

MAJOR RESEARCH PAPER

**IDENTITIES AND EXPERIENCES OF BLACK-AFRICAN IMMIGRANT
YOUTH IN CANADA**

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Thank you to my parents, their love and support made this major research paper possible. Thank you to my siblings, my built-in best friends.

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Introduction

Being a Canadian immigrant from Eritrea, my personal experience has greatly influenced my Major Research Paper topic on the identities and experiences of young Black-African immigrants in Canada. The research question of my Major Research Paper is: How do young Black-African immigrants in Canada identify themselves and how do they experience their lives in the country? I would first like to take some time to offer the reader with some relevant information about myself and my interest in this particular topic. I will then provide pertinent information on African immigrants in Canada. Next, a discussion on the conceptual challenges, and a section clarifying some conceptual tools will follow. I will then outline the methodology I will use to answer my research question. The following section constitutes the heart of my Major Research Paper which consists of a review of literature. I will conclude with a synthesis of the main ideas which emerged from the literature review, and a discussion of future research considerations in this field.

A Reflexive Note

To begin, I am an Eritrean-Canadian woman in my mid twenties. I immigrated to Ottawa, Canada, as a first-generation immigrant when I was six years old with my father, my mother and my three siblings: two brothers and a sister. Prior to immigrating to Canada, I was living in Great Britain for three years due to war conflicts in Eritrea. I was therefore exposed to the Western society very early in my life, beginning at the age of three years old. The age difference between my siblings and I is not great: we are very close, between one to four years apart. My family and I have been living in Ottawa ever since we have immigrated to Canada.

Growing up in Canada as a first-generation Eritrean immigrant was a unique

experience. I grew up in two different cultures: Eritrean and Canadian. I learned and lived by the Eritrean culture mainly at home with my family, and at Eritrean social gatherings. This culture consisted of an Eritrean language, Tigrinya, which was spoken to me mainly by my parents. Tigrinya is the main Eritrean language that is spoken in Eritrea. Through the contact I had with the Tigrinya language, I am able to speak it in a mediocre way, while I do understand it quite well. Moreover, the Eritrean culture, which I participated in while in Canada, included eating traditional Eritrean food that was eaten at home at varied meals of the day, and also at Eritrean social gatherings. Furthermore, while in Canada, I was also exposed to traditional Eritrean music both at home and at Eritrean events. There are several main Eritrean events that I have attended up until my high school years in Canada, which were the Eritrean Independence Day (May 24th), as well as Christmas and New Year parties.

The Eritrean culture put a lot of emphasis on the collective, signifying that the well-being of the group was more valued than that of the individual. This contrasts greatly with the Western culture's emphases on the individual. I observed this mainly at home with my family, especially among my parents, who were constantly helping and thinking about their family members abroad. Most of my extended family is still in Eritrea. We also have particular ways of doing things, which are at odds with customary behaviours in Western culture, such as the manner that we Eritreans greet one another which entails three kisses on the side of the cheek, at the same time as holding on to one another's hands. This occurred at Eritrean gatherings and when Eritrean guests came to our home. As well, the nature of our ethnic food allows us to eat our meals with our hands, rather than using utensils. Inclusively, when an Eritrean person attends another Eritrean individual's home as a guest, he or she almost always brings a gift or food to the guest's home.

Another characteristic of the Eritrean culture is the way that Eritrean youth greet each other when they are first introduced. The principal question that is asked upon the commencement of the conversation is “gual (for girl) or wedi (for boy) men ehi (for female) or eha (for male)?”. This translates in the English language into “whose daughter or son are you?”. The answer to this question would then be “the daughter or son of [the person’s father’s name]”. I carry with me my father’s name consistently around town and outside of the city when I meet Eritreans. Essentially, the exposure to this Eritrean culture makes me feel connected to a country that I identified with. It gives me a sense of comfort, as well as pride for coming from a beautiful country.

Conversely, I have encountered and became familiar with the Canadian culture through school, work, and social gatherings with my peers and friends. I suppose that the Canadian culture has had more of an influence on me as an individual as it was what I mainly grew up with and have come to know outside of my home. This culture is completely unlike the Eritrean culture. I attended Anglophone schools at the elementary, intermediate, and high school levels, where I learned English primarily, and French as a second language. As a result, I have mastered English at the advanced level, and French at the intermediate level. I am also more familiar with the Anglo-Canadian culture than the Franco-Canadian culture. For instance, I am aware of Anglo-Canadian “sayings” more than Franco-Canadian “sayings”. The food was also more assorted, ranging from food in fast-food restaurants to cultural food from other ethnic groups. Furthermore, unlike the collectivist nature of Eritrean culture, the Canadian society is very individualistic, meaning that people tend to ‘look out for themselves’ and are self-reliant. This was an attribute that I picked up on immediately, as I became very independent in my daily tasks and my mentality about life.

The communication with people in the Canadian society was quite distant as well, as people did not connect closely with me. When speaking with people, there was a sense of personal distance between me and the other person. Also, the pronunciation of my name, Fenan, among non-Eritrean Canadians sounds very different from the way that it is pronounced in Tigrinya. Non-Eritrean Canadians pronounce my name in a different manner than Eritreans, for the Eritrean pronunciation of it can be quite difficult to say. I also identify as a Canadian when I travel. For instance, when I go to the United States of America, I mostly identify as a Canadian versus an Eritrean.

Consequently, the contact with both the Eritrean and Canadian cultures has allowed me to gain an Eritrean-Canadian bi-cultural identity. Although the Canadian culture has had more of an effect on me, now that I am a young adult, I am having more of an interest in retaining my Eritrean culture. I am attempting to do this by constantly practicing speaking Tigrinya with my parents and inquiring to them about my country and my family back home. This is since I do not want to ever forget my ethnic roots and my Eritrean culture.

Furthermore, I believe that my experience of being an Eritrean-Canadian is quite different from that of my parents. Having come to Canada at a young age, I have been exposed to the Canadian culture more so than my parents were. As such, I deem that immigrant youth have a distinctive contact with the Canadian culture and society than immigrant grown adults. This characteristic exposure to the Canadian culture and society largely impacts their identity and experiences in comparison with immigrant grown-ups. Hence, my personal history of living as a young, first-generation immigrant in Canada, has informed my Major Research Paper topic on the identities and experiences of young immigrants in Canada, particularly Black-African immigrants, being from a Black-African

background myself.

African Immigrants in Canada

African immigrants in Canada constitute a small percentage of the population. According to the Statistics Canada 2006 Census, the percentage of African-born immigrants in Canada out of all the immigrants in Canada is around 6.0 %, which amounts to 374, 565 people. This does not constitute the percentage of immigrants who originate from Africa, simply those who are African-born. The 2006 Census has also indicated that between 2001 and 2006, around 117,000 Africans have immigrated to Canada. In addition, this Census has shown that the province with the largest population of African immigrants is Ontario: Ontario has welcomed nearly 165,000 African immigrants.

Moreover, according to the Statistics Canada 2006 Census, the top African immigrant countries in Canada, since before 1991, were Egypt, South Africa, Morocco, Tanzania, and Kenya. In addition, between 2001 and 2006, the top African immigrant countries in Canada were Algeria, Morocco, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Egypt, while immigrants arrived in lesser numbers from Ethiopia, South Africa, Sudan, and Kenya.

The rise in the amount of African immigrants in Canada is mainly the result of modifications in Canadian immigration policies (Danso & Grant, 2000, p. 30). “The liberalization of Canadian immigration policies, accompanied by the removal of racist and discriminatory legislation and the consequent replacement with more objective selection criteria in the late 1960s, paved the way for the admission of a significant number of Africans” (Danso & Grant, 2000, p. 30). One of the immigration laws was the Immigration Act (Dauvergne, 2005, p. 13). This allowed for a broader discretion of evaluation for

immigrants to enter Canada. Another is the current Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) that took effect in 2002, and that substituted the Immigration Act (Dauvergne, 2005, p. 13). The IRPA is the predominant law that pertains to immigrants and refugees. African immigration can be also understood in relation to the “family sponsorship” policy of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012). This policy allows immigrants to sponsor a family member(s) abroad to obtain a permanent residency in Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012).

Moreover, Danso & Grant (2000, p. 31) add that specific circumstances occurring in Africa have resulted in a large number of Africans immigrating to countries such as Canada. For example, as previously stated, my family immigrated to Canada due to war-conflicts in Eritrea. Although “long-distance labour migration is not new in Africa, it has intensified in recent years in response to deepening economic, political, and environmental crises in many African countries” (Danso & Grant, 2000, p. 31). Thus, African immigration to Canada is for the most part a post-1967’s occurrence (Danso & Grant, 2000, p. 31).

Furthermore, it has been well-documented that African immigrants in Canada experience distinct conditions of marginalization. As summarized by Creese & Kambere (2003, p. 566), Adjibolosoo & Mensah (1998), Danso & Grant (2000), Elabor-Idemudia (2000), and Mensah & Adjibolosoo (1998)¹ have found that African immigrants generally have a poor socio-economic status, a low employment rate, are limited in receiving appropriate housing, and experience racial discrimination.

Additionally, African immigrant youth face unique problems in Canada. For example, Dlamini & Anucha (2009, p. 230) note that challenges that African immigrant

¹ Whenever the page number is not indicated in a second-hand citation, it is because it is not shown in the original document.

youth encounter for the most part “relate to cognitive and emotional changes due to the absence of familiar language, culture, and community”. As summarized by Dlamini & Anucha (2009, p. 230), according to James (1997), they can experience culture shock and anxiety as a result of the changes they encounter. Dlamini & Anucha (2009, p. 230), relying on Kilbride, Anisef, Baichman-Anisef & Khattar (2001), additionally explain that many African youths’ struggle of speaking the dominant languages of English and/or French is another of the troubles African immigrant youth are confronted with when living in Canada. This problem further makes it difficult for them to succeed in school, find employment, result in a poor self-esteem, and make it more likely for them to experience discrimination (Dlamini & Anucha, 2009, p. 230).

Dlamini & Anucha (2009, p. 230) also say, according to Seat (1997), that African immigrant youth experience the challenges associated with “growth and independence” that are ordinary for all youth. In addition to these difficulties, African immigrant youth are required to engage in a new form of socialization due to being in a new country, Canada (Dlamini & Anucha, 2009, p. 230). They also need to understand a new system of education, meet parent/teacher expectations, and make new friends (Dlamini & Anucha, 2009, p. 230-231).

Research Question

This study focuses particularly on Black-African immigrant youth. The settlement of this population in Canada raises a fundamental question which will be the focus of this paper: *How do young Black-African immigrants in Canada identify themselves and how do they experience their lives in the country?*

For my Major Research Paper, the literature dealing with the identities among Black-African immigrant youth in Canada and their life experiences were examined. Since the scholarship on “African immigrant youth” in Canada is limited, I explored Black-African immigrants’ identities and experiences in Canada among *adults* to provide a brief comparison.

Saying this, however, the category “Black-African immigrants” proved to be problematic in itself since it includes Africans from many countries in Africa. This can therefore make this category appear homogenous, when it is really heterogenous (Tettey & Puplampu, 2005, p. 11). What Tettey & Puplampu (2005) and Tettey (2001) have to say about the more specific category “African-Canadian” is useful to understanding the complexity of this concept.

The Challenges in Defining “African-Canadian”

Tettey & Puplampu (2005, p. 6) discuss that “the term African-Canadian is often used in everyday parlance and in the academic literature as an uncontested signifier of identity capturing all peoples of African origin in Canada”. Tettey & Puplampu (2005, p. 6) state that African-Canadian, however, is a very complex category. To fully understand this term, Tettey (2001) has identified four approaches for comprehending the challenges in this category, neither of them being entirely satisfactory, as we will see, in order to understand the diversity of African-Canadian experiences and multiple identities (Tettey & Puplampu, 2005, p. 6). These are “(1) The Immigration Authorities Approach; (2) The Black equals African/African equals Black Approach; (3) The Self-Exclusion Approach; and (4) The Authentic African Approach” (Tettey & Puplampu, 2005, p. 6).

