. As Hall (1996) asserts, contextualizing these experiences allows the youth to understand their culture in the process of becoming, of who they might be, and of how they can be understood by others in this new space. Connecting to and identifying with the homeland, in the process of becoming Canadian, becomes important because of Canada's emphasis on diversity and culture. On the one hand, to these youth, to become Canadian means an individual must be able to identify with a particular cultural group – even if the location of the origins of that group (in this case Africa) creates challenges for new comers; consequently, youth are forced to re-contextualize, reinvent, and re-vision what the continent looks like under the circumstances they find themselves in.

The importance of the return to the homeland in the creation of Canada's diasporic identities cannot be overemphasised. It is not simply a recollection of the homeland and its histories (Clifford, 1994; King, 1998; Panossian, 1998a, 1998b); rather, it is sometimes about a "re-creation" of the (nostalgic) homeland as well as about constructing ways of becoming part of the diaspora within defined national boundaries (Canada) and accepted local Windsor practices. Notable, also, within this selective use of geography and space is that some youth have created their self-identity through reference to Africa (like Adegoke), while others have created their self-identity through reference to a microcosm of their country of origin in Canada (like Chiumbo). In other words, some youth use Africa as their reference point, while others use their homeland-based community within the diaspora. Yet, even within these differences in how they reference their homeland, for youth, to be associated with Africa supports an unchanging form of life that triumphs over changes, travels, and dislocations. Conversely, however, the way that identity relates to place is, to borrow from Rashakrishnan (1996), the expression of a shifting equilibrium, a product of fortuitous travels and re-contextualization.

What this use of geography also suggests is that space/land/country is socially constructed – an ambiguous entity. Africa's location is changed in that it gets re-created, redefined through youth travels; Africa becomes part of the developed world as it is part of developing areas; it becomes not only just land but also stories, histories, and culture. Such uses concur with Said's (1978) description of the Orient that is not merely there:

> Just as the Occident itself is not just there either. We must take seriously Vico's great observation that men make their own history – that what they can know is what they have made – and extend it to geography; as both geographical and cultural entities – to say nothing of historical entities – such locales, regions, geographical sectors as "Orient" and "Occident" are man-made. (p 321)

Just as the two geographical entities, the Occident and the Orient, in Said's terms, "support and to an extent reflect each other," so are these post-migration identities constituted in difference rather than intrinsically. For youth, their identities can be said to be formulated through their difference from the local, and it is in this relationship that identities come into being, both as a distancing from the Canadian mainstream and as a means of self-assertion. To speak of post-migration identities in Said's terms is to invoke certain ways of thinking about travelling, place, loss, and culture as well as the interrelationship among these experiences. Identities as constructed by these youth are never outside of their experiences; therefore, discourses of identity construction are always located within the struggle for control of these shifting experiences. If taken in this sense, for these youth, identities – that is, what gets articulated as experience and used in constructing and negotiating these identities – becomes, to borrow from Foucault, a "field of struggle."

Challenges in youth creation of identity existed as youth demonstrated a desire to maintain and teach others about their culture. Teaching and sharing with others a culture has great significance considering the diversity-emphasizing climate of the Canadian space they have entered. Whereas the youth have articulated the need for acceptance and celebration of their differences so that individuals in the new community would understand their experiences; and they could simultaneously learn from others and share in the new culture, the dominant society is often unwilling to accommodate norms and values that are not aligned with its own (Premdas, 2004). For immigrant youth attempting to integrate their culture within their new Canadian surroundings and yet are confronted by practices enhancing a forced assimilation, creates a cultural dissonance; consequently several youth resort in distancing themselves from the homeland in an attempt to integrate into the new culture. These challenges of cultural dissonance and perceived forced assimilation are also discussed by Kilbride et al. (2001), who argue that as newcomer youth negotiate between the new society and the culture that they once called home, they are confronted with a number of tensions that play out in different spheres (i.e., school, family, friends and peers, and the labour market). At other times, the tensions are a reflection of what immigrant youth often feel when they are pulled in opposite directions, between seemingly irreconcilable cultural standards or value systems and a desire to fit in. Exacerbating these issues is the racial discrimination (Dei, 1997) that newcomer youth often perceive as being directed toward them, which further complicates and challenges their integration into Canada.

