

**In Search of Communal Identity: The Role of The Black Community in
Identity Formation Among Nigerian Youth**

Buster C. Ogbuagu

School of Social Work
And
Department of Integrated Studies in Education
McGill University, Montreal

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of racism on the identity construction of Black Nigerian youth in Montréal. Several themes, related to socialization, family, education, integration, employment, racism, marginalization and social exclusion emerged from phenomenological interviews of 10 Nigerian youth, 5 parents and 3 community leaders. These expressions of their lived experiences exposed the negative impact of racism and racist discourses of the Canadian society on minority groups. It simultaneously showed, through the acquisition of pro-social skills, the extent that marginalized groups, as depicted by Nigerian youth, formulate resiliency and strategies to resist and deconstruct their “othering,” in order to construct a healthy identity.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude vise l'impact du racisme sur la construction identitaire de la jeunesse noire originaire du Nigéria à Montréal. Plusieurs thèmes liés à la socialisation, la famille, l'éducation, l'intégration, à l'emploi, au racisme, à la marginalisation et à l'exclusion sociale ressortent des entrevues phénoménologiques réalisées auprès de 10 jeunes Nigériens, 5 parents et 3 leaders de la communauté. Les expériences de leurs vécues exprimées ont exposé l'impact négative du racisme et du discours raciste de la société canadienne sur les groupes minoritaires. Elle démontre en même temps à quel point l'acquisition des habiletés prosociales par les groupes marginalisés, comme les jeunes Nigériens, résistent et développent des stratégies pour déconstruire cette perception de "eux autres", afin de construire une saine identité.

Dedication

This thesis and its outcome are dedicated to my late mother and Matriarch, Ezinne Mary Nwoyoronu Ogbuagu, who was called to a Higher Order and joined the Saints Triumphant, on June 1, 2007, while I was writing and compiling this thesis. Ma, you accompanied all my eight siblings and me to our first day of school, up to the University level, even when you were denied access to a formal education. In short order, and due to the discourses of patriarchy, your father denied you access to formal education because you were a woman. For your children, and all who knew you, you were an epitome of resistance and resilience, as you learned to write to some degree, and sign your name, as well as speak English, to the extent you could carry on a conversation in that language of power. For thirty-five years after our father's passing, you held on, raised and nurtured, with your "bare hands" all nine of us to the extent that we all are strong and have now come into our own. Now that you rest, we are assured that your labor was not in vain. **"Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain" [1 Corinthians 15:58].** Although in the corporeal sense, you are not here to witness the final outcome, I am assured that you are in the right place, where you are looking down at me, in the satisfaction that your resilience and steadfastness have brought this to fruition. Mma, we continue to and will uphold your ideals and legacy of truth, faithfulness, fairness and endurance. Thank you!!!

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This educational journey has been long and enveloped in challenges and family tragedies, but it was a journey that I certainly did not undertake alone. I have been fortunate to be blessed with the support and encouragement of a number of very wonderful people, without whose assistance this journey would probably have been abandoned in mid-stream. They have encouraged, guided, and assisted me over the past fourteen years since I settled in Canada, albeit through another family tragedy. I began my educational journey in Canada in 1999, with my enrolment in the Special Bachelor of Social Work Program, through the sustained encouragement of my educational mentor and role model, Dr. Michael Baffoe, who has continuously stood by me through the past nine years of my educational battles at McGill. “Commander” as I fondly refer to you, I will forever cherish your support, encouragement and guidance. I remember that day in the studio of CKUT Radio Station, in 1997, while we were presenting our program, Basa Basa. You pointedly ordered me, “You have all the skills, academic knowledge and a huge world experience. Stop wasting your time with these contracts that only maintain you in circles leading to nowhere and apply to the School of Social Work. All that you need are the necessary academic skills and some body of knowledge in this field to join me in working for the Black Community.” I still recall that by the time I finished the BSW program, and enrolled in the MSW program, we were both already serving, and experienced a successful tenure on the Board of LaSalle Black Community, among others. Thank you, Dr. Baffoe, my brother, for being with and supporting me all these nine years, without questioning what you stood to gain personally.

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until I graduated in 1979. Thank you for refusing to pay heed to determined detractors, from without, but most regrettably, from within, who ceaselessly urged you to abandon me, for the only fact that we did not share the same mother. I still have, and cherish some of the letters of sustained encouragement that you wrote me in the 1970's. I probably would not be here today if you had abandoned me as the detractors had so wished. Although our mother has now journeyed back to the bosom of her maker, just at the threshold of my completion, I am elated that at 82 years young, and the "unpatriarchal" Patriarch of the family, you are still here to witness the final outcome of your sincere effort towards me. And finally to my late mother, Ezinne Mary Ogbuagu, for your nurturing and blessings. Only the Lord knows why you passed on just three months to my crossing the finishing line of this project. This final achievement and all the glory that comes with it is to your blessed memory.

And finally to all my friends, too numerous to detail here, who have stood by me over the years, I say a big thank you for your support.

Forward

Situating myself in the research-reflexivity through and autoethnography

Birth, upbringing and socialization

I was born in Nigeria in the 1950s, being one of 12 surviving children. My father was a schoolteacher, and a Lay Reader in the Methodist Church, and my mother, a homemaker. Of these 12 children, two are my stepbrothers, whose mother had passed on in the 1930s. Her passage paved the way for my father to marry my mother towards the end of that decade.

At this time, the European Christian model had already taken hold in my community, due to the occupation of that territory by Imperial Britain. Britain subdued and occupied territories, using so-called “Gun Boat Diplomacy,” whereby it stationed its frigate boats offshore and shelled the community of interest into submission. After this phase, Britain expeditiously set out to implant its model of administration in Nigeria. Ikime (1982) and Ohadike (1991) referred to this system as Indirect Rule, or as in the local parlance, “Divide and Rule.” With the Indirect Rule system or mode of governance of its occupied territories, Britain meant to implant in its totality, the bureaucratic and social systems that were operating in Britain. Simultaneously, it allowed the locals to continue with some of their traditional ways of life (Lewis, Robinson & Rubin, 1998). I will elaborate on the inroad of British imperialism into Nigeria in the latter sections of this study. With the entrenchment of colonialism and Christianity, some of the age long practices, including ancestral and deity worship became not only equated with “paganism and heathenism,” but also attracted moot, ecclesiastical sanctions. In this way, the process of indoctrination, involving the building of European modeled schools and churches in Nigeria, began in earnest.

My father had before this time, and against protests from his own father not to go with the “White man,” “rebelled” and joined the “missionaries.” This apparent recalcitrance on the part of my father was for the purposes of acquiring the White man’s brand of education, as well as proselytizing the new Christian religion, the apex of which ensconces Jesus Christ. We attended school on weekdays and church every Sunday, without fail. It was under this type of dispensation, at both the family and community levels that, I and eleven other siblings, found ourselves growing up. Things would have been all right, except for the confusion over whether one’s spiritual allegiance should be to the deities that our ancestors had worshipped for ages, or to the new god that came from across the seas. This confusion, emanating from the motley of Christianity and traditional worship, still exists today. For instance, most members of my community attend church on Sunday mornings, but revert to consulting the “native doctor” or *dibia*, worshipping and pouring libations to their ancestors and deities on the same evening.

My father, due to his acquisition of the Western education, became, as they are still referred to, the Headmaster of several schools, in Eastern Nigeria in the 1950’s and up to the 1970’s, when he retired. Following the British colonial structure at the time, as earlier shown, all the schools were missionary founded, designed and operated. The British imperialists also incorporated a church, where, depending on logistics, the Headmaster or Principal could also double as the Sexton, but without the grave-digging component. Based upon this structure, my father, mother, and by extension, my siblings and I, received enough European brand of religious pedagogy that enabled us to counsel people on a broad-range of domestic issues. These included drunkenness on the part of men, spousal abuse, financial management, and choice of formal education as a vehicle to prosperity. It was into this type of environment that I and eleven other siblings were born and nurtured.

Formal educational process

Elementary

My father received a formal education up to elementary six, as was the case with those in the then British Empire. Just like the South African Apartheid system, this education had a ceiling, beyond which most educated Nigerians of those days did not exceed. Why? This was essentially because the colonial system, designated them the White man's "hewers of wood and drawers of water," who needed to be maintained in perpetual subordination to the Europeans. Those, like my father, who were adjudged by the White missionaries to possess scholastic ability excellence, were allowed to continue to Grade II Teachers' College, but no more. It would appear, on the face value, that this education benefited the locals like my father. If it did, then it more than served the purposes of the White speculators, who then used the local elite to propagate British imperialist interests.

Like most Nigerians, I attended an elementary school, fashioned to a limited extent on the British system, which taught English, Arithmetic, British and European History, Religious and General Knowledge. This was also the pattern of education all across the then Eastern Region of Nigeria. Since the educational curricula and pedagogy were designed and implemented by the British government, all the information, as well as educational subject matter was British. The curricular, books, the instructional materials and the subjects were of British origin, having been imported from England to our region, lock, stock and barrel. Each morning on the assembly line, pupils, as we were called, were required to pray, recite the British national anthem and pledge to the Queen, with the Union Jack fluttering in the wind. In this equation, while the system strove to promote British interests and ways of life, it sought vigorously to stifle the ways of life that had characterized my community and its inhabitants for centuries. This denigration would be found,

and still dominates as in language, spirituality, education, fashion, including the normal ways of dressing and adornment.

Social work advocacy in early school years

The school that I attended had a population of about three hundred students from all family constellations, including orphans, physically and mentally challenged persons, the dirt poor and single mothers (widowed mothers). One of my responsibilities, in addition to attending classes without fail, was administering the first aid kit to injured kids. Fridays were “milk days,” when I was given the responsibility of arranging the students in single files to receive a glass of milk boiled in large earthenware. My attention focused more on persons with special needs, who, due to my status as the Headmaster’s son, I promptly identified to the teachers and school “monitors” for assistance. Since most of the students had parents, who also attended the same church, it was fairly easy to remember every student and their parents. The empathy was so great, that in addition to listening to some of their difficult stories and proffering solutions in consultation with my parents, some of the very poor students, who regularly came to school on empty stomachs, had me sneaking food to them during lunch break. Sometimes, I managed to get the school authorities, represented in my father, to accept late payment of school fees from a hard-up student, or when exceptionally lucky, get a waiver for the very indigent ones.

High School

I carried over some of these advocacy traits to my high or secondary school, as it is referred to in Nigeria. Here, I was a member of the school’s Boys’ Brigade Club. This club, as I still recollect from my childhood days, was formed in 1883, by a Sir William A. Smith in Glasgow, Scotland, and was fashioned just like the Boys’ Scout Movement. As the junior team

leader, I led expeditions, which when we were not camping, found us visiting orphanages, hospitals and Remand Homes for Boys, who were exhibiting conduct behavior problems. These activities were also in addition to donating money and items to charity. My high school activities and experience were cut short by the Nigerian Civil War, which raged on from 1967-1970.

During this period I served the defunct Republic of Biafra as an under aged soldier. For better or for worse, the Nigerian Civil War also brought a lot to bear on my life experiences, including knowledge and appreciation of suffering, emotional and physical pain, deprivation, a deep comprehension of the transiency and superficiality of life, empathy, emigration, my education at McGill and advocacy for vulnerable populations, including Black youths and their families.

My Experiences during Military Interventions and Interregnum in Nigeria

The Nigerian Civil War- Memoirs of a child soldier

The British Imperialists, when they arrived in Nigeria in the 1800s, perceived a kaleidoscope of cultures, multifaceted traditions, and ways of life that had been in place for centuries. For example, there are so many cultures and languages that current statistics show that over 250 cultures and languages exist in Nigeria (Lewis; Robinson; & Rubin, 1998). At the time of British occupation of Nigeria, most of the religions and belief systems, revolved on, indeed, centered on ancestral and deity worship. As Northern Nigeria was becoming Islamized, due to the influence of conquerors from the Middle East, Southern Nigeria, especially the South Eastern section where I am from, was being Christianized, due to the European advent.

When the British colonial government observed the political system as it was, they perceived that it would be unwieldy to administer the groups as separate and disparate entities, which they rightly are, hence the 1914 Amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates

into the entity now known as and called Nigeria. As the North followed and continued with its religion and Muslim-type, Qur'anic education, the South remained as Christians and traditionalist, while embracing the Western form of education. To this extent, the British administration found it challenging, even overtly irritating, to manipulate the mostly now educated Southeastern elite. Not only that, the colonialist policy also began to favor the mostly "malleable" North, as well as pitch them against the South. History has it that Lord Fredrick Lugard, who later became the first Governor General of Nigeria, favored the North, to the extent that he was unable to hide his utter contempt for the Igbo in the Southeast (Cronje, 1970; Kirk-Green, 1971).

Just as in Rwanda, the seeds of discord sown by the British colonialists escalated so much that by 1966, just five years after the so-called departure of the British colonial government, there were many coup d'etat and counter coup d'etat in the military circles. At this time, the military elite from the South, especially the Igbo (of which I am one), reportedly occupied the higher military echelon, and the civil service, due to their complete acceptance and acquiescence of the Western form of education. Okpaku (1977) and Niven (1967, 1971) argued that the Nigerian Civil War or the Nigerian/Biafra War as some may prefer to call it, had its origins in the January 15, 1966 coup d'etat. There was also a popular conviction about British subterfuge to destabilize the new Republic, due at the time, to an increase in African nationalism. This nationalism rendered British and other forms of physical occupation, through colonialism impracticable, even unconscionable. In this violent overthrow of government, a military Major of Igbo descent, Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzogwu, reportedly led the other coup plotters, across tribal lines, in the assassination of members of the Northern Muslim and some Western elite, inside and in the corridors of power at the federal, as well as regional levels.

In 1966 the mainly Muslim North went on a religious rampage and pogrom directed mainly against the Igbo, reportedly killing over 30 thousand men, women and children as it was then estimated (Nwankwo & Ifejika, 1970; Okpaku, 1974). This pogrom, (some claimed it was genocide) was ostensibly to avenge what was termed an Igbo plot that saw the assassinations of the ruling elite of the Muslim North. Some other estimates put the number of Igbo who lost their lives in this pogrom at 50 thousand (Schwarz, 1968). It is also estimated that over 2 million others, with origins in the Eastern Nigeria were displaced from other parts of Nigeria, as they had to return en-masse as refugees to the Eastern region (Nwankwo & Ifejika, 1970; Niven, 1971; Okpaku, 1974; Stremlau, 1977). The Igbo, who no longer had faith that their lives and properties could be protected under the Nigerian Federation, chose to secede in May 1967, and became known as The Republic of Biafra. This was the origin of the Nigerian Civil war, of which toll in lives, especially among the Igbo, has been conservatively put at two million (Schwarz, 1968).

My conscription into this civil war as a child soldier has defined most of my interactions with people, especially vulnerable populations, as can be located among Black youths and their families. I was going on 13 years, and in my second year of secondary school, when the war broke out. This war, to all intents and purposes, was mostly fought by and at the behest of Britain and other interests. These stakeholders from outside, perceived the possibility of an effervescence of their source of cheap petroleum and other natural resources, should the South Eastern Nigeria, which had now changed its name to Biafra, be allowed to remain a separate nation (Cronje, 1970; Stremlau, 1977). Southern and Southeastern Nigeria is the known location of most of the brackish waters, holding oil deposits, for which Nigeria's petroleum production has international renown.

I initially entered the war in the Medical Ordinance Unit, due to my school related experiences with first aid treatment. Here, and despite being just in my teens, I directed and treated injured Biafran soldiers; wrote reports, which saw some of the famished, battle-fatigued and sick soldiers fed, even in the face of a vastly diminishing food resources. Some of the medical and nutritional relief came from the International Red Cross, Caritas International and World Council of Churches, all based in Geneva. Through my reports, some invalid soldiers in my unit, and those contending with shell shock, battle fatigue, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, were initially no longer forced back into the war. This was later to change drastically, as the severely injured, sick and dying were re-drafted into the war, due to shortages in personnel and other military ordinance.

As a war conscript at the age of nearly 13, I remained fighting in the trenches of a rag tag army that was receiving the brunt of the well-oiled British war machine until my 16th birthday. At 13 years of age, I had no dialectical knowledge of why the war was raging on, with me in the middle of it, except that I had seen and treated so many dying and dead persons. The other reason that my 13 year old mind conjectured as reason for the mayhem, was that during the 1966 pogrom against persons of Eastern Nigerian origins, I had also seen some of my uncles', aunts' and relatives' headless bodies, as they were loaded back to the East in runaway trains; or my fellow child soldiers' and civilians mangled bodies strewn beside me, in the market places, along the roads, bushes, trenches and elsewhere, some fresh and others at various stages of putrefaction. There is no need to get into further details, due to the graphic nature of the full narrative of the conflict as I saw it, and the preclusion of a detailed exploration due to the scope of the study.

Since I came to Canada in the early 1990's, the Nigerian Civil war did not only have a profound influence on my life, but became a turning point in my search for solutions to problems of Black youths in Canada. In comparison to my experiences with the Nigerian Civil War, which was brutal but short, Black youths in Canada are in an endless war of both internally ascribed and externally imposed marginalization and social exclusion. I will explore this in detail as this study wears on.

Post-civil war experiences

After the civil war in 1970, my father, who was also the life chief of our approximately thirty thousand strong community, passed on. The Nigerian Civil War, with its attendant devastation and mayhem, had just ended. The government, in order to stimulate the mending of broken human, physical, psychological and emotional psyches, as well as infrastructure, had instituted a cliché called Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation-The three Rs, were based on its "no victor, no vanquished" axiom. I was becoming a young adult at this time and was expected, according to the dictates of primogeniture, to take on, or at the least participate in some of my father's rather daunting duties. Paradoxically, I was not the oldest male, but my two older brothers had gone away; the first was a Ministerial Director of agriculture in the large city of Enugu, while the second had returned to his legal practice, which was cut short by the war, following his return from England, where he studied before the on-set of the hostilities.

The enormity of this task was rendered more profound by my enrolment for undergraduate studies at the University of Nigeria to study Sociology & Anthropology. As well, I had already irreversibly lost 3 years of my growing life. At this time also, the United Nations International Children's Educational Fund (UNICEF), had initiated universal programs to stem the tide of infant mortality, brought on by preventable childhood diseases. Such diseases that

included poliomyelitis, diphtheria, tuberculosis, tetanus and whooping cough, were taking their toll on children in the former Biafran enclave at the end of the civil war. To this effect, I lobbied for drugs and equipment to get the village health center running full time. Not only that, I developed an educational and public enlightenment campaign aimed at sensitizing the village on the inoculation programs available. I was to continue this public enlightenment later, when I became a broadcaster and program Producer with the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria. At the domestic level, I devised means to expedite settlement of spousal disputes, family and extended family disputes and land and property disputes. Other duties that I juggled with my undergraduate studies were negotiating with agricultural extension officers to teach new farming techniques, as well as source hybridized crops and livestock for distribution to farmers. My know-how stemmed from a few post-secondary years spent in agronomy at the Federal Agricultural Research and Training Station, Umudike, Umuahia. In some cases, I was involved in inter village events, including settling disputes, setting up committees to run the village elementary and high schools, jump-starting and stimulating community development projects through the self-help approach. These enlightenment programs also involved educating the populace on political franchise. At this period, which marked the end of the civil war, voter apathy had developed and was sustained by the intractable nature of military interventions and political usurpations in that West African sub-region.

University education in Nigeria

While at the University of Nigeria, I was a serious student activist in my hall of residence. Here, I engaged in campaigning for students' rights and welfare, organizing hall events, engaging in sponsoring candidates for student body elections, positions and activities. I was also elected as the Secretary of Umuahia/Ikwuano Students Association of that University.

In this capacity, I successfully counseled students with social and academic difficulties, especially on the need to remain and complete university, organizing community events and activities related to the Association, as well as saw to the overall students' welfare. I graduated in 1979, with a Bachelor of Science (Honors) degree in Sociology & Anthropology, setting the stage for my entry into the Federal and State civil services.

My Experiences in the Nigerian Civil Service

Federal Civil Service

I joined the Federal Civil Service of Nigeria in 1981, after undergoing the mandatory post-graduation National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) program, the equivalent of which was the American Peace Corps. The Youth Service Corps program was designed to expose young University and College graduates below 30 years of age, to Nigerian cultures other than their own. The aim by the military government, which prescribed this "medicine" at this time, was to forge cultural, religious, national tolerance and unity among Nigerians of diverse ethnicity and religion. Therefore, and for this purpose, Corps members were sent to states other than their own, but within the country.

I first began my civil service career in broadcasting, as Features and Outside Broadcast program Producer, with the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria. The Federal Radio Corporation, which is at the national level, is the equivalent of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation-CBC. The spectrum of my programs, which comprised Ministerial Briefings, Matters of the Moment, Talk Back, Week-In-Review and Year-In-Retrospect, were mostly directed at an elite target audience. On occasions, I presented various rock & roll artistes from the West, as well as classical music. From time to time, I moderated or joined television

discussion groups on internal topical issues, or those having international content that had implications for Nigeria. I was also on the coordinating team and entourage of visiting dignitaries to Nigeria, including that of Pope John Paul II in 1982. Eventually, the democratic contents of some of my programs caught the ire of the military junta, earning me summary dismissal, as well as military ordered detentions, and physical and emotional chastisement. I prefer not to get into the details, as some of its reminiscences are negative and disturbing and perhaps, rather difficult to put down in writing at this time.

State civil service

While in the employ of the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, I was simultaneously moonlighting in the state education ministry, precisely the State School Board, first as a high school teacher and later assigned to the Personnel Management Department. I later regularized my appointment, due to several episodes of harassment by the military government at the Federal level. Eventually, I rose to become one of its senior officers. While here and in my spare time, I continued to participate in democratic processes, under the auspices of my University Alumni Association. As its Financial Secretary, I coordinated several symposia and seminars in Nigerian universities and elsewhere, on the relevance and necessity for democratic processes and ideals. This non-violent activity further brought me at cross-purposes with the military junta's agenda and became the crux of my flight, and subsequent designation as a Convention Refugee in Canada.

Emigration to Canada

Convention Refugee status

The only alternative to death or detention without the benefit of a judicial trial in the hands of the military in Nigeria was flight and politically self-imposed exile. I probably would

have remained in Nigeria against better judgment, but for the advice of a few well-meaning and well-placed friends, including military personnel. I left with my then most vulnerable seven-year-old sick daughter, under the guise of bringing her for treatment in Canada, which in large part was true. I had been to many parts of the United States on previous occasions, but had never been to Canada. However, here I was; a refugee with a sick, dependent daughter to care for, and no visible or foreseeable means of catering to her needs. I was also gripped, daily, with gut-wrenching fears about the safety of the rest of my family in a country, where any member of the family will do, when the military is unable to locate the principal family member it is in quest of.

One of the experiences that defined my entry into social work, as well as situating me in my proposed PhD research, was the experience of marginality faced by my daughter at school. Being labeled as both disabled and Black, she experienced a great deal of discrimination at the hands of other children. She came home most days in tears, because some children were calling her names. Despite the fact that she spoke excellent English as a result of attending private school in Nigeria, she experienced a great deal of ostracism and exclusion. At some point, my daughter, who was only seven years old at the time, did not wish to go to school anymore, but my encouragement and persistence helped her stay the course.

Family reunification in Canada & the perception of identity conflicts.

I remained in this limbo with my daughter until four years and six months later, when my spouse and our three other children joined us here in Canada. The newly arrived children also came home and continue to come home to date, with their experiences of racial discrimination and social exclusion. Our now 22 year old son, came home from high school with stories of being called “African monkey,” while our other daughter was called “thick lips and ugly,” among other names, just because of their skin color. My wife’s and my continued

encouragement, to ignore these incidents and concentrate on getting their education, were required so that they stayed in school.

The first step that I took in my bid to find meaning to the lives of my children in Canada was to locate and join the Nigerian Community. Although faced with marginality of its own, the Nigerian Community, at the least, afforded a collective platform for debriefing our individual and collective experiences as Black persons in Canada. Later, and as Secretary of the Nigerian Canadian Association of Montréal, I saw to the organization of various community activities, for our children and youth that were aimed at giving them some sense of belonging. Of paramount importance, was our individual and collective striving to integrate my children and these other youths into the mainstream Canadian society. This, we did, through encouraging them to attend and remain at school and avoid and disengage from criminal behaviors and criminally minded persons.

Due to the need to protect my children and others, I was to join my daughter's school committee as the only Black person at the elementary level, where I fought for, and succeeded in teaching children about the issues of disability. I followed my children to their high school in LaSalle and was elected to the governing board in 1998, which at this time had been given tangible executory powers. In continuation of this struggle for vulnerable persons, I was elected to the Advisory Committee on Special Education, at the Protestant School Board of Greater Montréal, for a number of years, beginning in 1996. When the Ministère de l'Éducation, Quebec re-zoned schools in Montréal, from religious to linguistic categories, I was again elected on the Advisory Committee on Special Education of the Lester B. Pearson School Board.

I also sought out and joined the Black Community in Montréal, becoming a member for many years, of the Board of Directors of the LaSalle Black Community Association, until my

recent relocation to the Ottawa region. Since the LaSalle Black Community is made up of persons and families from Africa and the Diaspora, it afforded me the Canadian platform, for further understanding the profoundness of poverty, single parentage, female-headed households, as well as outcomes with having many children. My role as a member of the board, also gave me insight into issues related to education and the educational system as defined by Blacks, in contrast to the dominant population. I was also exposed to racism, discrimination, social exclusion and the condition of being Black in Canada, which I was unaware of while resident in Nigeria.

At the LaSalle Black Community Association, we set up programs, among which were After School and Mentoring Programs. The most important of these programs was the LaSalle Youth Justice Project brokered with the Montréal Consortium for Human Rights Advocacy Training (MCHRAT), whose purpose was to assist Black youths, in conflict with the Juvenile Justice System. My involvement with these organizations to help Black children and their families in Montréal spurred my interest in acquiring a social work degree at McGill University.

Education at McGill

Bachelor of Social work (B.S.W.) (Special) Program

On my admission to the BSW (special) degree program in 1999, I observed that I was one of only five Black students admitted to this program among a class of approximately 75 students, mostly from the dominant culture. Of these Black students, I and another gentleman were the only males. The significance of my enrolment as I perceived it, was that I wanted to be a role model for my children and other Black youths, who have been known to come mostly from single parent, female-headed households. When I saw the class configuration, I wondered

how this could be possible, when there were only the two Black males in this class. I also wondered how this situation might impact on my children and the youths, who I had vowed to assist, if for a moment they reasoned that it may not after all be worth while, to attend and finish their education, when only five Blacks were in a class of 75 in a university located in a supposedly multicultural environment such as Montréal.

However, I bore in mind that I had a task ahead of me, for the sake of our four children, Nigerian and Black youths, as well as others of diverse backgrounds, who may also share the marginality continuum with Blacks. I plowed on even harder, when one day, a staff from the Young Offenders Services in Montréal, came to deliver a lecture in our class. In this lecture, he informed that Black youths and their families were overrepresented in Quebec's social and juvenile justice systems. "How could that be possible?" I ruminated. "Blacks in Canada represented only close to 1 percent of the total population" (Torczyner, 1997). Bearing this in mind, when it was time for the practicum, I resolved and competed with others to complete my Internship with the Young Offenders Services. In Montréal, the Young Offenders Services on Bellechasse Street, caters to the English-speaking population, and is a part of the Batshaw Youth and Family Services. During the interview, I spoke of my interest in being a role model for these children. They also listened and fortunately agreed with me, about the need to help the youths and by extension the system, to re-channel some of the youths' sometimes-negative energies into pro-social ones. Since completing my Internship at this place, I have run into some youths, Black and White, (whom I could hardly place), who come up to me to thank me for turning their lives around.

Master of Social Work (MSW) program

I enrolled in the M.S.W. program, in an attempt to consolidate my learning process. I felt that my learning had been cut short with the brevity of the B.S.W. (Special) program that lasted only one year. I wished to return to the Young Offenders Services, due to the need to continue assisting youths, but regrettably I had already served out my time there as the program required. For my M.S.W. Internship, I chose the addictions field at Pavillion Foster, first on Cavendish Avenue in NDG, and later at the St. Philippe-de-la prairie office, close to the United States border with Canada. Here I eagerly assisted in group and individual counseling across racial lines. "Regrettably," I encountered only one single, Black, male "addict" throughout my Internship period. After graduation, I applied to work in a new facility on the West Island of Montréal that planned to cater to youths dealing with addictions. Again, it appeared that neither they, nor Batshaw Youth and Family Services, which serves English-speaking clients in Montréal, was hiring at the time. Despite these temporary setbacks, and due to my continued interest in contributing to the reduction of the labeling and psychopathology of the Black child and family in Canada, I researched and wrote my Independent study for the M.S.W. on Black youths in the Young Offenders System. I further sought, and gained employment with the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa, Ontario, as a child protection worker. I am still in its employ as I compile this narrative. The idea behind my wish to remain in children-related services is to continue to find ways of assisting children and vulnerable populations. I am cognizant of my experiences as a child soldier and my continuing designation in Canada as a member of a "Visible" minority population. My reasoning is that if, with all my so-called education, knowledge and resistance, I am still being marginalized by racism and social exclusion, then

there must be a dire need to advocate for others whose fortunes are by far, less gold rimmed than mine.

PhD Program

I enrolled into the PhD program, due to an ever increasing need and drive to find a fulcrum upon which I can help to bring meaning to the lives of my children now in Canada, but more especially Nigerian and Black youths and their families here, and others on the periphery. Quixotically, I initially set out on my inquiry on a rather grandiose scale that straddled nearly all facets of the Black Community in Montréal. As this stance would certainly have become unwieldy in the research process and may have posed a myriad of challenges along the way, I therefore, and wisely so, retained the sagely counsel of my academic mentors to streamline and give it focus. This new focus, while still dealing with the Black Community at large, was designed to concentrate on how the role of the Black Community or collective impacts upon the development of identity among Black youths, with particular reference to Nigerian Youth in Montréal.

In trying to understand what Black youths, their families, including my children, endure in Canada, I brought a lot of my checkered life experiences to bear on this research. Some of my experiences include being a colonial subject, child soldier in an adult conflict. Manager of human and material resources, broadcaster, teacher, refugee, community organizer, probation officer and youth delegate, social and child protection worker and student. Ultimately, I hope to apply these humbling experiences, in ways that contribute to a body of knowledge that will assist in finding solutions to the common challenges of Black children and their families. I hope that the solutions I may uncover will not only expeditiously seek to integrate Black youths and their families in the Canadian mainstream society; they will also support their contributions to the

physical, mental and emotional health of other Blacks, and the Canadian mosaic. I indicated earlier that I am currently in the Child Protection Services of the Province of Ontario. Yes, I am here in child related fields, because I see it as a calling. I am still here because I, my dear spouse, and especially my children and other Black youths and their families, are still struggling with the issues of identity, racial discrimination and social exclusion. I strongly believe that there is a need to remain in this field, due to my culture, my skin color, as well as being defined with other Blacks, within a social category, imposed from without, and ascribed to and internalized from within. I probably will still be here, for a long time, due to an altruistic desire, and a “divine” sense of “calling” to assist Black youth and their families to appropriately navigate the Canadian society.

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Chapter 1

1.0.

Introduction

As a whole, the Black population in Canada, while relatively small, is growing. The 1901 Canadian Census reported 17,000 Black people residing in Canada, representing 0.3 percent of the total population. This figure had risen by 31 percent by 2001, representing just over 2 percent of Canada's total population; and at 17 percent represents the third largest visible minority group in Canada, after Chinese and South Asian populations. The Black population increased three times as much as the Canadian population generally between 1991 and 2001, representing 31 percent compared to only 10 percent for the Canadian population as a whole.

Black youth represent a much larger proportion of the Black Community than Canadian youth generally. In 2001, Census Canada reported that 30 percent of the Black Community in Canada was under the age of 25, compared to only 19 percent for the general population. By contrast, only 5 percent of the Black population was aged 65 or over in 2001, represents less than half the proportion of 12 percent for the general Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2001).

Immigration patterns account for a significant proportion of growth in the Black population of Canada. Prior to the mid 1950's, Blacks represented a very small proportion of immigration to Canada. Most of the Black populations in Canada before this time reflected those descended from the Slave Trade. The first Black populations in Canada arrived due to the Slave Trade, when they were forcibly brought to the New World for economic reasons (Alexander and Glaze, 1996; Black Loyalists, n.d.; Junne, 2003; Kilson & Rotberg, 1999; Pachai and Bishop, 2006; Winks, 1977, 1997). The first documented Black slave to arrive in Canada, from Africa was a seven-year-old boy from Madagascar, Olivier Le Jeune, in Quebec in 1628 (Bolaria & Li, 1988b; Bramble, 1988; Walker, 1980; Williams, 1989; Winks 1977, 1997). Blacks living in the

area of Nova Scotia represent the oldest Black Community in Canada, where more than 84 percent is at least third generation Canadian (Henry, 1973; Winks, 1997). Overall, 10 percent of the Black population in Canada in 2001 were at least third generation Canadian. Changes to immigration policies in the 1950s and 1960s allowed for increased immigration of Black population from both Africa and the Caribbean (Saney, 1998; Statistics Canada, 2003). According to Statistics Canada (2001) 31 percent of the Black population in Canada in 2001 were immigrants. Another 19 percent were listed as second-generation individuals aged 15 years or older, who had at least one parent born outside of Canada.

From the 1960's to the 1980's, this increase in the Black immigrant population to Canada saw Jamaica leading the Black immigrant population with up to 40 percent. Haiti came in second during this era, with nearly 20 percent of them accounting for the total Black population in Canada. Again from 1991 to 2001, 20 percent of Black immigrants to Canada came from Jamaica, followed by Haiti, with 12 percent. Additionally, in 2001, approximately 48 percent of the immigrants claimed to be originally from Africa, and had a population about the same as those with origins from the Caribbean and South America at 47 percent. Of these Black immigrants, Somalia contributed 10 percent, Ghana 8 percent and Ethiopia, 5 percent. To this extent, in 2001, the Canadian Black population was reported at 662,200 and represented 2 percent of the total Canadian population, as well as 17 percent of the visible minority population (Foster, 2005; Mensah, 2002; Milan & Tran, 2004; Statistics Canada, 2003).

There is a further finding by Statistics Canada (2001) that at 30 percent, Blacks had a much younger age distribution than the total Canadian population at 19 percent. Of these Blacks, 17 percent were aged 15-24, compared to 13 percent of the Canadian population. Black children aged 0-14 years or 46 percent resided in a single or lone parent family, compared with 18 percent

for the general population. Clearly, the combined factors of recent immigration and sizeable youth population, has had an impact upon the social, economic and demographic realities of Black populations in Canada. Amongst the Black population, 47 percent of the Canadian-born children lived in lone-parent families, compared to 40 percent of foreign-born Black children. Finally, in 2001, almost all Blacks, or 97 percent lived in urban areas, with half, 310,500 or 47 percent residing in Toronto, while 139,300, representing 4 percent of the total Montréal population resided in Montréal. In some areas of Montréal, like LaSalle, Montréal North and Pierrefonds, there is a larger percentage of Blacks than the general population, with most of them, 78 percent, being foreign-born and mostly of Caribbean origin. Of these, only about 18 percent were born in Africa (Foster, 1996 and Statistics Canada, 2001, 2003).

Black youth face many challenges in Canada, not least of which results from racialization processes that have implications for identity construction, self-esteem, and socio-economic outcomes (Bernasconi, 2001; Frost, 2005). This racialization process of Black youth also has implications for social and class outcomes, school and educational attainment, which finding shows that they have a higher rate, than the general population, to drop out, with the eventuality that they would in the future be occupying a lower class strata (Connolly, 1998; Nakkula and Toshalis, 2006; Rassool, 1999). In employment and insertion into the labor market, Black youth are subject to discrimination and prejudice, sometimes, without the opportunity to attain the highest extent of their potentials (Fleras and Elliott, 2003; Foster K.M., 2005 and Foster, M., 1991; Wien, 1976). Black youth differ from White youth, due to the great importance of, but more significantly the exclusionary practices of racism and “othering” in their daily lives and the lives of their families (Elabor-Idemudia, 2005 and Foster, 1996). Through a predominantly White policing, they are watched, followed in shops and public places and sometimes arrested,

detained and worse, for genuine, as well as frivolous reasons (Foster, 1996). In the judicial system, Black youth are much more likely, than White youth to be incarcerated or awarded stringent probationary conditions, when the courts have found them guilty for these real or imagined offenses (Fleras & Elliot, 2003; Foster, 1996). This situation has resulted in overrepresentation of Black youth and their families in the juvenile and adult judicial systems, as well as the social services throughout Canada, but particularly in Montréal. In the disinheritance by forces of racism and exclusion, Black youth have wondered where it is that they fit in within Canada (Laguerre, 1998; Stepick, 1998, 2001). They are visible in one location and juggle this with invisibility in another, White Canada (Foster, 1996; Marger, 2003; Thomas, D.M., 2000; Thompson & Weinfeld, 1995; Wood, 1998). Black youth have striven to adjust both to their parents' world, while at the same time struggle with the wider Canadian society, which rejects them in most spheres of their lives (Carbaugh, 1996). They are conscious of their acceptance in the cultures and world of their parents, all of which are persistently discounted by the majority White society. They are also conscious of their rejection in mainstream society, when they attempt to integrate, not mainly on account of the content of their character, but because of their skin color and heritage.