Tettey & Puplampu (2005, p. 6) explain that the “Immigration and Authorities

Approach” stems from “the nomenclature used by Canadian state institutions, such as Citizenship and Immigration Canada”. Tettey & Puplampu (2005, p. 6-7) continue that this nomenclature, grounded on official citizenship, labels an individual with an African passport as African. It also denotes immigrants as African when they affirm that they are from a country in Africa. This is based on geographical associations. “The classification of African-Canadians on the basis of formal citizenship and geography has, however, been criticized by those who argue that it is exclusionary” (Tettey & Puplampu, 2005, p. 7). “The critics contend that Africanness is an innate characteristic that should not be denied because one does not fit into a territorial conception of origin, whether geographical or political” (Tettey & Puplampu, 2005, p. 7). On the other hand, the individuals who stand for the inclusive term of African-Canadian, tend to have a connection to Africa, which although cannot be proven, is very real to them. For instance, it can be a spiritual or ancestral affiliation to Africa. An example of a group of these individuals is Africans who were slaves in Canada. They resided in Canada for many years, and as a result believe they too should be considered as African-Canadian.

For the second viewpoint, the “Black equals African/African equals Black” approach, Tettey & Puplampu (2005, p. 7) argue that it “racializes African identity”. This idea claims that Black individuals came from Africa, and as such are considered to be African (Tettey & Puplampu, 2005, p. 7). This logic has many negative implications, which are discussed below. Tettey (2001, p. 165-166) explains that those who stand for this claim believe that “Black people in the diaspora should be recognized as Africans. (...) This view ... comes from a belief in, and expression of a Black consciousness and an identification with Africa” (in Tettey & Puplampu, 2005, p. 7).

Tettey & Puplampu (2005, p. 7) go on to say that those who are against this view affirm that there are differences among diaspora Blacks. As summarized by Tettey & Puplampu (2005, p. 7), Adeleke (1998) explains that the differences between continental Africans and diaspora Blacks lie in “their collective daily circumstances, struggles, and aspirations”.

In terms of the relation between African-Americans and African immigrants, Adeleke (1998, p.187) suggests that “regardless of the degree of African cultural retentions, regardless of how far Black Americans went in changing their names and wearing African clothes, they remain, in large part, products of the American historical experience, an experience that has left its mark indelibly on Black American culture and identity” (in Tettey & Puplampu, 2005, p. 7-8).

Tettey (2001, p.167) further discourses that:

the problem with the ‘Black equals African/African equals Black’ conception is that it is an exclusionary construct. It does not take cognizance of those who may not be Black but whose traceable historical, culture, and cultural origins may be in Africa. Examples of these groups are East Indians and Whites from Eastern and Southern Africa who have known no other place of origin but Africa. Whilst these groups may not have originated in Africa as a racial or ethnic community, they may have no traceable origin to any other place but the continent (in Tettey & Puplampu, 2005, p. 8).

As summarized by Tettey & Puplampu (2005, p. 5), Tettey (2001) states that “indeed, not all Africans are Black, nor do all Black people consider themselves Africans”.

Mensah (2002, p. 60– 61) accounts,

while most of the immigrants from Western African countries ... are likely to be Blacks, the same cannot be inferred about immigrants from Northern, Southern, and Eastern African countries. North Africans ... usually consider themselves, and are best described as, Arabs. Also, immigrants from South Africa are just as likely to be White, Indian, or

Coloured as they are to be Black. The situation among Eastern Africans is equally complicated by the large number of Europeans, Arabs, and Asians, particularly East Indians, in that part of Africa (in Tettey & Puplampu, 2005, p. 5).

Tettey & Puplampu (2005, p. 5) add that the lack of distinction among Africans is due to the *limited* academic literature on continental Africans. Furthermore, Tettey & Puplampu (2005, p. 9) discuss that the “Self-Exclusion Perspective” is the third standpoint of the African-Canadian identity and consists of two aspects. “The first comes from non-Blacks whose contemporary geographical origins are in Africa, while the second pertains to the children of first generation, continental African immigrants” (Tettey & Puplampu, 2005, p. 9). “Those incorporated into the first strand tend to contest their designation as Africans because, for them, African connotes Black” (Tettey & Puplampu, 2005, p. 9).

Tettey & Puplampu (2005, p. 9) further explain that the second component of the “Self-Exclusion Approach” demonstrates that African immigrants’ children do not view themselves completely as African despite that they are geographically linked to the continent. They view themselves mostly as Canadian since the environment they grew up in, instead of that of their parents, impacts their values and perspectives.

Tettey & Puplampu (2005, p. 10) discuss that the last perspective of the African-Canadian identity is the “Authentic African Approach”. “(...) There is the belief among a significant number of ordinary Africans, as well as some analysts, that there are, indeed, certain basic values that cut across all African societies” (Tettey & Puplampu, 2005, p. 10). Abraham (1962, p. 42) validates this perspective when he mentions that “there is a type of African culture ... this type finds expression in the art, the ethics and morality, the literary

and the religious traditions, and also the social traditions of the people” (in Tettey & Puplampu, 2005, p. 10).

However, proponents of the “Authentic African Approach” have been critiqued for not considering the variety among Africans, which includes “race, region, religion, ethnicity, gender, and so on” (Tettey & Puplampu, 2005, p. 11). Tettey & Puplampu (2005, p. 11) explain that the “Authentic African Approach” is not an appropriate way of defining continental Africans in Canada, because it does not include the “*multiple* identities” of Africans, and the aspect that they are *not* a homogeneous group of individuals. Tettey (2001, p. 169) states that it is significant “when we talk about African-Canadians, to recognize these sub-identities and their impact on the definition of how people conceptualize themselves as Africans, the collaborations and contestations between various groups, and their relationship to the meta-identity of African” (in Tettey & Puplampu, 2005, p. 11). I would also contribute to this by stating that Black-Canadians likely have different identities than Black-African immigrants due to factors such as their longer presence in Canada, as well as divergent experiences and circumstances.

Given the varying contestations of the term African-Canadian, this paper will center on “Black-African immigrant youth in Canada”, which include Black, continental, African youth who are immigrants (from any generation) in Canada (Tettey & Puplampu, 2005, p. 11-12). I will note that I will be cautious in using the category because I am well aware that it includes people with a vast array of experiences.

Conceptual Tools

The following is a list of conceptual tools that was used to frame my analysis of the primary and *predominantly* secondary literature. Having done my B.A in Psychology, I took many definitions from work in Social Psychology. For my study, it was useful to investigate how these tools can be used to conceptually understand both sociological and other streams of research with Black-African immigrant youth in Canada.

Youth

According to Bucholtz (2002, p. 526), in the research on youth, it is quite ordinary that the youth term allows for flexibility, “and in some situations may be based on one’s social circumstances rather than chronological age or cultural position”. Bucholtz (2002, p. 526-527) continues that in different cultures, the youth term can range from preadolescents to individuals in their 30s and 40s. “And youth as a cultural stage often marks the beginning of a long-term, even lifelong, engagement in particular cultural practices” (Bucholtz, 2002, p. 526). The groupings adolescent, teenager, or young adult can be used in different ways in different settings, although they are particular ways of demonstrating age. The definition of youth is thus dependent on cultural and social context. It may also change due to circumstances occurring in the society, such as economic or political. “Such classifications are often strategic and contested” (Bucholtz, 2002, p. 527).

According to Erik Erikson, a well-known American psychologist of human social development and psychoanalyst, as summarized by Tyyska (2001, p. 13), “successful identity formation in adolescence is a process through which a person gradually internalizes societal expectations”. On the other hand, for Grinder (1973, p. 5) & Howe & Bukowski (1996, p.189-190), not integrating into the society turns into a “prolonged identity

confusion” (in Tyyska, 2001, p. 13). This view suggests, however, that unless an individual imitates the normative ideas, attitudes, and activities in adolescence, he or she is unlikely to completely integrate into the society. This is the case among young Black-African immigrants in Canada, who are challenged in integrating into the mainstream society, as they have another culture that they sometimes hold onto that is apart from the dominant society. In my literature review, I analyzed such processes.

Also, in Canada, youth may experience pressures between their traditional cultural values and modernity (Bucholtz, 2002, p. 529). According to Bucholtz, these strains may “disrupt traditional social roles and socialization processes” (2002, p. 530) among youth. Black-African immigrant youth are particularly confronted with this. For these youth, tradition is attributed to the culture of their ethnic origin, while modernity is associated with the Canadian culture. Therefore, the traditional socialization that they experience, for instance by their parents, is disrupted by modern forms of socialization, such as the ones conveyed by Canadian educational institutions.

Bucholtz (2002, p. 530-531) further notes that culture change in Canada, such as new cultural and social conditions, allow young people to exhibit agency. Among Black-African immigrant youth, they also demonstrate agency by determining to what extent they want to acculturate to the Canadian society. The conceptual tools described below indicate the various acculturation strategies that these immigrant youth can select.

Immigration and Acculturation

As summarized by Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder (2006, p. 304-305), “two consequences of immigration are the experience of acculturation by groups and individuals (Sam & Berry, 2006), and the emergence of culturally plural societies (Kymlicka, 1995)”.

Individuals and groups determine how to exist interculturally in these societies, that is within two cultures (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006, p. 305).

According to Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, “acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups” (1936, p. 149).

Furthermore, as summarized by Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder (2006, p. 305), Berry (2003) states that “acculturation is the process of cultural and psychological change that follows intercultural contact”. Immigrant groups have four acculturation strategies according to Berry:

-Assimilation: “when individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures” (1997, p. 9);

-Separation: “when individuals place a value on holding on to their original culture, and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with others” (1997, p. 9);

-Integration: when “there is some degree of cultural integrity maintained, while at the same time individuals seek to participate as an integral part of the larger social network” (1997, p. 9);

-Marginalisation: “when there is little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance (often for reasons of enforced cultural loss), and little interest in having relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion and discrimination)” (1997, p. 9).

Inclusively, as summarized by Vedder & Virta (2005, p. 318), according to Berry (1997), Howard (1998), & LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton (1993), *integration* is the best acculturation strategy for an immigrant, while *marginalization* is at the other end of the

scale. Also, as summarized by Berry (1997, p.10), Berry (1991) states that “integration can only be ‘freely’ chosen and successfully pursued by non-dominant groups when the dominant society is open and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity”. In order for integration to be reached by immigrant groups, the immigrant groups and dominant groups must agree that each group can “live as culturally different peoples” (Berry, 1997, p.10). Furthermore, Berry & Sabatier (2010, p. 193) say, according to Berry (1984), that “the acceptance of integration along with cultural diversity and equitable participation by the larger society defines the attitude of mutual accommodation now widely called multiculturalism”.

As summarized by Berry (1997, p. 11), Berry & Kalin (1995) mention that there exist particular psychological requirements in a society that is multicultural. Berry (1997, p.11) further say, according to Kalin & Berry (in press), that “these pre-conditions are: the widespread acceptance of the value to a society of cultural diversity (i.e. the presence of a positive ‘multicultural ideology’); relatively low levels of prejudice (i.e. minimal ethnocentrism, racism, and discrimination); positive mutual attitudes among cultural groups (i.e. no specific intergroup hatreds); and a sense of attachment to, or identification with, the larger society by all groups”. I deem that Canada fulfills these psychological requirements.

Identity

“The concept of an identity is an elusive one, simply because identity is not a fixed construct, and may change or develop” (Neethling, 2008, p. 32). “Identity is agentive, flexible, and ever-changing” (Bucholtz, 2002, p. 532).

As summarized by Neethling (2008, p. 32), according to Wasserman & Jacobs (2003), “identity is a journey, not a destination”. “It is continuously constructed anew as the

social context changes” (Neethling, 2008, p. 32). There is therefore no static identity (Neethling, 2008, p. 32). In Canada, being a “multilingual and multicultural country”, where people often experience migration within the country and between provinces, “individual identities may adapt, adjust, and change” (Neethling, 2008, p. 32).

The social identity theory by Abrams (1992), as summarized by Xing (2001, p. 205), states that “an individual identifies with a certain group because of emotional ties and perceived value significance to his/her group membership”. Xing (2001, p. 205) further summarized Abrams (1992), who notes that “the salience of group identity is reinforced as an individual gains psychological comfort, self-enhancement, and a sense of pride through communal and communicative activities among members of the groups”. For instance, groups can use “ethnolinguistic vitality”, a concept by Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor (1977) “to refer to group members who maintain their cultural or ethnic identity by demonstrating loyalty to their language” (Xing, 2001, p. 205).