Difference also acts as an important signifier in how African youth see themselves in relation to White youth from the core Canadian society, consequently shaping how they narrate their experiences of loss as well as how they form relations with other youth. For some youth, the relationship between self and place conjured memories of violent and traumatic experiences that position them as different from and/or inferior to the dominant core group of White Canadian youth. For other youth, however, the telling of these stories of loss can be a strategic practice[11] with pedagogical and transformative potential (Dlamini, 2006). For this set of youth, these stories can be used to educate others about who they are and about their countries of origin, as well as being used to position them in positive ways within the dominant community, since, through these stories, they are perceived as strong, courageous survivors, which ultimately alleviates feelings of inferiority (as exemplified by Mchumba). In addition, many youth demonstrated an understanding of the history of resistance and dominance within their own identity, a process that Walcott (2003) has identified as critical to the Canadian Black identity.

Culture and "looks" (as racial appearance, i.e., skin colour) also become part of how youth proclaim their identities and of how and why they develop social relationships. Commonality of culture and values as well as similar looks

enhanced the creation of social relationships, while cultural differences led to reluctance towards that establishment. These uses of culture and looks call for an examination of the meaning in the interconnection between these axes of differentiation. We must ask the questions: What is the meaning and significance of the focus on cultural and appearance differences for African youth living in Canada? Why do these young people want to establish a distance between themselves and the core group of White Canadians? What is the primary goal for these youth – self-assertion or distancing? Such questions suggest the need to further study youth patterns of identity construction in reality to their White peers and how schools, governments, social agencies, etc. will respond to these reasons for self-assertion that is coupled with distancing.

Such diverse ways of constructing and negotiating identities is instructive at several levels. First, it teaches about the fraudulent nature of stable locations and, perhaps, place-based identities; that is, it demonstrates the importance of not assuming the necessity of a stable homeland for constructing identity. Not only are identities fluid, always in the process of construction and reincarnation, so, too, are the resources (such as a home and land) used in these discursive processes. Second, the diverse way of using resources in history points to the need for more studies that examine the process of constructing identity from the perspective of multiple and intersecting identifications, rather than those perspectives that are based on the assumption that youth tend to categorize themselves along a single, externally imposed dimension – in this case, simply being Black. Third, these varied ways of constructing and negotiating identities speak to how youth must negotiate between identities across space and time (Bhatia & Ram, 2001) in ways that shape their processes and practices of identification in the new homeland. And finally we are instructed that for African youth, difference, as an important signifier, can be as inclusively illuminating as it can be exclusively alienating.

NOTES

1. We wish to acknowledge and thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for providing the funding for the research study from which the data we used is based.

2. Social capital refers to features of social organization and networks, including norms, trust, information channels, and support that facilitate individual and group benefits (Bourdieu, 1986; Putman, 1993, 2000).

3. This growth feature is beginning to change because of debilitating economies leading to high unemployment rates. As such, anecdotal information shows significant emigrating activity of Windsor residents going "out west," in particular Alberta, where the economy is said to be at its peak.

4. In paired interviews we were interested in understanding ways that youth develop interpersonal relations with their parents, elders, and other senior members in the community. Some studies suggest that there exist challenging family relations and intergenerational conflict amongst immigrants resulting from the difference in the ways that first and second generation minority youth negotiate family relations and deal with their own culture in relation to Canadian mainstream culture (see, for example, Sharir's 2002 study of first and second generation youth

of Chinese background, which concluded that the first generation overwhelmingly supported integration and assimilation into mainstream Canadian culture while the second generation supported acculturation strategies).

5. The Liberian civil war began when the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, led by the well known, now infamous Charles Taylor, staged a coup and took over the government in December 1989. Over 150, 000 Liberians are reported to have been killed, including the participant's father, and another 1 million were displaced.

6. There is a competing argument here in that it is possible that the participant could not use Liberia as a marker of identity because he was only 6 when he left. What would be interesting would be to hear about someone who left a war-torn country as a young teen and sojourned in different countries after that before coming to Canada. Such participants in our study did not refer to these countries as their "homelands," many spoke of them as countries they lived in – as if temporarily on their way elsewhere. What would be further interesting to do is, in a future examination, to explore the relationship between age and the development of social identity.

7. The inclusion of Lebanon in this context suggest that, like identity, geography is politically poignant.

8. This respondent is referring to African friends, either those kids born here of immigrant parents or kids who immigrated themselves.