Although there exist the original Canadian Blacks from the Underground Railroad era, most Black youth and their families are immigrants from a wide range of countries; therefore have no significant roots in Canada. Due to the government's preference for White immigrants, (Bernasconi, 2001 and Frost, 2005) most Black families arrive individually, and often with one parent initially, followed by a stressful and protracted immigration and reunification process for the whole family. Children of immigrants are particularly vulnerable to this separation, isolation, long reunification process and the culture shock that follows the reunification. By the time it

takes Citizenship and Immigration Canada to reunite the families, many would have broken up irretrievably, with most of the youth being raised by Black single mothers (Statistics Canada, 2001). Blacks and other minorities are routinely blamed by Whites in Canada for every malaise of Canadian society, leading to “a hardening of feelings, for this is a time of the ascendancy of tough-talking, right-wing parties, with their coded words about taking back Canada and making the streets safe, of choosing the right immigrants to reflect the traditional Canadian way of life...” (Foster, 1996, p.10).

For reasons of immigration and racialization, Black families and their children face significant economic barriers, which are highlighted by parents’ lack of gainful employment and the concomitant poverty. The high rate of divorce among Blacks also signifies that poor, Black women are raising, and are the primary caregivers of Black youth (Ambert, 1998; Myers, 2005). Also, Black youth, more than Whites and other visible minorities, are more likely to be raised and living in low-income “projects,” where they are easily recruited and engage in crime and criminal activities that bring enormous strain to bear on the family (James, 2005). This is because in Canada, space is organized (Foster, 2005; Palmer, 1997; Razack, 2002) for the sustainability of unequal social relations and in turn, spaces are shaped by social relations. This has resulted in spatial and legal practices, which have been designed to develop and maintain Canada in a racial hierarchy as solely a White settler society. The impacts of these and other anomalies are constantly expressed in the denigration and pathologizing of the Black family and Community (Keita, 2003). On the other hand, Black youth, who survive the strains of the family dynamics, the racialization process that they face and endure from the wider society, are conferred with immunity and become highly resilient. This resiliency results, and is sometimes, expressed as pro-social skills, manifesting in positive school experience, through having

acceptable or sometimes outstanding school and educational outcomes. They also tend to adjust and integrate appropriately into the society, despite facing serious rejection by the majority population (Thomas, V., 2001).

It has been found that a strong family and community play important roles in the lives and development of positive Black youth identity and its construction. This sense of community and solidarity is so, due to the minority stature of Blacks, as well as the isolation that they experience through racialization, “othering” and exclusionary practices of the majority population. Owing to this experience, the Black family and its Communities, over several centuries, have evolved strategies for resisting and unlearning racism and “othering,” to ensure their survival within the majority, White society (Foster, 1996).

1.1. Rationale for the study

The purpose of this study is to understand how Nigerian youth in Montréal construct their identity. The study also seeks to understand the impacts on the Nigerian youth, of negotiating identity construction in a racist environment. It is known that identity formation and construction can never happen in isolation, but through the instrument and sometimes deliberate or non-deliberate engineering of socialization agents (Connolly, 1998; Loslier, 1998; Bulmer & Solomos, 1999; Rassool, 1999; Brunsma, 2006). The identified agencies are the family, peer group, school and educational institutions, community and the wider society. The study intends to explicate the role of these agencies, especially the Nigerian Community and the Black Collective, as well as the Canadian society in the construction or formation of Nigerian and Black youth identity. Three research questions that emerge from this theme are:

1. How do Nigerian youths in Montréal construct and perceive their identity?
2. What is the role of the Nigerian Community and the Black Collective in identity construction among Nigerian youth?
3. How do racism and “othering” impact upon identity construction?

This study explores the experiences of Black youth, their families and Communities, through the lens of the Nigerian Community in Montréal. Why study the Nigerian Community? This is because any attempt to understand the Nigerian Community in Montréal, and Canada as a whole, must be made within the context of the Black Community, under which umbrella the Nigerian Community is subsumed (Torczyner, and Springer, 2001, Foster 1996). The location of the Nigerian Community within the Black Community is essentially on account of internally ascribed and externally assigned categories. As a racial category, the experiences of Blacks, from all nationalities, poignantly mirror the experiences of Nigerians resident in Canada (Foster, 1996; Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

The Nigerian Community, as a part of the Black Community comprises one of the more recent Black immigrants, from the African mainland. The Nigerian Community is also made up mainly of first generation families comprising parents and their children. They are a rather recent addition to the Black Community, in Montréal and the larger Canadian society. A few Nigerians have been in Canada for a long time, especially since the 1950's and 1960's, when the main reason for their sojourn was to study. Many of those who completed their studies in Canada returned home to Nigeria, in order to apply their learning and acquired expertise in bureaucratic and other institutions. These educational acquisitions were designed to re-empower and release themselves from the shackles of colonialism, but especially lift the status of the Nigerian society. Yet, some remained in Montréal and other Canadian cities, especially at the on-set of the

hostilities, which marked the Nigerian Civil War (Adekson, 1981; Campbell, 1995; Nwankwo, 1998; Schwarz, 1968). Most of these Nigerians are now in their late 60's and 70's. Currently, most Nigerians, who live in Canadian cities, including Montréal, began arriving in Canada from the late 1970's for a variety of reasons. Some of these include the spate of protracted military interventions, ethnic and tribal conflicts, political, religious unrests and persecutions, including those that are gender related. All these have produced many refugees from Nigeria into Canada. Other Nigerians living in Canada, including Montréal and Toronto, have the status of landed immigrants and visitors (Engin and Myer, 1997).

The Nigerian Community Organization in Montréal, as elsewhere in Canada, is the umbrella under which all Nigerians of the disparate ethnic, tribal, religious and political groups fall. There are several other Nigerian ethnic groups and associations, whose memberships are endowed and derived from belonging to that ethnocultural and ethnolinguistic group. There is an inherent tendency for Nigerians to be more loyal to their ethnic and tribal group than to the country of Nigeria, regardless of where these Nigerians reside or are located. Nigerians in Nigeria, as well as in Canada believe in having large families, which traditionally was for the purpose of producing food and subsistence, as well as to engender family security and solidarity. The average number of children and youth in most Nigerian families currently residing in Montréal is three.

The Nigerian Community in Montréal is strong; struggles with, but sometimes resigns and accepts its definition and lumping together with other Canadian Blacks (Keita, 2003). The Nigerian Community and its leaders also understand race discourses, as well as have experienced the subjectivities of the "other" since their arrival in Canada. They express their awareness of the need to acknowledge and understand the issues related to immigration or emigration, race,

racism, prejudice, marginalization, exclusion, on the one hand; and on the other, are quite willing to accept the struggles associated with inclusion and integration into the mainstream Canadian society. Nigerians, since arriving in Canada, mostly individually, but sometimes with their families; and others, with their children born here, understand the need to come together as a Community to struggle against oppression, but mainly prevent isolation in a foreign, mostly monocultural environment. Additionally, Nigerians have struggled to balance the act of socializing their children and youth to integrate into mainstream Canada, while at the same time holding on to their Nigerian cultural roots, and identity, in order to maintain the cultures, mores and values of their country of origin. This balancing act, occasioned by the monocultural nature of the Canadian society, which includes those from Europe, while purposefully excluding those from Africa and the Caribbean, is the rationale for the evolution of identity issues and sometimes identity crises among Nigerian and Black youth. It is also the rationale for this study.

In view of Nigerians being a part of the Black Community in Montréal and Canada, they therefore share with most Blacks in Canada, similar experiences of and struggles with immigration, integration, race, racism, powerlessness, prejudice and social exclusion. They also share, with other Blacks, the struggle and a desire to be part of and accepted by White Canada as a social fact in this environment (Marger, 2003; Thompson & Weinfeld, 1995; Thomas, 2000; Wood, 1998). This collective experience by the Black and Nigerian Communities, be they positive or negative, eventually culminates in identity issues, which in turn leads to the self-interrogation of “who am I and where do I belong?” If the issue of identity is challenging for parents and caregivers from the Black and Nigerian Communities, then it must be very confusing, even disconcerting for Black and Nigerian youth, due to where they belong in their developmental milestones.

This study is an exploration of how Nigerian Youth in Montréal construct their identity, or have their identity constructed for them, by the process of parental socialization, the Nigerian and Black Communities, as well as through the influence of the Canadian society. In order to effectively explore these identity issues with Nigerian youth in Montréal, it would be an important backdrop, to also explore and understand how Blacks as a group, have fared in Canada since their arrival to the North American continent. In the main, I will explore how Black youths, who call Canada and in some respects, the United States home, construct their identity or have identities constructed for them by their parents, communities, and mainstream (White) Canadian society. This argument is based on the fact that Nigerians are ethnically or racially categorized and designated by the Canadian systems as Black (Foster, 1996; Statistics Canada, 2001; Torczyner and Springer, 2001). Therefore the Canadian systems' assignment, as well as the ascription by Nigerians in Canada, of this category, exposes them to the same experience, indeed, all the subjectivities of the Black population in Canada.

Furthermore, in exploring the Nigerian Community and the issues of identity construction I chose the ethnographic research, which is predicated on the anti-racist, anti-oppression and resistance framework or approach, as the fulcrum for my study. This research process is designed to capture and describe the lived experiences of members of the Nigerian Community, with a view to articulating how these lived experiences assist in resistance and identity construction by Nigerian youths in Montréal. Located within the ethnographic research method, is autoethnography, which has its offshoot from autobiography. The only point of departure is that whereas autobiography is an unaligned description or the life history of an individual, autoethnography is very much and unequivocally aligned. It is aligned, in so far as the individual rendering his or her biography, as you will find in my own case, ties these specific experiences in

studying the cultures, traditions, and lived experiences of those of the individuals or group that he or she belongs to. Although emphasis of this ethnography will be on the Nigerian youth in Montréal, their experiences mirror those of the other members of the larger Black Communities in Canada, across ethnocultural, social, economic, class and gender lines. The contents of this ethnography also have ramifications for the lived experiences of those other immigrant types, who are not of European descent, and commonly referred to in Canada as “Visible Minorities.”

The importance of conducting an ethnographic study on the Nigerian Community in Montréal is that Nigerians are very recent arrivals to the Canadian mosaic, and as such, fit the profile of suitable research subjects on the issues of immigration, identity, community, integration, experiences of racism, prejudice, discrimination, marginalization; and contending with a racialized identity, and the formulation of different forms of resistance. Additionally, I tied my and family’s lived experiences with those of members of the Nigerian ethnic and cultural group, to which I belong, observed and studied. I also tried and hope that I accomplished this inquiry, by including in the research, some of my own narratives and experiences that did not only elucidate on issues related to my personal experiences, those of my spouse and children, but also the Nigerian and Black Communities here in Canada. This, I pursued through autoethnography.

Conducting an ethnographic research on the Nigerian Community of which I am part, gave me some voice, enabling me to reflect and place myself squarely in my research within the concept of autoethnography. This stand, although less significant, also enabled me tell my own story and lived experience, for the purposes of coming to terms with my own identity and transformations if any, as a Black, male, colonial subject, recipient and internalizer of racism, prejudice, discrimination and exclusion, educated, as well as one of the parents of four children

in Canada. The most important derivative of an autoethnographic study, such as I have conducted is that it allowed me to quest for the identities of youths, and caregivers from the Nigerian Community and elsewhere, much more than if the research was a quantitative, therefore reductionist exposé of other person's or a larger community's "disemboweled" experiences. Much more than these, an ethnographic and autoethnographic research proffered some techniques for me, and hopefully in the future for Black and Nigerian youths, other Nigerians and members of the Black Community, or those whom this cap fit, to be better equipped to negotiate this environment called Canada. I have provided an in-depth discussion of autoethnography, as you will see later in the methodology chapter.

Historically, ethnographic researches of cultures and communities, especially those located within so-called "Third World" have been carried out by outsiders; mainly Europeans. These Europeans have been found not necessarily to arrive to conduct the research on a "*tabula rasa*" or clean slate. Most had self-rewarding missions in mind, assumptions, and pre-conceptions, some of which may be stereotypical or outright prejudiced. This is not to say that I, as the researcher was completely devoid of any pre-conceived research assumptions or pre-conceptions during this inquiry, because I have. Indeed, and as a rule of thumb there is an existing, general, scientific research procedure that must make necessary assumptions, as a primary base, platform or premise for conducting the research. The difference between this ethnographic research and others is that my status as a researcher on the Nigerian and Black Communities also renders me as a research subject. The obvious reason is that as a member of this Community, and having experienced the subjectivities assigned to the group, whatever it is that most others have experienced, struggled with, resigned to and sometimes internalized, mirror my own definitions. This is the "*raison d'etre*" of my decision to study identity issues

among Nigerian youth, and my choice of the ethnographic and autoethnographic methodology as the process.

For the purposes of this research, and to bring clarity to the process in this study, I have divided it into seven main chapters. The eighth chapter is made up of appendices. This first chapter represents a prolog or general introduction to all the other chapters. The idea is not only to encapsulate the whole work as a single unit, as it should be, because it is, but also to establish continuity and flow between the other sections or chapters of the study. This is not to say that the other chapters, which comprise the research, will not have their own introductions and conclusions, because they will. The general introduction dealt with my rationale or the issues that informed the study. They include the impact of racism on identity construction, as well as what I intend to accomplish, in order to address the issues, some of which present as impediments to a healthy identity construction by Black youth. Chapter two represents my theoretical framework, which deals with constructs of race, racism and the theories of power and privilege, as well as anti-racist, anti-oppression and empowerment discourses. In chapter three, I examined the historical and political context of Nigerians in Canada, in terms of immigration, emigration, experience in the labor force and education, including schooling and social integration. Chapter four deals with a review of the literature on issues related to the inquiry on identity construction by Black youth. These included a definition and explication of vehicles or agencies for identity construction, impacts of racism, prejudice and exclusion, as well as some impediments to this construction by Black youth. Chapter five describes the methodology of my study and inquiry into identity construction by Black youth, using ethnography, phenomenology and autoethnography to shed light on the lived experience of Nigerians and the Nigerian youth in Montréal. In chapter six, I provide an opportunity to “listen” to the voices and narratives of

Nigerian youth, parents, caregivers, and community leaders, on their lived experience, as it connects with identity construction, through parents, in school, among peers, within the Nigerian Community and Canadian society. This chapter also represents my attempt to critically explore the emergent themes from the phenomenological interviews, for the purposes of discussion and analysis. The themes are related to school, education and educational attainment; socialization, community, community cohesiveness and group consciousness; identity, identity conflict and confusion, integration; parents' and caregivers' work and occupation and family; racism, prejudice, discrimination and exclusion. The synthesis is represented by the evolution of Black resiliency to counter and resist the onslaught of the aforementioned variables. In chapter seven, I attempt to encapsulate my research findings, through the exploration of different forms of individual and group resistance to exert change and inclusion. I also examined, as important agents for the resolution of Nigerian and Black youth identity and other problems, some possibilities and gains of my research study, mainly social work and educational implications. Chapter seven concludes with some of my researcher insider and outsider dilemma, as well as the dilemma of my methodology. It is important to note, that some of the literature that I have used in this study are somewhat dated. They are, in so far as some of the dated literatures are about Nigeria, as well as the observation that some of those authored by pioneers in ethnography have no new editions since they were first published. However, I have used these literatures, due to the fact that they have significant relevance to my study.

It is pertinent to point out that this study was not defined and mired solely by discourses of oppression and domination, and its reproduction, as experienced by Nigerians, Blacks and other minorities in Canada. I laid important emphasis on understanding how the youths, parents, the community, the Black Collective, and even those from the dominant culture, with anti-racist

ideologies, formulate, express and sustain resistance. This cross-cultural expression of resistance was not only within the dichotomy of ascribed and imposed identities, but also through social, political and community organizing. I have addressed the issue of formulation and expression of and sustainable resistance in the next chapter and concluding parts of this study.

Chapter 2

2.0. Theoretical Framework

The Black Community is tied and definable within the umbrella of “group identity,” which is ascribed as well as imposed (Foster 1996, 2005; Statistics Canada, 2001). As an ascribed category, the Black Community forms a basis for self and collective definition, as well as group consciousness. Additionally, it exists, and has surprisingly thrived as a forum or rallying ground for resistance to racial and group injustices, by the dominant culture in Canada, the United States of America, Britain and elsewhere. The Black Community or Collective is somewhat a transplantation of the concept of extended family, practiced among Peoples of African descent. It also serves as a cultural base for supporting one another, but especially for the purposes of group survival. In the context of Canada, the White population sees the Black Community as a monolith, which it is not. It comprises individuals, families, groups and cultures from Africa and the Diaspora, who are either residents or citizens of Canada. Within these groups or countries that make up the Black Community or Collective in Canada, are many ethnic and disparate cultural groups (Foster, 1996; Milan & Tran, 2004; Torczyner, 1997).

As a social category that has been assigned or imposed from outside, “Black” is a definition (Foster, 1996) applied by policy makers from the dominant culture to lump all persons of African descent into a simplistic, monolithic, but especially malleable social group.

....Canada’s Black population is indeed unique and has several distinct segments. What members of these groups have in common is the challenge of realizing that the mainstream does not differentiate among these groups. Ironically, no matter how much these individuals strut their perceived differences, most Canadians see us as forming one homogeneous group. And how we are seen and treated by Canadians at large might, in the end, be the deciding factor (p.21).

Through the Canadian Census, Statistics Canada (2001) grouped all persons of African descent, irrespective of their country of origin in Africa, West Indies or South America, as

“Black.” This imposed and sometimes, Darwinian, racialized identity, then justifies or rationalizes the denial of individual and group rights. This chapter is an attempt at articulating and understanding, through a critical review of relevant literature, the issue of identity and its construction within the context of power, resistance, social location, community and language, through an anti-racist theoretical lens. I will contextualize the variables of race and racism, at the individual and institutional levels; power and powerlessness, racialized identity, language, community and ethnicity. This contextualization of the variables would lead to understanding their impacts on the Black Community, but especially on identity construction by Black youth, with emphasis on Nigerian youth. I will also examine some of the ways in which Blacks have formed resistance to racism, racialization and their classification with “otherness.”

To this extent, Black youths do not exist in a vacuum, but have parents, caregivers, significant others and whole communities, who give meaning to their existence. It is therefore logical to surmise, that the impacts of racism and racialization in identity negotiation, endured by Black youths as a significant part of their minority experience, is equally shared by Black parents and adults across the board of the Black Community. Having said this, and although the emphasis of this study is on Nigerian and Black youths, I bring the issue of racist discourses on identity negotiation to equally bear on Black adults, including locating myself within the dialog. The major reason for locating myself in this debate is to highlight how identity issues have impacted on my life experiences first as a “Black,” African, male and parent from a minority population. The second is the fact that I am a relatively recent arrival into the Canadian sociocultural and linguistic mosaic, having spent a significant amount of my growing years and adult life in Nigeria. As a new arrival, I am now, just like most Black youths and most Black adults born in Canada, or those who are long-term residents, contending with an array of race,

racialized and culturally related re-socialization processes, paradigm shifts and its attendant identity conflicts. These paradigm shifts could be located in culture, including culture conflicts, language or languages, community, racism and racialized identity. I am also contending with the challenges of deconstruction or fragmentation, as well as construction or reconstruction of my and children's identity, in light of exposure to racial discourses, and its ultimate culmination into evolving strategies for resistance to power and control.

2.1. Race, racism and racialized identity

2.2. Race

Bernasconi (2001) attributes the origin of race to Immanuel Kant's (1724-1804) attempt to review "the entire human genus, with a view to finding either the natural or the purposive causes of the various deviations, depending simply on whichever kind of cause was most readily discernible" (p.23). To Bernasconi, Kant's systematization of the human races, specifically was trying to answer to the inquiry on the different skin color, as the parameter for distinguishing the four, fundamental races, "Whites, Blacks, Hindustanic, and Kalmuck" (p.23). He quoted Kant as arguing that although humans, having spread all over the earth, were not only affected by the region, where they are, but also were genetically ingrained, with the natural dispositions that were suspended, or remained dormant contingent on that climate.

Farley (1995) defined race or a racial group in two ways: as generally perceived to be distinct from other groups in some ways, such as skin color, hair texture, or facial features. The other way is a general perception by the group itself, that it has a distinct identity. Smith (1999) argued that the concept of race has double ramifications for an "othered" society in the following ways:

On one hand, it is essential to understand how the social, economic, and cultural institutions of racism and White supremacy are produced and reproduced through the routine recognition of race. Yet, on the other hand, it is not enough to simply say race is itself and expression of racism. For instance, while race marks relations of privilege, exploitation, and subordination, it also provides many people a sense of identity, community, and history. For many people of color, a refusal of race can express self-loathing-an assault against ourselves and our community (pp.181-182).

Although Pascale (2007) supports Smith's argument, she departed by asserting that when identifying with racial categories, even if it was designed to deconstruct racism and organize for racial justice, we unwittingly repeat the problems of racism by its reification. To the extent that we attempt to resist racism through the same discourse of race itself, these efforts to "strangle" racism become complicit with racism. Blackburn (2000) saw racial groups in terms of both physical and social characteristics. Blackburn argued against the previous general conception of race, as entirely based on physical or biological and genetic characteristics. This argument was due to the confusion among geneticists, sociologists and anthropologists, to arrive at a consensus on how many races exist universally. The other was the arbitrariness of, and variations in the application of physical characteristics towards the definition of race. In encapsulating his argument, Farley (1995) insisted that interbreeding among races has debunked the utilization of biological characteristics to determine race. To this extent, Farley informed that race is a socially constructed concept. Malik (1996) agrees with Farley, by asserting that the notion of race assumes the acquiescence of often-touted, biological differences between human beings, differences which express and manifest the existence of distinct, self-reproducing groups. The attempt below, aims at dissecting race, in order to understand how race as a simple biological classification of human beings, became hijacked and metamorphosed into racism.

2.3. Racism

The creation of a new school of thought, embedded in the Darwinist framework began to emerge, when such social scientists as Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), applied the concept of race to social categories (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Henry, Tator, Mattis & Rees, 2006). According to Banton (1983) it was not the intention of the Darwinist school of thought to appropriate, propagate and sustain racism as a natural part of the race discourse. The appropriation of racism for other ends occurred according to Banton; and Ball & Dagger (1995) when in the 19th century, the French diplomat, Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau and Houston Stewart Chamberlain hijacked the theory, to construct a school of social racism. In his essay on “the Inequality of Human Races,” (as cited in Ball & Dagger, 1995) de Gobineau applied this deeply flawed construct, where the White race and European civilization were highlighted and assigned supremacy over all other races. The propagation of this ideology of race was reportedly the progeny of racism, and was applied all through the 19th and most of the 20th century, to delineate and distinguish between groups. More insidiously, race was established in a hierarchical fashion, such that the stratification order became obvious and ordered.

In furtherance of this human aberration, Darwinism was taken a step further, by correlating physical characteristics with social, psychological, intellectual, moral, and cultural differences. In this vein, skin color was applied in the classification of humans, supported by racial discourses and order. The three variables now became the platform for the justification, rationalization and legitimization of exploitation and oppression of racial minorities, of which Blacks feature prominently. Zackodnik (2004) argued, that White America began to express race related beliefs, be they physical, mental, cultural or behavioral throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. During these eras there was a belief that the Anglo Saxon race, personified

by “White blood” was superior to others, as well as “genius-bearing” (p.25). This gave rise to the concern and urgency for continued homogeneity and the subsequent fear of miscegenation or mixing of races. Prior to these eras, American racism was already alive and entrenched in the psyche of White society during the 15th century (Griffin, 1999). Griffin argued that this entrenchment was not necessarily due to the manipulation of race theories against Blacks, by rough-hewn Southern, White plantation owners, but more through “cultivated Christian ideologues” (p.5).

Griffin argued that American racism, emanating as a “body of ideas, is a religious confession” (p.4). For him, the genesis of American racism is contingent on a religious dogma that is grounded in powerful but misleading and distorted Christian comprehension of the Bible. These distortions originated, and were propagated by colonial-era Northern, Christian, intellectual ideologues, mainly Puritanical men and women. These preeminently espoused, as well as propagated the theory that “God had created Black people to be forever inferior and subject to all other races. Moreover, these “devout” Christians were the initiators of theories that the Bible, history and Christian theology together support the plain and obvious truth that White supremacy over Blacks is nothing less than a divine decree” (p.5). While the American Christian Puritans, Conservative and Liberal alike, sowed the seeds of racism, Griffin accused intellectuals as the purveyors, where, through “ their off-hand comments and expressions-whether from church pulpits, academic lecterns, scientific laboratories, corporate boardrooms, or the halls of Congress-are rarely challenged” (p.7). In this context, intellectuals have been the providers of the incubative culture for race theories. Their comments and expressions, then dominoes into working-class Whites being provoked into actions, or expressions by these theories that might have otherwise remained as abstract rants. Rees (n.d). strongly suggested that the most feasible

responses of a dominant group towards a minority group, deemed as non-persons can be summarized under the ideology of extermination, expulsion, segregation, integration and assimilation. In the same vein, American Native Peoples, like Blacks, have, and continue to suffer at varying periods from all of these four variables, since the White, European man set foot on the American Continent over four hundred years ago. In light of this experience, Native leaders are still entertaining fears that the intent towards them of the larger White Canada and its governments since it failed to exterminate them is now essentially assimilative in nature.

Only in the middle of the 20th century did such seemingly powerful, but randomly toothless and western usurped organizations, identified in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, (UNESCO), which is a branch of the United Nations Organization, begin to challenge, debunk and “de-mythify” race (UNESCO, 1972).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) stated:

“racism include racist ideologies, prejudiced attitudes, discriminatory behavior, structural arrangements and institutionalized practices resulting in racial inequality as well as the fallacious notion that discriminatory relations between groups are morally and scientifically justifiable; it is reflected in discriminatory provisions in legislation or regulations and discriminatory practices as well as anti-social beliefs and acts; it hinders the development of its victims, perverts those who practice it, divides nations internally, impedes international cooperation and gives rise to political tensions between peoples; it is contrary to the fundamental principles of international law and, consequently, seriously disturbs international peace and security.”

For Feagin (2000) everyday racism has a structural dimension, which allows its normalization, sometimes, the justification of racist attitudes.

An ideology is a set of principles and views that embodies the basic interests of a particular social group. Typically, a broad ideology encompasses expressed attitudes and is constantly reflected in the talk and actions of everyday life. One need not know or accept the entire ideology for it to have an impact on thought or action (p.69).

In contextualizing racism, Jordan & Weedon (1995) pointedly emphasized on the insidiousness of this human behavior, as not just a justification for economic exploitation and political

domination. According to them, if this were the only fulcrum of racism, then the pills of racism, though bitter, could be more palatable. Their major concern with racism is that it permeates the very essence of our humanity and humanness. In this regard, Jordan and Weedon argued that racism has been primarily and negatively credited with the negation of the affirmation of our sense of individual and group worth, passing final judgment on the value of one's history, culture and language; and of one's intellect and physical appearance. Marx (2006) contends that:

Because contemporary White Americans have been conditioned not to think about race and, especially, not to talk about it, facing the topic can be a challenging, frustrating, and even frightening experience for many. Preservice teachers in the multicultural issues in education classes that I teach often feel defensive when the word race is introduced in class. The topic makes them uncertain and sometimes angry. In the beginning of each semester, White students spend a lot of time arguing that race should not be the primary marker of diversity. Also, many argue that race is overemphasized in the field of education and that, in reality, we are all individuals with much in common and little that separates us. On some points, I agree with them....However, I recognize the color-blindness that influences students' discomfort with the topic of race...(p.21).

Foster (2005) argued, that those like South Africa's Jan Christiaan Smuts, promoted racism and the superiority of White Europeans, as well as their "endangered species" status through his famous inspirational quote that was directed at Whites:

Let us hurry to unite the knot and set the good genius of European civilization once more free from the bonds, which may strangle her in the future (p.1).

Following from Smut's famous clarion call, Foster opined that other leaders and high profile persons around the world, applying the Darwinian Theory, began to see his entreaty as intrinsic in the survival of Whites and Europeans. These persons believed, beyond a reasonable doubt, that in order to attain their highest levels, "societies had to separate into clear and distinct groups of superior and inferior people with their own identities and cultures" (p.14). The proponents of these ideologies argued that all men and women were not created equal. Whereas some were assumed to be inferior subspecies, possessed of the minimum abilities, virtues, and aptitudes that

were somewhat akin to humans, others were “near-perfect specimens,” (p.14) hovering on the threshold of achieving the mythical greatness of gods” (p.14). “In Canada, we saw such thinking espoused by the political leaders of the day, including Sir Wilfrid Laurier and MacKenzie King, and even by socialist leaders like Tommy Douglas ...at different times supported an officially sanctioned exercise in eugenics that continued until at least 1945” (p.14). The program of eugenics was to breed a master race of Canadians by weeding out what was presumed to be undesirable traits in some humans (McKague, 1991). This was to be accomplished by applying or adapting the same techniques used to hybridize some species of dogs, horses, cattle, as well as consumer crops. This plan, which had race at its core, dictated for the exclusion of other undesirable types of races, supposedly, visible minorities, inferior to Western Europeans, into Canada, to limit the chances that they might interbreed and “pollute” a superior West European gene pool (Foster, 2005).

Myers (2005) argues that racism is dialectical, in that it is located and operates at three main levels of society, ideological, structural and interactional. Therefore, and as he argued, racism applies a hierarchical structure to ensure that differential opportunities are meted out to people according to race. However, it is only through the instrument of humans, who believe in this ideology can racism operate and ultimately impact on all. Racists’ behaviors operate at interactional levels, where human beings relate with one another, intentionally or without any conscious knowledge of it. Myers argued further, that people have normalized racist behaviors, become so inured to it that they no longer see it as problematic, even when they become or are made aware of it. This lack or degradation of anti-racist consciousness, then leads to the acquiescence of racist ideology, a system of belief that awards legitimacy to “racist structure and practice” (p.22). Myers stated further, that racism is “hegemonic” (p.22) by the fact that it is

handed down over generations. When people are born or migrate to a society where racism has existed and mutated over millennia, they quickly and sometime, unceremoniously imbibe racism and racist ideologies from their normal route of socialization. As time wears on, such persons internalize, normalize and accept as *fait accompli* the differential treatment and denigration of “Others,” especially people of color. The hegemony of racism is so woven into the past and current fabric of society that it is often invisible and or inevitable, which in turn, makes it challenging, indeed difficult to recognize, discuss, challenge, disrupt and eradicate. Collins (2000) stated:

To maintain their power, dominant groups create and maintain a popular system of “commonsense” ideas that support their right to rule. In the United States, hegemonic ideologies concerning race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation are often so pervasive that it is difficult to conceptualize alternatives to them (p.284).

The propagation of racism has generated huge impacts on race and racial oppression, as argued by Bolaria & Li (1985, 1988b). These revolve around the destructive social and psychological implications, on members of minority cultures and institutions. This destruction lay, not only in dismantling the social incentives and support for minority institutions, but also in engendering a subordinate or inferior complex among minority members (Milloy, 1999). The final outcome, as argued by Bolaria and Li (1985, 1988b) is that minority individuals and groups acquiesce, and begin the unconscious rejection of their own heritage, in pursuit of White culture and symbols that ostensibly endow a higher social recognition. In this culture of acquiescence, and in so far as the dominant group has defined its social significance, many minority cultures and institutions become moribund or extinct, before minority members are empowered to utilize them and abandon the acquiesced norms and values. In this argument Yee (1995) maintained that racism is not confined to the state of being different, but that it is also about people’s everyday experiences of pain, social alienation and exclusion. This racism is further reproduced, and

acquiesced to as racialized identity. Racialization is then further applied, as we will see later in this chapter, in the acculturation process, and stress-laden interactions of recipient individuals from the minority culture.

Farnsworth (1995) states, that there have been a number of incidents in Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver, since the 1990s that portends more serious racist attitudes towards racial and visible minorities in Canada. This is not to say that these incidents are not occurring in other parts of Canada. However, their frequency of occurrence and recognition in these areas is, due to the concentration of visible minorities here. Farnsworth stated that in Montréal, which has an increasing number of the Black population, comprising primarily immigrants from the Caribbean, especially Haiti and Jamaica, there have been various, increasing in frequency, and serious charges of police brutality against Blacks, and others that are racially inspired.

2.4. Power and powerlessness

The argument that power and powerlessness are inherently related to race, ethnicity, and socio-economic class, have kept Canadian and other social researchers occupied for sometime now. Gee & Prus (2000) argued, that the fundamental issue is not the degree to which ethnicity, race or socio-economic advantage for Whites and subsequent disadvantage for Black are connected. Rather, what to them is paramount is the extent to which racial and ethnic factors play themselves out in socio-economic outcomes. To Gee & Prus, this interplay of racial and socio-economic factors, hold and facilitate the concept of power and powerlessness. Dworkin & Dworkin (1999) suggested that power, when achieved, can be utilized to increase one's prestige and property. However, they failed to mention by what means the prestige and property are attained, or how the attainment of this prestige and property, becomes inversely proportional to, or translates into the disempowerment of others. Departing from Dworkin & Dworkin, Berry &

Kalin (2000) appeared to agree that power is related and connected with racism, in so far as racism is the combination of prejudice, in addition to the power to act on that prejudice. Further to this, Berry & Kalin (2000) and Fleras and Elliot (2003) argued that prejudice entertained by a non-dominant group against the dominant group, would not suffice as racism, except when it is put in the context of power. What then are the dynamics of power in a racist society such as Canada?

2.5. Dynamics of power in a racist society

Using the theory of "Vertical Mosaic," Porter (1965) suggested that ethnic origin, to the extent that it and ethnic groups are arranged vertically, were the major parameters in formulating classes in Canada. In this equation, those originating from Northwestern Europe, with special reference to the British, occupy the apex of this pyramid. Conversely, the others of non-European descent, with particular reference to persons of African descent, were at the bottom of the pyramid. Porter's thesis derived this summation, based on Canadian Immigration laws, which patterns reflected ethnic and racial prejudice. Mensah (2002) concluded that power and its dynamics are located in the Marxist framework. This framework, in turn, relies on power and social class as its primary social category, to obtain cheap and sometimes free labor. The process, subsequently and in the final analysis, alienates those in the lower social position, from capital, especially Blacks from the social and economic order.

Trying to understand racism and social exclusion, without first exploring and understanding the role of class and power, presents as a meaningless exercise (Bonnett, 2000; Bulmer & Solomos, 1999). The pursuit and maintenance of power, gain and traditional factors of identity, as well as personal insecurities of those in positions of power, are involved in the

interaction between power, prejudices and discrimination (Simpson & Yinger, 1985). The reason for this interaction, according to Heller (1985) and Pinderhughes (1989) is that power, which “resides” with and favors those of European descent, has been ascribed and internalized, through centuries of persecution and domination of Blacks and other minorities. In exercising this power and privilege, Warren and Twine (1997) stated that the more powerful social group, comprising Whites, expands and contracts as time wears on; or depending on the need, consent to the entry of some, while shutting out the others. This situation renders their type of racism as a “White endeavor” (Myers, 2005, p.20). On account of this, the history of America has been created and defined by Whites (Feagin & Hernan, 2001; Feagin, Hernan and Batur, 2001) and thus “White racism.” Feagin et. al. stated (p.17) that: “White racism is “the socially organized set of practices, attitudes and ideas that deny African Americans and other people of color the privileges, dignity, opportunities, freedoms, and rewards that this nation offers to White Americans.”

In the discussion on power and oppression, Essed (1991) believed that domination constitutes a special case of power. In this respect, power cannot be appropriated by a single individual, but must be collectively owned and acted upon in unison for it to be effective. Power, viewed in this way, and acting in concert with racism, assists in reflecting upon and understanding the special relationship between Black and White. This special relationship plays out in such a way that each Black and White person represents a group, having relatively less or more power. The implication is that there is conscious or unconscious perception of security or the lack thereof, due to being a member of a group. In view of this, there is the expectation that other members of the group will acquiesce to or give accent to this power. This then endows individual members belonging to the dominant group, the power necessary to perpetrate acts or beliefs against the dominated or subordinated group (Hochschild, 1995; Wilson, 1973). Marger

(2003) argued that although overt suppression of minority Peoples in Canadian history is generally lacking, there are significant parallels between the United States and Canada, particularly with reference to non-Whites.

In Canada, these racial-ethnic groups have suffered various forms of discrimination including at one time or another, restrictions in voting, employment, land ownership, housing, and public accommodation....Serious racist actions have also been directed at people of East Indian origin. Along with the Chinese and Japanese, East Indians were barred from entry into Canada earlier in the century, and those remaining were subjected to discrimination in almost all areas of social life. East Indians in the past were generally seen as intrinsically dirty, sinister, immoral, prone to overcrowding, and generally inferior to Whites (p.522).