In my literature review, I was particularly interested in the ways that the Black-African group identity among youth is impacted by Black-African ethnocultural behaviours (for example, by specific forms of dress) and participation in Black-African groups’ activities (such as attendance to ethnic/cultural community gatherings).

Biculturalism

As summarized by Berry (1997, p.11), the authors Cameron & Lalonde (1994); LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton (1993); Padilla (1980); & Szapocznik & Kurtines (1993) each found that that the word bicultural essentially signifies an individual engaging in two different cultures at the same time. To start, there are many definitions for the term biculturalism. Xing (2001, p. 217) explains that “biculturalism is the *combination* of host

and native cultural values and practices”. Furthermore, Jambunathan et al. (2000) notes that it is “the ability of a person to function effectively in more than one culture and also to switch roles back and forth as the situation changes” (in Sodhi, 2008, p.187). Thompson (2005) likewise emphasizes that biculturalism allows people to “navigate two cultural worlds” (in Sodhi, 2008, p.187). Similarly, Goodenow & Espin (1993, p.178) say, according to Szapocznik & Kurtines (1980), that biculturalism is a form of identity in which an individual participates successfully in two different cultures, or ‘worlds’.

Canada recognizes both English and French culture and language in its national identity. Yet, biculturalism in Canada is not limited to the dominant cultures of French and English (Alli, 2010, p.15). The integration of immigrants’ children into the Canadian society involves a bicultural decision on their part of taking on the North American culture and/or keeping the culture of their ethnic origin (Alli, 2010, p.15). Haritatos and Benet-Martínez (2002, p. 598) describes these kinds of selections as the manner in which “bicultural individuals organize their two cultural identities” (in Alli, 2010, p.15). I analyzed these choices, negotiations, and (re)arrangements among Black-African immigrant youth through my review of the literature.

According to Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder (2006, p. 323), a bicultural lifestyle includes different methods of being involved in the two different cultures. This includes “preferences (acculturation attitudes), cultural identities (both ethnic and national), language behaviour (ethnic and national language knowledge and use), social engagements (with both ethnic and national peers), and relationships with parents within their families (including acceptance of both obligations and rights)” (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006, p. 323).

As previously mentioned, “bicultural identity formation can be defined as a constant, dynamic, and evolving process that is experienced in stages as significant milestones of life are achieved and integrated” (Sodhi, 2008, p. 196). In addition, “it is comprised of various stages that can be revisited during an individual’s lifespan, depending on various familial, community, and societal variables” (Sodhi, 2008, p. 190). Once an individual enters teenagehood, bicultural identity can change and be impacted by important life occurrences “(eg./ academic/professional achievement, marriage, the birth of a child)” (Sodhi, 2008, p. 190). Haritatos and Benet-Martínez (2002, p. 598) labeled high bicultural identity, the period of increased identity change, as two different cultural identities as “compatible, fluid, and complementary”, and the opposite, low bicultural identity being “largely oppositional, conflicting, and disparate” (in Alli, 2010, p.16).

“Bicultural individuals may experience some degree of personal conflict as they attempt to identify with both groups” and cultures (Stroink & Lalonde, 2009, p.45). Being within two cultures at the same time, these individuals are confronted with the Western society (through their peers, the media, etc.), as well as their native culture (through parents, their community, etc.) (Stroink & Lalonde, 2009, p.45). Also, Stroink & Lalonde (2009, p.45) say, according to Sung (1985), that “these two sets of cultural values and ideals have the potential to be different, and perhaps even contradictory”. As such, “the cultural niche that is created by the immigrant family and supported by Canadian policy can be experienced by the developing children of these families as being in opposition to the larger Canadian culture” (Stroink & Lalonde, 2009, p.45). The differing experiences between the Canadian culture and the Black-African culture of the immigrant youth was an aspect that was investigated in the literature review of this paper.

Ethnicity, Ethnic Groups, and Ethnic Identities

Phinney et al. (2001, p. 495) describe ethnic identity as “that aspect of acculturation that focuses on the subjective sense of belonging to a group or culture” (in Tartakovsky, 2009, p. 655). As for ethnic behaviour, Berry & Sabatier (2010, p. 194) see it in terms of “the degree to which individuals keep elements of their culture and behave in accordance to their cultural customs” (meaning that their behaviour tends to be consistent with their culture of origin).

I will now discuss an analysis of Barth who provides a *complex* analysis of ethnic groups and boundaries. Barth first insists on the idea that “ethnic groups are categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves, and thus have the characteristic of organizing interaction between people” (1969, p. 10). He places importance on the “different processes that seem to be involved in generating and maintaining ethnic groups” (Barth, 1969, p. 10) and this is why he is so first and foremost interested in ethnic boundaries and processes of boundary maintenance rather than in “internal constitution and history of separate groups” (Barth, 1969, p. 10) *per se*.

Having said this, Barth states that the typical definition of an ethnic group is a population with the following characteristics:

- “1) is largely biologically self-perpetuating
 - 2) shares fundamental cultural values, realized in overt unity in cultural forms
 - 3) makes up a field of communication and interaction
 - 4) has a membership which identifies itself, and is identified by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order”
- (1969, p. 10-11).

Barth (1969, p. 11-12) also says that ethnic groups can possess cultural attributes. They are recognized “by the morphological characteristics of the cultures of which they are bearers” (Barth, 1969, p. 12). Barth (1969, p.12) goes on to explain that there are two ideas which relate to this. First, being labeled as an ethnic group is contingent on the extent at which they display elements of the culture. These traits can be seen by an individual, and are therefore overt. Second, “the overt cultural forms which can be itemized as traits exhibit the effects of ecology” (Barth, 1969, p. 12). This does not imply that they mirror their existence in a region, but rather that “they reflect the external circumstances to which actors must accommodate themselves” (Barth, 1969, p.12). In my study of the literature, I took particular attention to these external circumstances or contexts, as they specifically relate to Black-African immigrant youth. These contexts are simply not ecological, they are also social and cultural.

Like Barth, Sodhi (2008, p. 188) also insists on the notion that ethnicity can be situational. Individuals can “assume different identities according to the situation” (Sodhi, 2008, p. 188). With situational ethnicity, immigrants have “the option of selecting and discarding assorted cultural values and traditions” depending on the context (Sodhi, 2008, p. 188). Again, in my study of the literature, I took particular attention to these contexts.

Barth (1969, p.13-14) positions that ethnic groups are a type of social organization. Ethnic groups are thus self-ascribed and ascribed by individuals. An ascription is a classification of an individual by the place that he or she came from. Individuals “use ethnic identities to categorize themselves and others for purposes of interaction” (Barth, 1969, p.13-14). In this way, ethnic groups are created.

Significantly, Barth (1969, p.14) further conveys that the only elements that are considered in ethnic categories are those that the individuals deem as important. “The cultural contents of ethnic dichotomies would seem analytically to be of two orders: i) overt signals or signs – the diacritical features that people look for and exhibit to show identity, often such features as dress, language, house-form, or general style of life, and ii) basic value orientations: the standards of morality and excellence by which performance is judged” (Barth, 1969, p. 14). In terms of the second guideline, with an ethnic category comes a specific identity, thereby inferring an entitlement “to be judged, and to judge oneself, by those standards that are relevant to that identity” (Barth, 1969, p. 14). He suggests that these two types of cultural aspects are not determined universally by actors (Barth, 1969, p.14). Rather, “ethnic categories provide an organizational vessel that may be given varying amounts and forms of content in different socio-cultural systems” (Barth, 1969, p.14). This idea is useful for this paper because the manner in which Black-African immigrant youth identify themselves and the identity markers that they use was examined in the literature review.

Furthermore, Barth (1969, p. 15) explains that the limits of ethnic groups are often social boundaries. These boundaries are standards that allow a person to become a member of a group as well as methods of marking “membership and exclusion” (Barth, 1969, p. 15). Ethnic groups are not determined by the “occupation of exclusive territories” (Barth, 1969, p. 15). Instead, the ethnic boundary consists of a multifaceted “organization of behaviour and social relations” (Barth, 1969, p. 15). People identify individuals in the same group. “The identification of another person as a fellow member of an ethnic group implies a sharing of criteria for evaluation and judgement” (Barth, 1969, p. 15). Since the members

are considered to be alike, there is a possibility for variation between them to take up various areas of activity (Barth, 1969, p.15). Conversely, “a dichotomization of others as strangers, as members of another ethnic group, implies a recognition of limitations on shared understandings, differences in criteria for judgement of value and performance, and a restriction of interaction” to other groups (Barth, 1969, p. 15).

Barth (1969, p. 15) states that this leads to another form of boundary preservation “whereby cultural constituents and boundaries” are maintained. Barth (1969, p.15-16) continues that when individuals of distinct cultures interact with one another, ethnic groups are maintained by divergences of behaviour. However, when people of different cultures engage with one another, the differences between them are condensed, as relations can be perpetuated by a resemblance of culture. Therefore, “the persistence of ethnic groups in contact implies not only criteria and signals for identification, but also a structuring of interaction which allows the persistence of cultural differences” (Barth, 1969, p. 16). Ethnic groups and its social relations are organized based on an arrangement of rules. These rules are complex in regards to ethnic group relations. “Stable inter-ethnic relations presuppose such a structuring of interaction: a set of prescriptions governing situations of contact, and allowing for articulation in some sectors or domains of activity, and a set of proscriptions on social situations preventing inter-ethnic interaction in other sectors” (Barth, 1969, p. 16). This altogether shields fragments of cultures from being challenged and altered.

Yet, Barth notes that “most of the cultural matter that at any time is associated with a human population is *not* constrained by this boundary; it can vary, be learnt, and change without any critical relation to the boundary maintenance of the ethnic group” (1969, p. 38).

Methodology

Method

For my Major Research Paper, as mentioned, I conducted a primary and *mostly* secondary literature review. Specifically, the primary literature consisted of a poem and a song's lyrics (taken from two different websites), while the secondary literature review entailed articles and books. Particular attention was given to:

- bi-cultural identity of Black-African immigrant youth in Canada and the ways they negotiate between / engage with two (or more) cultures and identities
- boundaries markers and boundary making processes
- contexts (such as education, community, etc.) of situational ethnicity
- engagements in Black-African ethnocultural behaviours and activities in Canada and abroad
- engagements and experiences in the Canadian culture and society
- impact of their identity(ies) by Black-African ethnocultural behaviours and activities
- relations with their ethnic group and Canadian society

I then asked the following questions in reviewing the primary and *mainly* secondary literature that I chose for my sample and framed the literature review around them:

- How do Black-African immigrant youth in Canada identify?
- What type of identity markers do Black-African immigrant youth use?
- How do they choose, negotiate, and (re)arrange their identities?
- What are the boundary markers that they use?

- How do they process and maintain their ethnic boundaries?
- How is their identity(ies) impacted by Black-African ethnocultural behaviours and activities?
- How is their identity impacted by the Canadian culture and society?
- In which contexts do they affirm/use certain identities (situational ethnicity)?
- How do they relate to their ethnic group? And to the Canadian society, peers, etc.?
- What type of communities, associations, activities, etc. do they engage in?

Sample

For the primary literature review, a poem by a famous poet Maya Angelou as well as song lyrics by the artist K'Naan, taken from two websites, were used. Scientific articles and books – coming first and foremost from Sociology, as well as other disciplines – were analyzed for my secondary literature review, which largely consists of the paper. The sampling consisted of work dealing with young Black-African immigrants in general. This was due to the limited amount of publication available on Black-African youth from specific immigrant generations. Therefore, literature relating to Black-African immigrant youth from all immigrant generations was analyzed in the paper. I also saw the “youth” category as an extensive one, since, as previously discussed, the category is flexible and varies culturally. In addition, information on the identities and/or experiences of Black-African *adult* immigrants were included in the paper in order to briefly compare the research on Black-African immigrant youth. As well, I focused on published articles and books which relate to the research question mainly after the 1960's, since this is when, as noted, African

immigration to Canada increased due to the liberalization of Canadian immigration and refugee laws.