9. The concept of respect for people older than you, especially teachers, was cited by many youth as a fundamentally different value that was amiss amongst their peers. Lack of respect in this context also includes any acts of talking back, which within many African communities is considered impolite ultimately posing implications for pedagogical practices that facilitate debates as central to learning (for a full discussion, see Dlamini, 2005).

10. Another Rwandan born participant had lost hearing in one of his ears during the war, and, like one other participant, did not like to talk about his disability because it positioned him as negatively different.

11. Simon, Rosenburg and Eppert (2000) argue that this invoking can be located in "a political justice-based redressing of mass violence such as the holocaust and historical genocides such as those of Rwanda and Bosnia" (p. 16).

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

A. *Introduction to study and completion of Consent Forms.*

B. *We would like to begin this interview by asking you to share your life story. There is no predetermined format – however, you may find it helpful to think of dividing your life in terms of early years, middle years and later years. You are free to share and provide as much detail as you want. We are interested in hearing from you what events, experiences, people or factors in your life story contribute to who you are today in the community. We may ask for more detail where necessary and you are free to further elaborate if you feel comfortable or able to do so.*

> *Are you agreeing to participate in this taped interview?*

> *Thank you.*

C. *Individual Identity*

1. *How would you identify yourself, in addition to age and gender?*

2. *What are the things you would use to define to a stranger who you are and the things that are important to know about yourself?*

3. *Why are these things important to mention about yourself?*

D. *Community Identity*

1. *What is your understanding/interpretation of the word community? What does it mean to you?*

2. *Do you consider yourself to be a member of any specific community/group?*

a. *If so, how long have you considered yourself a member of this community?*

3. *What makes you a member of this community as opposed to any others that you might be a part of?*

E. *Community Involvement*

1. *What community organizations and activities do you take part in? What do you do there?*

2. *What do you do for fun?*

3. *Have your parents encouraged you to participate in any community organizations?*

a. *Which ones?*

b. *What do you do in these organizations?*

c. *How do you feel about the activities/things you do in these organizations?*

d. *What are things that your parents have discouraged you from participating in?*

4. *What else has encouraged you to participate in specific community organizations?*

5. *Are there things that discourage your from participating and/or doing this in the community?*

F. *Outcomes of participations*

1. What do you get out of participating in your community?

2. Has participating in community organizations ever had any effect on your social or job opportunities? How?

3. Have there been things that have made you not want to participate in community organizations?

4. Has there been anything that happened to you or your friends that has made you not interested in doing things in the community?

a. Can you describe in detail what that was?

5. If you are still in high school, how have you fulfilled your 40-hour volunteer requirement?

a. What do you do in addition to your 40-hour requirements?

G. Contextual issues and socio-cultural processes:

1. In what ways did you or your family participate in community organizations in your country of origin?

If the participant was born in another country:

a. What differences have you noticed between the community organizations you took part in your country of origin, or another country you lived in, and in Canada?

b. How would you say that experiences in your country of origin, or another country you lived in, affected your participation in community organizations in Canada?

c. How would you say that experiences in your country of origin, or another country you lived in, have affected how your family participated in community organizations in Canada?

2. Have you experienced treatment from an individual/group that you consider to be unfair in Canada?

a. Has it affected your participation in the broader community?

3. Were there any organizations or individuals who helped you or your family to get involved in community organizations after you arrived in Canada?

H. Interpersonal relations

1. What kinds of activities do you typically take part in with other youths in the community?

2. What kinds of relationships have you formed with other youths through community participation?

3. Do you find it easy to make friends with people like you?

a. Can you give examples of where your friends or their parents are originally from?

4. Do you find it easy to make friends with people from other races? Give examples of these friends and the things you would ordinarily do with them.

5.   In organizations that you've participated in where individuals from a number of ethnic groups meet, do you find people to be friendly across groups?

6. Are there any ways in which being black/ or African descent has shaped the way you have participated in certain groups?

    a. What are they?

I. Intergenerational Links

1. What do you consider to be "good" or "bad" behaviour for youth?

2. Is your view of good behaviour similar to or different from that of your parents/guardians?

    a. In what ways?

3. How are your values and beliefs different from, or similar to those of your parents?

4. How are your values and beliefs different from or similar to those of youth associates from other racial groups?

5. In what ways do your values and beliefs affect your choice of community participation?

Thank you for completing the questionnaire with me. Your input is valued.

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