Blauner (2001) and McIntosh (1990) perceived power, enshrined in White privilege, as the key to racial oppression. Leonardo (2002) argued that White and White culture are neutral categories, but Whiteness, as a negative racial discourse, exists to reproduce racism and White privilege. In times past, the overt, blatant display of racist beliefs and acts by White power holders, were Eurocentrically constructed, even brandished as a sign of honor (Feagin, Vera, & Batur, 2001). In the covert form of racism as a White privilege, as argued by Feagin et al., many and “virtually all White men, women and children share and participate in a White-racist culture; and most harbor racist images or view of others” (p.25).

In recent times, there have been arguments by Whites that Blacks also perpetrate racism. Some have taken this stand to divert attention from the privilege they have and enjoy, in order to continue the subjugation of people of color. Hacker (2003) warns that people of color, especially Blacks, do not have the structural power or authority to exercise racism, except in the rare case of a handful of Blacks, Asians and Latinos, who may have somehow infiltrated the power elite of society. Even at that, Zweigenhaft and Domhoff (1999) argued that non-White newcomers to the economic arena are incapable of exercising racism, or being its agents, on account of their structural disadvantages. When they do, they immediately align their interests with other

counterparts of the elite club, rather than the masses, from which some arose. Some of the limitations to effectively practice racism, include their limited population, because that exclusive club is still populated by about 90 percent White, Christian, wealthy men. To this extent, Hacker (2003) maintained that those that occupy the top echelon of the economy, and are extremely wealthy, are primarily White, Christian and male. Mills (2000) agreed, adding that the power elite, who is located in the top leadership of the economy, polity and military, is White, therefore, make decisions that affect us all. Myers (2005) argued that Whites in power “recruit only like-minded, like situated members through homosocial reproduction, so as to protect their own interests from outside threats” (p.20). To stem the threat of incursion by Blacks into the privileged domain, they have been prevented, by White subterfuge, from accumulating knowledge, wealth, and autonomy. To accomplish this, Marable (1997) and Sugrue (1996) stated that Whites have erected informal, extralegal obstacles like lynching, blockbusting, gerrymandering and other barriers. Warren and Twine (1997) added, that the term Whiteness is only a meaningful category, in so far as there is the ability to juxtapose it with its opposite, Blackness. What this comparison translates into becomes the stagnation of Blacks in a definable, degradable, expendable group, which will enable Whites become insulated and value-laden.

Harris (2003) informed, that Whiteness fits the broad historical concept of property, which includes everything to which a human may attach a value, and has a right to, including the subjugation and alienation of those they perceive to be inferior. These Whites share a common belief and view of Black “others” in ways that also reflect how they view themselves as participants in culturally, as well as structurally racist society. In doing so, Whites have employed or substituted prejudice, while rejecting overtly racist actions, due to the sanctions it attracts. According to Harris, prejudice, which is a negative way of viewing others held in

contempt, is a way or means employed by Whites, of internally representing themselves, in characteristically unrealistic and inflated fashion. In the use of prejudice, Whites have developed “sincere fictions” (Feagin, Vera, & Batur, 2001, p.26) of personal and group construction, which reproduce societally held myth. This myth, paints them, not as racists, but good persons, even as they act, reproduce and perpetuate racist ideologies against the rest of the “Othered” society. At the same time, these Whites earnestly seek, find and offer an apologia or justification for these acts against the rest of the “Othered” society. White privilege is located in the White self, as an internalized conception of Whiteness. This White self is most often stowed away deep in individual and the collective psyche, that it is hardly recognized and discussed, until it is ready to be used. When confronted, most White practitioners present rationale and excuses for being non-racist or even colorblind. Being non-racist or colorblind then provides the loophole to organize social justice efforts, in which ignorance of the racially biased privileges they possess is paramount. This in turn, reinforces racist disadvantages for others (Nakayama & Martin, 1998). Nakayama & Martin argued that White privilege assists in the transformation of the other-outsider, into something less than the White self, and reduces the “other” individual’s humanness into a nonperson.

Giroux (1999) accused Whites of a siege mentality. With this siege mentality, Whites have shifted the “politics of race from the discourse of White supremacy, the historical legacy of slavery and segregation, as well as the on-going burden of racial injustice, endured by African Americans and other minorities in the United States” (p.225). Giroux argued, that these White supremacists have hidden under the cloak and aegis of Christianity, to mobilize a new populist racist discourse about family, nation, traditional values, as a subterfuge, as well as part of a broader resistance to multicultural democracy and diverse racial culture. As well, Bonilla-Silva

(2003); Chubbuck (2004) and Giroux (1997) slammed Whiteness as color-blind racism, as well as a racial performance or act, which can be enacted and reenacted to reproduce racial inequality. These authors additionally argue that Whiteness is directly connected to institutionalized power that benefits only White Americans and those of European descent.

Feagin, Vera, & Batur (2001) cited White privilege, using the case example of 19th century European immigrants to America, who initially defined themselves as oppressed Irish, Italians or Germans. A few short years later, these groups viewed and called themselves White Americans, when immigrants having “darker colors” than themselves arrived. Conversely Blacks, who arrived on the continent at the same or even earlier times, are still routinely told to go “home.” The authors went further, by citing case examples of early propertyless European workers, who were intentionally apportioned racial privileges to encourage them to ally with the White elite, having direct and indirect economic interests in the enslavement of Blacks. Of particular note were poor Irish immigrants to the United States in 1830-1890 eras, who were escaping racial oppression by the English, and subsequently transformed into White identified thoughts and actions. For Sullivan (2006) “the shift from *de jure* to *de facto* racism corresponds with a related shift from habits of White supremacy to ones of White privilege” (p.5). Sullivan argues further, that it does not take membership into the Ku Klux Klan and Aryan Nation to be identified as a White supremacist. What Sullivan argues as the indices for measuring being defined as such, are transactions with the world in which White domination becomes consciously affirmed and embraced. He argued that as long as White domination is perpetuated, there will always be, at the micro level of this person, and macro level of society, a mix of White supremacy and White privilege. Sullivan asserted that this mix however, has a higher concentration of unconscious White domination. Sullivan continued:

It is no accident that it is difficult to hear the soft patter of White privilege. White privilege goes to great lengths not to be heard. Habits of White privilege are not merely nonconscious or preconscious. It is not the case that they just happen not to be the object of conscious reflection but could relatively easily become so if only they were drawn to one's attention....It omits the strong resistance to the conscious recognition of racism that characterizes habits of White privilege. As unconscious, habits of White privilege do not merely go unnoticed. They actively thwart the process of conscious reflections on them, which allows them to seem non-existent even as they continue to function (pp. 5-6).

Although the effort of critical White studies (Pascale, 2007) is to interrogate, disrupt and discomfit the invisible status of White privilege and Whiteness, there have been uneven outcomes, which appear to sometimes, even serve to recenter, reprivilege and perpetuate the lives and perspectives of White people. Pascale does not lose hope, due to the finding that there are abundant literatures that speak to the social, historical, legal and economic processes, which present vehicles for the deconstruction of a White racial identity. This is in addition to significant critiques of the inextricability of Whiteness from racial domination strategies. She added, as well as (Aanerud, 2003; Chabram-Dernersesian, 2003; Muraleedharan, 2003) that in recent times scholars of race discourses have brazenly begun to deconstruct Whiteness as a practice, in dissonance with the originally held assumption that Whiteness was a characteristic or trait. These authors all have made distinctions between being White on the one hand, as a naturally endowed state of being, while on the other hand identifying Whiteness as an achieved status.

Helms (1990) has proposed a model that assumes that all ethnic or racial groups, experience a racial identity development process that can be conceived as having several stages. He argued that individuals sometimes, operate out of one stage of development or another, based on the type of socio-racial situation they are facing, and what previous adaptive solutions have existed in the past to deal with it. Contingent on Helm's assumptions, the ways in which White people progress through these stages, are different from those of people of color. Helms

informed that Whites, who have grown up, and are socialized in an environment in which members of their group and they themselves are privileged, in relation to others, learn to perceive themselves, and their group, as being entitled to similar privileges. However, in order to protect these privileges, individuals and the group are socialized into denying and distorting race-related discourses, in order to maintain the status quo. To this extent, Helms suggested that for a White individual to develop a healthy identity, he or she would have to abandon the normative strategies applied by White people for coping with race.

2.6. Racialized Identity

Miles (1989) conceptualized one of the most comprehensive definitions of racialization.

He referred to racialization as:

those instances where social relations between people have been structured by the signification of human biological characteristics in such a way as to define and construct differential social collectivities. (p.75).

The summation made by Satzewich (1998); James and Shadd (2001) of this definition by Miles, is that the crucial element to the process of racialization would be the delineation of group boundaries and identities. This process of racialization and delineation of group boundaries, and identities is done by reference to physical and or genetic criteria, or by reference to the term race. Racialized identity, as indicated earlier, is especially pertinent, when it has been imposed from outside, in a superordinate, and internalized and ascribed in a subordinate fashion, for the purposes of control. Racialized identity in Canada, with respect to its impact on Blacks has been reproduced by the Canadian mainstream society, which consistently organizes activities around the denial of its existence.

Fleras & Elliot (2003); Foster (2005); Marger (2003) argue that mainstream Canadian society denies racism, but sustains the maintenance of Blacks within a racialized category,

through comparing the treatment of Blacks in the United States with that of Canada. This comparison, akin to comparing apples and oranges, allows Canadian members of the dominant culture to view Canada as a non-racist society, and rightly so, because Canadian racism presents as refined and covert (Bernasconi, 2001; Itawuru and Ksonzek, 1994). This denial of the existence of racism is also reproduced in institutional and systemic racism, as evidenced by some discriminatory practices in hiring, promotion, recruitment and ascension into management positions (Thomas, 2000). The insidiousness of Canadian racism as well, presents in the frugal, sometimes, non-existent political representation practices of Black and other minority interests, as will be shown in this study (Marger, 2003; Thomas, 2000; Thompson & Weinfeld, 1995; Wood, 1998). Racialized identity becomes even more manifest and damaging, when it becomes internalized by Blacks, reproduced in the socialization process, and defines how Blacks act in their interaction with others from the majority culture. Internalized racial identity, when reproduced, engenders tensions and is reflected in how Blacks, especially children and youths, individually and collectively identify themselves, and how they in turn are perceived and identified by those outside. A corollary to this tension is that it defines the nature of a Black person's relationship with those of similar color, and cultural definition, as well as with those from the dominant culture (Dlamini, 2002; Schuman, 1975). Dixson and Rousseau (2006) argued that a significant contributor to the demoralization of marginalized groups is "self-condemnation" (p.21). They argue that minorities and marginalized groups internalize the stereotypic images and labels that have been assigned to them by certain elements of society, mainly the dominant group, who then ride on this to gain and perpetuate their own power.

James, C.E. (1999) spoke to the existence of age-long racial and ethnic diversity, which has characterized Canada. He argued however, that this ethnic diversity has largely been ignored

within the political, educational, social and cultural systems. James, C.E.; Astin (1982), as well as Feagin, Hernan and Nikitah (1996) tried to evaluate the experiences, feelings and reactions of students in some colleges and universities. The study, particularly by James, C.E. (1999) highlighted institutions with an ethnic mix of students in compulsory and elective classes, and how these institutions prepared them for a multicultural journey into the Canadian society. The findings were that the institutions hardly prepared ethnic students for the reality of day-to-day experiences of minorities in the Canadian society, especially in the absence of Black teacher role models (Murrell, (1991). In a similar vein, Dixson and Rousseau (2006) argued that the “voice” of people of color (p.20) is not heard, due to racism and racialization. Therefore, the way to justice and equity would be through a critical component of race theory, which would genuinely find a way to communicate the realities and experiences of the oppressed. They stated, that one of the tragedies of Eurocentric pedagogy and education is that it silences the dialog of people of color.

There comes a moment in every class when we have to discuss “The Black Issue” and what’s appropriate education for Black children. I tell you, I’m tired of arguing with those White people, because they won’t listen. Well, I don’t know if they really don’t listen or if they just don’t believe you. It seems like if you can’t quote Vygotsky or something, then you don’t have any validity to speak about your own kids. Anyway, I’m not bothering with it anymore, now I’m just in it for a grade (p.21).

Bobb-Smith’s (2003) understanding of racism and racialization, led her to argue that although Blacks and other minorities may be racialized, the oppressed may or may not ascribe to the politicized identity assigned by the oppressor or colonizer. Indeed, she was of the opinion that this identity can be re-examined, redefined, reworked or downright rejected. She explained further, that oppressions of subordination can render themselves as the paramount rationale for changing that identity from being static, while simultaneously applying resistance as the dynamic object to effect the desired changes. For Bobb-Smith it is:

learning to survive is connected to histories of oppressions and to the ways in which communities, subordinated and exploited by hegemonic powers, are sustained....the identities of Caribbean-Canadian women have been constructed to take up a legacy of learning, which has enabled them to produce acts of anti-subordination toward systems of exploitation (p.221).

2.7. Effects of racism on the Black community

2.8. Institutional or systemic racism and its reproduction

According to Marger (2003) and Mann (1993) social, political, educational and economic structures that benefit one group to the detriment of another are *de facto*, systemic racism. The entrenchment of systemic racism revolves around the prejudicial and discriminatory practices of a dominant culture, which uses socio economic and political influences, to control, dominate and disempower non-dominant cultures. Its major fulcrum, to this extent, is power and control, used in enacting, exercising and sustaining laws that have negative implications for others on the socio, political and economic fringes. Within this context, systemic racism is the infusion of lopsided and unfair policies and practices, by individuals operating within institutional sub and superstructures (Feagin, 2006). Other examples, from the perspective of Jones, L.P. (1997) are biases in professional decision-making, which have the implications for Black and Hispanic families being more likely to come in contact and conflict with the protective and juvenile justice systems. The frequency of this reporting occurs more with Black and Hispanic families, than observed with White families, even when both have exhibited the same behaviors.

Owing to its insidiousness, it is challenging to understand institutional racism and its reproduction, without framing it within certain concepts. Some of these concepts, located in employment and labor relations, appear to be significant as it concerns Blacks and other racial minorities. Labor relations existing between Blacks and hirers of labor, made up of mainly

Whites, allow us to highlight institutionalized and reproduced racism, in its full and unrestricted operation. More than any other racial category, institutional racism becomes evident, due to the discrimination against and exclusion of Blacks from the labor market, by means of some artificial theoretical assumptions (Kluegel, 1990; Kluegel and Smith, 1982, 1986). Mensah (2002) described four of such theoretical perspectives as-the human capital theory, the Marxist theory, labor market segmentation theories, and the vertical mosaic thesis, to underscore the institutionalization and reproduction of racism, as well as the subordination of Blacks in the Canadian labor market. Institutional racism in the labor market is therefore maintained, and reproduced by the connections made through families, schools and other institutions. Das Gupta (1996) and Li (1988) argued that many Canadian employers apply various race-based tactics, as found in scapegoating, oppression, and segregation, to exploit Blacks and other minorities in the work force. To Das Gupta, racism is not a historical accident or an aberration that is seeking remediation. Rather, it is a calculated attempt to maintain the powerlessness and vulnerability of Blacks, and other minorities, with the sole aim of sustaining cheap, expendable labor. Subsequently, the powerlessness of Blacks and other minorities in the work force, in turn maximizes the appropriation of surplus capital and its accumulation by the majority group.

Mensah (2002) argues that there are two tiers of labor markets, composed of the primary and secondary types. The primary type comprises jobs with specialization, higher wages, mobility, greater unionization, generous pensions and other fringe benefits. Conversely, the secondary labor market is defined by low-paying, dead-end employment or McJobs, having limited mobility and career development prospects. This is where Blacks and other minorities are frequently located, due to deliberately set up structural impediments, on their employment careers. This in effect, means that higher educational and occupational attainments by Blacks or

by those presumed under the secondary labor system, do not necessarily and automatically translate into greater economic returns, and upward social and economic mobility (Torczyner & Springer, 2001).

As pointed out by Dines (1994); McIntosh (1990); Sleeter (1994); Thomas (1990) White, male privilege and the dominance of power in society, by Whites, renders the Whiteness and especially, the privilege invisible, even when it continues to reduce the privileges of non-Whites. This is so because Whiteness and the privilege it confers is taken for granted by many persons who are White. In their argument, Dyer (1988) and Hooks (1992) stated that Whiteness was aggressively pursued and embraced in popular culture, in a bid to rearticulate or re-engage a sense of individual and group identity, for “besieged” persons of European descent. They argued the paradox of Whites seeing themselves as racially transparent, while re-inscribing Whiteness as invisible. The paradox of White invisibility is due to the rare occurrence to White people that they are privileged because they are White. To this extent Dei (1996) argued that:

there are enormous social, political and economic benefits that historically have accrued, and continue to accrue, to certain individuals in society due to the dominance of white, (male) power. It is how economic, political and social power was amassed historically and utilized by certain individuals and groups in society to deny and denigrate the humanity of others that has given rise to the anti-racism struggle. Anti-racism interrogates White privilege and the ideology that maintains and supports both Whiteness as a social identity and the dominant institutions of society (p.28).

According to Bolaria and Li (1988b) and Walker (1980) Blacks across Canada, experience an inordinate amount of discrimination and exploitation in employment, as well as in education, housing and social services. This discrimination is among other reasons, due to their “entrance status” and assumed low social standing. The situation of Blacks and other minorities prompted the Federal government to enact the Employment Equity Act, after centuries of acquiescing and even participating in social marginalization of Blacks, and other ethnic

minorities in the Canadian labor force. The Employment Equity Act was designed to create a work environment that is as diversified as the general population. However, due to institutional racism, there is an over-representation of designated groups in low-wage, dead-end jobs (O'Connor, 1999). This was after an understanding on the part of the Federal government of Canada, that institutional racism and its forms of reproduction are by far, more damaging than individual racism. Institutional discrimination is derived from employment practices that appear neutral on the surface, but have very dire and far-reaching consequences on Blacks and other disadvantaged groups (Boyko, 1998; Henry, Tator, Mattis & Rees, 2000). Ojo-Ade (2004) argued, "mainstream America does not want success for any attempt at re-humanization of Blacks and Africa, nor does it support the rehabilitation of African cultures" (p.6).

When, in 1986 the Federal government of Canada enacted the Employment Equity Act, it applied equally to Crown Corporations and federally regulated employers, having hundred or more employees. The sole aim of the Employment Equity Act, as described earlier, was a striving to achieve equality in the workplace. It was also enacted in order to redress the disadvantaged conditions of designated groups, such as visible minorities, women, Aboriginal Peoples and persons with disabilities in Canada. The Act provided a framework that was hoped would support diversity in the workforce. It also provided a framework for changing the face of the workplace, by identifying practices and policies, which, while appearing neutral and non-discriminatory in intent, have effects and outcomes that demonstrate systemic racism (Henry, Tator, Mattis & Rees, 2000, p.267). The contents of the Employment Equity Act, showed a desire by the federal government to abate the denial of opportunities, on grounds that have no bearings with an individual's or a group's inherent ability. The Act made it mandatory for all federally regulated employers to submit an annual report to the Canadian Employment and

Immigration Commission, on the representation of all employees, as well as members of a designated group, as previously enunciated. The report required the employers to submit the said report according to occupational group, emoluments and also on hiring, promotions and terminations. Additional to filing this annual report was the directive to prepare an annual employment equity plan, stating goals, and timetables for implementation. The annual employment equity plan was to be retained for at least three years. The Employment Equity Act was reviewed and given further teeth in 1995, to include the military and the RCMP.

The outcomes of the Act, as Samuel & Karim (1996) stated, have not shown any significant changes since its enactment. For instance, Canada's public service in 1987 showed only a 2.7 percent representation of visible minorities, while they comprised 6.3 percent of the total population. As at March 1996, the percentage of representation had risen to 4.5 percent with their population rising to 13 percent. There was only a 2.3 percent representation of minorities in management positions in the public service. What this shows in essence is that whereas the population rate of visible minorities was increasing, the employment rate was actually static or falling (Samuel & Karim, 1996). Although no hard data is available, this figure could even be much lower in Quebec, owing to the government's constitutionally enshrined monolingualism and national fervor that certainly disenfranchises a lot of English-speaking Blacks in Montréal and the rest of Quebec.

Despite the apparent best intentions of government, the Employment Equity Act has worked more on paper than in reality. The reason is largely based on the intent of those in the corridors of power, to continue to cling tenaciously to power, based on the argument for liberal values of individualism, equal opportunities, tolerance and "laissez faireism." According to Goldberg (1993) the notions of tolerance, equity and diversity are imbedded into the rhetoric of

government at all levels. Paradoxically, the same governments shelter an ambivalence to set those machineries in motion that would engender a true racial equity. Continuing, Goldberg argued that, “the major paradox of modern liberal societies like Canada, was that in its quest to bring about racial equity, it employs misguided parameters, notions and definitions of culture, race and racism” (p.349). These ill-designed parameters, allow these inequities not only to operate, but become internalized, reproduced and legitimized. To Goldberg, owing to the duality of French-English, most Canadians from the dominant culture perceive an inclusion-based principle, as precipitous to their construction of the Canadian identity. To this extent, Black youths especially, their families and other minorities, continue to experience job-related inequities and outright discrimination (Lopes and Thomas, 2006). Walcott (2000) attempted, by the means of a collection of “rebellious” essays to engage in an apparent insubordination, with regard to official narratives or discourses of the nation-state of Canada. The essays were attempts to decode the hypocrisy of some government measures, ostensibly aimed at inclusion, but highlighting, re-imagining and awarding “outsideness” or “not-quite citizen status,” through the application of nomenclatures, such as the Indian Act (Bartlett, 1980; Wherrett, 1997) and the Multiculturalism Act (Cameron, 2004; The Canadian Multiculturalism Act, 1990). Often, and although some of the Blacks persons would not mind being discriminated against, so long as they are working, they have limited chances of being hired in the first instance. The effects of power on the part of the dominant group, and powerlessness on the part of Blacks, can be viewed within the ambit of race, racism and racialized identity.

It is common knowledge that racism was responsible for the Slave Trade, and enslavement of peoples of African descent by the dominant, European population. When the slave era came to an end, and after several decades of the Civil Rights Movement, a large dent

was made on racism. It was no longer easy to deal with the subjugation of Blacks in blatant, overt ways, as this would be deemed illegal. Therefore, the concepts and ideologies of slavery became transformed and subsumed in racism and racial biases against Blacks. Racism in its present state has defined the nature of relationships between Blacks and the dominant culture, and further defined the relationships among Blacks themselves as they interact with one another. As well, the constructs of race, racism, racialization, discrimination and prejudice are implicated, according to Armour (1997); Collins (2000); Feagin (2003); Feagin and Sikes (1994); McIntosh (1997); Ramirez (2000); Feagin and St. Jean (1998); William (1991); Williams, P.J. (1991) in stringent surveillance being focused on them in stores, on the highways, during the operation of motor vehicles; denied equal access to mortgages, closely watched in open spaces or public arena and referred to as “welfare queens” and “street criminal.” There are several impacts of racism on the Black Community, which will be impossible to detail in this study. Whereas some of the effects of racism on the Black Community are blatant and easy to observe, others, indeed, the majority are insidious and less so overt, that they may not, and never will be easy to understand. Myers (2005) argued that, “Colorblind racism allows racism to hide in plain sight. It renders racism invisible even when it is thriving, leaving its victims impotent to critique it” (p.25).

For Breton (2005) minorities are routinely excluded from the labor market and well-paying positions because networks of contacts, which are relevant to accessing information about job openings are not available to them. He suggested that systemic and institutional racial discrimination in the labor force, affects Blacks more than any other form of intolerant behavior.

If structural and linguistic differences exist between employer and potential employee, the latter’s ethnic origin may be a liability compared to a competitor who shares the employer’s cultural background (p.37).

The Chinese and West Indians are the two groups who encounter the most problems of incorporation, whether economic, social, or political. Members of these two groups, especially the West Indians, are the least likely to have rewards in line with their qualifications. They experience problems of discrimination and social acceptance, and they are the least likely to feel that they are taken seriously by the political authorities (105).

Several studies, buttressing the individual and systemic discriminatory practices against Blacks in Canada, in recruitment and interviews, have been conducted by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (1983); Abella (1985); Henry & Ginzberg (1985a, 1985b). Other studies with similar findings, related to Black and minority under and unemployment and lower wages, include those by Basavarajappa, Samuel & Karim (2000); Beaujot (2000); Breton and Reitz (2003); Burke (1990); Kirschmeyer & McLellan (1990); Samuel (1991); Stasiulis (1989). These authors all argue and agree that lack of jobs or low-paying, dead-end jobs for Blacks, translate into the diminishment of survival strategies for their nuclear and extended families. They further translate into parents' and caregivers' inability to provide adequate education in skills that will provide gainful employment in higher wage-earning jobs. The miring of Black families in the circle of poverty then has concomitants for intergenerational dependence on government transfer payments, popularly called "welfare." Other implications of the under and unemployment of Blacks emerge, in drug and alcohol dependence and crime. Paradoxically, the inability of Blacks to gain rewarding employment is unrelated to a lack of attainment of education that is comparable to the general population. Following a comprehensive analysis of the 1991 Canadian census data, Macionis & Gerber (1999) and Torczyner (1997) surmised that the Black and Asian Communities in Canada have a higher level of educational attainment than the general population, which attainment fails to reflect the types of employment they have.

The other effects of racism on the Black Community include the miring of this population in stereotypical and pathological definitions, such as lazy, profuse breeding, and the fatalistic

assumption that nothing good can ever come from the Black Community. There is also the belief by the general population that Blacks can never favorably compete, or do well against other cultures, especially against those of European descent (Dei and Calliste, 2000; Dworkin & Dworkin, 1999; Henry, Tator, Mattis and Rees, 1995, 2000). This racist ideology is in turn internalized by Black youths in the socialization process, and sometimes adults alike, in their interaction with members of the dominant population. In the ways this racist ideology is internalized, it defines and mainly stifles their striving at lifting themselves by their bootstraps, due to having resigned to their fate. The effects of racist ideologies, with its accompanying power by Whites and powerlessness by Blacks can also be viewed in the use of language, as I have examined in the next section of this study.

2.9. Language

The main human vehicle for communication is language. Language as a concept, determines communication and how one human being understands, articulates or assigns meaning to what has been said and heard. To this extent, language becomes a very powerful force or power tool, which can be used to communicate, to teach and learn; to control and sometimes to deny or exclude those who do not have it, from the privileges of society. Gredler (1997) applied Lev Vygotsky's principle, which suggests that of the psychological tools that mediate our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, language is the most important. In doing so, Gredler argues, that the sociohistorical line of development begins with the use of signs and symbols. These signs and symbols are discerned as human speech and written language. This speech and written language are in turn, internalized and applied to regulate and organize social existence.

Many minority groups either do not have English as their first language or had never spoken it consistently, or applied it as the only medium of communication, before arriving in the West. Others, may have English as the first language, but speak a particular dialect that is different from that of the dominant culture, in such a way that it is sometimes not clearly understood or even perceived as English (Abraham and Troike, 1972). Bourdieu (1990a) viewed language not merely as an instrument of communication, but more so, as an instrument of performance of power, based on race, gender and class identity differences. Ibrahim (2000) stated that when African youths use such words as “yo yo,” “whassup,” “whadap,” “homeboy,” “talk to the hands,” “yo go gal,” rap and hip hop, etc., they are “stylistically and lexically allying themselves with, and translating what they conceive as Black linguistic practice” (p.66). Not only that, but Ibrahim also strongly suggested that these Black youths, by the way they speak, the type of lexical, phonological and syntactic choices they make, are also applying this linguistic style, to express and articulate certain identity configurations. Therefore, to them the language they use at home and among peers, but which are perceived and awarded pariah status by the dominant culture, outside and within the school system, is actually a sincere expression of desire and identification.

Levinson (2002) critiqued David Miller’s book entitled “Citizenship and National Identity.” In her essay entitled “Minority Participation and Civic Education in Deliberative Democracies,” Levinson’s argument was that minority groups like Blacks, should learn, be perfect in, as well as adopt the use of the “language of power,” in order that the majority population can “hear” them, and their claims and grievances. One would presume that this language is English. Levinson was basing this argument on her experience, teaching Black students in Atlanta and Boston. She informed that the mostly Black students were limited in

English vocabulary, due to an exclusive and extensive utilization and dependence on Black-related language like Ebonics at home. This exposure to non-mainstream [English] language, included the type of schools they attend, the type of TV, movies they watch, the type of music they listen to, and books they read. Levinson argued for Civic education for deliberative democracy, through the inculcation of the “language of power,” as a means of integrating Black students into mainstream society.

It appears that later in this essay Levinson contradicted herself, by acknowledging that even learning and mastering the language of power, may not guarantee that these minorities will feel free, and able to express themselves honestly and openly, as well as without distortion. If so, then, the problem with Black youths and the Black population is not the mastery and use of the “language of power.” I add, that even learning and mastering this language of power, may not guarantee that the majority will hear their grievances. After all, did not Martin Luther King, Jr. Malcolm X, Jesse Jackson, Vernon Jordan, Elijah Mohammed and their contemporaries and protégés, alike, master, but for so many years unsuccessfully, use the language of power to seek emancipation from White oppression? To me, the issue is power, and the medium includes language, among other vehicles of power and oppression. Mastery of the language of power, as Levinson suggested, may not in the end, confer power to a minority individual or group if they do not possess power.

Ghosh (2002) strongly suggested that the teaching of second language should not aim to reorganize the student’s sense of identity, or be presented as a power tool, to devalue and demean the language and cultures of minority students. Regrettably, Ghosh’s suggestion, as good as it sounds, is an ideal type. It is a mental construct, in so far as language, especially English and French have inbuilt colonizing and imperializing properties, to the extent that it would be

difficult to alter its power, control and domination “gene.” For example, English and French were used as power tools by Britain and France to colonize a large number of Peoples. These Peoples never spoke English or French before the advent of the White man, but presently, and in some cases, speak no other language. Their attempt to speak other languages, including the local, traditional types are stifled or corrupted with the colonial language. Some of them, *like me*, who was not allowed by the British colonial structure to use any other language while schooling in my country, are still around. *My children, who were speaking my language clearly, as well as English before arriving in Canada, have now lost this language to English and French.* It will be interesting to find any White teacher who understands, or would be interested in understanding and actually using a few syllables related to the language of the minority students in their class, who are Black or from an ethnic culture.

If this is so, how then is it feasible for “teachers to be sensitive to the language and culture of the student, and try to refer to words and cultural clues that would make the child comfortable and able to relate to the language and culture of the second language?” (p.79). My answer is simple. Colonialism and racism, which White teachers have internalized, precludes them from being “sensitive to the historical and cultural context of the students” (p.78). Why so? This is because the concept of colonialism and subjugation, having their medium in English and French confer a sense of superiority by Whites. This perceived superiority renders the need to learn one or two things about the culture and language of a minority student irrelevant.

It would be fair to document that a good number of African countries have begun to resent the colonizing properties of English language. This development has gone to the extent that some have modified their type of written and spoken language, to suit the culture and learning atmosphere of the country. For instance, if you confront a Nigerian about the use of

flawed English or mixed tenses, the spontaneous reaction would be “It is not my mother tongue and am I *Oyinbo* (White)?” McGee (1993) exemplified this resistance with the University Of Nairobi, Kenya, where faculty members called for, and actually abolished the English language department in 1968, due to such colonizing effects. The “abolitionists” argued about the relevance of their independence from Britain, if the local curricula continued to reflect writing, reading and thinking that sustained the European literary culture, while the same de-emphasized and even demeaned African cultures and traditions. They therefore perceived the abolition of an English language department and its curricular contents, as the first step towards decolonization. Further to this, they saw this abolition as awarding focus on designing a curriculum appropriate for the education and learning needs of Africans. As Ngugi (1972) who, has written many books on African literature, while championing the abolition of English language department at the University of Nairobi argued:

education is a means of knowledge about ourselves. Politically such knowledge works to reverse colonialism’s impact on social construction of African reality: With Africa at the center of things, not existing as an appendix or a satellite of other countries and literatures, things must be seen from the African perspective (p.150).

Ngugi’s measure, while relevant in Kenya, due to cultural and political homogeneity, is not feasible in Canada for minorities. Indeed, it will be ill advised and self-immolatory, to abolish English language as a medium of communication amongst Blacks and other minorities in Canada, as this would further marginalize them. The important lesson of this measure and its relevance is to underscore the colonizing, therefore, dominating effects of language [language of power]. A more feasible recommendation would be to chart a middle road, where cultural minorities would find a platform that will accommodate their language and cultures; and simultaneously find a diminishment in the ridiculing by mainstream culture, of Black students’ attempt to speak and express the language into which they have been socialized. This paradigm

shift is very necessary, due to the changing demographics of Canada, and the view of Canada as a country of immigrants (Hawkins, 1972; Heritage Canada, 2000; Kubat, 1993; Moodley, 1995; Naidoo, 1989).

Nieto (1999) joined the debate by suggesting that pressure that the school system places on Black and minority students to assimilate, is hidden in the framework of discrediting cultural and linguistic differences, and in itself a form of educational inequality. This is not to be removed from the fact that a Black child, as a rite of passage, and in order to succeed, has to learn English in an English-speaking environment. The bone of contention is that some of the advantaged students from the dominant cultures, arrive at the front porch of the school with “officially sanctioned languages, cultures, and background,” and are already endowed with the prerequisite tools to succeed. When compared to a Black child, who came, or whose caregivers came from Nigeria and speaks Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, Fulani, Ibibio, Tiv, Kalabari or pidgin English, while simultaneously struggling with mainstream English and French, as in the case of Quebec, then the playing field is not level and certainly not fair.

The same can be said for a student whose caregivers are from Jamaica and the language at home is Patua. If he or she understands English, this child is expected to shed his or her language of socialization immediately on entering the school environment, or risk being ridiculed by mainstream students and cohorts (Nieto, 1999, p.36). After a while, these Black or minority students begin to view their languages as shameful and worthy of ridicule. In this way, according to Boateng (1990) the process of deculturalization begins. For Boateng, deculturalization happens when people, who are not in power positions, are forcibly deprived of their culture. To buttress the exclusionary power of language, Scott (2001) cited the following example:

Janice was in her final practicum of her certification year, and looked forward to her placement because this was the school where she hoped she would be working after graduation. She had particularly asked to work with the special education classes of children who had learning disabilities. One day in her second week, she was asked to assist in the class of children who were labeled "educable mentally retarded." In the group of 10 children, there were 2 who did not seem to present the appearance of children with lower intellectual capacity. They were curious and observant, and responded quickly to the teacher's demands, but said very little, and appeared to be very shy. Janice's own curiosity was aroused: what were these children doing in such a class? Later on, in the staff room, the regular teacher told her that these children, two sisters, had recently come from Jamaica, and as no one could understand what they were saying, they were placed in that class (p.68).

The Black or minority student perceives his or her language as unworthy, undesirable and above all, counter productive. As Scott continued, Black students as well, fear that using their language was capable of attracting unpleasant reprisals, no matter how subtle, from those in positions of authority. Educational inequality is highlighted in how the languages and dialects of Blacks and minority students are perceived and treated in school. The United States and indeed Quebec, typify this extreme example of the linguistic pressure to assimilate. According to Crawford (1992) the history of the United States of America is replete with the prohibition of languages other than English. Even when there are no overt laws prohibiting the use of minority languages or dialect, there exist a myriad of subtle practices that are sufficient to discourage Black and minority students, from using their native languages in school. In the context of power, language, as dictated by the dominant culture, can and has been used to dominate and exclude immigrant peoples. Indeed, assimilation can be a disincentive to learning, alienation and marginalization of students and even adults from minority cultures (Nieto, 1999). Studies and findings by Gibson (1991); Nieto (1996); and Zanger (1993) show that the maintenance and affirmation of cultures and languages of minority students can foster learning and academic achievement. The findings also showed assimilation, neither to be necessarily a parameter for evaluating, nor an elixir for academic and other social, political and economic successes,

especially for ethnically identified individuals, such as Blacks. How do we define and contextualize ethnicity?

2.1.0. Ethnicity

There are several definitions that have been attributed to the term, ethnicity. The Greek language used the term “ethnos” to connote heathen nations or people of non-Christian or Jewish descent (Mensah, 2002). In modern terms, “ethnic” refers to persons or groups that are descended from a common heritage, ascribed at birth, a sense of “we” consciousness, language, religion, tradition and shared or group experiences (Feagin & Feagin, 1996; Li, 1999; Mensah, 2002). Ethnicity as a term has often been interchangeably used to denote race, or racial variations among peoples of the world. Indeed, ethnicity as a concept can be subsumed within the tenets of race, which includes or incorporates ethnic community, ethnic identity, ethnic group, and ethnic minority (James, C.E., 1999). Umoren (1996) argued that ethnic groups are subdivisions of a race; so is tribe; therefore, there exist some societies that are uniracial, but yet are multiethnic and multitribal. Umoren went further, to describe ethnic groups, as a smaller subunit of human group, with more powerful force of human affinity than race; usually being more catalytic, rigid and narrowly focused. Furthering this argument, Murji (2002) added that an ethnic group has a shared culture that includes language, customs and religion. For him, there is a universal preference for the use of ethnicity, rather than race to describe groups. This preference is due, to ethnicity being relatively fluid and chosen. Murji also perceived the use of ethnicity as a majorative form of group identification, owing to its denotation of a distinctive cultural identity and kinship. On the other hand, and still, according to Murji, race is perceived as an imposed social category, in that it has often been linked to fixed human anatomy. Murji however exonerated himself by highlighting the preference of ethnicity as a descriptive term over race,

due to the latter being hinged on explicit, currently discredited scientific attempts to categorize distinct racial types.