Furthermore, for my secondary literature review, I selected 15 texts written by 15 authors on the basis that they all relate to the “identities and experiences of Black-African immigrant youth in Canada”. They are the work of sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, social workers, feminists, and educators. All the texts chosen were published during the last 16 years. Importantly, their research in these texts occurred in the context of the post-1960’s liberalization of immigration and refugee laws which increased Black-African immigration in Canada. Here are a few details on the research of the authors in alphabetical order, on which are based their analyses.

The first text is by Kristine J. Ajrouch and Abdi M. Kusow. They had two studies, one with 30 Lebanese immigrant adults, and the second with the same amount of Somali immigrant adults (Ajrouch & Kusow, 2007, p. 77). Only the research on Somali immigrants was analyzed in the paper.

A PhD thesis is part of my sample, the one by Michael Baffoe (2006). This author studied ten immigrant and refugee youth, parents of the youth, “four community leaders”, as well as “two teachers and one school administrator” (Baffoe, 2006, p. 17). Only information on an African youth was used for this paper. From this thesis, I analyzed “Chapter 5, Section 5.9: ‘Ethnic Bonding’ ”.

The third text I selected is by Nkechinyelum A. Chioneso. This study involved 32 participants (split between male and female) from Toronto (Chioneso, 2008, p. 72). Half of the participants were Ghanaians, and the other half were Jamaicans, and they were between 18 and 55 years of age (Chioneso, 2008, p. 72). Only the information on Ghanaians was

used for the paper.

The next book is by Laura Gillian Creese, who conducted an investigation among sub-Saharan Africans (Creese, 2011, p. 14). The participants in the study were “sixty-one participants, consisting of thirty-one women and thirty men, from twenty-one countries in sub-Saharan Africa” (Creese, 2011, p. 14). In her book, I analyzed “Chapter 6: Identity and Spaces of Belonging”.

George J. Sefa Dei (1997, p. 245-246) with his colleague Irma Marcia James (Dei & James 1998, p. 96) conducted studies with 150 male and female students and above. Black or African-Canadian students from Grade 10 and 12 were included (Dei & James 1998, p.96). “In a few cases, the difficulty of obtaining students from these two grades led them to include students from Grades 9 and 11” (Dei & James, 1998, p. 96). Also included in the sample were “21 dropouts, at-risk youths”, as well as “41 schoolteachers (including guidance counsellors and other school administrators), 59 non-black students (mainly White students), and 55 Black parents, care-givers, and community workers” (Dei & James, 1998, p. 96). The reason for this diverse sample was to cross-check the Black or African-Canadian students’ accounts (Dei & James, 1998, p. 96).

As for S. Nombuso Dlamini and Uzo Anucha (2009, p. 232), they conducted a study on Black-African youth “16 to 24 years old, who had migrated to Canada between the years 1995 and 2005”. Their research included interviews with 41 individuals who came from these countries: “Ethiopia, 8; Ghana, 1; Kenya; 1, Nigeria, 2; Liberia, 1; Rwanda, 12; Somalia, 10 and Sudan, 6” (Dlamini & Anucha, 2009, p. 232).

I also included in my sample a PhD thesis by Kevin Gosine (2005). He studied 16 Black students (born and/or grew up in Canada) who “were currently enrolled in or recently

completed high profile, university-level academic and professional programs in Ontario” (Gosine, 2005, p. 4-5). “Nine of these participants were female and seven were male” (Gosine, 2005, p. 7). “The mean age of the participants was 27.6 years with a range of eight years (32-24)” (Gosine, 2005, p. 7). The limitation of this piece is that it does not always specify if the participants are from Africa or not. I focused on three chapters from Gosine (2005)’s thesis, which were: “Chapter four: Being Black *and* Canadian”, “Chapter five: Construing Identities and Aspirations”, and “Chapter six: Talk of Schooling Experiences and Opportunities”.

My sample is based as well on three texts by Awad Ibrahim published in 2000, 2006, & 2008. Ibrahim (2008, p. 235) studied a group that he names “the ‘new flâneur’, a recent immigrant and refugee group of continental francophone African youth”. The participants specifically attended “a small French-language high school (Grades 7-13) in South-Western Ontario” (Ibrahim, 2008, p. 244). “They came from places as diverse as Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire), Djibouti, Gabon, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, and Togo” (Ibrahim, 2008, p. 245). He studied this group of individuals in all three texts.

The next texts are by Jennifer Kelly (2001, 2004). Kelly (2004, p. 13) reported on students from a high school in Edmonton, Alberta. The participants were “male and female students of African descent, with family ancestry in the Caribbean, continental Africa, and the United States” (Kelly, 2004, p. 11). “The students varied in age from fifteen to eighteen years old” (Kelly, 2004, p. 11). In Kelly’s 2004 book, “Chapter 2: Diaspora as Collectivity” was examined. She discusses the results of her research with this group in her 2001 PhD thesis as well. In her thesis, I analyzed “Chapter 4: A Sense of Belonging” and “Chapter 5: Diaspora as Collectivity”. The limitations of the results in her book and thesis is that it is not

specifically indicated where the respondents originate from, whether it is Caribbean, Africa, or the United States.

Another text I included in my sample is a MA thesis by Malaika Ayanna Leacock (2006). The research participants in this thesis consisted of four Black individuals (1 female and 3 males) whose ages were from 19 to 29 (Leacock, 2006, p. 8). “Each of them claimed some sort of Caribbean heritage that surfaced in some of their responses” (Leacock, 2006, p. 8). Although the participants are from the Caribbean, their responses are valuable in relation to Black-African immigrant youth. In this thesis, I examined “Chapter 3: Being”.

Finally, Philomina Okeke-Ihejirika and Denise L. Spitzer examined young African females in Alberta (Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer, 2005, p. 211). They came from “various geographical and linguistic regions, including the Horn of Africa and Central, West, Southern, and Eastern Africa” (Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer, 2005, p. 211). “Participants ranged in age from eighteen to twenty-five and included young women from Eritrea, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, the Sudan, and Ethiopia” (Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer, 2005, p. 211).

Literature Review

Identifying with Multiple Travels

Dlamini & Anucha (2009, p. 233) found that Black-African immigrant youth in Canada identified themselves with multiple travels. This means that they travelled to different places before entering Canada. Here is an example of one Black-African youth's experience of multiple travels:

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 (in Dlamini & Anucha, 2009, p.233-234).

This quote shows that this participant lived in two different countries in Africa, before migrating to Canada.

Dlamini & Anucha (2009, p. 233) explain that for the youth who participated in the study that used the identity of multiple travels, prior to coming to Canada, these youth had travelled for many years of their life. In addition, the time they spent living in these countries was long (such as of four years).

The Significance of Loss

Dlamini & Anucha (2009, p. 236) also noted that Black-African youth identified themselves with various losses, such as of "parents, siblings, relatives, limbs/hearing/sight, friendships, 'homes', and many other things". Dlamini & Anucha (2009, p. 236) continue that these reports of losses were different for each individual. For instance, for one participant, his parents died in the genocide in Rwanda. He resided in an orphanage for two years, and after moved to Canada. His aunt also adopted him. He would rather not discuss

his life in Rwanda because he states, his “experiences in Rwanda, they were 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” (in Dlamini & Anucha, 2009, p.236). This individual created a new life in Canada, and left his past experiences behind him.

On the other hand, Dlamini & Anucha (2009, p. 236) mentioned that another participant who had also endured loss in Rwanda, identified with loss differently. All of her family died in the genocide, and she lived in a refugee camp in the capital city of Rwanda, Kigali. She then claimed a refugee status in Canada. She asserts a Rwandan identity, and is open to discussing her experiences of loss. She conveys,

It is important to me because, I guess it’s just being called Rwandese makes me proud, and it makes me proud of my country. Not exactly what happened there, but just that I’m from somewhere else and I was in another country and I came to share with the new people about my country so they can know... I share my story, my experiences from back home and they are always saying to me, ‘oh my gosh, how could you go through all that?’ (in Dlamini & Anucha, 2009, p. 236-237).

Even though she endured loss in her country through a genocide, this individual is still proud of her Rwandan heritage and finds it important that people know about what happened in Rwanda. Thus, these above accounts suggest that identities and experiences of travelling and loss are dependent on individuals and contexts and are not the same for all Black-African youth immigrants in Canada.

Place Identity

Another source of identification discussed by Dlamini & Anucha (2009, p. 234) for the Black-African immigrant youth in this study was related to conceptions of “place”. “The dialectic relationship between place and self provides a strong sense of who they are, while

simultaneously creating a strong sense of otherness – that which they are not” (Dlamini & Anucha, 2009, p. 234). This means that the places that these youth came from indicate their specific identities.

Dlamini & Anucha (2009, p. 234-235) continue that the participants differed in the manner in which they used these places as markers of their identity. For example, one of the respondents had lived in different countries in Africa, being Liberia, Ivory Coast, and Ghana. He claims an African identity, and uses Africa as a reference point for how to live. He expresses, “in Africa they strive for you to do your best school work” and “people are more helpful in Africa than Canada” (in Dlamini & Anucha, 2009, p.234). He thus positions his behaviours in Canada with the places he was brought up in Africa. He voices, “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” (in Dlamini & Anucha, 2009, p.234-235). This quote illustrates that this participant’s behaviours were uninfluenced by the Canadian society.

Dlamini & Anucha (2009, p. 235-236) bring in the example of an additional participant who migrated to London, England as a result of the war in Ethiopia. After living in England for four years, when she was eighteen years old, she moved to Canada. She claims an Ethiopian identity and asserts that in England, 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” (in Dlamini & Anucha, 2009, p. 235). For this female, “Ethiopia provides her with a way of defining herself as well as offering a sense of community and belonging” (Dlamini & Anucha, 2009, p. 236). Going to church seems also important in providing her with a community, but unfortunately the authors provide no further details. The religious identity

question among Black-African immigrant youth is neither discussed in the other texts of my sample, which is quite surprising knowing that religion is an important topic in the media when speaking about immigrants.

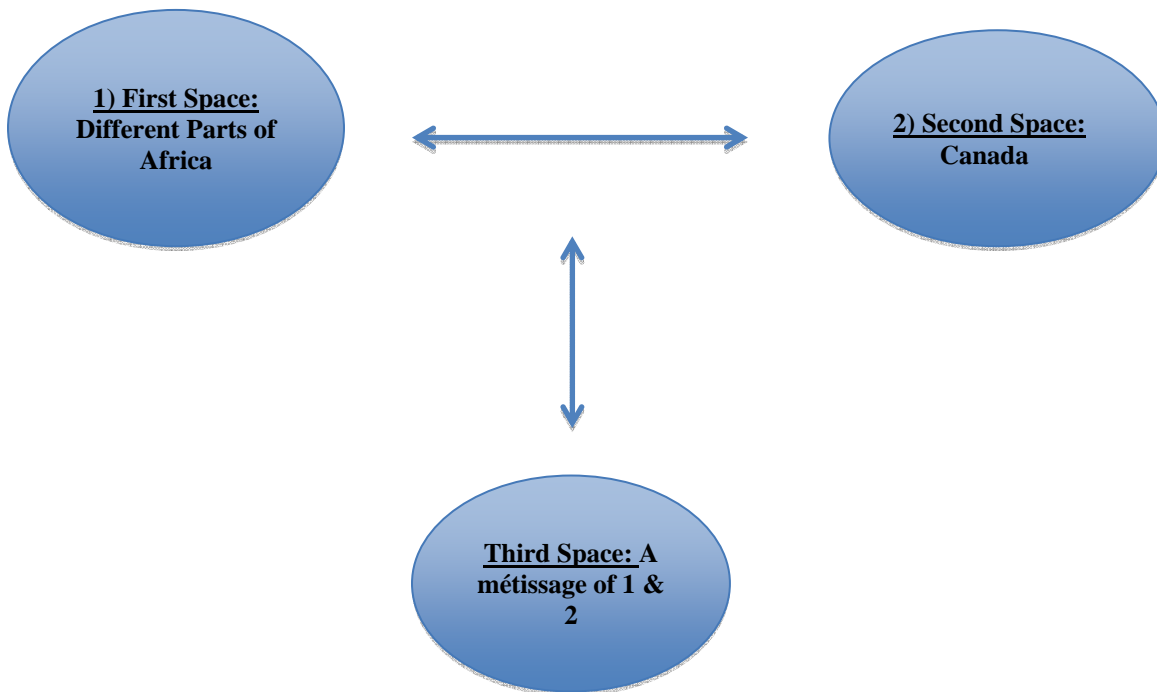
Moreover, Dlamini & Anucha (2009, p. 235-236) explain another participant who was from Somalia, then moved to Zimbabwe with his family when he was six due to the civil war. He then moved to Ottawa with his family again, and later on to Windsor. He claims a Somali identity even if he does not recall much of his country of origin: “I don’t remember very much about it (Somalia) or that transition from Somalia to Zimbabwe. I was about six, five years going six” (in Dlamini & Anucha, 2009, p. 235-236). His relatives were living in Ottawa, and therefore him and his family stayed in that city. It was also since “it was easier to be around our relatives or an already established Somali community” (in Dlamini & Anucha, 2009, p. 236). This suggests that this individual wanted to live close to his extended family while living Canada.

The Third Space

Ibrahim (2008) discovered that Black-African immigrant youth identified with a “third space”. According to Ibrahim (2008, p. 239), the third space consists of “two or more languages, cultures, and belief systems”. It is “a trace, a synthesis, a performative act, and an articulation of these two or more cultures and languages” (Ibrahim, 2008, p. 239).

This third space is depicted in the figure below by Ibrahim (2008, p. 241). “The arrows between first and second space are an expression of the dialectic nature between them, (...) whereas the arrow linking the latter with the third space is a product of this dialecticism” (Ibrahim, 2008, p. 241). This essentially means that the first and second spaces are two separate entities of cultures, languages, etc., while the third space is a mixture of the

first and second space.



Two of the participants in the study depicted what the third space was for them. Musa expressed: “Here, we are in Canada, you see. We are going to keep our culture, but at the same time there is the new technologies, the new musics. There is also glamour and modernization of the cities and towns” (in Ibrahim, 2008, p. 246). For Musa, the third space consists of combining both the Black-African and Canadian cultural forms, such as through music and technologies. Differently, for Mukhi, the third space consists of combining both cultures in the method of dress. He stated:

The way we dress, the way we talk, we are in Canada . . . The small Angolot you know, the small cloth we put around (the bottom), it is like the way we dress backhome. We need to mix in different genres of dress here. Backhome, for example, we put on Boubou and all that. But, I don’t find it embarrassing to go out like that (in Ibrahim, 2008, p. 247).

Ibrahim (2008, p. 240) also explains that “the third space is organic”. This means that “it is an indissoluble mixture of two, or more, linguistic, ideological, cultural, and belief systems” (Ibrahim, 2008, p. 240). “It is third because it is found in the inter-geographies, cultures, languages, and memories” of both Canada and Africa (Ibrahim, 2008, p. 240). “It is indeed where the ‘first’ and the ‘second’ are produced in the same sentence, in the same syntax, in the same grammar, in the same garment, at the same time” (Ibrahim, 2008, p. 240). “The third space for Black-African youth is a product of the memory, experience, and cultural and linguistic behavioral patterns they bring with them when coming into Canada”, and integrate it with the Canadian society and culture (Ibrahim, 2008, p. 240).

In Ibrahim’s (2006, p. 94) previous article, he provides an excerpt of two students who speak Black stylized English, Somali and French language at the same time. This reveals the third space of languages and cultures (Ibrahim, 2006, p. 94).

Sam: I don’t rap, man, c’mon, give me a break. (laugh) Yo. A’ait a’ait you know, we just about to finish the tape and all clat. Respect to my main man. So, you know, you know wha’m mean, I’m reprezi’in Q7. One love to Q7, you know wha’m mean and all my friends back in Q7. Even though you know I haven’t seen them for a long time you know, I still I got love for them you know who’m mean. Stop the tapin’ boy.

Jamal: Kick the free style. (Translated from the Somali language.) Get me the tape man.

Sam: A’ait this is Sam reprez’in in AQA where it’s born, reprez’in you know wha’m mean? I wanna say whassup to all my niggers, you know, peace and one love. You know wha’m mean Q7 reprezi’in forever. Peace. (rap music)

Jamal: Crank it man, ‘m coming up. (rap music)

Sam: Je reviens man, you know. It’s from Mecca yo, e reprezin you know, Mecca a’ait. You ask (laugh). (in Somali) Put the music up, wallahi bellahi (in the name of Allah). (in Somali) Look at this, a’ait a’ait (in Ibrahim, 2006, p. 94).

In this excerpt, Sam and Jamal are mixing different languages of Black stylized English, French, and Somali in their conversation (Ibrahim, 2006, p. 94). I see that by

speaking their ethnic language, being Somali, they are sustaining an “ethnolinguistic vitality”, a concept summarized by Xing (2001, p.205), in reference to Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor (1977), which as explained in the conceptual tools, “refers to group members who maintain their cultural or ethnic identity by demonstrating loyalty to their language”. Also, I see that by speaking their ethnic language, as well as Canada’s dominant languages of French and English, according to Berry (1997, p.9), they have integrated into the Canadian society. Ibrahim (2006, p. 95-96) explains another instance of the third space taken from his field notes. He writes:

The day was April 12, 1996. At lunch time, I was sitting in the foyer of the school, just under the board showing the students recognized as best by the school. (...) Najat and a group of seven African girls were holding a tape recorder which they had brought with them. They stopped in the middle of the foyer on their way from the gymnasium to the library; two girls wore the hijab, or traditional Muslim veil. “Whassup Awad? Man, school sucks,” Najat said to me in English. At the beginning of her second sentence, one of the girls plugged in the tape recorder: it was LL Cool J who was rapping. Najat turned around and spoke to one female in Somali, and hereafter everyone joined in the dance. Hands were moving, bodies were swinging, and the girls were talking in Somali, French, and English. Two of the girls, as already cited, wore the traditional Islamic hijab, others were dressed in a boubou, the Somali national dress; still others were dressed in baggy hip-hop clothes (in Ibrahim, 2006, p. 95-96).

This excerpt from Ibrahim’s fieldnotes reveals how the girls exhibit a third space in which they speak and engage in different languages and cultures (Ibrahim, 2006, p. 96).

In contrast to Ibrahim (2006, 2008)’s findings, Gosine’s (2005, p. 78) study tells that a participant named Phil, who graduated from an MBA program and is 28 years of age, identified importantly with the Canadian identity. He is very proud of being Canadian, and he compares his identity of Canada to the U.S (Gosine, 2005, p. 78):

Interviewer: Do you consider yourself to be Canadian?

Phil: Absolutely.

Interviewer: And what does being Canadian mean to you?

Phil: When I think about being Canadian, it's usually in relation to, as compared to being American. And by that I usually don't say American cause Canada's part of North America, which technically makes us Americans, but I usually compare it to being say a citizen of the United States, and in that regard I usually define someone being Canadian as someone who is inherently tolerant, much more patient, open-minded, almost...someone who's very patriotic, but it doesn't define them. I think you find with Americans that patriotism almost defines people there, whereas here it's just something that's part of your culture, that doesn't really make a lot of sense, let's see if I can shed some light on that. It's part of who you are and you're proud of it, but it's more of a quiet pride as opposed to an 'in your face, star spangled banner, rockets red glare' kind of way. I can travel around the world and not be concerned about my personal safety. I can travel around the world and proudly claim that I'm Canadian and other people will respect that and be curious about me. Someone who is outwardly focused, who's interested in what goes on outside of the borders of Canada, and again, all of this I'm saying in relation to someone being from the United States and that's kind of the way that I define being Canadian, as in relation to everything else and that's the closest neighbor and easiest comparison (in Gosine, 2005, p. 78-79).

By identifying himself as Canadian, Phil has likely engaged in the acculturation strategy of integration into the Canadian society, a concept used by Berry (1997, p. 9). Gosine (2005, p. 79) further notes that for Phil, diversity is an important element of the Canadian society. This element also makes it difficult to define who a Canadian is (Gosine, 2005, p. 79). As Phil mentions, "if you're ever going to define a Canadian, you're gonna have to always have a collection of people so that you can show the diversity and, at the same time, number of traits as well, but I don't think you can ever just put together one, I don't think you could ever just present one person as being a typical Canadian, probably, I don't think that would ever work" (in Gosine, p. 79). This quote demonstrates that for this individual, Canada consists of many different types of ethnic individuals and groups.

Jeannette from Kelly (2001, p. 98)'s study posits a similar viewpoint. When asked

about her identity, her answer was (Kelly, 2001, p. 98):

Jeannette: Canadian because... the whole Canadian thing is multicultural

Interviewer: What is a Canadian?

Jeannette: It's a lot of things, white people aren't just Canadian it's anybody who lives here because it's multicultural (in Kelly, 2001, p. 98).

This quote reveals that for this participant, Canada is very multicultural, and is not limited to White people only.

On the other hand, Aaron, a research participant in Gosine (2005)'s study, although identifies himself as Canadian, "articulates a simultaneous sense of estrangement from the society in which he was born and raised" (p. 71). He states, "I love Canada because it gave my parents the opportunity to come to, you know, live relatively comfortably, but at the same time I hate Canada because it put myself, my parents, ah, my friends through lots of different kinds of hell, whether it's racism or classism or sexism...whatever, you know? So I have that tension in my description of it" (in Gosine, 2005, p. 71). This quotation indicates that Aaron is experiencing a bicultural conflict, when he states that he loves Canada but hates it at the same time. It is important to note that Aaron is not African, but Caribbean. Despite this, he raises interesting points that could be useful in doing research among Black-African youth in Canada.

Furthermore, in Kelly's (2001, p. 97) findings, Denzil states that the definition of "Canadian" does not include African or Black due to Canada's historical representations:

I don't see much of a black Canadian so much. 'Cuz if you say Canadian? [pause] What pops to mind if you say Canadian? Its like Canadian [deep voice], you see lumberjacks and beavers [pause] and canoes and igloos and stuff. Like that's what pops to mind when you hear [the word] Canadian. There is no real black Canadian. I guess (in Kelly, 2001, p. 97).

This quotation reveals how Denzil does not identify as a Black-Canadian, due to the lack of emphasis on Black cultural symbols in Canada. Perhaps, he has also took on the acculturation strategy of separation discussed by Berry (1997, p. 9), since he does not identify himself as Canadian.

Ibrahim (2008)'s theory of the "third space" is, although termed differently, similar to the theory of biculturalism proposed in the conceptual tools section. This is since, as stated, the 'third space' "is an indissoluble mixture of two, or more, linguistic, ideological, cultural, and belief systems" (Ibrahim, 2008, p. 240). "It is third because it is found in the inter-geographies, cultures, languages, and memories" (Ibrahim, 2008, p. 240). Biculturalism postulates the same idea. As discussed, Xing explains that "biculturalism is the *combination* of host and native cultural values and practices" (2001, p. 217). Thompson (2005) also suggests that biculturalism allows people to "navigate two cultural worlds" (in Sodhi, 2008, p.187). In fact, Canada itself seems to be understood by some research participants as a "third space".

The differences between the theory of the "third space" and biculturalism lie in the idea that the "third space" can include more than two cultures, as opposed to *only* two cultures with the biculturalism theory. The "third space" is also not limited to cultures, as in the theories about biculturalism, but includes other aspects such as memory, experiences, etc. of Black-African immigrant youth.

"Black" and Hip-Hop Identity

Ibrahim (2008, p. 243) also established that the Black-African youth in his study identified as "Black" in Canada. They did not identify themselves in this manner prior to coming to Canada though. They used other ethnic labels to mark their identities, such as

“Sudanese”, or “Somali”. Yet, when they entered Canada, these labels turned out to be subordinate modes of identification. This means that they identified themselves primarily as “Black” in the Canadian society. However, Ibrahim (2008) does not specify in what contexts these more specific identities are affirmed.