Farley (1995) suggested that although race is closely related to ethnic grouping, the latter is defined more in terms of group-self identification; and sometimes by outsiders as a distinct group. Farley argued that this group self and outsider identification of race, is based on social or cultural characteristics, the most common being nationality, language and religion. Farley therefore defined ethnic groups solely on the basis of social and cultural characteristics. To the extent to which, like race, it presents as a social attribute that transcends generations, Farley added a degree of biological self-perpetuation as a definer of an ethnic group. To Isajiw (1999) an ethnic group is an involuntary group, which, although is based on the accident of birth of its membership, but equally has the basic element of socialization of its membership, as a defining factor. Isajiw asserted that one is quite capable of altering the ethnic group into which they had been socialized, through a re-socialization process. However, Isajiw warned that the re-socialization experience might come at a price that may be psychologically and emotionally traumatizing. Isajiw further contended that the process of socialization confers an identity on the recipient. Contingent on this, shedding membership of that particular ethnic group invariably translates into changing identity, or identities, if they have been socialized into two or multiple groups. Isajiw proposed that a definition of an ethnic group would be one that was involuntary, community-type, share similar, distinct culture, are descendants of those who have shared a distinct culture, and who identify with an apical ancestry, culture or group.

It is noteworthy, according to Isajiw, that an ethnic social entity is defined by its social, economic and cultural features, rather than the often, stereotypical racial characteristics. An appropriate definition of an ethnic community is one that is perceived as a dynamic, social unit,

which shares a sense of heritage, historical background, and is continually in a state of change or flux. In the consideration that ethnicity is a dynamic social unit, it may mutate, shedding one or several of its major characteristics, such as language or religion. To this extent, and over time, the ethnic community presents as more or less distinct, and represents a mixture of ideologies, which may be practiced and perceived as normative or a way of life.

In view of the existing body of knowledge, ethnic identity can arguably be said not to exist as a fixed and absolute state, but rather undergoes a metamorphic process that may develop toward full ethnic consciousness. However, and as Isajiw argued, all the people of a given community neither experience relations equally, either inside or outside the group, nor do they experience and express the same degree of ethnic identity. As in all social groups and societal interactions, there will always exist, the nucleus of a group, who will expeditiously, indeed, aggressively maintain overall group or community cohesion and homeostasis. In this way, they respect all or most of the ethnic differentiations, while others may disregard the boundaries, de-emphasize, disengage from, and disaffiliate with the group. The issue of ethnicity brings us to discussing community and community types, not only in furtherance of the inquiry on Black and Nigerian youth identity, but also due to the fact that an ethnic group may also constitute a part of or an entire community.

2.1.1. Community

The understanding of community by Ehrlich, Flexner, Carruth & Hawkins (1980) is that it comprises a body of people living in one place, district or country, and considered as a whole. What this means, is that a community can be viewed as a micro or macro entity, depending on the size or area that it covers. This assumes also that the community of Little Burgundy, in Montréal, for instance, can be equated to the community of Canada. For instance, if there are a

number of Canadians living outside of Canada and holding an association, they can rightly be called the Canadian Community. This argument is due to those individuals representing a microcosm of the country of Canada outside of its borders or continental shelf. Therefore to Breton (2005) a community or ethnic community is a “multidimensional phenomenon,” (p.202) which “can be viewed as a network of interpersonal relations and of mutual assistance; as a set of institutions to meet the various needs of group members; as a system of social classes; as a micro-economy with enterprises, a labor market, a clientele for commodities and services, and sources of capital” (p.202). Breton did not see this as the only use of Community. Breton’s most relevant argument for my study of the Nigerian Community and Nigerian youth identity construction was that he also perceived community as a cultural entity. In this respect, community provides the platform for individual identities, vehicle for cultural expression and enhancement, as well as a conduit for transmission of the group’s cultural heritage.

In this regard, there is a mirroring of community with ethnic groups, due to the former displaying a group consciousness or an awareness of close association. According to Marger (2003) community may derive from a sense of shared ancestry or heritage. However, this would not be entirely right, due to the observation that community may transcend shared heritage or ancestry. In this context, people, who perceive themselves as belonging to a community, may not have any connection with race, color, religion, heritage or culture. Indeed, unlike ethnic groups, which may have a number of variables that define their recognizability, community members may only be defined by a single variable.

2.1.2. What defines a community?

There exist several characteristics of a community, but I have examined only a few of them, including contiguity, collective or group experience, cultural similarity, physical

characteristics and common goal or interests, to extrapolate how Blacks or peoples of African descent feature in community discourses.

2.1.3. Contiguity

A community is made up of individuals, who are often a minute part of a larger entity, or occur within a larger society, with members residing or locating in a contiguous fashion. This means that members are in physical and close proximity with one another. Shaw (1981) perceived the most important attribute of a community or community group, to be their ability to be, and remain in regular interaction with each other, to the extent that they also consciously or unconsciously influence one another. In addition to Shaw's assumptions, Turner (1987) saw a community as a group of persons, who not only interact and influence one another, but also perceive themselves in opposition or contrast with other community groups. My point of departure from the contiguity assumptions made here exists, in so far as members of a community may not necessarily be found in a single location, and may not also be found in close proximity with one another. For example, individuals dealing with physical disability, such as the hearing impaired, the visually impaired, etc., are referred to as a community, even when they are located across regional, national and international frontiers. Again, due to advancement in technology, as demonstrated by the use of telephones, videoconferencing, satellites and the Internet, whole groups can, and are regularly in interaction with one another, and are referred to, and rightly so, as communities. Another example is the Black Community, which membership is not regularly contiguous and could be found in different locations of Montréal, Canada and the world. In spite of the different locations, they are still regarded as a community, due to their ability to continue the interaction in spite of time and space. It appears that the emphasis on

contiguity may be based on solidarity, group survival and ability to cohere, much more than it is about physical proximity, location or contact.

2.1.4. Collective or group experience

Following the assumption that a community is in close proximity or contiguity, there is a further assumption that the community may share a collective or group experience, as in the case of Nigerians in Montréal, including norms, which become inextricable properties of the group (Terry, Hogg & Duck, 1999). These experiences may combine happy or sometimes, cataclysmic events. Just as in the case of ethnic groups, a community may have similar heritage and culture, which identifies and makes them distinct from other communities. Hall (1990) defined cultural identity in terms of:

one shared culture, a sort of collective one true selves, which people with shared history and ancestry hold in common. Within the terms of this definition, our cultural codes which provide us, as one people, with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history (pp.222-237).

For example, although Blacks in Montréal and other Canadian cities have arrived in Canada from their home lands, located all over the world, they share a collective or group experience in Canada to warrant their self-proclamation and external recognition as a community. It is true that all Blacks or their forebears in the Black Community neither experienced slavery, nor were the challenges of immigration into Canada experienced in the same manner, as some immigration processes were more complicated than others. However, all Blacks have experienced racism, racial prejudice, racialized identity and the subjectivities of the “Other” (Breton, 2005; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Foster, 1996; James, 2005; Marger, 2003; Mokros, 2003; Palmer, 1997). In view of this experience, they all at one time or the other may have shared their narratives with

other Blacks, regardless of their previous nationality or country of origin. To this extent also, and due to this collective experience, Blacks, as well as others who may have experienced events as a group, qualify as a community. However, it is not often that members of a community have a common heritage or culture, in order to qualify as such. In urban settings such as Montréal, people who live in most areas of this large city, have communities whose membership do not have similar cultures, heritage, color, language or religion. Again, it does not have to take an array of social and physiological features to classify individuals and groups as a community. What is important here is the extent to which members of a setting or location experience an event equally.

2.1.5. Cultural similarity & physical characteristics

The concept of community in pre-industrial, pre-cosmopolitan times may denote a similarity in culture, and sometimes, physical characteristics. In modern times, and with the development of the cosmopolitan society, community no longer denotes cultural similarity and physical characteristics. This current composition of community is due to cross-cultural breeding, immigration of individuals, as well as disparate groups moving into the cities and communities. To Lee (1992) community denotes “a political entity, having self-interest or set of interests that correlate with some parts of its environment and runs counter to others” (p.14). In this regard, a community may, and often is a group of individuals and whole cities, coming from different races and ethnicities to locate within a geographical setting. In most cases, especially in urban settings, members of a community have no cultural or physical similarity, and are still referred to as a community, due to being located in a particular setting, in relation to other settings (Anderson, 1993).

For example, there is a tendency for society to examine community as a small hamlet or village within a farming or non-differentiated locality. This assumption is true to an extent, but may err in its assumptions, due to the fact that some large cities like Montréal, with a population that is estimated at close to 2 million, (Statistics Canada, 2001) can sometimes be referred to as “the Montréal Community.” Indeed, sometimes, smaller communities do exist within larger communities. For example, the Nigerian Community, which may not have all its members sharing or espousing similar cultures or physical characteristics, exists within the Black Community, while the Black Community exists within the Montréal Community. To take this argument further, there exist the Deaf Community, the Blind community, etc., who have nothing cultural or physical in common, but who define themselves in terms of a physical state of being or group interests and goals.

2.1.6. Common goal and interests

In as much as groups are identified by their interests, a community also fits this profile, due to its need to access and satisfy the needs of its members. In this regard, a community is also an interest group, in so far as it is not only in quest of the trappings of society, but also in perpetual conflict with other communities (Lee, 1992). Macionis, Clarke & Gerber (1994) viewed community in the same way as a social group, which interests lay in a sense of belonging and group consciousness. In this respect, a community as a social group could be primary or secondary in nature. In primary groups, the relationships are both personal and long-lived, and generally involve members expressing interest and genuine concerns for the welfare of its members. There is also an aspect of this group that looks at its members for clues to social identity. The secondary group, of which the community is part, is large, organized and impersonal. It is predicated on a specific interest or activity, having little personal knowledge of

each other and weak emotional ties. However, it would be deceiving to believe that the secondary group, which is like a community is faceless, lacking in intense relationships, therefore is not strong. On the contrary, it is strong, to the extent that people interact, influence one another, perceive themselves as distinct from others, and depend on its existence, to achieve specific individual and group goals (Myers, 1993).

Blacks as a “Community” in Canada define themselves in diverse ways, using nomenclatures that express their regions of origin, their experiences, as well as outlook to the world. To date, it is yet challenging for Blacks to define themselves, especially against the backdrop that whatever self-definitions they have assumed will ultimately be shaped or altered by time, place and events. In the days of overt racism, as demonstrated by slavery, Blacks were known as Negroes. Some members of the majority culture, who would wish to further subjugate and denigrate them, chose to refer to them as “Niggers.” Smitherman (1991); Smith, T.W. (1992); Kennedy (2002) traced the evolution of racial labels from Colored, to Negro, to Black and contemporarily, African American. The word African Canadian, as a definition for Blacks residing in Canada has somehow yet to take root. Indeed, according to a study conducted by Boatswain & Lalonde (2000) Black Canadians preferred four distinct labels, identified as Black, Black Africentric, Caribbean, and Canadian. These labels were based on the historical contexts of Black immigration, which further analysis is at the present beyond the scope of this study.

Among the Black groups-Canadian born, West Indian and African, there are a large number of self-definitions that exist and are maintained. The Canadian and West Indian-born, according to observations, have no issues with being referred to as Black. On the contrary, those of them from Africa, have a pejorative concept of Black, as a continuation of the subjugation and domination of persons of African descent (Smith, 1992). This denigration was personified by

slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism, including globalization. To this extent, the reactions of those from African mainland and indeed most Blacks in Canada would be to let you know that they are from Africa, where they or their forebears were born free and did not experience slavery, or identify their West Indian country of birth (Pegram, 2005). In this vein, those Blacks from West Indies and Africa, regardless of their citizenship status in Canada, have a tendency to identify with their countries of origin. For instance, this study showed that the Black person from Nigeria would not hesitate to inform about his or her country of origin, while at the same time claiming the citizenship of Canada.

From the foregoing, it appears that there is no monolithic structure to the Black Community in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and elsewhere. This lack in monolithic structure is due to Black multiethnicity, social, political, international and cultural divergences (Foster, 1996). Owing to colonialism and imperialism, Peoples of Africa and the Diaspora have come from an amazing mosaic of countries and cultures that a full evaluation will be enough for several dissertations, thus obviously beyond the scope of this study. Walcott (1997) theorizes “Black Canadian as wholly outside the biological and the national....and syncretic, always in revision and in a process of becoming” (p.120). Walcott stated that Black Canadian arises from multiple histories of uprootedness, migration, exchanges and political acts of defiance and self-(re)definition. He therefore affirmed that if the definition as a Black Canadian revolves around “political practices/act(ion)s that signal a transgression of instituted forms and practices of domination, then Black Canadian might be anyone who resists in concerted ways, with a vision of emancipation, all forms of domination” (p.120). For the purposes of this study, Blacks who represent 1 percent (Torczyner, 1997) of the total Canadian population, come from the Underground Railroad, Loyalist, West Indies or the Caribbean and South America, and

constitute Antigua, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Barbuda, Bermuda, Brazil, Cuba, Curacao, Dominican Republic, Guadeloupe, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Martinique, Puerto Rico, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Trinidad & Tobago, Virgin Islands, and others.

Those from Continental Africa include an inexhaustive list comprising Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Kingdom of Lesotho, Liberia, Malagasy Republic, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Southern Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe. The languages associated with these countries, without prejudice to the very ethnic ones numbering in their thousands, are Afrikaans, Amharic, Creole, English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swahili, and others. It is important to note that this list did not include countries of North Africa, who although some are very dark, are not classified, and do not self-identify as Black.

The pertinence of this inexhaustive listing is to show that each Black person of African Descent, coming to or born of parents in Canada, bears allegiance to their country of origin, as well as ethnic group, in the case of those from the African mainland. These allegiances and ethnic identity retention that manifest as national celebrations, meetings, rituals, religion, etc., have underpinnings for how Black children and youths are socialized, their world view and identity, language, as well as how they develop concepts about the Black Community as a whole. This is so, due to the fact that national and ethnic allegiances are in direct and stiff competition with the Black Community as a Collective, and may be inversely proportional to its cohesiveness or the lack thereof. This study quests for how Nigerian youth in Montréal construct their identity

or have identities constructed for them by the agencies of parents, caregivers, the Nigerian and Black Community, as well as the various institutions of the Canadian society. In this vein, it would be important to understand Nigeria and Nigerians, in order to contextualize them within the study.

Chapter 3

3.0 Ethnographic Contextualization of Nigerians and the Nigerian Community within the research

3.1 Understanding Nigerians and the Nigerian Community

This chapter asks and seeks to answer the question, “What is this entity called Nigeria; and who exactly are Nigerians? It is my strong belief that only in assisting the reader briefly articulate an understanding of Nigeria and Nigerians, in relation to their history, geography, ethnic configuration, religion and spirituality; political leanings and systems, migration history and patterns, can we begin to contextualize them here in Canada, and in the framework of this study.

Nigeria as we know it today is a country with a very complex structure, unlike any other country in Africa and the West African sub-region (Falola, 1999). The reason for the complexity of this country is rooted, not only in its colonial history, but also due to the ancient influence of the cultures of neighboring kingdoms, which later became nation states. It is also a complex country, due to the manipulation of the social and political systems by imperial Britain. In view of this, most Nigerians, especially those with some form of education, have been acculturated, internalized, perhaps, also been confused by the British way of doing things (Falola, 1999). As well, and in modern times, American influences have crept into the social, political and economic psyche of this nation, as I will explain in this section. For example, the British colonialists arrived in Nigeria, with a transplantation of their entire system, lock, stock and barrel. The only thing lacking, was that they stowed away the democratic process, which, had they bequeathed this, would have portended undesirable outcomes for their speculator interests. Britain transplanted the educational, religious, and political systems, applying them to the detriment of other local practices and belief systems. In the case of education at the elementary

and secondary school levels, the system was, and still is clearly British. Conversely, at the university level, the system appears to be clearly American. Even during what was termed Nigeria's 2nd Republic, a period heralding a temporary halt in military dictatorship and an experiment in democracy, Nigerians switched from the Westminster system, complete with a President as the ceremonial head, a Prime Minister and cabinet, to the current Presidential system, as practiced in the United States (Umoren, 1996). Indeed, in the 1980's, Senators and Members of the House of Representatives traveled to the United States to observe both houses in session, as a prelude to applying this system in Nigeria.

The Nigerian constitution has been drafted and redrafted so many times, with the entry and exit of so many military dictatorships that people have now lost count. Put succinctly, this is how complex Nigeria is. In the following section, I will attempt to articulate some of the various aspects of Nigeria and Nigerians, as I know it, from the geographical, historical, political, ethnic and religious perspectives. The reason for this exercise, as I indicated earlier, is in order to assist the reader in a brief journey to understanding Nigeria and Nigerians and their relevance to my research study of them here in Canada.

3.2 Nigerians in Nigeria

3.3 Geographical location & spread

Relatively speaking, Nigerians reside in a huge, sprawling country, found within 923,768 square kilometers (356,669 miles), making it the world's 32nd-largest country after Tanzania. It bestrides 1,126 kilometers east to west and 1,046 kilometers from the North to south. To put it into perspective, it compares in size to Venezuela, about two times the size of California and three times the size of the United Kingdom (Financial Times, 1981; Falola, 1999). In the context of the West African sub-region, Perkins & Stembridge (1957) gave the ratio of Nigeria as being

four times the size of Ghana, thirteen times the size of Sierra Leone and ninety-three times the size of Gambia. Nigeria can be located approximately between 3 and 15 degrees E longitude, and between 4 and 14 degrees N latitude. The Atlantic Ocean bounds it to the south, and the countries of Niger and Chad, to the north. In the west, it is bordered by Benin Republic, and east, by the Cameroon Republic (Falola, 1999; Perkins & Stembridge, 1957; Schwarz, 1968). The 1991 Nigeria National population census figures, estimated Nigeria's population at about 110 million, rating it as Africa's most populous country. Other estimates argue that its population is higher, as logistical problems associated with conducting successful censuses in Nigeria are daunting (Lewis, Robinson & Rubin, 1998).

The climate of Nigeria is governed by two major seasons; the rainy season, occurring more in the south, which begins in May and lasts until October. The other is the dry season, which begins in November and lasts until April. This latter season is accompanied by the North East Trade winds, which bring in the "harmattan," a dusty, equivalent of the snowstorm, found in some parts of North America and Europe. The only difference is that these North East Trade winds, blow through the Sahara desert, with its accompanying, mostly irritating, and desert-creating dust and sand storms (Falola, 1999; Flyod, 1969; Perkins & Stembridge, 1957). There are also two types of vegetations-the tropical rain forest, which is found naturally in the south, due to heavy rains, often accompanied by tropical thunderstorms; and the northern savannah, which is mainly grassland. A notable Nigerian geographical phenomenon is the River Niger, which snakes its way through 1,175 kilometers of the country. It has its origins from the Futa Djallon Mountains in Sierra Leone, confluencing with the River Benue, also in Nigeria, at the town of Lokoja (Falola, 1999; Perkins & Stembridge, 1957). The River Niger is the third longest river in Africa, after the Nile and Congo rivers. Together, this river and its tributary, The Benue,

flow southwards into the delta, to finally drain into the Atlantic Ocean at the Bights of Benin and Biafra (Bonny). Indeed, it is from this mighty river that those who gave it its name gained their inspiration. Subsistent agriculture, including other naturally occurring minerals, namely: coal, gold, copper, zinc, iron, timber and uranium, were Nigeria's economic mainstay until large deposits of petroleum were discovered and speculated at the expense of all others. Currently, petroleum and petroleum-based products account for 97 percent of export earnings, 75 percent of public revenues, and 20 percent of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Products-GDP (Falola, 1999).

3.4 History

The entity referred to as Nigeria, came into existence in 1914, following the partitioning of Africa amongst Europeans during the 19th Century; precisely during the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885. Due to this European partitioning, Nigeria was bequeathed or apportioned to Britain, which gave it this name that it bears to date (Nwankwo, 1998; Nwankwo & Ifejika, 1970; Okpu, 1977). This is not to say that there were no Peoples living in this area before the advent of the Europeans. Indeed, human habitation in some parts of the area dates back to before 500 B.C., as Falola (1999) argues. In articulating the history of Nigeria, it is important to note that this country dated to the pre-historic times, the remains of which have been archeologically excavated in Nigeria, in the towns of Igbo-Ukwu in the East, Ile-Ife in the West and the Nok terra cotta in the Middle Belt. There have also been discovered, evidences of Stone Age people in Nigeria, dating back to the 12,000 B.C., complete with Neolithic humans, who engaged in agriculture in the forest and savannah regions of this country (Arikpo, 1967; Falola, 1999; Isichei, 1973).

Pre-colonial myths and oral traditions have been narrated by most cultures of Nigeria to complement archeological discoveries. As well, there have been attempts to answer the questions

about the group's origins within the country, or even from as far away places as the Middle East. For instance, the Hausa Muslims in the North of Nigeria claim their ancestry through a prince of Baghdad. Bayajidda, the prince of Baghdad, was said to have sojourned into Hausaland, to marry its local queen. Together they sired seven *Bakwai* "legitimate" or "true" off-springs named Biram, Katsina, Daura, Zaria, Rano, Kano and Gobir, which all formed the famous Hausa City-States. There were other *Banza Bakwai* "illegitimate" or "bastard" offsprings, comprising the Hausa states of Zamfara, Gwari, Kebbi, Nupe, Yauri and Kwara. These small city-states burgeoned into very powerful kingdoms by the 15th Century. Falola (1999) stated that through external contacts, mainly the trans-Saharan Trade, Islam replaced and endured, beyond the existing animist religions practiced for centuries in the North. From this period, empires such as Nupe, Tiv and Igala, began to emerge in the Middle Belt, while to the southeast, several kingdoms namely the Igbo, with a largely acephalous or non-centralized social structure, the Efik and Yoruba thrived. Of these, the Yoruba of Oyo was the most renowned in the 16th Century. The Yoruba claim, that the mythological founder, Oduduwa descended from heaven to Ile-Ife to establish the kingdom (Hodgkin, 1960; Isichei, 1973). Not to be sidelined was the Benin Kingdom, which thrived around the 14th century until its annexation by the British Imperialist structure in 1897 (Falola, 1999).

Such was the history and social structure of Nigeria when the British landed. Initially, in the 19th century, it was confined to policing against The Slave Trade, promoting the English language and proselytization of Christianity. Later, it was to transform into developing imperialist interests for the purposes of colonization and domination. Said (1993) described this transformation from partnership to overlord by the British, in terms of a shadowy discourse of colonial capitalism, having root in liberal free-trade policies. He argued further, that there is also

an evangelical derivative of this capitalist interest. This implied that the indolent native, in this case, Nigerians and Africans, presented as ones, whose natural, Darwinian depravity and loose character necessitated a European overlord.

Prior to the advent and implantation of British imperialism, the Portuguese were the first to land in the coastal regions of Nigeria in 1486 (Hodgkin, 1960). The Portuguese began to lose their grips on Nigeria, when other Europeans, namely The Dutch, French and the British, entered into the business of buying and “hunting” for slaves. British imperialism in Nigeria began in 1861, with the establishment of a consulate and Crown colony in Lagos, the erstwhile capital of Nigeria. It exacted complete control four decades later over most of Nigeria. Britain, through well-oiled machinery, managed to stranglehold the Nigerian Peoples for another sixty years thereafter (Graf, 1988; Nwankwo, 1998). Paradoxically, the Peoples of Nigeria could not be, and are still not united under a strong entity. This state of disunity was contingent on a purposeful British imperialist “Divide and Rule” system, designed to keep them apart and antagonistic towards each other, whenever they come together. I had described in the “forward” to this study, how this British imperialist legacy deteriorated into ethnic intolerance and the Nigerian Civil War.

The annexation of Nigeria was further guised as trade, under the mercantile ventures of Sir George Taubman Goldie. Arikpo (1967) and Burns (1972) stated, that between 1877 and 1879, Goldie had united all the other rival, British, mercantile companies under a single trading force called the Royal Niger Company (RNC). Goldie applied to the British government for a royal charter to control trade in the territory of Nigeria. The granting of his application gave Goldie and the Royal Niger Company sweeping powers, to govern without regard to previously signed protection treaties with the locals. In addition, the Royal Niger Company’s mandate,

allowed it to annex new territories, collect taxes and duties, establish a constabulary, a High Court of Justice, and to the delight of Britain, begin to administer the whole area as a government up until 1899 (Arikpo, 1967; Burns, 1972; Falola, 1999; Kirk-Green, 1971; Stremiau, 1977). British annexation of Nigeria, leading to colonial occupation began gradually in 1849, when John Beecroft was appointed as Consul to the West African coast. Beecroft was then stationed in Fernando Po, currently referred to as Equatorial Guinea, ostensibly to regulate legitimate trade, following the abolition of the slave trade. In 1851, Lagos, which is located to the southwest of Nigeria, had signed a treaty to surrender its sovereignty and was subsequently annexed in 1861 (Obaro, 1977). This capitulation was owing to the use of gunboat diplomacy and assault by the British naval force. The assault, forced the king and his subjects to flee, leaving the Island to the British (Ikime, 1977). The North of Nigeria, where local resistance to British occupation was stiffest, and resulted in the massacre of a large number of its people, including the Sultan, Attahiru, fell between 1897 and 1903. This led to the establishment of a colonial army. Captain, later, Lord Fredrick Lugard, became appointed as the High Commissioner for Northern Nigeria. He officially hoisted the Union Jack, while proclaiming the area as the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria on January 1, 1900 (Arikpo, 1967; Falola, 1999).

At the outbreak of World War 1, the British, who had subjugated and appropriated disparate groups, began consolidating their position, by forging a dual political system in the annexed territory of Nigeria. The first was a central administration, designed to manage the entire country, while the other followed a local government pattern, referred to as Indirect Rule. Indirect Rule was a local government structure that facilitated British governance, through the vassalage of indigenous rulers and institutions. In the process popularly referred to as "The Amalgamation," the British government, under the auspices of Sir Fredrick Lugard, fused the

Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914, which also marked the on-set of WW1. The new, single entity became known as and called Nigeria (Niven, 1971). Indeed, in 1897, Flora Shaw, later, Lady Lugard, while writing an article for the Times of London, accidentally coined the name Nigeria, as it is known today. (Arnold, 1977; Falola, 1999; Schwarz, 1968; Tilman & Cole, 1962). Prior to this time, Niven (1967) examined some attempts in the 18th Century to “baptize” the territory with such names as Nigritia, Negroland or, at the turn of the 20th Century, with the name of Goldesia, after Sir G. Taubman Goldie, who pioneered the British Royal Niger Company.

The Amalgamation in 1914 of the Northern and Southern Protectorates, forced disparate, non-culturally and non-socially related peoples into a strange bed-fellowship. The North comprised mainly Muslims, with cultures that greatly differed from those of the Christian and Animists South. Consequently, even with the Amalgamation, there was the absence of an integrated country, as both the North and South charted irreconcilable governance and society (Falola, 1999). By 1919 the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria had been divided into nine provinces, while the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria was divided into twelve provinces. Further to this, in 1939, the provinces of the South were divided into two regions, East and West, while the North was to become the third region (Burns, 1972). This was the political arrangement through 1960 and until the on-set of the Nigerian Civil War in 1967 (Okpaku, 1974). It would be fair to end this section by highlighting the fact that the Amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates into the country of Nigeria, under these strange social and cultural contexts, resulted into a sterile central institution. Cronje (1970) and Nwankwo & Ifejika (1970) stated that the tenets of the Indirect Rule system, with its moribund and sterile central

arrangement, also led to the strengthening of the local and regional entities, which served British colonial interests at the expense of national allegiance and unity.

3.5. Ethnic configuration

With an estimate of over 110 million persons in 1991, the ethnic configuration of Nigeria is immense. Nigeria is diverse, to the extent that 250 ethnic and linguistic groups have so far been identified, and cataloged, as I indicated in the earlier sections of this study (Hoffman, 1974; Lewis, Robinson and Rubin, 1998). Indeed, some, like Nwankwo & Ifejika (1970) put the number of Nigeria's ethnic groups at 400. Owing to this lack of demographic agreement, Wentelukas (1985) went even further to identify 619 groups. Nnoli (1995) argued that it is challenging to calculate the number of ethnic groups in Nigeria, due to a lack of consensus on the criteria used to identify ethnic groups. Nnoli further argued, that the other reasons for this apparent misidentification lay, in the challenges of distinguishing between a language and a dialect of the same language. Whereas analysts have classified some dialects as languages, other dialects are not. Other arguments, as Nnoli suggested, are based on the assertion that more than language is necessary in drawing this distinction, especially during political crises, when ethnic boundaries become much more contextualized. Umoren (1996) argued that although ethnic groups were in existence before the arrival of the colonialists in Nigeria, the separatist agenda of the British government consolidated these divisions, by discouraging ethnic mobility and interaction, while maintaining stereotypes. The Indirect Rule policy of Britain empowered each vassal and chief in a feudalistic way, to manage his territory or vassalage with the colonial government as the overlords. To this extent also, Nigerians were coaxed, cajoled and forced in various, including educational curricula, to study the history of the British Empire and Europe, rather than the cultures that comprised, defined and stood to unite the country.

The ethnic structure of Nigeria appears at once to be made up of only three distinct groups, namely the Hausa and Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba. Indeed, there are other numerous, "minority," ethnic groups numbering over 250, already mentioned in this study, but which have tended to be overshadowed by the three more populous ones. In this dispensation, the major ethnic groups of Nigeria have different migrational history, origins and settlements and are located in the North, South East and South West (Flyod, 1969; Okpu, 1977; Umoren, 1996). For the purposes of understanding the make up of Nigerians in Nigeria and here in Canada, I will be exploring the ethnic configuration of Nigeria, to underscore their relationship with one another, and later, evaluate how this configuration defines Nigerians in Africa and here in Canada. I indicated earlier, about the existence of over 250 ethnic groups that make up Nigeria. Since discussing all of them would be enough to complete several dissertations, I will only be exploring the "major" ethnic groups here. Later, I will be advancing reasons why the existence of so many diverse, disparate ethnic groups in Nigeria represents challenges for cohesion and unity, as well as for my ethnographic research study of them here in Montréal. The major ethnic groups are Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo.

3.6. Hausa-Fulani

Flyod (1969); Okpu (1977); Umoren (1996) have each suggested that the North of Nigeria is made up of the different emirates and empires of the Tuareg, the Berber, the Furah and the Hausa. As indicated in my description of the history of Nigeria, the Hausa ethnic group predominates the demographic landscape of the northern emirate cities of Kano, Katsina, Sokoto, Kaduna, Zaria and Daura. There is a spillover of the Hausa in Ghana, Niger, Togo, and Benin Republic, all in the West African sub-region, and even in as far away as Timbuktu (Khaleel, 1996). Khaleel stated that Hausa is used both as the name of an ethnic group as well as a

language. Further, one is deemed Hausa by virtue of birth, assimilation and language use. Although, today, the Hausa are referred to as belonging to the West African Negroid race, the language they speak is indeed Hamitic and belongs to the Semito-Hamatic or Afro-Asiatic family of languages (Fage, 1969). As far as language is concerned, the Hausa language developed out of interactions with Arab traders on the Trans-Sahara Trade route as early as the 8th century. This interaction, as legend has it, gave rise to the cohabitation of a certain prince of Baghdad and the historic Queen of Daura, who together sired offsprings now collectively called the Hausa. This also led to the saturation of the Hausa language with Arabic and writing of Arabic script, called *Ajami* (Fika, 1978). I have already detailed the origins of the Hausa in a previous section.

There are mainly three types of education amongst the Hausa-Fulani of Nigeria that exist to the present day. These are traditional, informal African education, the root of which is in the customs and traditions of Africans. The other is Islamic education, infused by Arabs and based on Islamic doctrines. The British missionaries and colonial administration, whose roles I have already dealt with in an earlier section of this study, while exploring the history of Nigeria, introduced the Western European type of education. Until recently the Islamic type of education held sway among the Hausa, who embraced the reading of the *Qur'an* (Koran) as doctrinally central and sacrosanct. The *Qur'an* was previously the only curriculum for the school and basis of scholarship from elementary to the university level (Khaleel, 1996, p.47). To date, there are still in existence many *Qur'an* only schools in Nigeria's north.

In the context of family systems, the Hausa family is governed by Islamic principles, which preach moderation in every aspect of the family system. The Hausa family structure is patriarchal and involves religious practices, social interactions and Hausa language, as a means

of communication. Religious worship is however conducted in the Arabic language. In this patriarchal set up, *uba* or father is the prime family member from whom authority exudes. There is also respect and authority accorded to the chief called emir or *Sarki*. It is common for the Hausa living away from home, to appoint a *Sarki* or emir as the epical ruler. Other family and community-oriented practices among the Hausa, include marital seclusion of women called *purdah*, or *Aware Kulle*. In *Aware Kulle*, women are expected to remain at home and veiled, in order to maintain their dignity and especially chastity. There is also the practice of polygyny, characterized by a man marrying several wives and said to emanate from an Islamic ordinance. The ethnic, cultural and religious make up of the Hausa, differs markedly from those of the Yoruba or Igbo. These differences have been the major Achilles heels in the relationships among these major ethnic groups. The following is an exploration of the Yoruba ethnic group.

3.7 Yoruba

In the South West of Nigeria are located the Yoruba, who were believed to have migrated from the Sudan to form a large renowned empire in the 18th Century called the Oyo empire. The Yoruba ethnic group speaks Yoruba. They flourished under this language and culture, while being united under the spiritual leadership of the Oni of Ife and Alaafin of Oyo. Okpu (1977); Sadiku (1996); Umoren (1996) have also stated that there are Diaspora Yoruba in Sierra Leone, Togo, Benin Republic, Ghana, Puerto Rico, Trinidad, Cuba and Brazil. However our discussion on the ethnic make-up of the Yoruba will be limited to Nigeria and those of them in Montréal, Canada. Also, as earlier shown in the history of Nigeria, the Yoruba trace their origin to Oduduwa, who is regarded as the epical and mythical ancestor of all Yoruba. The Yoruba have

their traditional king as the Oni of Ife, while the city of Ile Ife is still regarded by Yoruba legends as the origin and fountain of life.

The Yoruba is divided into subgroups, including the Egba, Ekiti, Ijebu, Ijesa (Ijesha), Ondo and Oyo. They all have a common heritage and basic culture, but are different in the existing variations of dialects. The Yoruba's uniqueness can be found in their preference for urban settlement. Sadiku (1996, p.127) notes that Ibadan, the capital of Oyo state, is the largest African city after Cairo, Egypt. Like the Hausa, religion is the central focus of the Yoruba, constituting the base of all governance and worldview. Religion, among the Yoruba, has found expressions in music, songs, myths, folklore, riddles and proverbs. Despite the acceptance by the Yoruba, of two major world religions, Islam and Christianity, traditional worship still holds sway among this ethnic group. At the apex of the gods is *Olodumare* (Almighty). Other more important deities include the *Orisa-nla* (the arch-divinity); *Sango* (god of thunder and lightning). Other minor gods, which are still fervently revered and worshipped, are *Oya*, *Osun*, *Sopona* (god of smallpox), *Ela*, *Yemoja*, and *Esu* (Satan) (p.129). Central to the worship of these deities, are all forms of sacrifices, including sheep, oxen, goat, poultry, and the offer of human beings in the olden days. It is rumored that there may still exist some form of clandestine, and unlawful human sacrifices, among the Yoruba and other ethnic groups in Nigeria (p.129).

Like the Hausa, the family system, among the Yoruba, is patriarchal and extended. This means, that while there is the man, woman, (usually wife) and children, who form the nuclear family, there are close and remote family members, who trace their apical ancestry from a single lineage. Prior to the advent of the White man, marriage, among the Yoruba, was polygamous and sometimes, also polygynous. In effect, this means that a man may marry more than one wife at the same time, as well as engage in concubinage. Polygamy and polygyny are still widely

practiced among the Yoruba and other Nigerian ethnic groups at the current time. Currently, marriage among the Yoruba falls under two ordinances-Islamic ordinance and customary marriage, under native law and custom.

3.8. Igbo

Located in the Southeastern Nigeria are the Igbo and other ethnic groups, Efik, Ibibio, Ogoja and Ijaw (Izon) in the Niger delta area. They closely resemble each other in culture and religion, but distinct and differentiated in many other ways, including language. I will be dealing with the Igbo as the “major” ethnic group in relation to the others within southeastern Nigeria. There are several theories, including legends and archeological findings that attempt to explain the origin of the Igbo. The legend exists, that the Igbo migrated from the confluence of the rivers Niger and Benue to the present location. Curtin, Feierman, Thompson & Vansina (1982) argued that the Igbo are the lost sons of Judah, who joined the southwards migration of Jews, Arabs and Berbers traversing the Sahara desert, to Igboland around 2500 B.C. Shaw, T., (1972) supported this assertion, by stating that the large collection of archeological artifacts in the town of Igbo-Ukwu, signified remnants of trade intercourse between the Igbo, Arabs and Jews (Ottenberg, 2006). This position was however challenged by (Afigbo, 1981) who noted that the archeological findings in Igbo-Ukwu predate this period. This meant, he argued, that the Igbo were already settled in this area about 2000 B.C., or even before the Moses era in Jewish history. To this extent, the origin of the Igbo still remains unclear and shrouded in mystery. One thing is clear and peddled about the Igbo, that is, that they are stereotypically referred to as “ambitious, shrewd, industrious, adventurous, avaricious, innovative and clannish” (Okehie-Offoha, 1996, p.63).