Furthermore, Ibrahim (2008, p. 243-244) found among his research participants that the Black-African youths’ identity of being “Black” led them to identify more specifically as Black *Hip-Hop* youth. This in effect influenced their behavioral patterns, in that they attained a Hip-Hop culture. He noted that there are locations in which Black-African youth convey a Hip-Hop culture through language, attitude, and clothing, such as Downtown Toronto. For instance, verbal phrases in the Hip-Hop culture, such as ‘Whassup homeboy?’, are methods of expressing Black and Blackness (Ibrahim, 2008, p. 244). Other aspects of the Hip-Hop culture that the participants displayed were “baggy cloths and the myriad shades of sneakers, bicycle shorts, chunky jewelry, dreadlocks, braids, and other high-fade designs” (Ibrahim, 2008, p. 244). I see that these are forms of ethnocultural behaviours and practices that allow them to affirm their Blackness and also contribute to reinforcing it.

The findings of Ibrahim (2000, p. 128-129) on Black-African youth identifying with Hip-Hop and Black popular culture also show that some research participants see their identity as a reflection of African-Americans; they see themselves as similar to them through Black Hip-Hop and popular culture. As a 16 year old from Somalia named Amani states, “We have to wonder why we try to really follow the model of the Americans who are Blacks? Because when you search for yourself, search for identification, you search for someone who reflects you, with whom you have something in common” (in Ibrahim, 2000, p. 128-129). Hassan likewise expressed:

Hassan: Yes, yes, African students are influenced by rap and hip-hop because they want to, yes, they are influenced probably a bit more because it is the desire to belong maybe.

Interviewer: Belong to what?

Hassan: To a group, belong to a society, to have a model/fashion; you know, the desire to mark oneself, the desire to make, how do I say it? To be part of a rap society, you see. It is like getting into rock and roll or heavy metal (in Ibrahim, 2000, p. 129).

The reality that Black-African immigrant youth are taking on a Black Hip-Hop and popular culture identity has to be understood in relation to the African diaspora. The African diaspora, which was the result of historical events, such as the memory of slavery, Black nationalism, the Négritude movement, etc., allowed Black youth to come into contact with each other and share some cultural elements. Popular culture is greatly influenced by the African American culture, that its influence on Black-African immigrant youth is inevitable.²

“Black” and Gendered Identity

Interestingly, Ibrahim (2000, p. 125) further reported that boys – and not girls – mainly identify with the Black Hip-Hop culture. Also, in another narrative in Dei & James (1998, p. 101), a student named Charlene links her Black identity with her gendered identity by stating:

I think black guys have it worse. I do because they pick on those black guys, they really, really do, the teachers and all the fights, people come to fight the black guys and you have to act like you want to fight. Even if you don't want to fight you have to fight. And you're pushed to just do sports ... And if a black guy's smart, they don't admit it, they don't want to talk about it, they don't want to. They just want to just do enough to pass to be like the rest of their friends, just wear the clothes and that's it. I think again they, you know, if you seem smart and they say okay, if you're black

² Thank you to Professor Couton for raising these ideas in my Major Research Paper proposal defence.

and you're smart it's usually female that'll admit it, not male—it's awful (in Dei & James, 1998, p. 101).

Dei & James (1998, p. 101) specify that “when Charlene says that ‘black guys have it worse’, she is also implicitly stating that ‘black girls have it bad’ ”. Dei & James (1998, p. 101) explain that this student sees that young males are a predominant group who experience racism. Also, according to her in her quote, Black-African males can be violent and poor academics due to the negativity they receive from teachers and their peers. However, I see that she does not state this in the case of Black-African females, demonstrating that Black-African females have a different (although unspecified) experience of holding a Black identity.

Parents are also concerned about their Black-African youths’ experiences in places such as school, employment, etc. African-American writer Maya Angelou’s poem, “A Pledge To Rescue Our Youth”, gives an understanding of these concerns. Although it was written by an African-American, it can definitely be directed towards Black-African immigrant youth in Canada as well. This poem is:

Young women, young men of color, we add our voices to the voices of
your ancestors who speak to you over ancient seas and across impossible
mountaintops.
Come up from the gloom of national neglect, you have already been paid for.
Come out of the shadow of irrational prejudice, you owe no racial debt to history.
The blood of our bodies and the prayers of our souls have bought you a future
free from shame and bright beyond the telling of it.
We pledge ourselves and our resources to seek for you clean and well-furnished
schools, safe and non-threatening streets, employment which makes use of your
talents, but does not degrade your dignity.
You are the best we have.
You are all we have.
You are what we have become.
We pledge you our whole hearts from this day forward (in Angelou, 2012).

This poem depicts the desires of parents towards their children towards having a better

life than they did. It also demonstrates that parents have high hopes for their children, despite the challenges of racism and discrimination that Black-African immigrant youth may face in society.

In relation to the link between race and gendered identities among Black-African youth, in a narrative from Gosine (2005, p. 109)'s study, Allison for the most part places race before gender in her identity as she explains,

Race, yep, again I had this conversation the other day, race, I mean, race even before gender for me. I see myself as a Black woman, you know what I mean? And again, just because of what race means, I mean, we all know the argument, race is a social construct, bla, bla, bla, but what race means in our society, I mean, there's just so much emphasis placed on race. People have died because of race, people move ahead because of race, people, people's dignity is, you know, affected because of race and all of those factors. It factors in my mind as something so important, it's so important to me, my race, more so than, more so than my gender, so it factors I'd say, race, gender, and then, I'm not sure how I would categorize the other things, but, um, you know, certainly right off the bat I'd say race (in Gosine, 2005, p. 109).

Although Allison is from the Caribbean, her comment is relevant in relation to Black-African immigrant youths' identities.

Furthermore, Ibrahim (2000, 2008)'s results are similar to the findings uncovered by Kelly (2004, p. 43). She found that according to a participant in her study named Omar, the Black identity among Black-African youth includes them yearning to be differentiated by others. This distinction is reflected through their music and language. Also, while Black-African immigrant youth want others to learn and participate in their culture, they also fear it being viewed as odd. Omar expresses what he affirms in allowing others to partake in his culture by stating:

Like sometimes (pause) you are afraid of what the other, the outsider, is going to say about it. So you don't want anybody to have a big image of what you believe in. So you just kind a distance it from other people. You know the type of thing like that. But you always want them to like it. So in a sense you want them to learn about it, but you don't want them to have a negative thought about it. So it's like. I don't know (pause) That's all I can really say. Like you just don't, you don't (pause) it's like your shelter. You don't want people to like look at it and say, "What is this! This is rubbish." You want them to say, "Yeah that's good. I never knew" (in Kelly, 2004, p. 43).

This passage demonstrates that by distinguishing themselves through their culture, Black-African immigrant youth make and reaffirm an ethnic boundary (Barth, 1969) in order to emphasize the differences between themselves and others. This boundary making process is not always easy, however. It sometimes involves concerns about what the others might think and different types of negotiations. It reveals as well that by not sharing their culture with others, they maintain a collective identity. This notion will be explained further in one of the subsections below titled "Collective Identity and Friendships".

"Black" and Class Identity

Furthermore, in Dei & James' (1998, p. 98) study, with respect to the link between race and class identities, Carlton identifies with being Black, and at the same time indicates the issue of financial prosperity among Blacks. He states,

A child of poor parents, they've got more pressure on them because the parents are always telling them to work hard ... especially if you're black because they say, 'Oh, the white man don't have to worry about it because there's always jobs for them to get'. You may be black and you have the same qualifications as they do, but they're going to get the job. And for rich people it's, like, even if it's black or white, they probably don't have to work as hard because their parents will probably get them a job for them in a company or something (in Dei & James, 1998, p. 98).

Dei & James (1998, p. 98) explain that Carlton believes Black people need to increase their work efforts in Canada because they have a low contact with "the social

networks of the dominant society”.

Furthermore, in Gosine’s (2005, p. 105) study, the link between the Black and class identities among Black-African immigrant youth in Canada is also demonstrated. Rachael explains her circumstance of being brought up in a middle-class family, and how that has impacted her Black identity (Gosine, 2005, p. 105). She voices,

...it was a very White school like when I started that school in grade nine, in 1989, there was like, I don't know, maybe a handful of us that were Black and interestingly enough I got friction from both sides, the Black kids thought I was whitewashed, because I lived in the suburbs, right? That’s just where we lived, the suburbs, and both my parents were married, and you know, maybe the way I dressed or whatever, so they thought I was whitewashed because I wasn’t beat boxing in the halls. I don't know what it was, I don’t know, but literally the Black kids thought I was whitewashed and the White kids thought I was a different kind of Black kid cause I was not fulfilling their image of Black kids. The other Black kids who were there, or maybe um, the ones who were like maybe a little rougher or I’m thinking some of the other Black kids who lived in like, the ‘ghettoes’ and etc., and I didn’t live there, so the Black kids, the White kids thought I was a different kind of Black, like I was just different, it was like, ‘oh, Rachael’s not like that.’ So I kind of, I got friction from both sides, so I was kind of in the middle and I didn’t really fit with either so I just kind of just carved my own niche (in Gosine, 2005, p. 105).

Gosine (2005, p. 105) notes that “Rachael’s account of her estrangement from her Black peers illustrates how middle-class attributes, such as living with both of one’s parents in the suburbs, can result in exclusion from a bounded construction of Blackness that is forged in opposition to middle-class values perceived as White”. Rachael’s comments are reflective of Barth’s (1969) theory of ethnic boundaries in that the manner in which others view a person can impact their ethnic identity. In Kelly (2001, p. 112), Gerald’s answer to the inquiry, “What does it mean to you to

be black?” also demonstrates that Blackness is based on society’s racial perception of oneself. He comments, “It’s the way society looks at you, not what you think of yourself. [pause]. That’s how I see someone being black. If society thinks you are black then you are black. You don’t have a choice” (in Kelly, 2001, p. 112). This is related to Allison’s viewpoint that “race is a social construct” (in Gosine, 2005, p. 109).

The Meaning of “Black” Identity

To the same question, “What does being black mean to you?”, four respondents answered quite similarly in Leacock (2006, p. 67)’s study:

K: to me being black is being proud, strong, and [pause] I also felt that you also have to fight the negative... stereotypes, um and I don’t think that as a student that was y’know at the forefront of my like thinking but I think that at the back there, and even now, that I have to prove myself and do well.

A: I mean I guess being black is about the...common...history...the struggle, the achievement...the um...and for me being so proud of being black but not black supremacist (unclear) I dunno...it’s the... blackness is something that has been so a part of everything I’ve been in, like in the past and to be proud of it...of your history should be natural um...and in this way you can say that I guess I’m more a bit of a political agent.

M: what does being black mean to me? Well [long pause]...it means that uh I come from uh...a background full of kings and queens uh going back into history so that’s something that we should be proud of as black people. Being black means that you come from a people who are strong and powerful. But black people have done so much for history, but it’s never shown and I think that should change.

J: right now? I guess its just knowing your culture, knowing your roots, knowing where you came from, knowing who was there in the past to help you in the future (in Leacock, 2006, p. 67).

Leacock (2006, p. 67) remarks that in these quotes, certain words are mentioned several times. “Three of the four speak of the need to know ‘history’, ‘pride’ in being black

and of being 'strong' or in a 'struggle' ” (Leacock, 2006, p. 67). Also, all of the responses suggest the idea of “struggle and cultural preservation” (Leacock, 2006, p. 67). Their responses were quite different from Gerald’s comments in Kelly (2001, p. 112)’s study, as he placed emphasis on his Black identity being based on society’s conceptions of him.

Although from the above responses, the respondents are from the Caribbean, their comments are quite pertinent to the Black identity among Black-African immigrant youth in Canada.

Finally, Dei (1997, p.249) found that in coping with isolation they experience at school, some Black-African students developed a Black identity. “For example, students make the conscious choice to hang out with other Black students, regardless of whether or not they are friends, because ‘We’re Black’, ‘We all understand each other’ and ‘We have the same experiences’ ” (Dei, 1997, p. 249). Being Black is what Black people can relate to. “Blackness is seen as an experience which is felt and understood, and which unites individuals” (Dei, 1997, p. 249). Several students do not make friends with White people because they feel that they would not be able to fully comprehend or support them (Dei, 1997, p. 249). Brandi, who was born in Canada and studying at the Grade 10 higher level, expressed this sentiment (Dei, 1997, p. 249):

I hang out with mainly ... Black students and stuff. I don't really associate myself with any of the White students because ... I don't feel so loose with them and comfortable. I have to act, like, not myself. I have to be, like, you know, downplayed (in Dei, 1997, p.249).