With nothing resembling the centralized structure of the Yoruba and Hausa, the Igbo and the other minority ethnic groups in this location, have an acephalous, (headless or non-centralized) structure (Nwankwo, 1998; Ohadike, 1991; Ottenberg, 2006; Schwarz, 1968). This political structure allowed heads of families to come together in a democratic process that is guided by ancestry, lineage, cultural and religious beliefs. The Igbo lived, and still live in single-family compounds or units called *Umunna*. The *Umunna* is headed by a patriarch, who is also the family unit head and repository of the cultures, traditions and religion of the family. In the days gone by, he was polygamous and polygynous, which meant that he often married many wives, usually from other neighboring villages, as well as maintained concubines referred to as *iko*. The reason for exogamy is the belief that one will be constrained to go to war against, or be laid siege by his or her in-laws. The other reason is economic, due to the fact that many wives meant many children, therefore several hands for working the land and producing food. The family unit is also made up of extended family members from far and wide, who are major stakeholders in the family's affairs.

Unlike the Hausa and Yoruba, the Igbo majority are Christians. The rest are animists or ancestral worshippers, which form of religion is predicated on the worship of ancestors and deities. Okehie-Offoha (1996, p.70-71) stated that the head of the gods is "*Obasi di n'elu*" (god almighty above). *Obasi di n'elu* is so powerful, so revered, that his name is not invoked frivolously. On account of this, and to show deep reverence, the Igbo have to get to him (*Obasi di n'elu*) through other less powerful gods. One of them is *Ala* (god of earth, land and harvest). Due to the practice of extensive tenure and subsistence agriculture, *Ala* (god of earth, land and harvest) is venerated. The other gods are *Amadioha and Eze elu* (god of thunder and lightening). The family unit's oldest male is the patriarch and custodian of the deities, and leads the worship

during festivals like *Iri ji* (new yam harvest and festival or thanksgiving). He is also the custodian of the *ofo na ogu*, represented by a carved wooden insignia, which he welds to invoke *Obasi di n'elu* (god almighty) and the ancestors during worship. (pp.70-71). To this extent, Igbo traditional religion is centered on health, long life, and prosperity, fruitful marriages, with many children, abundant crop harvest, rainfall and the afterlife.

It is important to note, that the balkanization of Nigeria by ethnicity meant that allegiance was, and is still owed, first to the ethnic origin. In this context, nationality is left trailing far behind. This state of affairs has also continued to define, even post-independence Nigeria and Nigerians in their interactions with those from other ethnic groups in Nigeria and outside of the country (Irukwu, 1983; Okpu, 1977; Umoren, 1996). The central point of the discussion about the ethnic configuration of Nigeria is to show what the ethnic groups have in common, and or lack in common also. However, it appears that their dissimilarities far outweigh their commonalities. This appears to have led to ethnic suspicions and outright intolerance, in all spheres of the Nigerian mosaic, but especially on the issue of religion. In the last discussion on the ethnic configuration of the three major ethnic groups, Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo, I subsumed their religions and religious practices in my explanation of their ethnic origins. In so doing, and on purpose, I left out minority ethnic groups in the fray because there are so many that this study is unable to deal with them.

The following is a general description of the religion, religious practices and allegiances of the different ethnic groups in Nigeria, including the major ones already discussed. It is very important to note that the pertinence of this discussion on ethnicity, religion, and political allegiances, is to underscore their ramifications for my study. The conflicting and sometimes

confusing ethnic configuration presented as a major dilemma for my research on identity issues among Nigerians, and especially Nigerian youths in Montréal.

3.9. Religion, religious practices and allegiances

Nigeria has been roughly estimated to have a population with about 50 percent Muslims, although no solid statistics to this effect exists. The challenges of obtaining data on the religious variable mirror the challenges of conducting an accurate population census of Nigeria. As shown previously in this study, the original religion in the north was Furaḥ Mohamedanism, now popularly called Islam, while the language comprised the Hamitic types, inherited from the immigrants from further North, up to the Middle East (Umoren, 1996). The majority of Christians reside in the southwest, but mainly in the southeastern Nigeria and constitute about 45 percent of the total population. The rest are animists or ancestral worshippers (Lewis, Robinson, & Rubin, 1998).

In the case of Nigeria, Umoren (1996) insisted that religion, especially, that of rivalry between Christianity and Islam is the third major force, after tribe and language. Religion has also been inextricably tied to tribe and politics, despite the clear, constitutionally derived and defined secularity of the Nigerian state. Okehie-Offoha (1996) argued, “religious practice in Nigeria, which includes indigenous religions, Islam, and Christianity, has continued to undermine national integration, and may correspond with ethnic and regional division” (p.5). Okehie-Offoha further informed that the spread of religion has the Hausa, the Fulani, the Nupe, and majority peoples of the northern states, practicing the Islamic faith. In the east, are pockets of indigenous religions as already indicated, but with Christianity dominating all others. Further to this, those in the West of Nigeria are said to practice all three religions. Whereas countries like the United States have succeeded to a large extent in separating church and state, the state in

Nigeria has conversely been usurped and annexed by religious and tribal sentiments. The domino effect has been felt in Nigeria, to the extent that membership in a political party is defined and dictated by location, tribe and religious practices. This religious rivalry is not confined to the doctrine or ecclesiastics of Christianity or of Islam, but has found use even among persons in the same religion. For example, several sects of the Muslim religion such as the *Ahmmaddiyya* and the *Ansar-ud-Deen* exist in rivalry with one another. Those of Christendom, struggle between Catholic and a host of Protestants, from Methodist, Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian, Jehovah's Witness, Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints (Mormon), Seventh Day Adventists and Spiritualists like the *Aladura* Sect, Pentecostal, among others. To this extent, Awolowo (1947) said:

a deep religious gulf runs between the Northern (Hausa-Fulani) and Southern (Igbo and Yoruba) portions of the country. The people of the South, approach religion with remarkable moderation and nonchalance. Christians, Mohammedans and so called Pagans mix in society without restraint. The people of the North are extremely fanatical about Islamism. They have an open contempt for those who do not share their religious beliefs (p.49).

It was mainly ethnicity, religion and British post-colonial subterfuge that sparked and sustained the Nigerian Civil War for three years, during the late 1960s and up to the early 1970s.

3.1.0. Political practices and allegiances

The Nigerian political arena was and currently is dominated by persons, and groups, who are linked and united either by ethnicity, religion and language. Pre-colonial, political practices in Nigeria, indicated that different parts of the country were held together, mostly by a centralized government, as was observed in the Muslim North. In the North, the Emirs held the power of life and death, while in Yorubaland in the southwest, the Oba held an equal sway. Among those in the Southeast, mainly the Igbo, there was a lack of an apical political structure,

due to the form of decentralization of powers or acephalous social system practiced here. As functional as this was over the centuries for the Igbo, it was very frustrating to the British colonialist, due to their inability to delegate or appoint a lackey. For this reason, the British resented, even hated the system, as well as the Igbo, who practiced it (Nwankwo, 1998; Umoren, 1996). In light of the above, when imperialist Britain arrived in Nigeria, they had significant struggle with the political amorphousness of Southeastern Nigeria. They found it to be hostile to the system they created, the Indirect Rule system, and abandoned it in favor of the more centralized, monarchical, and malleable structure found in the North.

From 1959, independence in 1960, to 1962, all the major political parties in this first republic were founded along tribal lines. Some of them included the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), founded by Ahmadu Bello, the great grand son of Usman dan Fodio-conqueror and the main proselytizer of Islam in Northern Nigeria. Others, were The Northern Elements Progressive Party (NEPU), Action Group (AG), which was based among the Yoruba of the Southwest, and founded as an opposition party by Chief Obafemi Awolowo (Niven, 1971; Lewis, Robinson, & Rubin, 1998). The others were National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroon (NCNC), founded by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, who later became the first ceremonial President of a democratic Nigeria. Following a referendum in 1959, Southern Cameroon, which at the time was a part of Eastern Nigeria, chose to join their brethren in the North of Cameroon. The success of the plebiscite necessitated the change in this party's name to National Council of Nigerian Citizens. United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) was found mainly among the Tiv ethnic minority in the Niger and Benue rivers confluence. The Tiv, and others from the Middle Belt have felt marginalized and resented being included in the Northern Region, with whom they felt they had very little in common, socially and culturally. To all intents and purposes, one's membership into

a political party defined his or her tribal origin. If one was Igbo, he or she was unmistakably and by default a member of the NCNC; or if Yoruba or Hausa, must belong to the Action Group or Northern Peoples Congress, or risk being labeled a traitor and sell-out (Lewis, Robinson and Rubin, 1998; Irukwu, 1983).

This patrimonial, political arrangement remained in force until it was sacked by a bloody military coup d'état in January 1966. The coup d'état, as indicated earlier, led to the assassination of most of the political demi-gods in the North and the West, while all the political leaders in the Southwest were largely untouched. As described in a previous section of the paper, an Igbo military officer of the rank of a Major, Chukwuma Kaduna Nzogwu led the coup d'état of 1966. To date, those from the North and the West accuse the East and mainly the Igbo, of having planned and executed the demise of their prominent politicians (Adekson, 1981; Campbell, 1995; Nwankwo, 1998; Schwarz, 1968). The military junta in Nigeria remained in power until 1978, when General Olusegun Obasanjo, who was the military dictator at the time, lifted the ban on political activities. He has since exchanged his military garb for a civilian one, as demonstrated, since 2000, by his recent civilian position as the President of Nigeria, from 2000-2007. The formation of political parties in 1978 was still ethnically based, but less so than the first republic, as trickles of politicians transcended ethnic and religious boundaries (Falola, 1999). The scope of this study disallows an in-depth analysis of the political parties during this 2nd Republic. Suffice it to say that most of the Nigerians currently residing in Canada, and to whom this ethnographic research is geared, participated directly or indirectly in political activities during these periods. In the next segment of this study, I will address how the migration of these Nigerians to Canada, complete with colonial, ethnic, religious, and political hangovers or experiences has been perceived to define their existence in Canada. This existence has further

defined the ways in which they socialize and construct identities for their young, as well as perceptions of identity during interactions with fellow Nigerians, and the Canadian population in general.

3.1.1. Nigerians in Canada

3.1.2. Migration history

Mensah (2002) suggested that the migratory incidence of Blacks from mainland Africa was quite recent and did not occur until the 1970's. Prior to this time, Africans, sojourning in Canada and the United States were both young and elite. These came in search of the proverbial "golden fleece," as studying outside of Africa was then popularly referred to in Nigeria. Those, who came under this category completed their studies and returned to their countries of origin, ostensibly to apply their learning to community and national development. In the 1970's and 1980's, there were no overt reasons for Nigerians to remain in Canada or elsewhere, since the economy of Nigeria was strong, despite the stranglehold of military dictatorship. By means of single and multiple responses, the 2001 Canadian population Census estimated the Nigerian population in Canada at about 9, 530 individuals. Of these, there were 5,035 males and 4,500 females. Only two of the three major Nigerian ethnic groups, the Igbo, with an estimated population of 1,200 and the Yoruba at 1,875 were mentioned in this Canada Statistics data (Statistics Canada, 2001). There is currently, no available Canadian statistics on the other Nigerian ethnic groups in Canada. There also appears to be no retrievable data specifying the migration patterns of Nigerians; they are lumped with those from all over Africa and the African Diaspora. Immigrants from Africa, with those from West Indies and some South American countries have also been lumped in the social category called Black (Foster, 1996; James, 1981;

Smith, 1992). To this extent, I have dealt with the migration of Nigerians to Canada under those of other Blacks from Africa.

As shown previously, African migratory trends changed rapidly in the 1970's across socio-economic lines due to globalization. More significantly, the migrations were the results of several upheavals involving famine, civil and international conflicts, with dire outcomes, taking place on that continent. In this equation, and since the last twenty years and up until 1991, only 1 out of 10 Blacks was born in Canada, representing 44.2 percent of all Blacks in Canada. To this extent also, 1 in 4 Blacks represented immigrants from Africa and Central and South America. Prior to this, between 1961 and 1970, Blacks from Africa represented less than 5 percent of all Black immigration to Canada in that ten-year period. As the Canadian government reviewed its immigration policies, more than 1 in 4 Black immigrants in Canada between 1981 and 1990 were designated as being born in Africa (Torczyner, 1997). As this immigration policy review progressed, those from Africa, including Nigerians migrated to Canada, as refugees, visitors and landed immigrants, under the Point System (Mensah, 2000).

3.1.3. Visitors & Landed immigrants

Since the 1970s, Nigerians, just like other Africans and West Indians, have come to Canada and the United States of America as visitors. With the advancing trend in education, most, who arrived as visitors, sometimes overstayed their visas, especially when they found jobs or became somewhat acculturated into the North American way of life. In order to remain as documented residents, Nigerians have routinely applied for landed immigrant status, and when accepted became Permanent Residents or Landed Immigrants and subsequently citizens (Segal, 1990). The status of landed immigrant, now gave them the entitlement to apply for their spouses and children, when such family situation was the case. It is important to note, based on

Torczyner's (1997) observation, that the migration trends of Africans to Canada is mostly led by men, for reasons of cultural norms regarding education within countries of origin. Mensah (2006) stated that women on the African continent are most often still expected at maturity, to marry and raise children. Any woman, especially a married one, who packed her suitcase and left, was often considered an outcast, not only to her family of origin, but to the community from which she originated. Mensah (2006) suggested other reasons; among them, limited education, limited socioeconomic power, and limited participation in political activities, which expose more men than women to conflicts that would elevate the need to take flight. Additionally, social and financial pressures, with regard to family and child rearing responsibilities limit women's freedom. Conversely, these patriarchally structured conditions that limit women, provide men with enough financial and social power to migrate. Contingent on this, most Nigerian women have traditionally arrived in Canada under the auspices of their spouses or adult children. In most cases, these women only visit their children and do not remain in that country when the invitation is from their children, especially if her spouse is still alive and resident in Nigeria (Kopytoff, 2005; Njoku, 1980; Onah, 2001).

3.1.4. Refugee Claimants

With the escalation of civil and political unrests, as well as military usurpation of power, there has been a mass exodus of Africans, who have been forced from their homes and countries (Cramer, 2007; Guy, 1999; Souare, 2006). In the case of Nigeria, a significant number of persons, including intellectuals took flight from that country and sought refugee status in Canada and other countries. The flights were mainly due to interminable military interventions, several incidents of persecutions, as well as blatant violations of civil liberties and rights. For example, there were two military coups d'etat in Nigeria in 1966, another in 1976, 1983 and 1985. There

were many other allegedly botched coups d'état that I will not include here, due to the brevity of their tenure (Umoren, 1996). The significance of these military interventions is that each produced refugees, among them the intelligentsia, who ultimately found refuge and succor in Europe and North America, including Canada. This group forms the crux of the Nigerian Community, who made up my research participants or respondents. The impact of this, presents as a marked difference in educational status of both refugees and their children in migration countries in the West.

3.1.5. Demographic location & spread

The 2001 Canadian population census estimated the Black population in Canada from Africa and the Diaspora to constitute approximately 662,200 persons (Foster, 2005; Mensah, 2002; Milan & Tran, 2004; Statistics Canada, 2003). A larger percentage of Blacks in Canada are of Caribbean descent than Canadian born, or Africans who are a recent addition to the Black demography (Jenne, 2003). In this regard, seven out of ten Black immigrants to Canada, claim to have been born in the West Indies. Of those Caribbean born outside, 80 percent reside either in Toronto or Montréal (Torczyner, 1997). The monolingual status of Nigerians has presented significant challenges finding jobs and sustenance in Montréal. In Montréal, as elsewhere in Quebec, there is a political mandate by the Quebec government under Bill 101 that all new immigrants and Canadian citizens alike speak French. On account of this, most English-speaking Africans reside in Toronto, where this requirement is less stringent. The outcome, in the case of Nigerians, whose adopted lingua franca is English, is that there are 665 Nigerians (Statistics Canada, 2001) residing in Montréal, compared to 5,275 in Toronto. In Montréal, Nigerians reside mostly in the Western part of the Island, due to its composition with a mostly English-speaking population. This is not to say that there are no Nigerians residing in other sections of

the Island, as demonstrated by a large Nigerian population living in the Park Extension area. The choice of the Park Extension area by a large number of Nigerians is due, to its multicultural nature and business enterprise. Additional is the ability of this section of the Island to meet their cultural needs in the areas of nutrition and activities. Owusu (1999) found that Ghanaians in Toronto exhibit a high local concentration in specific suburban neighborhoods, primarily, due to their desire to live among other Ghanaians. In the case of Nigeria, there appears to be no existing data on their spatial location in Montréal.

3.1.6. Ethnic, religious, and political practices and allegiances

Nigerians in Canada, and especially Montréal, where I conducted this ethnographic research, have carried over their religious practices. Indeed, Africans, with Nigeria ranking as the most populous, have religious faith ranking above every other cultural boundary. *I have observed that those of them, who are Muslims, attend Mosques for worship, while the Christians of various denominations also attend churches on Sundays.* Unlike in Nigeria, where religious practice is still very strong, some of the population's religious practices have been denuded or eroded in Canada, by the demands of an industrial society, which they now are a part of. For example, in Nigeria, stores and markets and businesses are closed on Sundays. However, it will be self-defeating for such Nigerian to attend church and observe the same religious practice in Canada, when they have to work in a store or the factory floor, in order to fend for themselves and family. It does appear that after a while, a lot of Nigerians in Montréal, have put less emphasis on observing their religious practices and concentrated instead on adapting to survive in their new culture (De Blij, 1993).

In the case of political parties, most Nigerians who are Canadian citizens are Federalists. They either vote with the Liberal party, under which a lot of them have told me they gained their

status in Canada, or shown voter apathy altogether, due to their internalized experience of election farce in Nigeria. From time to time, it is possible to hear Nigerians discussing political events in Nigeria, including whom and from which ethnic region the front-runners are coming. Predictably, most of them will not be voting in an election in Nigeria any time soon, due to the mandatory six months residency. However, support for, and allegiances to parties and politicians in Nigeria continue, with an amazing fervor even here in Canada, and mostly, along ethnic and religious lines (Achebe, 2000; Mustapha, 2006; Sklar, 2004).

In conclusion, it will be important to state that the entity called Nigeria is neither homogenous nor monolithic, before, at the advent of or after British imperialism. Nigeria, as a name and imposed category, owes its existence to British administrative desire to lump disparate groups together, in order to minimize expenditure, while maximizing their imperialist interests. In this heterogeneity, Nigerians have no common grounds in culture, ethnicity, religious practices and political beliefs. Indeed, all the components and ethnic groups that make up Nigeria are in their own rights, nation-states that have all the necessary resources to remain viable, standing alone. The essence of bringing the historical, geographical, ethnic and political configuration of Nigeria and Nigerians into my current research is to assist with an understanding of how these variables played themselves out, if they did, in the study of the Nigerian Community in Montréal. This is so, because Nigerians have experienced a civil war, on-going ethnic conflicts, on-going religious intolerance and violent conflicts, political upheavals, geographical dissimilarities, and a confusing sense of who they are. As shown earlier, Nigerians, both in Africa and in Canada, owe allegiance first to their ethnic or tribal groups, religious and political affiliations, much more than allegiance related to the concept of nationhood. It is important to observe how these carryovers, including historical, geographical,

ethnic and tribal, religious and political sentiments, impact upon Nigerians' experience of living in Montréal.

Chapter 4

4.0. Literature Review, Definitions and Concepts Related to the Inquiry

In this section, I have pursued the review of some relevant literature on identity construction among youths, but particularly, among Black youth. I have also pursued the impacts and influence of the media, peer group, and role models, in this construction. This is in attempt to encase the social location of Blacks, and by extension, Nigerians, within the Canadian society. Further to this, I attempted to define and conceptualize some of the impediments to Black youth identity construction, as located in racial prejudices, discrimination and social exclusion.

4.1. Identity Construction

This chapter explores how Black youths construct and negotiate their identity in a racist society. In this section, I identify the role of family, community, peer group, influence of role models and the electronic and print media in the identity construction. I will also explore some of the impediments or challenges to Black youth identity construction in a racist society, including discussions on racism, prejudice, discrimination, and social exclusion. Contingent on these, I will examine some of the ways in which youths in general, but especially Black and Nigerian youths construct and negotiate their identity in Canada. This evaluation of identity construction will form the basis of my later foray and exploration, for the actual narratives of Nigerian youth and their families, as well as community leaders, about their identity construction in Canada. *If I consider my identity as an adult, primary agent of socialization and caregiver; born and raised in Nigeria, and now resident in Canada, to be in question, what would it be like for my children, Nigerian Youth and other Black youths, who are growing up in Canada, and looking up to me for direction? How can I, my children and other Nigerian and Black youths and their caregivers, construct and negotiate these identities, against competing interests of integration, communities,*

cohorts and the school system on one hand; and individual, societal and systemic racism and exclusion on the other, without conceding to the dysfunctional form of rage?

4.2. Defining identity & identity formation among youths

Identity or the preoccupation with its formation, presents as a developmental rite of passage for young people irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender or nationality. Indeed, identity as an event in human growth and development appears to have a more profound impact on youths in the course of their “metamorphosis” from childhood to the adult stage (Berger and Thompson, 1995; Novak and Pelaez, 2004). Kaplan (1999) stated that the ages between 9-14 depicts when human beings commence the journey from childhood to adulthood. They manifest at different rates and various degrees, and with each child, in body shape, skin, hair and hormones, in ways that will traverse the adolescence stage. Whereas this stage, for Kaplan, is challenging, it is much more complicated for those who are arriving at the adolescence stage. He stated:

Adolescence is much more complicated. It encompasses physical, social, and cognitive development. All of this development takes place in cultural context that offers complex, and sometimes contradictory, expectations, values, and models of psychological health. Identity conflict/confusion is relatively common during early adolescence. For some, it is time to begin the search for the “right mask.” But others will take an active part in their own development and grow beyond the need for a mask (p.129).

As shown by Gartside & Sternberg (1999) identity development during the adolescence stage is gradual and a psychological process. They stated that during the middle school years the youth may overidentify with peers and distance themselves from their parents. However, at the high school stage the adolescents may begin to search for their individual identity, by playing roles or partaking in politics or political stands, religion, career commitment and romance. In later adolescence, they may show more introspection and begin to question, “Who am I? What do I believe? Where am I going?” (p.146). Kroger (2004) views identity construction as a

“developmental process of qualitative stage reorganization rather than a mere unfolding of static personality characteristics” (p.9). Kroger explored context and identity construction, highlighting how social and cultural environments are implicated in facilitating or arresting identity formation and development. She argued:

When identity is viewed as a developmental phenomenon, some important implications for social response become apparent. Rather than being a collection of static traits, identity is conceptualized as a structural organization more responsive to opportunities that will obviate developmental arrest as well as promote further movement towards maturity (p.9).

For Gove & Watt, (2000) and Breton (2005) it manifests in several ways, including self or group consciousness, a sense of high or low self-esteem, relationships within the family and outside of it, career choices and the pursuit of them; gender and sexuality-including its orientation, to mention but a few. The understanding of self-identity and its formation among Blacks is determined by several variables, which include geographical location of origin, culture and socialization processes.

Blacks in Canada fall under three major categories-Canadians of the Underground Railroad, who are mainly in the Maritimes, West Indian Diaspora and African (Foster 1996; Mensah, 2002; Winks, 1997). These categories determine to a large extent how members define themselves. Further to these, Blacks also identify themselves in terms of their countries of origin, sometimes in a sincere but futile attempt to stem the tide of being lumped into a category (Cross, 1991). In the case of Africans and West Indian Blacks, parents also socialize the children in terms of cultures and values practiced in their former locations of origin, while seeking to balance these with those of the dominant culture (Boatswain and Lalonde, 2000). Parents' attempt at bi-culturalism could be found, and reflected in festivals like the Caribana, speaking “Patua,” or as in the case of those from mainland Africa, speaking and teaching their children to

speaking Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, Efik, Izon, Tiv, as Nigerian, or Ashanti and Twi, as is the case with Ghana (Tse, 1997, 1998, and 1999). Sometimes, this balance could be derived from culturally relevant culinary practices (Boomie, n.d.). Simultaneously, parents of Black children in Canada are also socializing their children in some of the cultures of the dominant population, including speaking and writing English and or French. They also encourage them to participate in extracurricular activities such as basketball, baseball, soccer, skating, ballet, hockey, or such other fall events as Halloween. This leads to a form of bi-culturalism, which in turn defines the construction of identity for the youths. This identity construction and biculturalism (Cote, 2002; Cote and Schwartz, 2002) as well, affects parents, who must imbibe this new and sometimes, alien culture, in order to impart them to the children.

4.3. Identity formation among Black youths

Identity formation for children of any race, ethnicity or color is challenging. The popular belief is that identity issues profoundly and for better or for worse, impact more on minorities within a dominant society, than they would of persons of the majority culture. In the continuation of this popular belief, the issue of identity impacts even more severely on Black youths, than adults from within the same culture for various reasons. Helms (1990) argued that for people of color, racial identity development is found in the ways that they overcome internalized, societal racial stereotypes, negative self and own group conceptions. In view of this, most majority ethnic groups are located somewhere on a continuum of racial identity development, as demonstrated in their relationships with others belonging to different racial groups. On the other hand, the process is somewhat much more complicated for those belonging to visible minorities. The minorities must, and do contend with developing relatedness to the dominant group (Nash and Daniel, 1999). As well they contend with developing relatedness to the racial and ethnic group with

which they identify, or to which they have been ascribed by mainstream society. The popular belief is that the individuals of another culture, in this case, Blacks, living outside the boundaries of a dominant culture, are the only experts on the differences between the two cultures. Why? It is because they are the ones who are daily forced to notice these differences. The reality is that subordinated groups interpret reality differently from the dominant group. To survive, they must have knowledge, awareness, and sensitivity of both the dominant groups' view of society and their own. This creates a potential for a more complex view of social reality (Carniol, 1987, 2005).

Cornell & Hartman (1998) argued that for the Black child in Canada, identity construction can be very difficult indeed. This stand is due to the uniqueness of Black cultures, and confrontation with some of the dominant culture's policies, and sometimes, racist ideologies. Pegram (2005) argues that immigration brings Peoples from an array of cultural groups and society into a cultural amalgamation. In spite of this cultural amalgamation, these immigrants, especially the visible minorities amongst them, remain typically connected to their ethnic and cultural community of origin. Additionally, whether or not an immigrant participates in civic, community and economic life is shaped by the type of social, political and traditions of the host country they encounter. When there is a contact between a dominant group, as represented by White Canada and a minority group such as Black youth Loslier (1998) argued that this contact inevitably results in changes occurring among the minority group. These changes are locatable in how they perceive themselves, as well as how they perceive certain cultural symbols, which they use as a collectivity. Often a White youth cohort may only be required to contend with socialization into the culture of the dominant population, without the burden of learning other minority cultures, or the fear of reprisals. On the other hand, the Black child in Canada must

learn and master two or more distinct cultures, especially those of the dominant population, or risk sanctions in the course of everyday interactions. Cote (2002) and Cote and Schwartz (2002) examined the role of context in identity construction from empirical and theoretical approaches. Cote theorized on how culture and identity interrelate, based on macro-sociological process, through to the micro-interactional and psychological types. He furthered this postulation by querying the relationship between agency and identity construction. This theory identifies with the identity construction by Black youth in a largely monocultural environment. Here, they are forced to balance their agency of construction, mainly by parents, caregivers and the Black Community, with what goes on in their lives in the wider Canadian society (Parham, 1989).

The issue of race and racism plays significant roles in identity formation for Blacks and Black youths. This is so, in that their parents would have initially socialized the youths into viewing the Black culture and values, as a part of their essence within the Canadian society. However, once the youths are “weaned” and thrust into the wider society, they soon discover that those cultures and values, which they held dear at home and within their communities are irrelevant within the dominant culture (Rice, 1996). They also discover that the practice and sustenance of these cultures and values attracts severe sanctions of further discrimination, ostracism, and even a pariah status (Brunsma, 2006; Bulmer & Solomos, 1999; Cornell & Hartman, 1998). In order to remain sane, and aspire to become somewhat integrated into mainstream culture, when color is not the determining factor, the Black youth has to sometimes also sanction and reject his or her culture. Knaus (2006) stated that “American White supremacy has built a house of ‘norms’ that hold black and brown bodies against a template that never considered their cultural realities” (pp.ix-x). Knaus, a person of mixed race, who was adopted by a White family was trying to understand discourses of race, how they have experienced, continue

to endure, and are defined by racism amongst students of multi-ethnic and multi-racial backgrounds. The students defined race in terms of how it has impacted on them. One of the students defined racism as:

Basically, racism is power plus prejudice. White people have the power to impact you as far as where you go, how you live. Basically impeding on your education or your climbing up the social ladder. Whether it's in your job or anything else (p.427).

For another student in Knaus' interview group, racism can be blatant as well as in the premise of White social power, insidiously located in an institutional format:

They're based in the same White supremacy. The KKK is more overt about it, and they actually go out and kill people. But the institutional is more subtle and you don't know when you're growing up against it because you have no idea. You have nothing to base it on. But it ingrains in you that there are no important Asian or Arab people in Society. And it just makes you look up to White people as these leaders. You know, all the presidents were White males. And 80% of congress is White males. So, it makes you look up to these White male figures. And then by not seeing minorities in public leadership positions in history then you tend not to trust them when they are today. And that's institutional (p.428).

Owing to apprehensions over racism and fear of ostracism, some minority youths may choose to shed a fixed identity, for a more fluid or multiple types. In this case, the youth, in order to be accepted, will simply and as the need arises, denounce his or her culture of socialization when in the midst of peers of the dominant culture. Most would revert to those denounced cultures once they find themselves within the Black Community or their own culture (Cornell & Hartman, 1998; Phinney, Lochner and Murphy, 1990; Piaget, 1965). *I have observed my children, none of whom was born in Canada, in interactions with peers of the dominant culture. During this time, they struggle to, and sometimes successfully alter their accent and diction to justify their acceptance into this group. Conversely, I have, also during the same event, but with those of similar culture, observed them rapidly revert to their cultural way of doing things. Even for me as an adult, I have been caught in this maze of identity confusion in my interactions with*

those of the dominant culture. For example, I have been socialized in Nigeria into referring to those in authority as Sir or Madam, as a sign of respect and recognition of their status. Since coming to Canada, I have run into curious glances and bewilderment, each time I have used it to refer to persons in authority; even my professors at school and supervisors at work. Everyone wants me to call them by their first names, which I find rather challenging, because colonialism and patriarchy have implanted and ingrained it as taboo where I come from.

Mokros (2003) has argued that identity construction or formation is embedded in the question of “Who am I?” (p.243), due to this interrogation, being related to or revolving around an individual or community’s sense of identity that was constituted through “otherness.” Mokros further dialoged that there is a philosophical consideration that identity perceives the very possibility of an experiencing self as inextricable from the experience of one’s own sense of otherness. To Mokros, otherness, constructed through social interactions, conditions the sense of community and self-identity of its members. Isajiw (1981) identified five variables that underscore ethnic identity construction and retention, which I can only list here. Isajiw, listed identity, revolving around concrete objects-symbols, food, artistic articles; practice of customs and community participation; language, and the idea of sustaining uniqueness through children; giving support to the group on some general and unspecified way; and linking one’s ethnic group with the larger society through work or achievement. I have already presented a dialog on language in a previous chapter. The following discussion will attempt to understand some of the sources of identity construction among Black youths in Canada, but which may also apply to Black and youths of other ethnicities elsewhere.

4.4. Media roles: electronic and print media -radio, TV. Videos, the Internet, magazines, Newspapers, comic prints, etc.

One, very significant, majority-dominated machinery for imposing identity, imparting new values, as well as perpetuating negative stereotypes about Black youths, their families and communities is the media. This section relates to perceptions of how the Canadian, indeed other media not only impose identity, but marginalize people of color, by reducing them to a status of invisibility (Pizanias and Frideres, 1995). This marginalization process also takes the form of devaluing their contributions in the Canadian cultural mosaic. The Canadian media, just like other White dominated media, produce and circulate the message that people of color, especially Blacks, are purveyors of social problems that in turn disrupt the harmony of Canadian society (Foster, 2005; Henry, Tator, Mattis, & Rees, 2000). The media are predominantly the sources of beliefs and values from which people, especially children, develop a picture of their social world. They represent the most significant forum for mass communication for Black youth and others (Legette, 1994) which include information and reproduction of that information, education, socialization, correlation, entertainment, employment and in recent times, advertising (Cullingford, 2000; Davis & Gandy, 1999; Henry, et al., 2000). These authors argue that some coverage by the media, also reinforce the stereotypes about Black youths having a greater propensity, than the general population, to indulge in violence and other criminal activities. This tendency to racialize crime is manifested by the use of subtle and sometimes, overt misrepresentations and stereotyping, to influence popular opinion. Henry et al. (2000); Davis and Gandy (1999) argued that these stereotypes, invariably become internalized by Black youths about the futility of striving to better themselves in worthy, societal endeavors. Their belief is that the media and the larger society will consistently fail to validate any meaningful striving by

them; rather, the emphasis by the media is to continuously probe for areas, where they have fallen short. The statement below exemplifies the relationship between Blacks and the media.

when visible minorities do appear in our newspapers and TV public affairs programming, they emerge as villains in a variety of ways-as caricatures from colonial past; as extensions of foreign entities; or, in the Canadian context, as troubled immigrants in a dazzling array of trouble spots; hassling police, stumping immigration authorities, cheating on welfare, or battling among themselves or with their own families. Siddiqui (as cited in Henry, Tator, Mattis & Rees, 1995, p.235).

Walcott (1997) illustrated how the media demonizes Black youth, with his narrative of an incident in 1996. The incident was related to a Black youth, who was alleged to have committed murder in Toronto. Some of the headlines read “a Black serial killer” on the loose (p.118). The youth, Adrian Mathias Kinkead, had his face splashed all over Canadian newspapers for five consecutive days as not only a Black criminal, but specifically, a Black, Jamaican and criminal. Walcott argued that Kinkead’s designation had serious ramifications in the “public discourses of law and order and its Canadian twin, immigrantness. Jamaicans have been “marked” as the most violent and criminal among Black immigrants in Canada, and a reverse migration (deportation) back “home,” after doing time for their crimes, has been inaugurated” (p.118). Kinkead escaped to Jamaica, as Walcott argued, either because of the guilt or to hide from the “trigger-happy” (p.118) Toronto police, who he stated had during the last decade killed no fewer than nine Black men, under questionable circumstances. Walcott also alleged Toronto police to have severely wounded one Black woman, paralyzing her, without any consequence or any overtures made to hold them accountable. What Walcott’s argument appears to speak to is the fact that the media saw it fit to highlight the crime of a Black youth, but did not have enough to say about the mostly White police slayings of Blacks, when such did occur.

In Quebec, Pegram (2005) found that Haitian youth, regardless of place of birth or gender, perceive themselves to be misrepresented and maligned by the local media. They believe that the

Quebec media focuses significant attention on minorities' ethnic heritage, rather than highlight their accomplishment and contributions to the Quebec society. On the other hand, these Haitian youth were reported to show little interests in reading Haitian newspapers, radio programming or cultural and community events. This, on-the-fence stance is due to their perception that their interests are neither represented in the Canadian society, nor by those of the older Haitian generations. On one level, Davis & Gandy (1999) and Stroman (1984) concluded that even the viewing of high amounts of television entertainment by Black youths, have implications for low-self esteem among this population. On the other level, Legette (1994) and Johnson & Birk (1993a,b) suggested, through a market research, that the Black owned and formatted radio stations have a tendency to promote Black Community activities, educational and health promotions, that assist Black youths in their identity construction.

4.5. Peer Group

Another vehicle for the construction of identity by Black youths is the peer group. For the new immigrant and Canadian-born youths alike, peer group influence at best, could be a major source of identity construction and identity negotiation. At the worst, the influence of peer groups could create confusion, conflict, parental and cultural alienation of Black youth of all categories, but especially the new migrant types. In the African and Diaspora content, parent and child relationships are based on cultural values, found in the socialization tenets of love, honor and obedience to parents, even when verbally or physically chastised. Indeed, verbal and sometimes, physical chastisement are integral parts of the socialization process, within these cultures, that have no bearing with abuse. In Africa and West Indies, children view this system as harsh, but accept it as a norm that should never be questioned in the socialization process. However, in Canada, due to peer group influence, based on narratives and observations that their

cohorts of the majority culture are spared these “indignities,” Black youths reject those notions of discipline related to their identity. Often, they reconstruct the new and majority-imposed identity, leading to serious conflicts with their parents and caregivers. Some of these culturally relevant intergenerational conflicts have sometimes resulted in social-services intervention. In a lot of cases, placements occur that are mostly unnecessary and resulting in overrepresentation of Black children in the welfare system. This overrepresentation was observed to occur, especially in Montréal and Toronto, with a demographically large concentration of Blacks (Christensen, 1989; Gopaul-McNicol, 1993; Pinderhughes, 1997; Torczyner, 1997; Tucker-Rambally, 1990). The fall-outs from these conflicts are rejection and alienation from both the parents, and a dis-identification with Black cultures and values. The youths are equally rejected by the White cultures to which they were aspiring, and which initially resulted in the conflicts with primary caregivers.