Furthermore, some students in the study mentioned that they do not spend time with their White peers because they believe they cannot be completely themselves around them (Dei, 1997, p.250). For instance, one student stated, “I want to be myself and show

everybody who I am, but you can't, you can't be yourself too much, you have to hide some of your Blackness when you're around White people, because then you become like an alien to them" (in Dei, 1997, p.250). This reveals that Black-African immigrant youth can feel that they are limited in completely expressing themselves around White people because of a fear that they will be viewed as bizarre.

Collective Identity and Friendships

Black-African immigrant youth also identify themselves in collective terms and put great emphasis on being part of a group. Chioneso uncovered that these youth exhibit "collectivistic cultural attributes" (2008, p. 77). This is enhanced by the racial and cultural discrimination they believe they experience in the Canadian society (Chioneso, 2008, p. 77). They therefore create collective environments, in which they discuss the discrimination they each experience (Chioneso, 2008, p. 77). These groups also allow them to develop an understanding of the particularities of their culture from which these persecutions stem from (Chioneso, 2008, p. 77). This in effect results in them conserving their culture (Chioneso, 2008, p. 77). This is also a method of ethnic boundary making resulting from their distinctions as ethnic minorities in a larger society. The dimensions of their collective identities include cultural festivals, and volunteering, such as with prison groups (Chioneso, 2008, p. 77).

Furthermore, their collective identity is revealed in "their active involvement in the struggle for justice and freedom for African people" (Chioneso, 2008, p. 77-78). It is also shown in their recognition of their important accomplishments (Chioneso, 2008, p. 78).

In Baffoe (2006, p. 161)'s investigation, a young participant named Silvia expressed his or her process of finding a friend from the same ethnicity as him or her in a school, and

the effect it had on him or her:

What I realized again was like people were in groups, Indian people here, this group here, Ghanaian people here and others. So if you don't have enough Ghanaian people then you become isolated. I was kind of so isolated and making friends was one of the hardest things to do. I will always be in the hallway and after I will go outside. That was the hardest for me. At least if you had friends you could ask them questions and for me instead of asking friends, I will go straight to the teacher. Maybe a friend could have explained it much better to me than the teacher will do. So if I feel shy going to the teacher then I get stuck (in Baffoe, 2006, p. 161).

This demonstrates that this participant had a difficult time finding friends and support in school due to the division of students based on ethnicity. On the topic of group belonging and friendship, most of the Black-African immigrant youth in Dlamini & Anucha's (2009, p. 237) article stated that their friends are from Africa. Also, several individuals in the study mentioned that they had 'all kinds of friends' and 'Canadian-born friends' (Dlamini & Anucha, 2009 p. 237). Below are two quotes that reflect the responses that their friends are from Africa:

...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 (in Dlamini & Anucha, 2009, p. 237).

In this quote, the individual has friends mostly from different parts of Africa.

They are also African friends living in the United States of America.

And the second quote:

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. I met them at school, you know, and we go to school together (in Dlamini & Anucha, 2009, p. 237).

This shows that this participant has friends that are first and second-generation Africans, some of which he or she has met at school.

The Black-African immigrant youth also explained their experiences in the Canadian society in that they performed different activities with their friends, such as playing sports and going to the movies (Dlamini & Anucha, 2009, p. 237). They also noted that they selected African friends for reasons of “commonality of culture and values” (Dlamini & Anucha, 2009, p. 237). Inclusively, an unfamiliarity of other cultures restricted friendships from different ethnicities from forming for some Black-African youth in the study (Dlamini & Anucha, 2009, p. 237). The reasons for not selecting friends from other ethnicities among Black-African youth are revealed in the following quotations:

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” (in Dlamini & Anucha, p. 237).

This shows that this participant selects African as friends, rather than non-Africans, because he can understand their culture better.

And another,

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. So in that context, it's different (in Dlamini & Anucha, p. 237-238).

This quotation reveals that this individual has African friends because they have similar values to him or her, such as respecting one's elders. Thus, both these quotes demonstrate that, as stated, Black-African youth choose Africans as their friends because they can relate to them on a cultural and value-based level.

Dei (1997, p. 251) examined that although many students in his study identified with Blackness, some students articulated some of their difficulties with this identification. Black-African students who do not identify with a Black identity can be viewed as “(by other Blacks) as ‘not being Black enough’ ” (Dei, 1997, p. 251). They in essence typify them as “acting White” (Dei, 1997, p. 251). One student expressed her contempt for these “types” of Black-African youth, particularly those with a light skin tone (Dei, 1997, p. 251):

Student: Sometimes, it don't matter how White you look. Sometimes you have a little bit of Black in you. You are Black, so you're Black. They act Black, they talk Black, but acting like they're White ... I hate those people.

Interviewer: What's acting like White?

Student: They just act like White people, you know, like they're White. You know, they walk with, they only have White friends, you know, they listen to White people music, they don't know nothing about Black people music, they talk about that non- sense ... and all like this, you know. They just act White” (in Dei, 1997, p. 251).

Dei (1997, p. 251) explains how this is an illustration that the perceived racial distinctions among Black-African youth can create a “lack of solidarity” among them. It can also place some Black students on middle ground, being “neither Black enough nor White enough” (Dei, 1997, p. 251). This can result in them not being able to have people to help or support them (Dei, 1997, p. 251). These findings are also linked to Gosine (2005, p. 105)'s results on how Black-African youth possessing middle-class attributes can be perceived as being Whitened.

Ethnic/National Identification

Chioneso (2008, p. 78) explains that as members of a “minority/immigrant status”, Black-African immigrant youth are viewed as “Others” in the Canadian society. Consequently, these individuals feel the need to claim their cultural and group “Otherness” through a specific ethnic/national identity, such as being “Ghanaian” (Chioneso, 2008, p. 78). This claim is a way of making an ethnic boundary. As well, Black-African immigrant youths’ “interpretations of ‘*Who am I?*’ are analogous to ‘*Where do I come from?*’ ” (Chioneso, 2008, p. 78). I see that the latter question, “*Where do I come from?*” reflects specific attributes of the places an individual originates from. For instance, a Ghanaian named Quaashie expressed:

To say, “I’m a Ghanaian”, means I would do myself like how every Ghanaian would. Like having good interpersonal relationships ...and being respectful. Ghanaians try to help the other person who needs it or who is in trouble and we’re loving. Basically that’s our standard, anything that comes out of loving and caring (in Chioneso, 2008, p. 78).

This quotations reveals that this individual links her ethnic identity of “Ghanaian” with traits of Ghanaian people, such as being compassionate and helpful.

Dlamini & Anucha (2009, p. 234-236) similarly found that Black-African immigrant youth identify according to place, as well as ethnicity/nationality. Moreover, for one research participant, claiming simply an African identity is an issue (Kelly, 2001, p. 100). According to this individual, an identification with a particular African country rather than Africa in general should be made (Kelly, 2001, p. 100-101):

Saska: I don't like when people say ...they are African. ‘What country in Africa are you from?’ When people ask me if I am African I go no I am Chadian. They ask, ‘Where is that?’ ‘Africa’ they go ‘Oooh.’ No one knows anything about Africa because it’s

never taught. It is the biggest country in Africa and no one can find it on a map. It's like Americans {laugh} Americans don't know anything about Canada (in Kelly, 2001, p. 101).

As Kelly (2001, p. 101) indicates, this account underlines the manners in which Black-Africans can exemplify Africa in opposition to a heterogeneous continent. This is linked to Tettey and Pupilampu's (2005, p.11) comments that Africa is *not* homogenous and Africans are *not* an unified people.

In comparison, numerous Black-African immigrant *adults* also emphasize an ethnic/national identification on top of being African. The literature reveals that the two groups, Black-African immigrant youth and *adults*, converge on these identities. In a study by Creese (2011, p.198), a respondent noted her ethnic/national identity as 'African', 'Ugandan', and 'Canadian'. Kakoto states:

I see myself as, of course, I am an African. That's natural. I am a woman. I am a Christian. I am a Ugandan. My husband is Kenyan. I am Canadian. Sometimes I feel more African, sometimes. And other times, it depends what is going on. If I am at work I feel I am a Canadian because I have Canadian education. I have Canadian citizenship, yeah. And I understand the topics that are being spoken. So I really don't feel like, yikes, I am, you know, I am inferior to them (in Creese, 2011, p. 198).

Creese (2011, p. 198) notes that, as in the above quote, identities can be situational among Black-African immigrant *adults*. I see that the emphasis on one identity rather than another is context-dependent. Black-African immigrant *adults* can also identify themselves according to religious terms, such as Kakoto who mentioned, "I am a Christian" (in Creese, 2001, p. 198).

Creese (2011, p. 196-197) provides another narrative that reveals the ethnic/national identification among *adults*. A respondent by the name of Kavuo asserts:

I used to identify myself as African, like when I was going to school, in university in Ontario. I was asked, 'Where are you from?' 'I am from Africa.' And I met a lady from Sierra Leone; it is a friend who was a fourth year when I was starting. She told me, 'Don't say you are from Africa, because Africa is not one country.' When you say that, and that is the truth, when you say, 'Africa', it's all seen as one place. But Africa, it's north is different from south, the east is different from west, you know, everywhere is different. So I stopped saying I am from Africa. So I started saying I am from Kenya (in Creese, 2011, p. 197).

This quote reveals how this individual used to identify herself in general terms, claiming that she is African, but learned to identify herself more specifically, as Kenyan. Thus, the two above narratives from Creese (2011) reflect similarities between Black-African immigrant youth and *adults* with respect to ethnic/national identity, as well as biculturalism (from the first narrative only).

Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer (2005, p. 219) also noted in their study that Black-African youth asserted a varied set of identities that were dependent on their context. "While the ordering of these intersecting associations could be construed as ranging from local (ethnicity, country of origin) to global (pan-Black, woman), they are not necessarily arranged in a hierarchy" (Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer, 2005, p. 219). In contrast, Ibrahim (2008, p. 243) found that when they entered Canada, Black-African immigrant youth chose their ethnic identity as subordinate modes of identification, and "Black" as a primary form of identity.

A participant named Rose describes her context-dependent (situational) identities: "I consider myself both (Black/African), but it depends on whom I am surrounded with. Like, if I am in Ghana, then I am called Canadian. If I am surrounded by Black people from here, I am considered an African or Black person" (in Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer, 2005, p. 219).

On the other hand, Myriam identifies herself primarily with the country and continent that she came from (Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer, 2005, p. 219). Myriam states, “even though I am in Canada, I am still seeing myself as a Sudanese woman from Africa. Even if I get Canadian citizenship, it’s going to be on paper. So, I love to be African woman. I am African woman” (in Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer, 2005, p. 219). This reveals that even though Myriam is living in Canada and getting her Canadian citizenship, she still holds her African identity definitively.

In addition, Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer (2005, p. 219) explain that for Black-African youth, not being able to speak their ethnic language can restrict their connection to their country of origin. “Older family members often provide a bridge between the younger generation and other kin” (Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer, 2005, p. 219). For example, Zahra, had limited interaction with her ancestral country (Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer, 2005, p. 219). She says, “Only my dad’s family... is back home, and the kids do not speak English well. And, er...I depend on my dad to keep me in touch with his family back home and with Eritrea” (in Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer, 2005, p. 219-220). This demonstrates that this individual relies on her father to connect with her family in her country of origin due to language barriers. Another respondent explained what occurs when her family contacts her and her family from Africa, “I don’t hear what they are saying ... I hand the phone over to mother” (in Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer, 2005, p. 220). This shows that this participant is not able to speak her ethnic language with her relatives.