Owing to the construction of this new identity, it is not uncommon for even recently arrived Black youths, including youths of Nigerian descent, and children to invoke the 911 distress signal for alleged abuse by a caregiver. Sometimes, they run away from home, or internalize these new experiences and act them out at school or elsewhere. To this extent, the Black child, in the process of constructing or reconstructing his or her identity, is placed between the “rock and a very hard place,” in identifying with a world belonging to his or her parents, and the other that he or she regards as their own (Dwivedi & Varma, 1996).

4.6. Influence of role models

The activities of those perceived as role models are significant in the construction of identity and engenderment of new values in Black youths. For those Blacks growing up in the era of the Civil Rights Movement (Dworkin & Dworkin, 1999; King, 2003) the role models were

Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. Following on their heels is Nelson Mandela, former South African President (Kelly, 1998). These precursors of Black rights and emancipation in North America and Africa, were, and are still being regarded as worthy of emulation. Some Black parents have named their children after these men, not only to idolize them, but also hope that in some ways, their hallowed names would somehow, rub-off on their children who bear these names.

In recent times, role models, as perceived by Black youths, have concomitantly become a source of concern for Black parents and the Black Community. In the new world of globalization, and the sudden affluence that it endows on a few, names like Michael Jordan, Shaquille O' Neal, Charles Barkley, Tiger Woods, and others, have meant that a significant number of Black youths now assume that the values of basketball and golf, rank higher than those of other professions (Kelly, 1998). The result has been that sometimes, the youths quit or attend school sparingly, while concentrating all their effort at making it into the NBA League or the Masters. The truth of this assumption is that most will never make it to the NBA or the Masters. Worse still, the chances of engaging and succeeding in other endeavors that would otherwise have contributed to the formation of a concrete identity, and promote the cohesion of the Black Community, would have diminished, due to preoccupation with constructing an identity based on these role models.

4.7. Impediments to identity construction and formation among Black youths

Black youths face rather difficult and disproportionate obstacles, such as poverty, unemployment, incarceration and crowded urban environments. This was the assertion made by Peters (1985) and Safyer (1994) in articulating the struggles by Black youth to understand issues related to their identity. These obstacles present as constant phantom of institutional deterrents

that impede access to mainstream life. Since the process of racial socialization occurs within the family (Peters, 1985) argued that Black parents, particularly, must struggle with raising physically and emotionally healthy and balanced children, who are Black in a society in which being Black attracts negative connotations. Concurrently, most of these obstacles to partaking in mainstream life impede identity construction and negotiation amongst Black youths. Kivel (1996, p.9) suggested that, “racism affects each and every aspect of our lives, all the time, whether people of color are present or not.” So, for Kivel, there are no winners in the perpetration and reception of racism. Racism ultimately impacts, for better or for worse, everyone, but especially children and youth. These young persons become the conduit for transmission and reproduction, in the case of racism, or anti-racism to the next generation through eternity.

The issue of identity becomes even more salient here due, to the fact that not all youths of this category identify with the Collectivity regularly or equally. According to Thompson (1999) the importance a youth attaches to the Black or any identity determines if, when, and how he or she will use or access it. Continuing, Thompson suggested that two possibilities exist here for the youth of this cohort. On the one hand, they may conceptually define themselves as members of the group, in which case they would wish to hold positive attitudes about the group. On the other, the youth may regard the group as intrinsically insignificant in their understanding of who they are, hold negative opinions of it, and reject it entirely. For Yoder (2000) it is the concept of ‘barriers,’ which prominently manifest as racism, and exclusion that act as external forces or influences in Black youth identity construction. Yoder, through describing some of those barriers to identity construction, developed interesting means of evaluating how socio-cultural factors impact the individual in the domain of psychological functioning.

4.8. Immigration and parent-teen conflicts

In constructing identity, Black youth, especially those, who are new immigrants, struggle with balancing the cultures into which they have been socialized, with the new ones that they are now being “bombarded” with in their new country. When for instance, Black families and especially children in this category arrive in Canada, there is a process of de-socialization that rudely transforms into re-socialization into the norms, values and culture of the host country. In this vein, and on arrival, first generation immigrant children have always been torn between the internalized values, customs and norms of their country of origin, and those of the host or adopted country. The result has often been intergenerational conflicts and sometimes, conduct disorders, due, to the children striving to reject their parent’s apparently sanctioned cultures and values, in order to fit and assimilate into the new dominant culture (Herbert, 1987). In view of the findings by Hutchinson & Pepin (1994) this identity situation, presents as a double bind for Black immigrant and non-immigrant children in Canada. This double bind is owed to culture clash, struggle to adapt and integrate, and language difference of the majority society. It is strongly believed that racism and language engender barriers to assimilation and exacerbate the intergenerational conflicts between Black youth and their parents and caregivers. Hutchinson and Pepin found, that these intergenerational conflicts, especially in Montréal, have multiplier effects on parent/child relations, which in turn sometimes result in social services intervention. In some cases, the Black youth has acted out, by mingling with conduct-disordered youth, who lead them into engaging in antisocial behaviors and subsequent contravention under the Young Offenders Act.

In one vein, Tse (1997, 1998, and 1999) argues that Black youths, as with most ethnic and visible minorities will unconsciously “feel” for the overall status or strength of their group,

including their group's normative ways of carrying out activities of daily living and survival. This often occurs, regardless of the degree of subordination of their group to the majority group in Canada, in constructing their identity. If they perceive the status or structure of their group to be strong, they often tend to remain and grow within. In another vein, as argued by Tse and Essed's (1996) argument for multiple identities, Black youths will survey for "malleable borders" and the degree to which they can traverse these social and cultural borders from one cultural group to another. If the social and cultural borders are impermeable, the youth will tend to abandon his or her foray into the other social and cultural group, and remain within his or her own ethnocultural borders. According to Tse, Black youths, where the boundaries are permeable, may construct their identity by traversing and belonging to one or more cultural groups. This way, they could simultaneously share many traits, characteristics and beliefs with other ethnic groups, while maintaining some of their own. Tse informed that this situation is more prevalent when the youth has residency in a diverse ethnocultural society. Contingent on this, individuals from minority ethnic and cultural groups, who possess multiple group memberships, will have several factors and demands that will ultimately influence or shape their social, cultural and diverse identities.

The permanent immigrant status (Ruggles and Rovinescu, 1996) of Black youths and their families presents as another medium of identity construction, as well as impediment to this identity construction. Walcott (1997) puts it aptly:

Yet a Canadian multicultural desire for simplicity and knowability is revealed in the naming. In Canada, Black identities must be rooted elsewhere and that elsewhere is always outside Canada. Black subjects become knowable objects through a simple, uncomplicated story of origins. But the naming spells more than that, because it puts into place a semiotics of meanings. The naming triggers a chain of meanings that are associated with assumed actions and specific identities in Canada...Canada's racialized immigrant mythology is dependent upon narratives that riff off of the nation's discourse of benevolence and goodness towards immigrants, but simultaneously places those

immigrants within a crippling discourse of heritage that locates non-White others outside of the nation (pp.122-123).

4.9. Fear of racial prejudices, discrimination & social exclusion

Defining racism, racial prejudices and discrimination as catalysts to social exclusion and barrier to identity formation is not simple and clear-cut. Finding definitions for these variables are still challenging, due to the existence of a myriad of definitions and specialists on the subject. Despite this lack of definition consensus, racism, racial prejudice and discrimination, permeate and continue to impact on the Canadian social, political, economic and cultural milieu. Fleras & Elliot (2003) have provided a succinct definition of racism as:

those ideas and ideals (ideology) that assert or imply the superiority of one social group over another, together with the institutional power to put those beliefs into practice in a way that controls, excludes, or exploits others because of cultural or physical differences (p.63).

Laguerre (1998) and Stepick (1998, 2001) found that many young Haitians in the Miami area, due to racial prejudice and the stigmatization of their Haitian origin and experience of the United States, prefer to assimilate into the African-American mainstream. Stepick contended that whereas some youths of Haitian origin do not altogether abandon their identity and ethnocultural heritage, others become completely “Americanized” in both culture and language, in order to attain an upward mobility, while simultaneously obscuring or rejecting their Haitian origin. These youths fear discrimination and prejudice, as well as social exclusionary practices that have been associated with and aimed at Haitians in the Miami region. They also feel apprehensive that self-identification as persons from Haiti may stifle their social and economic growth and stability, even among other African Americans or Blacks.

Pegram (2005) argues that his research on identity construction by Haitian youths in Montréal found that racism is prevalent in four areas of the youths’ lives, namely school, public

transit, social gatherings at public arenas and workplace. Due to their visible minority status, these youths construct and ascribe to an “Othered” identity in Quebec. The Haitian youth are deeply upset, even angered by the discrimination and social exclusion they receive in Quebec. They contend that Quebecois themselves are a minority, and although White, they are and claim to be dominated by the rest of Canada, therefore should display some intelligence and sensitivity in the way they treat other minorities. The youth in this research, cite the hypocrisy of the Quebec government, which appears to welcome visible minorities to the province, but then immediately highlights their country of origin the moment they are implicated or even suspected to be complicit in crime or economic deprivation. The findings by Pegram (2005) are in line with Tse’s (1997) argument that Black youth often revisit or rediscover ethnocultural heritage as they approach adulthood, which in turn invokes a strong affinity towards their cultural group. In the case of Black youth in Quebec, being a minority group tends to isolate them (Pegram, 2005) from participation in the activities of the dominant culture. Even when they consciously choose to participate within the dominant culture, Black youth are not always granted full access, as non-subordinated participants. In this way, Black youth, who believe that the majority culture plays ignorance to their lived experiences, therefore nullify any sense of attachment they may have or internalized about the dominant, White culture.

In the context of Black cohesion, racism, prejudice and social exclusion by the dominant culture, as experienced by this population have sometimes been found to forge a positive, resistive racial identity. Cross (1971), postulated four linear progressions of racial identity, which he called “Psychological Nigrescence” that Blacks experience as they develop a psychologically healthy Black identity. The “Nigrescence” model ranges in the continuum of pre-encounter, encounter, immersion, with the final stage being internalization. Rather than by a linear

progression mode, Helms (1990) argued that each stage for the individual, presented as a distinct world-view. In light of the above, Parham & Williams (1993) suggested that the stage of internalization of racism, evolves into a positive African American identity. This, they argue, occurs directly after the realization of their uniqueness as African American, and the inevitable implications of how it will influence their life chances and opportunities. The end product, they argued, is the internalization of a sense of security and self-confidence with his or her Blackness. Parham (1989) came to the conclusion that for Black youths to meet the challenges of the exclusionary social conditions that contend with and challenge their mobility, they have to develop a strong sense of racial identity. The postulations above present as best case scenarios. Findings by Miller and Macintosh (1999) suggest otherwise. They leaned towards endorsing that some members of a racial group such as Blacks, especially adolescents, strive to overcome racial prejudices and discrimination through developing a “raceless identity.” For them, “Raceless” identity develops when a Black or minority individuals, in order to reduce negative stereotyping, futilely distance themselves from the collective, to interact with and assimilate into the mainstream. In the case of a Black youth, this defense mechanism of distancing or “racelessness” from the Black collective, elicits jeers and alienation from peers, while doing little to enhance acceptance in the mainstream.

4.1.0. Effects of racism on Black youth identity

The effects of racism on Black adults mirror its impact on Black youths. The only difference is that this effect on the youths is much more profound, due to the naïveté associated with their age and plasticity of their developmental stage (Davis and Gandy, 1999; Dwivedi & Varma, 1996; Henry, Tator, Mattis, & Rees, 2000; Kivel, 1996). Youths, due to their age in the human developmental cycle, accept and internalize discourses that are positive, but mostly those

that are negative, and ultimately determine their survival or otherwise, in Canadian society (Van Ausdale and Feagin, 2001). Youths' internalization of racism and racialized identity manifests in two ways. The first, is that learned from (Black) parents, who themselves have internalized racial stereotypes in their interactions with the dominant culture. (Bonilla-Silva and Foreman, 2000). Omi and Winant (1994) argued that attitudes affect identities. In the second, these internalized behaviors are then unwittingly passed on to their children, who accept them as the gospel truth, having been handed down to them by their primary agents of socialization (Drieger and Halli, 2000).

According to Thompson (1999) and Prince (2001) the importance a youth attaches to the Black or any identity determines to a significant extent, if, when and how he or she will use or access it. In line with the findings by Miller and Macintosh (1999), Thompson suggested that two possibilities exist here for the youth of this cohort. On the one hand, they may conceptually define themselves as members of the group, in which case they would wish to hold positive or negative attitudes about the group. On the other, the youth may regard the group as intrinsically insignificant in their understanding of who they are, rejecting it entirely. Feagin and McKinney (2003) argue that racism negatively impacts on the health of recipients. In view of the findings by Hutchinson & Pepin (1994) racism and othering also engender barriers to integration or assimilation and exacerbates the intergenerational conflict. According to Hutchinson and Pepin, the three variables of immigration, racism and sometimes, language difficulty, have been implicated in the diminishment of self-worth, and a potentially alienating environment for both the children and their parents.

4.1.1. The juvenile justice system (Young Offenders Act) & Black youths

The issue of overrepresentation of youths and families of African descent, within the Protective services, juvenile, as well as criminal justice systems, has been a recurrent theme in Canadian society as studies by Bala and Lilles (1984); Clairmont & Linden (1998); Hawkins (1995); Joseph (1995); Caputo and Kelly (1997); Marshall (1998); Mosher (1997); Shaw and Jane (1998); Siegel and Senna (1997); Stuart (1996) have shown. These researches and written work, throughout Britain and North America, especially the United States and Canada, have been carried out by social scientists and human services agents, now and in the past, on the issue of Black criminal and youth justice (Caputo and Kelly, 1997). The United States appears to have conducted more researches and produced many books and materials on this issue, due mainly to the large number of Blacks in that country. However, Canadian research attempts are growing, but still rudimentary. It is feasible that this situation exists, for the mere fact of the limited population of Blacks in Canada, in juxtaposition with the dominant culture (Mosher, 1997; Schissel, 1990).

These literatures on minority issues, especially those related to child development show a clear consensus amongst researchers, that throughout North America and Britain, Black children are overrepresented in the care system. This assertion is even more so, in some states of the United States of America, where Black children have an extremely high proportion of representation in foster care. According to Stehno (1990) in seven states, this proportion exceeds 45 percent, while, in one major urban area, such as Cook County, Illinois, 80 percent of foster children are from a minority background. In the Big Apple, New York City, this proportion jumps to 90 percent. Barn (1993) reviewed a number of studies, which indicated that Black children in the UK had a higher propensity to come into care than others. Barn, suggested, that

this trend seemed to be increasing since the 1970's. She argued further, that there exists a documentation of the overrepresentation of Black children and youths in the public care system. Vis-à-vis other cultures or groups, there appeared to be insufficient and reliable research evidence, to streamline or suggest how, and why, Black families come to be known to the social services; and under what circumstances Black children enter public care.

In Canada, the Young Offenders Act received assent in 1982, and was passed into law on April 2, 1984, by the Federal government, for the universal consumption by all the Provinces. This Act, which replaced the Juvenile Delinquency Act that began in 1908, represented a legal mandate that sought to address delinquent acts by young persons between the ages of 12 to 18 (Bala and Lilles, 1984; Rosen, 1996). The fundamental consideration for the enactment of the Young Offenders Act, as enunciated was the minimization (Schissel, 1990) of the construction of subjectivity of the judicial system, in cases of young offenders. Paradoxically, and according to Schissel; and Mosher (1997) the executors of the Young Offenders Act or juvenile justice system, have incessantly treated Black youths and other visible minorities in a racially prejudiced manner, due largely to the latter's ethnic and cultural heritage as visible minorities. This state of affairs, brought Chiricos and Crawford (1995); and Walker, Spohn and Delone (2000) to conclude that the disproportionate percentage of Black youths and families highlighted in arrests, trials and institutional custody, has underpinnings not necessarily related to legal justice, but more manifestly to race, family dynamics, class and socioeconomic dispositions. Henggeler (1996); Joseph (1994); Russell (1998) argued that serious antisocial behaviors, including delinquency and crime is multidetermined by the reciprocity and apparent symbiosis between the individual youth and the important social systems with which youths come into contact, interact

with, and ultimately conflict. These multisystems include family, peers, school and teachers, police and law-enforcement agents, Black and White neighborhood and community.

In the case of Montréal, Quebec, Hutchinson, Nichols, Pare, & Pepin (1992) conducted a cross-sectional study design, involving a one-day census carried out in December 1993. The study was carried out with collaboration from the social work personnel in Mount St. Patrick Youth Center, Ville Marie Social Services Center, Shawbridge (Prevost Campus) Youth Center and Youth Horizons. In furtherance of this survey, social services workers from the centers in the research population, were each requested to complete a questionnaire for each juvenile client receiving services and care from the network. The findings showed, that of the three thousand, six hundred and seventy-four (3,674) children receiving services, 23 percent were Black. The findings further showed that in the 199's, Black children in Montréal were four times more likely to come into care than were White children. This situation exists, even when controlling for the findings according to the 1986 Canadian Census, that Anglophone Blacks represented only 5.8 percent of the population of Montréal. In the case of juvenile offenders, Blacks point an accusing finger at the mostly White police, for being the main facilitator of the arraignment of Black youths under the Young Offenders Act. As is well known, the police are the front line agency that deals with the prevention and control of crimes, including juvenile delinquency. In dealing with Black youths, most of these police officers have manifested a lacking in the specialized training, necessary to work with cross-cultural groups. There are findings by Bishop and Frazier (1988); Pope and Feyerherm (1990); Wordes, Bynum, and Corley (1994) concluding that race was a major and independent variable for arrests and charges of Black youths by police. This variable, according to these postulations, also had negative implications for the final outcomes, including post apprehension adjudication.

There is a universal belief that individuals, mostly depending on circumstances that have no relevance to race, commit crime and delinquency (Sutherland, Cressey and Luckenbill, 1992). Mann (1993) and Marger (2003) concluded that social, political, educational and economic structures that benefit one group to the detriment of another are *de facto*, systemic racism. Therefore, institutional racism against Blacks has been owed to centuries of slavery, colonialism, domination and racial prejudice. Institutional and systemic racism have also found significant implications for and expressions in the overrepresentation of Black youths and their families, in both the criminal justice system and the Young Offenders justice system in Montréal and the rest of Canada.

4.1.2. Schooling & the educational environment (educational attainment)

The educational system, of which the umbrella is the school, is a source of new values for Black children. This assumption is so since the school and educational system serve as forum, where children share what they have learned from books, peers, teachers, instructors and mentors (Sandoval, 2002). It is mostly at school, that peer group influence and pressure, which is the subject of the next argument, plays itself out. In this regard, school and the school environment are significant to the Black child's identity formation, reconstruction and communal cohesiveness. Connolly (1998) argued that:

...discourses on race also have real material effects on the schooling of Black and Asian children...the popular discourse that Black boys are volatile and aggressive creates a tendency for some of them to be labeled in this way and therefore more likely to be chastised and disciplined by teachers and other school staff, even for things that they have not done. This can act to alienate some Black boys from school, and therefore impinge upon their overall educational performance. A self-fulfilling prophesy appears to come into operation at this point, where certain Black boys do not do well at school and even begin to resist what they feel to be unfair treatment on behalf of the teachers, only then to be labeled as being 'less able' educationally and more likely to present 'behavioral problems' (p.13).

In this vein, systemic racism in the educational sector receives criticisms, due, to certain acts of omission, but mainly commission in this environment (Nakkula and Toshalis, 2006). The school, due to its demand and insistence on competition, individualism, materialism and consumerism, becomes a prescription for failure when these demands are not met (Freire, 1985). Some of these demands by the school environment, for Black youths, especially in the absence of exemplary, educationally-minded Black models, (Foster K.M., 2005 and Foster, M., 1991; Wien, 1976) present as diametrically opposed to the talents and skills they are socialized into, and subsequently bring from their homes and communities. This further alienates them from school, as they sometimes perform below standards, get streamed into remedial or vocational categories or worse still, dropout entirely (Fleras and Elliott, 2003; LeCompte, and Dworkin, 1991).

Rassool (1999) conducted a study on the life histories of a group of first and second-generation immigrant pupils, from the African and Asian Diasporas, in an inner-city comprehensive school in Britain. The study was to ascertain, through narratives, the ways in which Black identities have evolved in the British society over the past two decades. Their narratives encapsulated the perceptions of their status as citizens, cultural identity, and their dreams, hopes, desires and aspirations, growing up in a contemporary British society. British racial, educational and other discourses, according to the findings of the study, have historically imaged the immigrant, especially Blacks as underachieving, due to language deficits and differences, culture, family practices, and adjustment problems. This stereotype, which at best is based on cultural determinism and pathology, has become the fulcrum upon which Black children's educational experiences have revolved (Modood and Shiner, 1994). In experiencing school, Rassool, determined that Black youths internalize the ethnocentrically organized (Levine, and Campbell, 1972) rejection of their accent, traditional mode of dressing and cultural

celebration, in preference for Western symbols of success and upward mobility. Sometimes, even the lunch they bring to school is scoffed at, as it is not viewed as mainstream (Gurin, and Epps, 1975). This study concluded that Black youths often react to this rejection by mainstream society, by reverting to traditional cultural practices, as part of the “psychological and geographical pilgrimage to the homeland.” This “pilgrimage to the homeland,” as Rassool explained, is usually in a bid to dis-identify with the dominant culture that has so rejected them. If this were the case, the outcome would then be beneficial toward Black youth identity formation and community cohesion. However, from my perspective, based on observation of the Black Community in Montréal and elsewhere, such rejections by the dominant culture, have often resulted in Black youths rejecting their own community, and being left in the middle of a cultural nowhere (Rassool, 1999).

Chapter four attempted to define identity construction, using relevant literatures on universal, but particularly Black youth identity construction. I explored some of the vehicles or media of this identity formation, as located in parents and caregivers, but also how the immigration process heightened intergenerational conflicts, as well as formed the basis for impeding identity construction. In the identity construction by Black youth, it was found that for better or for worse, the predominantly White media, peer groups, role models, all play major roles in Black youth identity construction. Particularly, literatures abound that implicated racism, prejudice, discrimination, as complicit in outcomes related to school and educational success. As well, it was found that the Young Offenders justice system, served as impediment to positive Black youth identity construction, which in turn, produced negative outcomes in the Black Community. When internalized, these variables, which racism and “othering” personify, present as major stressors, as well as impede positive identity construction for Blacks. The impact is

even more profound on Black youths, who are the most vulnerable, but also are perceived as and expected to be the building blocks of a cohesive, sustainable Black Community.

Chapter 5

5.0.

METHODOLOGY

In chapter one, which I referred to as the prolog to this work, I informed that I would be applying the ethnographic research approach as my methodology for studying the Nigerian Community in Montréal. I also expressed, that I would be engaging the autoethnographic component of the ethnographic research method, in order to place or contextualize myself within my research. I argued, that the application of autoethnography, would place me squarely in my research, since I am identified, as well as self-identify as a member of the Nigerian Community. I also informed, that an autoethnography would lend me some “voice” and permit me to explore my life experiences, and journey, as a member of the Nigerian Community, which is the subject of my research. This is so, because, as a member of the Nigerian Community in Montréal, it will be impossible to speak about the group in isolation, and with reference to its culture, values, mores, norms, language and lived experiences, without speaking directly to and about my culture, values, language and lived experience as a sub-component of this whole.

The purpose of this study is to understand how Nigerian youth in Montréal construct their identity. The study also seeks to understand the impacts on the Nigerian youth, of negotiating identity construction in a racist environment. It is known that identity formation and construction can never happen in isolation, but through the instrument and sometimes deliberate or non-deliberate engineering of socialization agents (Connolly, 1998; Loslier, 1998; Bulmer & Solomos, 1999; Rassool, 1999; Brunsmas, 2006). The identified agencies are the family, peer group, school and educational institutions, community and the wider society. The study intends to explicate the role of these agencies, especially the Nigerian Community and the Black

Collective, as well as the Canadian society in the construction or formation of Nigerian and Black youth identity. Three research questions that emerge from this theme are:

1. How do Nigerian youths in Montréal construct and perceive their identity?
2. What is the role of the Nigerian Community and the Black Collective in identity construction among Nigerian youth?
3. How do racism and “othering” impact upon identity construction?

My choice of the Nigerian Community for this study, was informed by several factors, among which is the recency of Nigerians in the Canadian mosaic. The other fact is that Nigerians come from a very large, diverse, ethnic, tribal, and linguistic spectrum. This situation is further defined by their experiences in the pre-migration phase, due to colonialism and its attendant domination. Not only this, but the fact that most of the Nigerians who currently reside in Montréal, are not only defined and lumped together as Black, but are also defined by their ethnic and tribal allegiance, as well as inter-ethnic rivalries that were intentionally determined and sustained by British Imperialism. Having said this, Nigerians, both on the African continent and the Canadian Diaspora, primarily see themselves along tribal and ethnic lines as against national lines. Their interaction with one another is also based on their tribal allegiances as Igbo, Hausa, Fulani, Yoruba, Efik, Ibibio, Ijaw (Izon), Tiv, Idoma, etc. In this dispensation, Nigerians appear to have carried over into Canada, these pre-migration experiences of British imperialism, tribal allegiances and conflicts, into their post-migration journey. In this way, such lived and internalized experiences have defined, and continue to define their interactions with each other, the Black Community and the Canadian society. Again, Nigerians have a group experience as recipients of multiple domination, first, as colonial subjects in the pre-migration phase, which

they carried over into the post-migration phase. The second is their experience with post-migration domination in Canada.

My interest in studying the construction of identity, and identity issues with Nigerian youths is contingent on these socialization processes by parents and caregivers, and their impact on the youths. These socialization processes, hinge heavily on tribal, cultural and religious affiliations and allegiances, as well parents' and caregivers' internalization of domination here in the Diaspora (Cornell & Hartman, 1998; Knaus, 2006; Mokros, 2003). Sometimes, these socialization processes act as mechanisms for combating and resisting domination and "othering" within a dominant culture. Again, it is important to observe, how these socialization processes have not been lightened by the competition of the pull and push factors from the dominant culture. These pull and push factors, which the Nigerian youth is immersed in, and contending with, have implications for how they formulate and construct their identity. It also has ramifications for how this identity, once constructed is used for negotiating the Nigerian Community and the Canadian environments. For all youths across cultures, identity formation is an inevitable component of their developmental tasks, albeit always difficult and confusing. In the case of a Nigerian, Black child growing up in Canada, the challenges of this identity formation and negotiation are serious. These challenges are due to their residency in the Canadian environment, being purposely or inadvertently influenced by their parents' and caregivers' projected lived experiences. More profoundly and more poignantly is the impact of the dominant culture's projection on them of racism, racialized identity, social, political and economic domination, and exclusion. On account of racism, these minority youths resident in, and many born in Canada have as well, the statuses of outsiders, which become more profound as they attain adulthood and citizenship. In electing to conduct this research, I felt that it would

be interesting to see, how Nigerian youths living in Montréal, construct their identity, self-identify, are identified; as well as have identity constructed for them by their parents, caregivers and others from the majority culture. In addition, I ruminated that it would be interesting to see how the youths apply this identity, once formed, or still in its fluid state, to negotiate the Canadian “ecosystem.”

It is pertinent to reiterate that this study was neither designed, nor defined and mired solely by discourses of oppression and domination, and its reproduction, as experienced by Nigerians, Blacks and other minorities in Canada. The research has its fulcrum on understanding how the youths, parents, the community, the Black Collective, and even those from the dominant culture, with anti-racist ideologies, formulate, express and sustain resistance. This cross-cultural expression of resistance was not only within the dichotomy of ascribed and imposed identities, but also through social, political and community organizing. The next chapter, as well as the concluding sections of this study addressed the issue of formulation and expression of and sustainable resistance.

5.1. Research Design

5.2. Ethnography

This study uses the ethnographic research method located in Grounded Theory for the study of the Nigerian youth. Dobbert (1982); Davies (1999); Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte (1999); Babbie (2004); Beins (2004) described ethnographic research, as a means of discovering and describing the culture of a people, group or an organization. This definition is further framed within other important classes or patterns. Some of these are shared value patterns; interpersonal and inter-group behaviour patterns; and as patterns for the creation, acquisition, and use of material objects. For Dobbert (1982) the focus of ethnographic research is:

upon patterns that relate ideas to each other, to people, and to material objects, people to people, groups to groups, and jobs and tools to all of these...ethnographers generally study patterns as they relate to a given natural setting; that is, the setting of people's everyday lives, which contain interaction patterns they have established for their own purposes, and not either settings or patterns established for research or experimental purposes (p.39).

The most compelling argument by Dobbert was that she reminded and acknowledged that understanding these patterns did not complete the work of an ethnographer. She argued, that unlike programmed computers, humans, neither needlessly run through patterns, nor do they structure genetically constructed social patterns without reflections, as lower animals may do. Human beings assign meanings to patterns. Therefore, the search for patterns and their meanings is the pivotal operation of the ethnographer and the ethnographic research process.

To put it in context, Agar (1996); Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) argued that ethnography is the most basic form of social research, in the sense that it resembles some of the ways in which people have been acculturated to make sense of the world in everyday life. Through the use of ethnography, the researcher covertly or overtly participates, for long periods, in the daily lives of the participants. The researcher applies ethnography to watch what participants, individually or collectively do within a locality; observe what occurs, listen to what is said or what they have to say and pose questions. They also collect any pertinent data that will serve to expose and explicate issues or concerns, which have been identified or those that are salient in people's lives. Hammersley and Atkinson clearly stated that although ethnography was important in mapping people's lives and lived experience, it did not replace experimental survey, or documentary research. On the contrary, as they argued, ethnography is just a method that has its gains and pitfalls, but whose virtues were initially undervalued and underestimated by social scientists, due to their preoccupation with positivism. They therefore highlighted the values of ethnography as one steeped in the development of theory. The development of theory is achieved

over time, through the researcher shedding his or her initial misconceptions (Horman, 1991) and replacing these, over time, with an understanding of the phenomenon under study. Thus, through ethnography, the researcher, who is in the field of study, is provided the opportunity to explore other plausible lines of analysis than would a survey researcher. Ethnography is flexible, therefore valued for its devaluation of the need for extensive pre-fieldwork design (Muecke, 1994). Therefore the strategy and also the direction of the research can be altered easily in consonance with observed theory construction and changes in the location of study, or even away from it. Ethnography, as a tool of truth and objectivity (Ellis, 1990) can also be applied to test theory, especially those that have been conceptualized on a false premise or those resting on shaky grounds. Finally, Hammersly and Atkinson (1995) argued, that ethnography forms the basis for triangulation, in that different types of data can be systematically compared for their validity and relevance.

Thomas (1993) described ethnography, as the “tradition of cultural description and analysis that displays meanings by interpreting meanings” (p.4). Further to this, Thomas admitted to the role of ethnographers, as being that of studying culture, for the main purpose of describing it. Additionally, Thomas recognized the impossibility of a research, free from normative and other biases that must somehow be repressed and prevented from tainting the study outcome. For Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte (1999) ethnography represents:

A scientific approach to discovering and investigating social and cultural patterns and meaning in communities, institutions, and other social settings (p.1).

Schensul, et al. argue that the basic difference between ethnography, as a scientific method, and other social and behavioral science method of inquiry, is the fact that ethnographers discover the things that people do, why they do them, prior to assigning meanings to these behaviors and beliefs. To this extent, people’s view of their world then forms the foundation upon which local

theories are constructed, tested, linked to scientific literature, adapted and utilized there and elsewhere. Ethnography relies on the researcher as the primary vehicle for collecting data, which means that they have to pay particular attention to means of ensuring that their data is accurate, in order to rein in their partisanship and biases (Association of Social Anthropologists (ASA), 1987; Hammersley, 2000; Wright, 2003). This reliance on the researcher as the primary medium for collecting data, also presents as its primary drawback. Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte (1999), based their ethnographic methodology or ways of conducting ethnographic studies on four major principles. These are:

Ethnographic research is guided by and generates theory: This principle is based on a premise or belief that ethnography begins with a set of ideas that are connected. This set of ideas is continuously redefined through the life span of the study, until they become finalized and interpreted. They further stated that the ethnographic researcher, at the on-set of the study, formulates or conceptualizes a model. Once conceptualized, the model in turn, assists in compartmentalizing observations and interviews into units, patterns, and structures, allowing him or her to attribute meanings to social facts that would otherwise have been disconnected and meaningless. Therefore ethnographers have the ability to apply research in a local environment to generate significant or medium theories of culture (Trotter and Schensul, 1998). A local environment can range from some of the remotest settings, to a sprawling urban environment. The important variable is that a locality constitutes a distinct place, which might also mean a Community, a hamlet, a Collective or group, from which the participants are drawn, and the ethnographic research conducted. The research often begins with a question, based on prior work or study, which then provides the researcher in-depth knowledge about the setting to move beyond the initial question.

Ethnographic research is both qualitative and quantitative: There is no clear agreement amongst ethnographic and other social sciences researchers on whether or not quantitative research can be regarded as a part of ethnography. This lack of consensus is based on quantitative researchers' argument that it is nearly infeasible to convert belief or behaviors into numbers. However, the general perception is that both quality and quantity are important and vital in ethnography. This summation is based on the idea that although outcomes may be numerically rendered, however, through frequencies, percentages, correlations, and graphs, interpretation and communication of results inevitably leads the translation back into the qualitative language of ideas, concepts, and theories.

Both quantitative and qualitative data provide the cross-checks (triangulation) that ensure that the numerical data are valid and effective representation of the phenomenon being measured. At the same time, quantitative data provide the external validity that enables ethnographic researchers to generalize appropriately from their qualitative data (Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte, 1999, pp.5-6).

Ethnographic research is conducted locally: This principle is applied in describing the communities, organizations, schools, workplaces and other collectives, which have spatial definition that permits the ethnographer to have face to face, one-on-one interactions with participants, for the primary purpose of collecting data (Campbell and Gregor, 2002; Mead, 1963). The corollary is that in order to build theory that would assist in understanding beliefs, events, and behavior, the ethnographic researcher must listen to the narratives of community members, observe them in their activities, and learn through engaged participation in activities of their daily lives (Mead, 1963; Simon and Burstein, 1985). Once learned, the ethnographic researcher has the opportunity of applying these local theories as a fulcrum for articulating issues pertaining to other local communities. The comprehension of the community members' daily lives, also assists the researcher in understanding longitudinal transformations that occur in a

community over time. Not only this, but the fact that the local theory that has been learned can be applied in understanding the connections between events, such as policies and political and economic events that occur locally, regionally and globally.

Ethnographic research is applied: One of the essences for the conduct of an ethnographic research is that it becomes an efficacious tool for understanding and altering for the better, unfavorable conditions that are faced and endured by the participants and their communities. In its applied form, ethnography provides a rapid transition from knowledge of the conditions of people, as in the case of oppression, into policy and program development, as reflected by empowerment and self-determination. To this extent, applied ethnographic research can assist in achieving the following:

- a. describe a problem in a local population
- b. assist in understanding the causes (and therefore the prevention) of a particular problem
- c. assist members of the group under study to clarify and document their needs
- d. provide information that can identify resources supportive of change
- e. assist in formulating intervention program models
- f. help to assess the efficacy of an intervention
- g. modify interventions so that they will be more effective (Schensul, et al., 1999, p.8).

Ethnography, as a component of qualitative research, has increasingly become popular in recent times, according to Hammersley and Atkinson (1995); Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte, (1999). This popularity is due to the conflict existing between qualitative and quantitative methods, the latter of which was “modeled on the premise of natural sciences on the one hand,

and ideas about the distinctiveness of the social world, and the implications of this, for how it should be studied on the other” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p.2). Having said this, my utilization of the ethnographic method in my research, was informed by its ability to make me a participant in the study, through articulating or narrating my lived experience. Ethnographic method also assisted me to explore the narratives of my children, family members, and the daily lives and lived experiences of members of the Nigerian Community, of which I am a minute part. Ethnography offered me the latitude to watch what goes on, listen to what was and is said, ask, be asked and respond to questions. Mostly, the ethnographic research approach afforded me the opportunity to collect the most relevant data that are not only available, but also crucial in exposing and analyzing the issues that form the focus of my research (Lofland, 1995).

Social scientists, who choose to pursue naturalism as an aspect of qualitative method, therefore relevant to ethnography, debunk quantitative positivism as too artificial and too sterile. This argument is based on naturalism’s perception and consideration that the social world ought, and should be studied in its natural state, and as undisturbed as possible by the researcher. Naturalism believes that pure scientific research, as posited by the quantitative approach, does so in artificial and sterile settings, through experiments and laboratories. Where then lies the relevance of naturalism and qualitative approach to ethnography? My answer is that naturalism lies at the heart of sensitivity to the nature of the setting, through describing what goes on in the setting, how those involved perceive their actions, those of others and the context in which the action occurs.

The way naturalists see it, as argued by Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) is crucially in terms of fidelity to the phenomena under study, rather than to a set or sets of methodological principles, regardless of how much philosophy supports its arguments. Naturalists draw a clear

distinction between social and physical phenomena and through this way, draw a lot of inspiration from philosophy and sociology, especially phenomenology and symbolic interactionism. These social science traditions concern themselves with the interaction order of daily life and experiences, rather than the structures associated with large scale and relatively fixed social forces, laws, and hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is the study of methodological principles of interpretation. The focal points of these three traditions listed, are that it is impossible to understand the social world in the mere terms of causal relationships, or by subsuming social events under universal, one-size-fits-all laws. These traditions, further posit, that social action as locatable with humans, are based on and infused by social meanings, among them intentions, motives, beliefs, rules and values. Additionally, these meanings are not static, but in a continuous state of change and alteration. To the extent that meanings are not dormant and static, a single individual can represent physical stimulus in one way at a time in point, and do a 360 degree turn on the same stimulus at another time or even shortly after (Mehan, 1974; Morgan, 1997; Simon, 2003).

The important value of naturalism to ethnography is predicated on the existence of cultural variation patterns across and within societies, as well as their significance in understanding social process. Therefore, my ethnographic study exploited or harnessed various capacities for learning new cultures, or even better understanding the existing ones, in addition to the objectivity that the process endows. In my case, and although I researched a “familiar” territory or group, (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p.9) I strove to and appealed to an ethical requirement on my part, to render this study “anthropologically strange.” In this way, I can make the presuppositions or pre-assumptions that I have taken for granted, as a member of the Nigerian Community, clear and explicit, while rendering the culture or the Nigerian Community,

which is now an object, available for study. In using the ethnographic research approach, through marginality in social position, location and perspective, it would be possible for me to construct a vivid account of the cultures and lived experiences of Nigerians in Montréal. My intention, which I hope I succeeded in, was to construct it in such a way that I am able to understand it as it directly concerns me, as someone from within, as well as articulate it as being external to and independent of myself as the researcher.

Stewart (1998) suggested that there are certain characteristics of ethnography, relevant in studying, understanding and articulating cultures and lived experience. The first is holism, which believes anthropologically that culture and society are inextricably intertwined, as such can only be understood in the context of the whole. The second appendage is context sensitivity, which argues that the immersion by an ethnographer in a setting, allows her or him to see linkages as components of the whole. The third principle of ethnography, as a sociocultural description is what (Wolcott, 1992; Malinowski, 1922, 1961) referred to as understanding the native's point of view, through recording the subjective vision of the actors. The fourth, and one of the most relevant appendages of ethnography, is participant observation, which involves close-up involvement of the researcher in a participant role, and in a natural, day-to-day interaction with the people and study setting. In my research, I applied Participant Observation, which is a relevant tool of ethnographic research, due to its ability to initiate the researcher into membership of the culture or community that she or he wishes to study. It was also relevant to my social location, in that this ethnographic research has an autoethnography component, which was essentially geared towards studying and understanding myself, in order to apply it in understanding the community of study. Autoethnography, as an ethnographic choice, assisted me in trying to understand my life, as well as my lived experience, as an individual, who is a

biological or natural member of the group that I studied. Armed with this self-understanding, or in concert with others, I applied this in studying, understanding lives and lived/shared experiences of Nigerians in Montréal, who are the focus of my research. This, I accomplished through autoethnography, which I will attempt to explain in the following discussion.

5.3. Autoethnography (Researcher as Subject)

Autoethnography is a recent term, developed in the 1980's, and which has been applied to understand, or in some post-modernist term, replace self-stories, personal narratives, narratives of self, complete-member research, auto-observation, self-ethnography, etc. (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). The term autoethnography, had been in use before this time, but the full meaning was only realized by (Hayano, 1979; Colic-Peisker, 2004) who ascribed the term to anthropologists conducting researches of their own people, due to being born and raised as members of the group they are studying. This privilege of being a member of the group, then affords them the opportunity of deriving intimate knowledge of the group, or in the case that they are not already members of the group, the study allows them to achieve full membership of the group. According to Ellis & Bochner (2000) autoethnography hovers in the autobiographical realm of writing and research which portrays:

several layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural. Back and forth autoethnographers gaze, first through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations (pp.733-768).

This definition of autoethnography by Ellis & Bochner, agrees with (Davies, 1999) and my explication of the uses of ethnography in a previous section of the study. This explication and Davies' argument, hinge on the open admission of the involvement of ethnographers with the subjects of their research. Davies argued, that the involvement of ethnographers with their

subjects provides an opportunity to liberate the field from a “positivist” based assertion, which demands that it be value-free scientificism. The autoethnographic movement, according to Davies (p.176) was further strengthened by a need to address the ethical concerns about anthropological endeavor, and its links to the exploitation of Third World Peoples. The other movement was championed by feminist and postmodernist epistemological critiques, which socially situated the nature of knowledge and the inevitability of specifying the knower. Davies argued, that autoethnography, as a component of ethnography, is a product of ethnographic knowledge and social situation of ethnographers. This social situation must be acknowledged and its significance or impacts addressed during analysis and the reporting of findings. Davies explored the use of autoethnography in ethnography, in terms of its effects on the experience of fieldwork, and on the ethnographer, who uses others to learn more and reflect upon oneself.

The challenge of autoethnography, which I grappled with in my research of the Nigerian Community, is that it also placed me as a research object. On the one hand, as a research subject, it assisted my attempt to understand life, experiences and myself. On the other, autoethnography has the ability to make blurred and fuzzy, the personal and the cultural, as I as the writer go back and forth, inward and outward. In doing so, and due to the nearly mandatory use of first person singular, “I,” its challenges for persons such as myself from cultures, where self-exposure and self-eulogy are not considered modest traits became profound. By writing in the first person, I chose not only to be an insider in this research, but also to declare myself as an object of the research. In the pure scientific, positivist’s domain, being an insider may be viewed as having vested interest, as well as being in violation of the separation of the researcher and subject. Again, autoethnography, which uses the first person singular, for me, is a departure from pure academic writing that I am used to. In the case, where the use of first person singular has

never been the norm, my training in the use of English syntax, runs into direct opposition or cross-purposes with the concept of autoethnography. In this process, I agree with Ellis & Bochner (2000) that autoethnography is an exposé or depiction of the self, which texts are unable to hide, therefore must show concrete action, dialog, emotion, embodiment, spirituality and self-consciousness. In this instance, it takes the form of relational and institutional rendition, involving history, social structure and culture, which must be delivered as action, thought, feeling and language (p.757).

The main concept behind my choice of autoethnography was to make ethnography readable, engaging, evocative, generally understandable and personally meaningful. My use of autoethnography was to extend this ethnographic research beyond mere academics, which, the age cohort I am studying would slam as “boring,” too academic, therefore may not elicit the kind of interest that people, especially youth have while reading a favorite novel or book. One of the ethical considerations in the course of my research was to explain how, and in what ways my research subjects from Nigeria would benefit from the research. If the research follows the autoethnographic approach, which not only applies the first person singular, “I,” then those, particularly the youth, for whom the research was conducted, would be able to read and understand the research process and outcomes. Reading and understanding the research by Nigerians, and Black youth, as well as sundry concerned persons, will then present with possibilities for “follow-throughs,” of any observations or suggestions that interpret or give meaning to their experience. The expectation was and remains, that my readers would experience my probe for understanding, the questions that I pose, how my subjects respond, what their answers evoke, the new issues that arise and how I interpret my story and theirs. This process

then enables me, as the autoethnographer, to see how my story compares or changes as I interact with other stories of fellow community members.

5.4. Phenomenological interviews

In my research of the Nigerian Community, I found an inter-twining of, and existing relationship between ethnography, autoethnography and phenomenology. This means that phenomenology and autoethnography are offshoots of ethnography, without which ethnography may be incomplete, especially when it relates to lived experience of a cultural group. My research design is evident in its incorporation or combination of ethnography, autoethnography and phenomenology, due largely to their interconnectedness. Having said this, there exist several research methodologies relevant to the social and scientific study of humans and their interactions with society. The methodology of my research was embedded in Grounded Theory, which is a systematic methodology, designed to generate theory from data. Subsumed in Grounded Theory is phenomenological interviews, an ethnographical approach, which was developed in 1913 through the abstract writings of German mathematician, Edmund Husserl. Creswell (1998) stated that these abstract writings of Edmund Husserl, attempted to understand and address phenomenological philosophy. In very simple terms, phenomenological interviews are important, as they are a means of eliciting and describing the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals, or group, about a concept or phenomenon. As an interview process, it has its fundamental strength in the ability to give voice to marginalized populations. Generally speaking, Blacks, who fit this profile in most ways, have endured centuries of subjugation by the dominant culture. In this regard, I evaluated phenomenological interviews as an elicitor of understanding of the collective experiences of Black people in the United States and Britain, and applied it, especially, for interviewing and understanding Nigerians in Montréal,

Canada (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). The phenomenological interview approach has been applied extensively by the social and human sciences, including psychology, nursing, health sciences and especially in sociology.

In his application of the phenomenological approach, Husserl enunciated several stages or process, as a means of searching for and understanding a phenomenon. The first is related to what he referred to as essential, invariant structure or essence; or the central underlying meaning of the experiences and emphasis. The corollary is emphasizing the intentionality of consciousness, where experiences straddle both the outward appearance and inward consciousness, based on memory, image, and meaning. The third, according to Husserl, is that this study applies a data analysis that is phenomenological in nature. This is explained by the fact that it follows through the methodology of reduction, analyzing specific statements and themes, as well as a questing for all possible meanings. The fourth aspect of Husserl's approach, is the expectation that the researcher eschews, or avoids all prejudgments and returns to natural scientific methods, by relying on intuition, imagination, and universal structures to get a picture of the experience (Creswell, 1998).

The four major themes that are derived from Husserl's philosophical perspectives are (1) a return to the traditional tasks of philosophy, as conceived by the Greeks, whose emphasis was on the search for wisdom. On the flip side, current 19th century scientism has its emphasis on empiricism; (2) a philosophy without presuppositions, as it suspends all judgements about its concept of what is real until their certainty can be established; (3) the intentionality of consciousness, which is predicated on consciousness being directed at an object. This then translates into the intentionality, becoming inextricably twined to an individual's consciousness of its existence, rather than being divided into the binary of subjects and objects; (4) the refusal

of the binary of subject and object, which implies that the reality of an object or phenomenon is only perceivable within the meaning of the experience of that individual or group.

There have been several social scientists and schools of thoughts, in all fields, that have directly emerged with hybridized versions of Husserl's phenomenological interview approach. These include such schools as reflective/transcendental phenomenology, existential, dialogical and empirical phenomenology. Alfred Schutz's social phenomenology is interested in understanding how individuals in society construct meaning out of social interactions with others. Therefore, his, found relevance to my study of identity formation among Nigerian youths, Black youths and the Black population in Montréal (Creswell, 1998; Schutz, 1967; Swingewood, 1991). In spite of the variations existing among social scientists, there is a general consensus on the procedure, based on which researchers, using the phenomenological approach are expected to develop a plan of study. This plan of study is aimed at articulating the particular experiential phenomenon, which will form the fulcrum of their study. The summation of all the various schools of thoughts on the phenomenological approach, led (Creswell, 1998) to outline some of the major procedures for its application:

the need for the researcher to comprehend the philosophical perspectives behind the phenomenological approach, particularly the concept of studying how people experience a phenomenon. This procedure has relevance to the study of identity construction and perception among Nigerian youth, and members of the Black Community, due to their experiences as a minority group in Canada. These experiences as a group have further been complicated by racism, social and political exclusion. Central to this, and relevant to my study, is what Husserl defined as *epoche*, where the researcher brackets his or her own preconceived ideas about the phenomenon, in order to understand it through the lens and voices of the informants.

Bogdan & Biklen (1992); Denzin (1989); Patton (1990) based their arguments on Husserl's postulations, by describing three basic phenomenological principles of interviewing to facilitate the study process. The first, is what they designated epoche, and based on Husserl's work; while the second and third were called phenomenological reduction and structural synthesis, respectively. In the epoch inquiry, the researcher, such as in my situation will look inwards for self-examination of internalized personal biases, assumptions or stereotypes. These are now according to the approach, expected to be purged and in its stead, insight gained from these biases for sustainable analytical purposes. Patton (1990) described the second, phenomenological reduction, as the isolation of the previous world assumptions, in order to promote the location of the subject of inquiry in its pure, unadulterated state. The derivatives from this unalloyed state are what I brought to bear on the textual themes in this study. Structural synthesis, which is the third step, collates these untarnished experiences, for the purposes of describing and explaining them to the wider audience.

Following from this, the current study structures research questions that explore the meaning of the experience for individuals, to request them to describe their everyday lived experiences. In the case of Nigerian youth living in Montréal, their lived experiences include constructing and maintaining an identity or a set of identities, while being buffeted by conflicting influences from their family, peers, their ethnic and tribal cultures, and the Black population on one hand. On the other, is the impact of the majority culture, expressed in the struggle to juggle their parents' culture and that of Canada; also in racial discrimination, social, political marginalization and exclusion in school, among peers, and all facets of the Canadian society. Through phenomenological interviews, I collected data from individuals, who have experienced the phenomenon under review. Husserl argued, that the ways in which these experiences are

documented, provide a window to the world of individuals and groups, who have experienced the phenomenon (Patton 1990, p.70). The collection of data included individual interviews, which were augmented with researcher self-reflection and review of literature.

There are different types of interviews applicable to phenomenological or other forms of ethnographic research. Consistent with how I approached the interviews of the Nigerian Community research respondents, Spradley (1979) described phenomenological or ethnographic interview, as “a series of friendly conversations into which the researcher slowly introduces new elements to assist informants to respond as informants” (p.58). Introducing new elements too rapidly renders the process like a formal interrogation, which will in turn diminish rapport, in addition to the possibility of a discontinuation of cooperation by the respondents. Spradley further informed, that the three most important characteristics of a phenomenological interview are its explicit purpose, which means that both the interviewer and respondent expect the interview to involve purpose and direction. This purpose and direction is in order to arrive at a determined destination. The second is ethnographic explanations, which means that the ethnographer must repeatedly offer explanations to the respondent, to facilitate the process from the first encounter to the last day of the interview. The third are the ethnographic questions, which are descriptive, structural and contrast questions. (Holmes, 1995; Sokolowski, 2000; Steeves, 2006).

Fontana & Frey (2000) suggested the most common form of interviewing to be individual, face-to-face verbal interchange. Others are face-to-face group interchange, mailed or self-administered questionnaires, and telephone surveys. Interviews can also be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. In the case of structured interviews, such as I applied for the gathering of narratives of youths and members of the Nigerian Community, I asked all respondents the

same series of questions with a limited set of response categories. This is not to say that I did not pose open-ended questions during the face-to-face interviews. I did, because Open-ended questions stood to, and elicited more information during the interviews than would a close-ended type. The next step involved analyzing the phenomenological data, which according to Moustakas (1994) and Polkinghorne (1989) divides the original protocol into statements or horizontalization. The components are then transformed into clusters of meanings, expressed in phenomenological concepts. The final step of this stage is the bundling together of the transformations, to derive a general description of the experience. This experience involves the textual description of what was experienced, including the effects and the structural description of how it was experienced. There is the latitude for the researcher to incorporate personal meaning of the experience, by applying single-subject analysis. This is followed by intersubject analysis, as well as by analyzing the role of the context in the process.

The final stage of the phenomenological approach, according to Creswell (1998) is designed to accomplish an enhanced understanding by the reader, of the essential, invariant structure of the experience. This presents as if the reader experienced it by him or herself, as well as being cognizant that a single, unifying meaning of the experience exists. For example, Nigerians, Nigerian youths and all Blacks, as well as most non-Black cultures in Canada share a unifying meaning in their experiences with shades of Black, ethnic and tribal variations and sometimes conflicts. They also share experiences with migration or emigration, culture shock, adaptation and integration, identity construction, identity conflict, identity confusion and crisis, minority status, racism and racialized identity. The other unifying meanings, particularly in the case of persons of color, are racial discrimination and harassment in schools, employment and

social interactions; social, political and economic marginalization and exclusion by the dominant population.

5.5. Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a term often used especially in social sciences research, to locate oneself within the world of the phenomenon, or individuals and groups representing the phenomenon under study. It has become more manifestly applied in ethnographic and particularly phenomenological research, due to a need for the researcher to have, as it were, an “out-of-body experience.” This “out-of-body experience” is then applied reflexively, to bring clarity and familiarity to the researcher, of the lived experiences of the respondents that she or he has chosen to study. Against this backdrop, is the well-worn argument, and to some, belief that only members of a group or a race are truly capable of understanding and representing the experiences of members of that group or race (Carniol, 1987).

Van Maanen (1988, 1991) accused qualitative researchers of their negligence, and avoidance of discussions of the subjective lenses, through which they have often viewed their research and research subjects. Cochran-Smith (2000) furthered this argument, by underscoring the role of race and race relations in the shaping of the research, and the fall-out from the research, based on these parameters. Here, and according to Bulford & Pattillo-McCoy (2000) the argument is that some researchers have applied reflexivity for self-therapy, engaging in ethnic or racial “narcissism” and confessional tales of mistakes of the field study. In procuring this self-therapy, these researchers have rather neglected to address the more pressing matter of race, representation, and accounts of the data or its implications for validity or social justice. In dealing with the narratives of racial minorities, especially Blacks, the question of “how do I treat

my subjects?" constantly nags the researcher. This nag is due, to the feeling that the subject lies somewhere behind the interview respondent. Dunbar, Rodriguez & Parker (2002) stated that:

although there is always an envisioned subject behind an interview respondent, this subjectivity-the subject or agent who produces meaningful, contextualized interview responses-becomes especially problematic when the respondent is a member of a "nonmainstream" group or population. If there are myriad assumptions made about mainstream respondents, they commonly emanate from presumed similarities between interviewer and interviewee. For nonmainstream respondents-whether they are persons of color, members of a culturally distinct or enigmatic groups, or persons of nonconformist political persuasions or lifestyles, for example-the complications and uncertainties of how such subjects will be constituted virtually multiply. A common consequence is that "crude and simplistic" portrayals of complex and nuanced experience emerge, because subjects are not accorded their due respect as distinctly situated individuals. (p.280).

Through the instrumentality of Reflexivity, an ethnographic researcher, whose study is on marginalized groups, challenges authoritative ways of knowing and validating knowledge. She or he does this, by finding the actual determination in real time and location of the life condition of the subjects, through understanding our lives and the other lives and mapping them. Campbell and Gregor (2002) suggested that only by approaching people's lives, their conditions in real time, real locations, to explore and understand the actual world in which things happen, in which people live, work, laugh and cry, can they claim to have found a window into the world of the subjects. To this extent, the preference for a disengaged, distanced approach, at the expense of an engaged, physical and mental reflexivity, is considered within the domain of the obsolescence. The disengaged, distanced approach was not my preferred study approach of the Nigerian Community, because not only did I consider it obsolete, but mainly because I am also a member of this Community, as well as one of the researched. In light of my knowledge of the Community, as well as most of its members, who kindly consented to be participants in my study, it was, and would therefore have been impossible, even hypocritical, to be distant, disengaged or pretend that I had never met or known them prior to the interviews.

Although, I have already, in the previous sections of this paper, contextualized my social location in relation to the choice of title and methodology, I cannot overemphasise the importance of my application of reflexivity, during my conduct of ethnography of Nigerians, Nigerian youths and the Black Community in Montréal. To recapitulate, the most fundamental aspect of my reflexivity is that I am in the category called Black. In this equation, all the highs and lows affecting every Black individual and groups have already impacted on, and continuing to affect me. I have a first hand knowledge of how it feels to be “Black,” due to having experienced the subjectivities attached to “Blackness,” predominantly framed in racism, racialized identity, racial harassment, political, economic and social exclusion, just like other so-called Blacks. I also live with my spouse, who is “Black;” and both of us are the legal custodians of our four biological children, who are equally “Black,” and some of whom themselves are youths and have narrated similar experiences as cited, since their arrival in Canada.

I had the status of a Convention Refugee when I arrived in Canada, until I became a Canadian citizen a number of years ago. Prior to this, and as one from Nigeria, I have experienced hardship from being a colonial subject of British imperialism, to that of a child soldier, in the Nigerian Civil War (Nigeria/Biafra War) of the 1960’s and 1970’s. Since becoming a Canadian resident, I have experienced poverty and temporary single parenthood, due to the bureaucratic maze of the Canadian immigration and its intractable, indeed selective reunification procedure. Significantly, I have been physically and emotionally engaged with the Nigerian and Black Communities across the board. Especially, I have been engaged with children and youths, whose lives have been located at cross purposes with the social welfare systems, educational institutions, and Canadian judicial system; and whose lives I have been

striving to make more meaningful, through advocacy and assistance, to come to terms with their individual and group identities.

Through my use of reflexivity I earnestly strove, and hopefully was able to avoid being a reproducer of oppression, by constantly reminding myself of my “knower privilege,” which I possess through academia, and which also located me in the binary of power between the research respondents and myself. It is possible that as a researcher, I may presume and be perceived by the marginalized group that I am researching on as possessing this “knower privilege.” However, among the majority population, my scholarly and “knower” privilege may sometimes be meaningless, due to my not being identified as a male of European descent, as well as due to this latter group’s occupation of the higher echelons of Canadian society’s hierarchy of power. Despite this, and with minimal regard to being a member of the group and category called Black, indeed my reflexivity was to shed my “expert knowledge,” arrive on a “tabula rasa,” and depart, fortified with new theories, writings and meanings on my psyche. As Mishler (1986) puts it, to recognize the “asymmetry of power” and redistribute this power by aiming to be taught and understand in real time, the real world, especially of Nigerian youths, Nigerians and the Black Community, which I hope I did.

5.6. Methods of Data Collection

Ethnographic research and phenomenological interview methods, such as I undertook, with regard to the Nigerian Community, required the collection and collation of a significant amount of data. The collection of data, as well as methods of collecting this data, definitely underscored or determined outcomes of the research questions. There exist a wide range of data collection methods, but for the purposes of my research and scope of this study, I examined and

applied Participation, Observation, In-Depth Interviewing, as well as books, written documents and analysis.

5.7. Participant Observation

Participant Observation has been developed from the disciplines of qualitative sociology and cultural anthropology, as an important inquiry and data collection principle. DeWalt and DeWalt (2002); Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte (1999) stated that it is a process of learning, through being exposed to or being a part of daily or routinal activities of participants and their setting. Schensul, et al. argued, that participation is always defined by the researcher presenting and placing him or herself in the event being observed. The researcher engages in a “near total immersion” (p.92) when the researcher takes up residency in unfamiliar communities, with little or no knowledge of the local culture, and proceeds to participate by assuming full-time residency and membership of the locality. The acquisition of full-time membership, affords the researcher privileges to events, such as rituals, initiations, rights of passages, and any other identity-producing event that would not normally be granted to one deemed to be an outsider.

Participant observation is a data collection technique that requires the researcher to be present at, involved in, and recording the routine daily activities with people in the field setting (1999, p.91).

There are two fundamental purposes, for which a participant observer attends a social location, according to Spradley (1980). The first is to engage in activities or behaviors appropriate to the situation, while the second is to observe the activities, people, and physical aspects of the situation. In Participation or Participant Observation, the researcher assumes membership of the social world or phenomenon that is intended for study, giving the latitude to hear, feel, see and receive first hand information on the subject under research. It is a means of describing what goes on, whom or what is involved, when and where things happen, how they occur, and why. In

some cases, this component of ethnographic research is what Babbie (1989, 2004) described as the observer-as-participant research. It entails one identifying himself or herself as a researcher, interacting with the participants in the social process, and making no pretense of actually being a participant. Jorgensen (1989) described the methodology of Participant Observation as:

exceptional for studying processes, relationships among people and events, the organization of people and events, continuities over time, and patterns, as well as the immediate sociocultural contexts in which human existence unfolds (p.2-25).

Jorgensen further argued, that there are at least seven fundamental principles of Participant Observation that ultimately aim to evolve practical and theoretical truths about human life, grounded in the realities of daily existence. I refrain from getting into any details, due to the scope of this study. Suffice it to say that as a member of the Nigerian and Black Communities in Canada, I had no need to assume membership, since it had already been endowed on me by the accident of birth and socialization. More poignantly, and for better or worse, I am also a recipient of most of the positive and negative racial and cultural benefits that Canada has to offer. Being a member of the Nigerian Community, which is a part of that silenced minority, I have a first hand opportunity to have heard, felt, seen and received unadulterated, non-garnished information of my Community and its members. My interview respondents, who also happen to be members of the Nigerian Community, did not flinch or felt awkward when I joined them, which was most of the time.

5.8. Observation

Often, Participation and Observation are interchanged as data collection methods, even when they represent two distinct methods of collecting data. Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte, (1999) described observation as “what can be seen through the eyes of the ethnographer” (p.95). This means that observation’s major drawback, as well as that of ethnography, is that they harbor

“personal biases, values, and other tacit, implicit, or unarticulated theories” (p.96). Marshall and Rossman (1995) described Observation as entailing the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for the study. In this way, the emphasis becomes that of being physically present in a social or cultural location, painstakingly recording and taking notes related to activities, ways of life, and human made objects involving this location.

Reid and Smith (1981) argued that although the use of direct observation is demanding and time-consuming, it allows the observer or researcher to obtain and in my case, transform (Wolcott, 1994) certain qualitative data, through direct access to the phenomena of interest. These phenomena may include, studying communication patterns, with particular reference to dyads, such as that existing between a parent and child, married partners or among group members, as in the case of the Nigerian Community. Reid and Smith insisted further, that although observer or researcher biases and the Hawthorne effect are unavoidable trade-offs, with direct observation, it is always possible to eliminate distortions associated with reported data.

Jorgensen (1989) and Spradley (1980) identified the Unfocused and Focused Observations, as two main techniques of Observation. Again, I refrain from getting into the details here, owing to the scope of the study. In light of this argument, I have been a member of the Nigerian Community for all the time I have been in Canada, and as such have had ample time to observe most of what goes on in the Community, as well as some of my research participants prior to and in the course of the study. Like Jorgensen advised, I remained open to the unexpected, even when I had a previous experience related to the Nigerian Community. This privilege endowed me with more learning power, in addition to empirical evidence of the existence of these facts, through individual and group interactions, informal conversation and

casual questioning. I applied Observation as a technique of information gathering in the case of my research of the Nigerian Community. However, unlike other outsider observers conducting a research, I derived my privilege, not from being granted that status, but due to already being a member of the group through ascription by birth. As a member of the group since birth, I have participated in activities that have afforded me the opportunity of a progressive Observation of Nigerians from different and diverse ethnic groups, across age cohorts, social class and gender lines, including their similarities and peculiarities. For instance, since arriving in Canada, I have participated in most activities, as well as been an organizer of Nigerian and Igbo Community activities in Montréal. Currently, I am the President of the Igbo Association in Ottawa and Gatineau region. Therefore, prior and in the course of this study, I have conducted Participant Observation of Christmas and Easter parties, Nigeria's Independence anniversary celebrations, Christening ceremonies, picnics, funerals, protests and other formal and informal activities organized by the Igbo and Nigerian Communities (Sanjek, 1990b).

5.9. In-Depth Interviewing

In-depth Interviewing, which has already been discussed in an earlier section of this study, under phenomenological interviewing, is perhaps the most significant method of data collection in the social sciences domain. It is a method of conversation, used by the interviewer to provide a window into the world and perspectives of the participant or participants (Patton 1990). Seidman (1998) argued for the purpose of interviewing as:

not to get answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses, and not to "evaluate" as the term is normally used. At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience. At the heart of interviewing research is an interest in other individuals' stories because they are of worth (pp.1-21).

Seidman described In-depth, phenomenological interviewing, as a method that combines life history, interviewing and focused, in-depth interviewing, informed by assumptions drawn from phenomenology. In-depth Interviewing is designed to draw the subject into reconstructing her or his experience within the framework of the research topic. Further to this, In-depth Interviewing uses open-ended questions, in order to build upon and explore the responses of the participants to the questions posed. Although Seidman suggested that In-depth, phenomenological Interviewing should involve conducting a series of three separate interviews with each participant, as designed by (Schuman, 1982), I did not follow this process in interviewing Nigerians. In place of three separate interviews, I conducted, single, open-ended, face-to-face, audio recorded interviews, some, between sixty to ninety minutes in duration, with my research participants. Fortunately, all my respondents already knew me, appeared quite comfortable, and did not necessarily need to get to know me first.

I structured three (3) different Interview Guides to comport the range of the interview participants already listed, as comprising the youth, parents and caregivers and community leaders. In the case of the Youth, I posed questions related to their birth and location, migration and length of Canadian residency, where this is the case. I also asked how they identify themselves and perceive themselves to be identified, school experience and educational attainment, their perception of the Nigerian Community, as well as the Canadian society. For the parents, caregivers and community leaders, I asked questions relevant to their migration, length of Canadian residency, work experience, socialization process for their children, identity issues, race discourses since their Canadian residency, as well as how these discourses have impacted on their approaches to raising and socializing their children here in Canada (Schwandt, 1997). In spite of this, I gave latitude for the emergence, exploration and articulation, by the participants,

of new angles, from the existing questionnaires, which gave the participants the loophole to speak to their lives and lived experience. In this vein, my research of the Nigerian Community in Montréal followed the part of a qualitative methodology that dwelt on a pre-determined number of participants, numbering eighteen (18) Nigerians all together.

The respondents were made of up ten (10) youths, five (5) parents, caregivers and three (3) community leaders, for a total of eighteen (18) interview participants. What this meant, was that I searched for a predetermined number of respondents, to highlight not only the range of participants, but also the various locations that comprise the research population. The idea behind this was to give would-be participants outside the sample, the chance to relate to the experiences of the subjects already involved, during and after the study (Seidman, 1998).

I took cognizance of the ethnic configuration of Nigerians in Montréal, therefore strove, as much as demographics and previously identified sample size permitted, to interview persons and families from different ethnic groups. These were represented by the Igbo, Yoruba and Edo and Rivers ethnic groups, with some of the families having spouses of West Indian origin. It is important to indicate here that several Montréal-based, Nigerian ethnic or tribal groups or communities hold meetings and events, to signify their existence, sustain the uniqueness of their cultures and provide support for one another. Some of the Nigerian ethnic associations, which have been identified, and from which I drew some of my participants, include the Yoruba-Omo Oduduwa Association; Igbo-Otu Umunna or Otu Ndi Igbo Association of Quebec; the Edo Association; and AkwaCross Association, etc. In principle, the Nigerian Canadian Association of Montréal encapsulates and is the umbrella under which the various Nigerian ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic groups residing in Montréal, Quebec fall and are subsumed.

The importance of In-depth Interviews is underscored by its ability to lead to an interest in the entire life of an insider or insiders, leading the interview to take on the form of life history. Researchers like Edwin Sutherland have successfully applied this method in the study of crime and criminal behavior (Sutherland & Conwell, 1967). Most social scientists and researchers use qualitative research that involves Observation, Participation and In-depth Interviews in making inquiries (Rubin, and Rubin, 2005). Since these present as methods of inquiry, they were invariably valuable tools that I utilized in the inquiry on the Nigerian Community in Montréal. Indeed, I combined all the three aspects of Participation, Observation and In-depth Interviewing process in the study, in order to gather relevant data on this population.

5.1.0. Ethnic and family constellation of research participants and respondents

All the interview respondents were of Nigerian descent, except for one (1) female (parent) who was originally from the West Indies and married to a Nigerian male. For logistical reasons, as well as to curtail the inroad of too many variables, I arranged, where possible, to interview youths and parents from the same family. There were two (2) couples, one of who was the parent of two youth respondents. The other couple was the parents of one (1) of my male, youth respondent. The last parent, who made up the fifth respondent in the caregiver category, was a male. I also interviewed his two children, a female and a male. The rest of the six youths, who made up the ten (10) youth participants in my study were five (5) females and one (1) male from three (3) different families. I did not interview the parents of these six youth, due to my sample size. At least, one respondent was the daughter of a caregiver, raising his brother's child, as aptly illustrated in the case of kinship foster care or adoption. Here, Timberlake & Chipungu (1992); Hegar & Scannapieco (1995) argued about the existence among Blacks, of a traditional and universal care of children. This care is rendered by relatives informally, temporarily, and

especially in response to crisis. I also interviewed three Community Leaders, all of whom were males. Additionally, all the adults as interviewed, including parents, caregivers and community leaders, were still in marital relationships and living with their spouses at the time of the interviews.

5.1.1. The composition of the interview participants and respondents

5.1.2. Youths-males and females-ages 12 –23

I interviewed ten (10) youth altogether, ranging from the ages of thirteen (13) to twenty-three (23). Of these, only three (3) were males, while the rest seven (7) were females. If the Black adult is struggling with giving voice to their own interpretations in a majority culture such as Canada, this challenge would be even compounding for the Black child (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). Gubrium and Holstein further argued, that interviewing children, allows for the exposure of issues that are salient in their lives, but which are not overt in their interactions and discourses. Like all children, but particularly the Black child, issues such as identity, sexuality, and relationships with the same or opposite sex are often salient, but mute. If this is the case with a Black youth from the Diaspora, it then must be deeply discomfiting for the Nigerian child growing up in Canada. This is owing to the child having the status of being raised by parents, who are first generation immigrants, therefore still immersed and defined by their tribal or native cultures and ways of doing things.

In the Nigerian cultural context, children are still meant to be seen, not heard, and taboos such as being arraigned under the Young Offenders Act, teen pregnancy, single-motherhood, divorce and homosexuality, attract severe sanctions and pariah status among community members even here in Canada. This cultural state of affairs has the power to mire such youths in what I would refer here to, as the marginality of marginality. It is understandable, even tolerable

to be marginalized by outsiders, in which case, the marginalized may choose to return to his or her kit and kin. However, it can be devastating, when one, especially a Black or Nigerian youth is marginalized, both internally, by persons whose responsibility it is to love and protect them, and externally by those who may not have had any obligations towards the youth in the first instance. Having said this, I tried to, and found it interesting to use this forum to give voice to such youths, as well as assist them to navigate and comprehend those terrains or environments that they expressed having difficulty negotiating. The first environment would be the youth's own family and community, the next, the Black Community or Collective, followed by the Canadian mosaic. I found that only in the context of my interviews were such revelations made; and I found their narratives quite revealing. At the same time, I took into account the rights of children in their relationship to power and authority with me as an adult and so-called "knower" (Myall, 1999).

5.1.3. Women

The invisibility of women over the centuries, in a paternalistic, patriarchal world, is the subject of many books, especially with the inroad of feminism since a few decades now (Darlington and Mulvancy, 2003). I dwell on this social fact, only in so far as it highlighted women's discomfiture in the arena of power, and authority. The other fact was that interviewing women, presented for me as a major methodological issue. Among Black women, the dynamics of power and racism present as a double bind, in that it leaves them even more disempowered. In the Western societal hierarchy, Black women are the most disenfranchised, due to being left at the bottom rung of the societal order. Gubrium and Holstein (2002) described some of the impact of interviewing women, which I was aware of, and remained very conscious of through the duration of this study. As they argued, some of the issues with the subjectivity construct of

women lay, in certain societal and cultural expectations, about how and what women should be or should do. Collins (2000) argued that in Canada, as in other parts of North America, the same ideology applied during slavery, to justify the roles and positions of Black women, underscores the contemporary need to control them. The dialog over the oppression of Black women, by all social categories, including Black males, is supported by several scientific findings and arguments, including those of Bruegel (1989); James & Busia (1993); Langan & Day (1997); Simms & Malveaux (1986); King (1988). As a Black, educated, male researcher, the Insider/Outsider dilemma consumed and defined my relationship with gendered Black or Nigerian participants and respondents. I am an insider, due to my cultural heritage as a Nigerian of African descent. Conversely, I am an outsider, due to the fact that I am a "Black," educated male, who could, as well as be, purposefully or by default, a reproducer of oppression against Black women ordinarily, but much more profoundly in their role as research respondents.

The reality of this scenario is evidenced by the fact that when oppressive, White power structure becomes internalized by Black men, it is reproduced, transferred, and mostly projected onto Black women. For the Nigerian Community, my apprehension over the transfer of misdirected aggression was serious, more so, if the respondent's geographical region of origin [in the Nigerian context] was different from mine. For example, if the interviewee is a West Indian woman, who came to Canada under the Domestic Scheme, as opposed to the African, her experiences as a domestic hand, will inevitably underscore how she views and accepts me, being male and of a presumably "higher" socioeconomic status. In another instance, women in some societies, such as Nigeria were, historically and culturally raised to be seen and not heard. They are culturally expected to cook, clean, bear and raise children, as well as cater to the needs of their family, usually, at their own expense. This results in these women being erroneously and

stereotypically assessed as intellectually inferior or inept. Again, due to the experiences of Black women in Canada, as previously indicated, I was cognizant that some of the traumatic revelations during my interviews may evoke Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, requiring referral to support services (Brzuzy, Ault and Segal, 1997). The essence of this detail is to understand the navigational intricacies of interviewing women, so that they are not emotionally harmed or further marginalized by my research approach. Having said this, I did not encounter any challenges during the interviews with the two women participants in this study. Indeed, I consider myself lucky to have known them over the years, which made my interviews with them, as well as the responses they gave an interesting and rewarding experience. As well, none of the women had any religious taboos that would have made me overly cautious. Indeed, they presented as quite comfortable and eager to speak with me on their lives and lived experiences.