Thus, Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer (2005, p. 220) illustrate that for Black-African youth, being able to learn and keep their ethnic language while living in Canada is challenging. The Black-African youth in the study recognized “the loss of native language

as widening the generation gap between parents and children” (Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer, 2005, p. 220). Black-African youth can be limited in who they can speak their ethnic language with, as it may only be their parents or elder siblings. Yet, by speaking their ethnic language, the Black-African immigrant youth sustain their “ethnolinguistic vitality” as mentioned by Xing (2001, p. 205) in reference to Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor (1977). The lack of competency in their ethnic language is linked to Ibrahim’s (2008, p. 243) findings on Black-African youth taking on a new language while in Canada named BESL (Black English as a Second Language). This language stemmed from Black popular culture, which “they learned by taking up and repositing the Rap linguistic and musical genre” (Ibrahim, 2008, p. 243).

Somali-Canadian artist K’Naan described his experience of learning a new language in Canada after enduring a low-income lifestyle in his country or origin, Somalia (K’Naan, 2012). He describes this in a portion of his song titled “Somalia”:

Yeah, yeah, we used to take barbed wire
Mold them around discarded bike tires
Roll ‘em down the hill in foot blazin’
Now that was our version of mountain bike racing, damn

Do you see why it’s amazing
When someone comes out of such a dire situation
And learns the English language
Just to share his observation? (in K’Naan, 2012)

Through these lyrics, K’Naan describes how in Somalia, him and his friends used to engage in a poorer version of bike racing (K’Naan, 2012). Then, when he came to Canada, he learned the English language and was able to vocalize his experiences from his country as in his song “Somalia” (K’Naan, 2012).

A Common Experience of Racism and Discrimination

Kelly (2004, p. 48) discovered that the identities of Black-African immigrant youth reflect a common experience of being Black. For example, the racism and discrimination they face as a result of being Black creates a commonality of experience. Here are two quotes that reflect this notion. Joy stated:

Calling each other names, you know (pause) racial names and stuff...and their opinions of like other people are the same. They have gone through the same experiences that you have. Like the hair bit...Or being called racial names at school, that type of thing you know. Or (pause), yeah, like the family discipline. That's the things I can look at (pause) and, oh yes, dancing, liking the same music, going out, same kind of dressing, same kind of style. Um (pause), same kind of guy choice. All of that (in Kelly, 2004, p. 48).

This quote demonstrates that racism among Black-African youth expressed through name-calling, such as at school, allows them to relate to one another.

Also, Denzil's expressed,

There are certain things that a black friend could identify with that your other friends can't. In terms of not getting a job, not getting a job because they won't hire coloured people or whatever. Any kind of discrimination white people can't really identify with. Life is harder if you're coloured. It's that simple (in Kelly, 2004, p. 48).

This quotation suggests that the racism and discrimination Black-African youth experience makes their lives in Canada more difficult. They are thus able to connect with one another on this matter.

Also, I see that these two quotes reveal that discrimination and racism are also part of the boundary making process, as Black-African youth can experience these types of oppressions simply due to their race. The problem of racism is discussed as well by Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer (2005, p. 215), in which some of the youth noted that the racism they experienced in Canada was covert. For instance, one individual explained that when she is in

class, teachers ask her to repeat her name when they are calling out the students' names (Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer 2005, p. 215-216). Another student did not know if these requests were a direct form of racism (Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer 2005, p. 216).

Moreover, Kelly (2004, p. 48) found that the common experience of racism and discrimination among Black-African youth leads them to associate with those who understand their experiences.

In Gosine (2005, p. 160)'s study, Allison's comments add to the common experience among Black-African youth. She says:

I threw myself into my experience at [University X] and making connections with other Black people and sharing experiences and things of that sort, cause I realized that there was a connection there, and that, you know, well they, well it's not fair to say that because you're a Black person, you understand all about me. At the same time, there were certain commonalities of experience that we could relate to, that I did not have when I was in high school. I kept, you know, some of those friends from [University X], they remain my good friends to this day. In law school, again I, you know, you have to seek out, well not really seek out, you kind of just came together, because you just pool together because, you know, there's strength in numbers and for support, you just found yourself surrounded by other Black students. Not to say that I didn't have, make friendships with non-Black students, right, by any stretch of the imagination, but there was I guess in the minds of those other Black students, a sense of, you know, banding together in order to kind of get through this three year ordeal. So in law school again, you know, it so happens that a lot of my friends were also Black and that was again primarily because I also was involved with the [Black Law Students' Association] at that time as well (in Gosine, 2005, p. 160).

Gosine (2005, p. 160) explains that this passage reveals that "collective racial identities (...) serve as a protective mechanism against the marginalization and exclusion Black students feel within the university context". Gosine (2005, p. 160-161) continues that these collective Black identities are found in Black student groups. These associations give many Black-African students social and moral support that help them in dealing with

difficulties that they may experience at school. This is also related to Chioneso (2008, p. 77-78)'s findings on Black-African immigrant youth maintaining a collective identity through various activities.

The Importance of Community Life

Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer (2005, p. 214) found that Black-African immigrant youth identify with a community. The community life involves “their families, the local church, Black students’ groups, the youth wing of Black associations, and country of origin organizations” (Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer, 2005, p. 214). Their immersions in Black organizations were based on a personal willing. This means that they joined them without the influence of their families. On the other hand, it comes up from this study that their participations in ethnic associations are frequently based on pleasing their parents who are involved in these groups.

Moreover, Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer (2005, p. 214-215) discovered that for the parents of the Black-African youth, their perspectives of a community diverge from actual communities in Canada. Yet, the Black-African youths’ view of a community also includes that of their parents. Rose asserted, “my community would be Edmonton, because on my day-to-day basis, I don’t run into many African or Caribbean or Black people. It is only when I make an active effort to, outside of school” (in Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer, 2005, p. 215). This shows that Black-African youths’ community can generally be the city in which they live in, particularly if they do not often encounter people from their country of origin.

Continuing from Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer (2005, p. 215), their conceptions of community also includes their social support systems. The majority of them “obtain support from their parents, friends they grew up with, and religious institutions” (Okeke-Ihejirika &

Spitzer, 2005, p. 215). Their community is not firmly based (Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer, 2005, p. 215). A respondent named Mary comments, “It’s a social network. There’s no community...” (in Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer, 2005, p. 215). She goes on to say, “there’s no community, because we don’t interact with many people around us. We don’t go out to the community around. So I’m in a community, but I’m not part of that community” (in Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer, 2005, p. 215). This example reveals that Black-African immigrant youth can feel they belong to a community, but at the same time, for some of them, the “community” seems to be removed from their everyday life activities. Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer (2005, p. 215) further found that Black-African youth “see something of a community life in country-of-origin organizations”. For instance, Myriam, a refugee from Sudan, who arrived in Canada by herself several years before the study, described her community as (Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer, 2005, p. 215),

the Sudanese ... help (newcomers) a lot, first, to understand the life here ... We have women’s group ... those women need a lot of help. Whenever they have problems, they turn to the community. So they find what they need from the community, in terms of language and problems with kids at school. A lot of things like that, they cannot go direct. They do not know where to turn. So the first thing, they will go to the community (in Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer, 2005, p. 215).

This quote exemplifies how Black-African immigrant youth can turn to their community for social and moral support. Here the support group is a group of women. This is linked to the results by Dlamini & Anucha (2009, p. 236) in which her community allowed her to feel like she belonged.

Brief Comparison with Black-African Immigrant *Adults*

The literature review in this paper on the “identities and experiences of Black-African immigrant youth in Canada” allows for a brief comparison between Black-African

immigrant *adults*. I observed when conducting my literature review on the research question that “religious identification” did not come up for the youth in the texts that I reviewed. It is possible that it may be due to the youth not entering the workplace, thereby not experiencing religious discrimination that would perpetuate identification with this variable. On the other hand, Black-African immigrant *adults* tend to enter the workplace, and are therefore more likely to identify themselves according to religion in such environments. For instance, in a study on Somali immigrant *adults* in Canada, conducted by Ajrouch & Kusow (2007, p. 88), most of the respondents claimed an Islamic identity. One respondent asserted this religious identity in the workplace:

Yeah a lot of times, a lot of times. First of all it was when I applied for a job. When they call you for an interview, the first thing they do is find out who you are because when they look at your resume and your work experience they always imagine maybe they are getting somebody who is white and when you show up and they see that you are an African woman and apart from being black being a Muslim that counts too, and sometimes you wear your Hijab and from there they tell you point blank we have a dress code. They ask is this the way you are going to dress. If the answer is yes, then you won't get the job. See when I first came, I used to think it was O.K. I thought because maybe that is their policy until I found out it was not O.K. If you have the experience and you can do the job, then they should not restrict you from what you believe and that is the time I visited I think the human rights office and read their code and everything. So there was a time after that when I applied for a job and they took me, after taking me they decided I should put my Hijab down, I agreed to put the large over but I kept a small Hijab and then they said no you can't work with that thing, it is too bothersome for you, and this and that. But I said it does not bother me or anything. So I went to this human rights group who intervened. It took a while for them to understand the situation, but after everything was O.K. I still thought I had to leave the job because I was too uncomfortable I thought I won't it was still uncomfortable for me to work for them (in Ajrouch & Kusow, 2007, p. 88).

In this passage, the woman is asserting her religious identity in the workplace since she is refusing to take off her Hijab, despite that she may be discriminated against it. This

demonstrates that for some Black-African *adults*, they can hold their religious identities firmly, although they may experience barriers in doing so, such as in a work environment.

We could further wonder why the issue of religious identification was not discussed in the sample of texts for this paper concerning Black-African immigrant youth in Canada. Perhaps, the lack of literature on the topic of “religious identification among Black-African immigrant youth” may simply be a result of the limited amount of scholarly research on the topic of “religious identification” among Black-African immigrant youth. It may have also been due to the lack of interest by the researchers to explore this topic in their investigations. Or, perhaps that religion is less important among certain categories of Black-African youth. This would fit with lesser interest in religion among “mainstream” Canadians.

Conclusion

Black-African immigrant youth in Canada identified in various manners. We see that their identities are “agentive, flexible, and ever-changing” since they select the ways in which they identify themselves (Bucholtz, 2002, p. 532). Their identities are also not static (Neethling, 2008, p. 32). They identified with multiple travels, loss, and place. They also identified with a “third space”, being a “mixture of two, or more, linguistic, ideological, cultural, and belief systems” (Ibrahim, 2008, p. 240). This was similar to the biculturalism theory discussed in the conceptual tools section of this paper. As Xing explains, it is “the *combination* of host and native cultural values and practices” (2001, p. 217). The difference lies in the notion that biculturalism, suggested by Thompson (2005), allows people to “navigate two cultural worlds” (in Sodhi, 2008, p.187). The third space, on the other hand, seems a more interesting concept as it permits for more than two cultural interactions. This is particularly important since some of the participants identified with Canada, several identified with their ethnic origin, and others with both cultures or more.

Moreover, the review of literature demonstrated that the Black-African immigrant youth claim a Black identity strongly, which has to do with their particular experiences in Canada. The Black identity was reflected in their experiences as participants in a Hip-Hop and Black popular culture, through music, language, dress, etc. (Ibrahim, 2008, p. 243-244). Their assertions of a Black identity were also linked to gendered and class identities, but also to common experiences of discrimination and racism. The Black identity for them is rich in meaning as well. The Black-African immigrant youth additionally possessed a collective identity, and had friends from Africa due to similarities in culture and values. Moreover, Black-African immigrant youth identified themselves according to an

ethnic/national identification. This was convergent with what was found among Black-African immigrant *adults*.

Furthermore, Black-African immigrant youth identified with a community life. This community life was instrumental for social and moral support (Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer, 2005, p. 215). The importance of community life, with respect to social and moral support, found by Okeke-Ihejirika & Spitzer (2005, p. 215), was similar to the results of Dlamini & Anucha (2009, p. 236). Also, the brief comparison with Black-African *adults* revealed that, unlike the youth, they identify with religious identities in workplace environments.

In terms of future research considerations for this study, the review of literature was limited in revealing that Black-African immigrant youth identified with pan-Africanism. Therefore, future studies can further investigate this topic. Since religious identity was found in the literature review only among Black-African immigrant *adults*, projected studies on Black-African immigrant youth can research this topic as well. Finally, since the literature on Black-African immigrant youth is very limited, research prospects can include African immigrant youth from specific African countries.

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