5.1.4. Men-married and bachelors

Men have for a rather long time occupied social and political positions that have made them suitable and a-taken-for-granted interview category. From the perspectives of Gubrium and Holstein (2002), the category described as men is internally diverse. The exception is the similarity of cultural self-presentation. I feared that this cultural self-presentation may create some difficulties in the interview process, when male interview participants choose to put this self-presentation into “gear.” If we agree with the assumption that gender is a social construct, then men as a social category must perform certain social and physiological roles that will signify them as men. One of these roles may present as reacting to any attempt to interview them as threatening. This perception of threat will then evoke the dormant, but primitive defensiveness, and subsequently the struggle for control, which may ensue between the researcher and the researched or respondent.

As an interview respondent, the male participant unconsciously relinquishes control of most of his masculinity, to the point of becoming vulnerable. As race is a socially constructed category I initially felt that this struggle for control may become even more relevant among men in the Nigerian Community, due to the internalization of the dominant society's constructed subjectivity of inferiority (Davis and Gandy 1999; Dominelli, 1997; Drieger and Halli, 2000; Feagin, 2000). Anecdotally, Nigerian men are so challenging to engage in a discussion that it goes without saying that if you want to identify a Nigerian male from a crowd, disembark, say, from a plane at a crowded airport and try making a general statement, like "I heard that a plane overshot the runway here today." Any one who interjects with "who told you?" is sure to be a Nigerian. Thus, Nigerian men are legendarily said to answer questions with questions of their own. Quite a number of men in the Nigerian Community in Montréal came to Canada as actualized individuals, some occupying higher echelon positions, before migration or in some cases, emigration, forced on them by several years of military usurpation. While in Canada, some of them like me, for instance, have had to start life from scratch under some humiliating circumstances (Rodgers, 1975). In this regard, they would have come to the realization that their position in the Canadian social order is within the lower rungs, due to their migrant status, color, racism and marginalization by the host country.

From the foregoing, an important research methodology I strove to pursue was a non-moribund interview technique, which took the Nigerian male participant's masculinity and pride into account. Taking a male participant's masculinity into account entailed continuing to respect their cultural, religious practices and values. As indicated earlier, I have observed that Nigerian men, of whom I am one, can be challenging to engage in an interview process, as every action is suspect, and prone to the "who-told-you?" probe. This resistance is due in part, to their

internalized experiences with colonialism, interminable interregnum of military dictatorships, and a rogue social and political process. The other may be due, to their negative experiences with a deluge of swindlers or “con” artistes, thanks to globalization and a failing native economy. In respecting the cultures and values of Nigerian men during this process, I was sensitive and respectful, but firm with this population. Certainly, my aim of interviewing this population, which I succeeded in part, was to remain the interviewer, rather than be turned at some point into the interviewee.

5.1.5. Community elite and national leaders

Although Nigerians are new arrivals to Canada, some of them have striven hard, and risen in their chosen fields, as doctors, lawyers, engineers, professors, teachers, businessmen and women, community leaders, even social workers and other so-called elite. In the suggestions of Marshall & Rossman (1995) there have not been a lot of scientific researches done of the elite group in society, although they are acknowledged. A majority of research and studies that have been carried out have been of those in societal marginality, as recipients of the exercise of power by the elite. One of the reasons adduced for this lack of study of the elite, according to Marshall & Rossman, is based on accessibility. This accessibility is curtailed, due to the presence of gatekeepers, such as secretaries, personal assistants, lawyers, security guards, etc. From the perspectives of Marshall & Rossman, what particularly underscores the elite are power and wealth. The elite class has the capacity to provide valuable information, owing to the positions that they hold in society. They have the ability to furnish an overview of a particular organization or how this organization interacts with others. The elite dynamic is however different in the Black, but especially Nigerian Community for the following reasons. This difference is apparently owing to their rise in the societal echelons of Canada being still rudimentary for

obvious reasons, including having the status of recent arrivals, the stranglehold of racism and discrimination. Torczyner (1997) notes that although Black men in Canada have marginally higher levels of educational attainment than do all men and all women in Canada, they earned just about 85 percent of what all Canadian men earned from full time employment.

Torczyner and Springer (2001) found, in a more recent study on Demographic profiles of Canadian Black Communities, that White high school dropouts, were more likely to be hired by employers than Blacks possessing university degrees. What this means, is that the existence of an elite class within the Black and Nigerian Communities in Canada and particularly Montréal is negligible. I went to this population for information, and in consideration of Nigerian Community leaders, organizers, lawyers, doctors, businessmen and women, social workers and professors as an elite class. Aldrich (1988) and Daniels (1988) suggested some guidelines for approaching and interviewing the elite class of the majority culture. In approaching the Nigerian Community elite, organizers and leaders, Aldrich, and Daniels suggested that although courtesy, friendliness and professional demeanor that a researcher extends to all participants are normative, the expectations are even higher and further valued by the elite. Suffice it to say that like all elite, I interviewed Nigerian leaders in Montréal, as the repositories of the Community's cultures and values, as well as and for their knowledge and understanding of the Nigerian and Black Community.

5.1.6. Location, time and dates of interviews

In the typical anthropological and ethnographic research, such as epitomized by Leaky (1970); Malinowski (1979); Mead (1965) the researchers would sojourn, reside and learn the language and culture of the participants, in order for the research to be successful. In the case of the Nigerian and Black Communities in Montréal, it was a bonus that as the researcher I was

already residing in the same general location, as well as speaking some of the languages used by this population. Already, and as a member in good standing, of the Nigerian and Igbo Communities in Montréal and Ottawa, I was provided a comprehensive list, including telephone numbers, home and e-mail addresses of the membership. Although this list changed and required updating, due to re-location, personal preferences not to be listed, and transitions, it represented a fundamental database that was handy during the research process. In view of this, the database which I compiled, included the times that they were available to meet, their home and work locations, telephone numbers, and whether they will prefer the interview to be held either at their home, place of work or even a neutral ground (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002; Seidman, 1998). To this extent, I conducted all the interviews in each of the respondent's home. The exception was one participant, who, for the sake of convenience and logistics, chose to be interviewed in the home of another Nigerian family. I had driven all the way from Montréal to meet with and interview him. When I arrived in Montréal and dialed his cellular telephone, he was close to the home of another Nigerian, therefore chose to be interviewed there. To me, this gesture highlighted a significant display of cohesiveness, comfort and trust amongst some of the members of the Nigerian Community.

5.1.7. How was access gained?

The interview process does not take place or happen in a vacuum, but related to other variables, principal of which is gaining access. Seidman (1998) informed that the interview stage signifies the evolution of a relationship between the researcher and the participants that began with the initial access. The mode of this access will usually define the initial and subsequent interviewing process. A researcher has the choice of whether to pursue the interview on an overt basis or a covert one, depending on the terms of reference. In researching the Nigerian

Community in Montréal, I applied the overt procedure, (Bruce, Ksanda, Loughlin, and Johnson 1983 and Stoddart, 1986) which is the recommended process, unlike the covert, for ethical reasons related to the study of human subjects. Denzin & Lincoln (2000); Mason (1996) have argued for Informed Consent, which was my method of requesting for interviews from participants in the Nigerian Community. The authors have described the overt procedure, as a mechanism ostensibly designed to protect respondents, by advising them in advance of the possible outcomes. Those outcomes could be ones that may be potentially unfavorable. When this is potentially possible, the researcher will inform, advise and invite the respondents to excuse themselves at any time, prior to and or during the interview. In interviewing Nigerians in Montréal, I formally elicited each of the respondent's participation through a Letter, as well as an Informed Consent document, which they read, acknowledged understanding of, and signed their consent prior to the interview.

Jorgensen (1989) is of the opinion that there are several ways of gaining overt access to human settings, hinged mainly on the resourcefulness of the researcher. The most desirable is one, where the researcher receives assent from an authority or people within the setting. This assent is based on a conviction that the researcher could be trusted. The more persons in authority within the setting that are prepared to support the research, the more feasible will be the access to the location. If this becomes the case, the researcher is expected to present the appropriate authority with the research proposal, outlining the research plan, purposes of the research, goals, as well as clearly define how the research stands to benefit the respondents or research subjects. In the case of the Nigerian Youth, I approached them through their peers, but more especially through their parents and caregivers.

The pitfall of the overt procedure, with its attendant Informed Consent process, lies in the so-called Hawthorne Effect. Hawthorne Effect is a conscious or unconscious effort by a research subject/s to alter their usual behavior or routine, when they become aware that they are being studied (Roethlisberger & Dickenson, 1939). Having said this, the benefits of the overt access strategy far outweigh the pitfalls. I also explored and applied the following media in gaining overt access with my respondents in the Nigerian Community. The media included, telephone calls, e-mails, facsimile (fax), letters, individual and face-to-face contacts, visits and group contact, such as during Nigerian Community events-Christmas and Easter parties, picnics, home visits, etc. The attempt below describes with whom, as well as the means by which I gained access into and conducted my research on the Nigerian community in Montréal.

5.1.8. Friends, peers and acquaintances

For the purposes of the interview research, I elicited the cooperation of some of my friends within the Community, across ethnic, tribal, regional and linguistic blocs, in gaining access to the Nigerian Community. As I showed earlier in this study, Nigerians are made up of over 250 ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups, who may not all be represented in Montréal (Lewis, Robinson and Rubin, 1998). However, a cursory and undocumented observation indicates, and was proven by a demographic profile of Nigerians that the majority and dominant ethnic groups comprising Igbo, Yoruba, Edo, and a limited number of Hausa, appear to be greater in number in Montréal than those from other tribal groups, such as Rivers, Efik and Ibibio. It has been suggested that one of the reasons for the limited number of Nigerian Hausa in Montréal, is that the Nigerian government's quota system or "quotacracy" as it is popularly referred to in Nigeria, favors the Hausa, mostly by default, much more than most other ethnic groups. It is also rightly or wrongly believed that there are less Western educated Hausa than the

Yoruba and Igbo, due to the influence of Islam, although I am unable to vouch for the authenticity of this assertion, which may be based on ethnotribal stereotyping. To this extent, and due to the assumption that only a few educated elite exists among the Hausa ethnic group in Canada, those who attain any sufficiently acceptable education, not withstanding how it compares with those from other ethnic groups, then must fill the quota allotted to their region and ethnic or tribal group. There is also an observation, that when very well-educated Hausa travel and remain outside of Nigeria, they are there as elite government representatives, such as Diplomats, Consuls or Ambassadors, and have little need to lift themselves by their “bootstraps,” unlike the other major ethnic groups. This is one of the “Divide and Rule” legacies of Lord Lugard and the British imperialist structure.

My use of friends as informants from the Nigeria Community served, not only in providing me with a pool of research participants, but also a network or chain-link of potential participants referred by my friends. Again, interviewing friends is fraught with pitfalls, some of which include the fact that the interview relationship sometimes has no chance of developing under its own steam. Agar & MacDonald (1995) suggested that this scenario occurs on account of the belief that both the interviewer and the interviewee, assume that they know each other well, take their relationship for granted, but especially, tend to weave this informal relationship into the more serious and formal interviewing process. Morgan (1997) claimed, that the problem of interviewing friends, peers and acquaintances, is exacerbated when the assumptions existing with friends, relate to invisible boundaries. These invisible boundaries relate to issues that both parties have in principle decided to avoid. For example, it may have presented as a touchy issue, when during the interview, I, as an Igbo, sought the opinion of a Yoruba or Hausa interviewee friend on the Nigerian Civil War. There is the fact that each of us represented the enemy during

that period, as well as the fact that my interviewee friend may not have been impacted by the war in the same way as myself. During that war, most people on the Nigerian side were so much better equipped in military ordinance and means of survival, than the Biafrans. To this extent, the Biafran side never had any significant or sustainable opportunity to strike in the Nigerian territory, and inflict the type of mayhem that I, and other Easterners of the defunct Biafra experienced. Most on the Nigerian side, neither heard the crack of gunfire, nor ever saw fighter planes and bombers strafing and bombing the Biafran populace indiscriminately. Succinctly put, most on the “Nigerian side” as against Biafran, never went or saw this war that lasted for three years. To avoid this pitfall, I established sufficient distance, shelved assumptions and sought clarification related to each participant’s narratives (Seidman, 1998). Fortunately, none of the questions or the responses spoke to the touchy issue of the Nigerian Civil War.

5.1.9. Formal and informal Gatekeepers as Guides & key Informants

In the process of recruiting known or unknown participants, the researcher will confront gatekeepers, who are guides and key informants. Gatekeepers and informants are very important, as their participation may promote or mar access to the larger pool of participants and community members. Indeed, gatekeepers can be formal or informal. In the case of vulnerable, legally or medically excluded populations such as minors, institutionalized individuals, such as are located in schools, prisons and mental health facilities, access may only be possible through their legitimate gatekeepers. The Black Community in Montréal has a large pool of residents 27 percent of whom in 1991, were children less than 14 years of age (Torczyner, 1997).

As indicated in the earlier sections of this study, the interview range for children, adolescents and young adults from the Nigerian Community was in the 12-23 age cohorts. For this purpose, and in the case of these children, some of whom were very young, but who are the

obvious subjects of this research, I sought to and established beachheads through formal gatekeepers such as parents, guardians, caregivers, teachers, community and program organizers. The Black Community and especially the Nigerian Community in Montréal, with a recent history does not operate large institutions, except when we take into account community centers, where after-school programs, teen mentoring, teen mothers, golden age programs, etc. are organized. In this case, and considering that the sample size was quite small, as well as located within families, I had no need to seek the consent of any Boards of Directors and program coordinators as formal gatekeepers, in order to gain access to the youths and others serviced by the Community. In the Nigerian Community, as in most other Black Communities in Montréal, there is the existence of a large pool of informal gatekeepers, who may not necessarily be in positions of formal authority, but are generally respected and have views that hold sway among the group. On account of this, I targeted such informal gatekeepers, as the Chairpersons found in all the ethnic and tribal groups within the Nigerian Community, for recruitment both as participants and informants. I also solicited, and they delightfully rendered their narratives about living in Canada.

Given that I am the researcher in the Nigerian Community, where I am not only an insider, but also a member, by virtue of birth and socialization, there were many issues related to confidentiality, which I had to procedurally adhere to. For instance, I have been sure to painstakingly put away the interview tapes, transcripts from the interviews and any other identifying materials, where members of my family would access and possibly be exposed to them. I have also refrained from disclosing the names of the interview respondents to my family or other members of the Nigerian Community. During, and since I completed the interviews, I have been to several activities organized by the Nigerian Community or the Nigerian ethnic

Communities, where I met and was in interactions with some of my study participants. However, I have refrained from discussing the interviews. When they have asked me about the outcome, I have responded only when I had privacy with them.

Having hopefully satisfactorily explained the methodology of my research, as well as methods of data collection, the next installment, which is chapter six, is the exploration of the how and wherefore of the Nigerian youth identity construction. The next chapter represents an in-depth rendition of the ethnographic narratives of Nigerian youth, parents and caregivers, as well as Community leaders living in Montréal. These narratives represented an attempt on my, but especially and poignantly, their part, to articulate, in a clear and lucid manner, the voices of the interview respondents, of their individual, family, Community and collective lived experience in their location in Montréal. Simultaneously, their narratives of lived experience in Montréal drew significant inferences from, and insight into the entire echo society called Canada. This is because whatever experiences they have lived in Montréal, invariably mirror the experiences of other Nigerians, indeed other Blacks in Canada. In some cases, I will present excerpts representing their narratives or voices in a verbatim format.

5.2.0. Theoretical account of analysis

Consistent with Grounded Theory, which utilizes coding for processes that are fundamental in ongoing social life, I was engaged in collecting and analyzing qualitative data all through the duration of the research. I have deliberately separated the theoretical account of data from data collection section, in order to make the process clearer. This is on the premise that analysis, using an iterative method, informs data collection process. Although iterative method is applied in computational mathematics, it is also applicable in ethnography during attempts to resolve a problem, by finding successive approximation to the solution starting from an initial

guess (Greenbaum, 1997). The current study employed content analysis, which was rendered in a coded form. The interviews of the participants were audio-recorded and diligently transcribed by me, yielding concepts and hypotheses, which provided platform for advancing the research. Having conducted the interviews in random order and without deference to any cohort order, the broad concepts and hypotheses focused on what each participant expressed as his or her lived experience. These experiences spoke to their migration, family, socialization, education and school, integration, gender issues, employment and the labor force, race, racism and social exclusion.

In applying Grounded Theory as the practitioner's mode of inquiry we do not subscribe to an objectivist axiology, or epistemology in which we struggle to identify typical behaviors, which in turn would warrant those behaviors to be defined as a generalized knowledge of human nature. On the contrary, working within an interpretive axiology and epistemology, we search for and interpret contextual nuances in concert with others. The purpose of the research is not to doggedly prove that my interpretations are correct or even true, to give me the latitude and audacity to prescribe interventions. Rather, the discursive exchanges within the research process afford us the opportunity to challenge our own self-understandings by bringing our tacit knowledge to light, recognizing assumptions that we have taken for granted, and more importantly, examining our preconceptions and sometimes deep misconceptions. Grounded Theory offers the process, where we strive to understand and portray the range of meanings that we, and others might bring to our discursive exchanges. This assists us to expand our capacity to respond wisely within discursive moments of practice (Piantanida, Tananis, and Grubs, 2002). Coding or analysis in Grounded Theory applies comparative method within and between data

sources and eliciting questions of the data, in order to feel for similarities and dissimilarities in the data.

In light of ethnography and Grounded Theory, which differs from quantitative methodologies, in that it does not seek to identify the most stated themes, particular and close attention is given to emergent themes in the data, in order to recover unarticulated experience, which may be located outside. Therefore, ethnographic researchers must learn strategies, as well as become intuitive by taking their listening beyond the traditional definitions and assumptions. This way, according to DeVault (1999) the researcher is able to discern particular phrases that subtly demand investigation, in order to analyze the disjunctures that produced them. I applied this “intuitive” listening in the current study to try and understand, for the purposes of analyzing the lingering and deep pains endured by Nigerian parents especially, due to the exclusionary practices of racism in Canada.

Going through the data, comprising transcripts of a single interview with each participant, document analysis and participant observation material, I identified conceptual themes and assumptions related to immigration, socialization, family, community, school and education, employment and labor force, racism, racialization, marginalization and social exclusion. I then attempted to broadly categorize the data, contingent on how the themes or definitions related to or differed from each other. I diligently “listened” to the transcription, sometimes, recalling each participant’s exact words or actions during the interview, in order to remain true to that voice, as well as use that as a leverage to generate the largest possible number of themes, which will assist the grounding (Strauss and Corbin, 1997). At the end, I applied selective coding as a strategy that assisted me to fill in the map, integrating categories and concepts at an enhanced and more abstract levels, which also incorporated a model hinged on the core category or idea of relations.

This selective coding also informs the rounding out of data analysis. I also during this stage, tried to uncover patterns, validate relationships and solidified connections. The process entailed tracing backwards for cases that did not match, or those that elucidated on or validated what had been narrated, in order to render the analysis richer, more complex as well as to enhance credibility (Brotman (2000)). I did not create a written audit trail *pe se*, due to the sample size, but kept detailed email correspondences with most of the participants especially at the on-set of the study. I also was privileged to continue to meet and interact with all the participants during subsequent Nigerian Community events. This sustained contact enabled me remain abreast of, as well as capture the research process, including any changes that may occur with the research design and interview guides. Being in regular contact with the participants, on account of belonging to the same community group also assisted me transfer, find reliability and remain in conformity with both research process and results. It also assisted to enhance the research process, search for and locate clues to the social organization of knowledge, thought and feeling. This is especially against the backdrop that my research has a reflexivity component as a part of its design.

5.2.1. Limitations of the Research Design

Interviewing participants for research purposes pose some challenges, but even more so with youth, with respect to outreach, permission, disclosures and confidentiality. A majority of the participants were youth, some of them minor, and most were still residing at home. In view of their minority status, it required that I first approach their parents and caregivers for consent, prior to and during the interviews. Additionally, these youths and their caregivers already had full and busy schedules-school, work and other activities, which set limits on when and how to meet and conduct the interviews. It did not help that I was driving all the way to Montréal, from

the Ottawa region, on scheduled interview engagements, some of which did not hold or the participant engaged in other equally more important matters.

Owing to the multiple ethnicities and tribal enclaves that represent Nigeria, I clearly had the intention of interviewing Nigerians in Montréal across these ethnic and tribal lines, in order to derive fairly balanced responses. However, this was not realized, as Montréal appears to have an overrepresentation of Nigerians from some ethnic and tribal groups, while others have few and in some cases, none. In this vein, it was not feasible to interview members of all the Nigerian ethnic and tribal groups in Montréal. Contingent upon this situation, the interview participants were drawn from only four ethnotribal groups, represented by the Yoruba, Igbo, Edo and Rivers state. Again, and in the youth category, there were more girls than boys, due in part to the fact that there appears to be more girls in the age cohort that I was studying than boys. The youth participants were drawn from the same families as the parents and caregiver participants, which profile showed that there were more girls in these families than boys. I have presented gender issues in more details, in chapter six, based on the voices of the Nigerian youth and their parents.

There was also the fact that being a researcher, who is also a member of the Nigerian Community, and possibly too close for comfort, the participants, who all know me rather well, may have been too embarrassed to express themselves well, share intimate information about themselves and family, as well as some of their personal, perhaps, unpalatable lived experience. It is possible that they may fear having to face, as well as continue to see me within the Community in the future, for the things they may have revealed during the interviews. Further to this, the sample size of eighteen (18) participants may not have been sufficient to draw an unimpeachable, therefore sustainable findings and conclusions with regard to the study. It is also possible that the experiences of this small proportion of Nigerians in Montréal may not suffice

for all Nigerians in Montréal, therefore, neither generalizable to all Nigerians in Montréal, nor may the outcomes from this sample size represent the entire lived experience of the other Nigerians and Black people generally.

The greatest limitation of my study is the fact that I am the researcher as well as the researched. This is due, in fact to being a Nigerian, as well as a member of the Nigerian Community, who happens to live in Montréal and the Ottawa and Gatineau region, and experienced, continuing to experience the same phenomena with other Nigerians. Needless to say, that my personal biases, perceptions, assumptions, as well as countertransference, may have implicitly, overtly impacted or even impinged on the final outcomes of the study. I have provided a comprehensive analysis of my researcher dilemma towards the end of this study.

Chapter 6

6.0.

Emergent Themes and Analysis

6.1. Demographic profiles of Interview Participants

Demographic profiles of all the research participants are provided below, based on the three delineated cohorts. A total of eighteen (18) respondents were interviewed for this study. Of these there were ten (10) youths, (within the age range of 13 to 23 years), comprising seven (7) girls and (3) three boys. In the adult cohort, I interviewed five (5) parents/caregivers, of whom two (2) were women; and three (3) community leaders.

6.2. Table 1: Demographic profiles of the youth participants

Name *	Gender	Age @ time of Interview	Grade school/Current occupation @	Nigerian ethnic/tribal origin	Canadian born/ # years in Canada
Uche	Male	15	10	Igbo	CB
Nkenna	Female	18	11	Igbo	2
Angela	Female	16	Adult Ed-Class D'Accueil	Igbo	2
Obinna	Male	15	10	Igbo	CB
Karim	Male	16	11	Edo-Bendel	CB
Adaeze	Female	20	Undergraduate-University	Igbo	18
Trish	Female	20	CEGEP	Igbo/Quebecoise	CB
Bose	Female	23	University graduate/employed	Yoruba	14
Sophia	Female	18	High school	Igbo/Quebecoise	CB
Funmi	Female	21	Undergraduate-university	Yoruba	14

6.3. Table 2: Demographic profiles of Parents/Caregivers participants.

Name *	Gender	Approx. age @ time of Interview	Occupation/Employment	Nigerian ethnic/tribal origin	Canadian born/ approx.# years in Canada
Marcel	Male	50	Specialty machinery design/fabrication	Igbo	22
Stan	Male	53	Building maintenance	Igbo	30
Tamara	Female	45	Building maintenance	Edo-Bendel	12
Gloria	Female	49	Building maintenance	Caribbean	33
Femi	Male	48	Building maintenance	Yoruba	14

6.4. Table 3: Demographic profiles of the Nigerian Community Leaders interview participants.

Name *	Gender	Approx. age @ time of interview	Occupation/Employment	Nigerian ethnic/tribal origin	Canadian born/ approx.# years in Canada
Peter	Male	58	Social Services	Bayelsa-Rivers state	28
Razaq	Male	56	Engineering	Edo-Bendel State	34
Dan	Male	62	Retired; Self-employed	Igbo	35

*****I have substituted all names with pseudonyms***

6.5. Emergent Themes and Analysis

This chapter presents the findings that were based on the narratives of participants involved in the study. This presentation compares and contrasts voices of youth and adults, on various salient issues such as family, community and community cohesiveness and socialization;

school and educational attainment; identity and identity construction and gender discourses.

Other emerging themes are, integration and fitting into the Canadian society; employment and occupation; the issue of race, racism, racialization and exclusion. Our discussion of the emergent issues begins with the narratives of the youth, as well as the analysis of their lived experience using the above-listed themes as platforms.

6.6. Socialization, identity, identity construction, conflict/confusion

Parents socialize their children, expressly contingent on the type of socialization, acculturation, transfer of norms, cultures and values that they were bequeathed by their own parents during their formative years. The socialization process received by Nigerian youth from their parents, whether it be in Canada or Nigeria, is in line with universal concepts (Breton, 2005; Kaplan 1999; Kroger, 2004) of socialization and acculturation, but distinct in its cultural definitions, contents and relativity. In the case of the Nigerian youth, most of them categorically declared and identified themselves as Nigerians. When I asked them why they would choose to be identified as Nigerians, nine (9) out of the ten (10) youth declared that they were born by Nigerian parents, as well as being raised in a Nigerian home. All the youth also stated that they were being raised and socialized by their parents to be Nigerians, albeit through subtle means, including being with fellow Nigerians and the Nigerian Community. They also spoke about the types of food they eat, what they wear, some language and cultural ways of doing things. Many of the youth admitted to their ambivalence, when they were initially introduced to the Nigerian Community, cultures and ways of doing things. However, they also informed, having adjusted to these expectations that they are now beginning to enjoy and look forward to attending events with other Nigerians. Most of the youth also informed that they have most of their friends from the Nigerian Community, connected to other Nigerian youth, families, as well as cultural ways of

doing things, including norms of conduct, beliefs, skills and values (Lum, 2003). 15 year old

Uche stated:

Well, I don't really hang out much with White people. Am usually with my Black friends. You know, either with my Nigerian friends or [...not clear]... or I am with er...just Black people at my school. I really don't hang, really don't hang much with White people or play sports with them or anything (Uche, p.32, lines 1436-1441).

Asked where he fitted in most, 15 year old Obinna stated:

In Black Community...[inaudible]...Because I'm Black...the Nigerian Community...[inaudible]...I fit-in in those communities, but mostly in the Nigerian Community, em, yeah. (Obinna, pp. 17-19, lines 780-842).

In response to where she has most of her friends, Nkenna's response was:

Mostly from Nigerians...Than outside the Community. And most of the people that I have met from outside communities is people that I have met from Nigerian Community...So, I have more friends in the Nigerian and Igbo Community than I have out there. And most of the people that I have out there is people that I have known through this, through either one Nigerian or from either one Nigerian or the other. (Nkenna, p.36, lines 1606-1624).

Because most times, I feel more comfortable, like when I am with my family or people that mingle with my family, or people that are from Nigeria, because we kind of have the same culture, and we kind of understand the culture (Nkenna, p. 5, lines 193-196).

Ironically, and despite parents' and caregivers' struggle to maintain the cultures and identity of their children as Nigerians; they have experienced challenges, especially with getting their children to speak and articulate their own Nigerian ethnic languages. Perhaps it would be for the reason that these ethnic languages or dialects are not mandated, as well as will obviously not contribute to their upward mobility and integration into mainstream Canadian society. In this regard, Nigerian youth are under tremendous pressures to succeed by mainstreaming into the Canadian society, and at the same time must have to stay culturally connected and identified, in order not to be assimilated or lose the essences of their culture. The Nigerian Community offers some Nigerian languages instructions to their youth. However, these language instructions are

currently only limited to the three major Nigerian ethnic groups, namely, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. The reason that there are only three languages offered by the Nigerian Community to the youth is due to the existence of over 250 languages (Lewis, Robinson and Rubin, 1998) in Nigeria, which would render the teaching of more languages unwieldy. The youth also learn their ethnic languages through their parents, some of whom speak these to them at home. Adaeze, one of the youth, stated:

And because at home, my parents speak Igbo, and we eat Nigerian food and we go to Nigerian events and things like that (Adaeze, p.6, lines238-240).

It was observed that when parents do not speak their particular Nigerian ethnic language to their children, they quickly lose that language.

Maybe by, like, so that...like language, so that you don't forget the language. So we speak Igbo at home... Yeah. We speak Igbo at home. But at my age, I don't think, even though I was hearing, and I wasn't speaking with anybody, I don't think that I would forget. But maybe [*inaudible*] people that are younger, like you have to keep speaking to my little brother so that he doesn't forget the language. Because he could, he may forget the language. So, we keep on speaking Igbo at home. We just do things the way we do it and we act like Nigerians and... (Angela, p.12, lines 504-516).

Among the ten (10) youth interviewed, only one, Sophia, who is also of a mixed race, clearly declared that she did not perceive, and would not self identify as a Nigerian. She based her perception and argument on the fact that she was raised by her mother, a White Quebeoise, who has been separated from her spouse, a Nigerian, ever since Sophia was a child. Indeed, until recently, when she began residing with her father, she was also unable to, and did not define herself as Black because Whites and Whiteness surrounded her in all her activities of daily living. Asked if she would self-identify as a Nigerian, Sophia argued:

Em, I actually don't...Because like [laughing] I grew up with my mom, and because, so my mom speaks French and she's White. So, it was just like...and my dad, he was, he lives within [*an area*] and he always like drive down and everything. So, I saw him, is not like I saw him all the time. So and of course I live with my mom, and I go to school with White kids and my friends are White. So, I never even actually thought it at all. It

never really like occurred to me that my dad is Nigerian, so that would make me Nigerian. I actually never really like thought about that until I got here this year... (Sophia, p.15, lines 653-662).

Paradoxically, Sophia's sister, Trish, identified herself as a Nigerian, even when she displayed some doubts about this ascription. She even prided herself as displaying traits that characterize her as Nigerian.

Because I was raised with my mom and she's a Quebeceer, I guess. I would say yes, because I find I still have the attributes like a Nigerian, like I'm stubborn, like you know...No, yeah they are [laughing]. It's not that I think, they know what they want and they get it, you know? That's how I see it. My dad's always like that. So is my grandmother, so is my cousin, everyone else I know, who's Nigerian. And then, the reason why I was saying no is just because I don't know much about it (Trish, pp.17-18, lines 774-785).

Trish was not quite sure about whether she should identify herself as Black or White, and settled as not fitting in any of these two "strait jackets," but being able to navigate and gravitate between them. The case of Sophia and Trish is consistent with research that states that on a micro level, although self and identity will differ from person to person, it is the level of operational social closure that ultimately determines the level of importance attached to being a part of a distinct social group (Christian, 2000). It is possible that Trish's intentions in choosing to be non-aligned, is to occupy a distinct, separate, non-monoracially assigned space, which is alongside the other already existing racial options (Brunsma, 2006).

One of the Nigerian youth, Funmi, appeared to have a significant struggle with any identity disclosure, which required her to bifurcate her identity. She pointedly asked me if she was to pick, and choose, which she obviously did not like. Funmi was born in Nigeria, came to Canada as a child and has spent most of her life in Montréal. She wondered whether picking and choosing will render her less of each of the identities, as she preferred to be identified as both Nigerian and Canadian.

I think my cultural identity is quite important, because I do view myself as Nigerian/Canadian, I'm not sure which one I hold more...Or the egg, I'm not quite sure. I mean I was born in Nigeria, so that part of me is very much innate. And but I lived here a lot and I pretty much grew up here. Exactly! So, I'm not sure how to choose between the two (Funmi, p.9, lines 401-413).

It would appear that the issue of identity is the only major area of agreement between the Nigerian youth on the one hand, and the parents and Community leaders on the other. In the case of Nigerian parents, caregivers and Community leaders living in Montréal, they pointedly stated that they were socializing, and continue to socialize their children to be Nigerians, as well as expect them to continue to see themselves and self identify as Nigerians. This consonance was evident by the declaration by most of the youth that they perceived themselves first as Nigerians. The stand is also without regard that a good number of them are clearly Canadian born, have been socialized and integrated into Canadian mainstream, as well as have never been to, or may never visit Nigeria. There appeared to be an apprehension on the parents' part that the Canadian culture was so powerful, because they are immersed in it, that the children may lose the cultural essence of who they are, as Nigerians. Parents fear that this loss will be complete, including culture and values, by which the parents were raised, and into which they were now socializing and acculturating the youth. The parents and Community leaders cited some of the malaises of Canadian society, which they considered incompatible with the cultural and normative ways of doing things in Nigeria. They highlighted the North American "style" of sexuality, sexual permissiveness, sexual orientation, individuality, high rate of separation and divorce, with the accompanying loss of familial ties and relationships. Others were the loss of filial piety, as some of the culturally incongruent ways of doing things here.

Poignantly, it would seem that the incidence of serious individual and government corruption, massive human rights violations, political unrests, deliberate impoverization of the

populace, and other social malaises in Nigerian did not appear to carry as much weight in the parents' comparative analysis of Canada and Nigeria. Indeed, some of the parents, like Marcel, and a Community leader, Razak, still strongly believed that they and their children would be returning to Nigeria at some point in their lives, despite current realities. For instance, Marcel, a parent, maintained that since he has many investments in Nigeria, he is now socializing his son, who was born here, to eventually return to Nigeria to take care of the family business. All the five (5) parents, interviewed, as well as the Nigerian Community, identify their children, irrespective of their location of birth, as Nigerians (Hall, S., 1990). When they try to reach a compromise, they would state, unambiguously that their children were both Canadian and Nigerians, but not necessarily in that order, because they are Nigerians first before they would be considered or declared Canadian.

The parents' argument stemmed from their experiences with "othering" and the exclusionary practices of the majority Canadian society. Therefore, they felt that the children, when grounded within the Nigerian Community and cultural ways of doing things, would be equipped with ways of resisting the "othering" and domination by the majority population, because they would have their culture, as well as the Nigerian Community to fall back on. The parents also felt that regardless of how much the youth denied any current experience with racism, it would only be a matter of time before they would be caught up by and ultimately have to face it, especially as they move from adolescence into adulthood. It is also feasible that the Nigerian parents identify and regard their children first as Nigerians, due to their need to maintain their cultural pride; or it could be as a means to remain connected with their children, whom they may perceive as leaving them behind for the sake of the mainstream.

Another parent, Femi, who unequivocally stated that he preferred his children self-identifying as Nigerians, would prefer that they maintained their "Nigerianness," which would include marrying fellow Nigerians. On the other hand, he admitted to not exposing the children enough in Nigerian activities. Indeed, he and his family are sometimes hardly aware of some of the events occurring within the Nigerian Community, because according to him, his priority is his children's education and realization of positive educational outcomes in Canada.

Eh, not er, not actively. They have not participated actively in the Nigerian community activities. But they do participate in school activities like er, school activities or volunteer jobs, things that will enhance their progress, because they have limited time. They have not been able to...maybe they have limited time, at the same time they have...er, I don't know how to say it...they have, maybe, no means of transportation of that nature. Or maybe, even the interest in some of the stuff that will be offered in those communities. They have not fully participated in the Nigerian Community program, but they do voluntary jobs and stuff with schools and companies... I know my daughter (the small last-born) attended one, the Nigerian youth...eh...organization...once actively discussed doing it, eh but nothing much came of it really, because they didn't even go beyond the starting, the starting point. And at the same time, I think interest kind of differ on issues, just like me, my interest might not be too much in that direction. Maybe they took that from me... Which, which I do, but in their own case, when you talk about like culture, just like in school or when you talk about like cultural group or issues, they are things they shy away from... And these are the things that will be done in those community activities. As a result of which they don't see themselves actively involved in it. I'm like that too when I was small, I hardly would participate in things am not too good in. Things like that, I think we have the same problem. My daughter went to the first one, I thought she would be eager to go to the next one ...but meanwhile they called the next time, she was looking "daddy are we going?" [Laughter]. So, I don't know, but I think the interest is the problem. Their interest is kind of, maybe it's like educational stuff, where the Nigerian Community are saying that they are going to have a group of teachers who would teach this, or something that will enhance education. Maybe, they be they will be interested. Their interest is kind of much geared towards their academic achievement than any other activity. That's the way I will put it (Femi, p.14-15, lines 599-648).

The paradox is that it would be impossible to maintain a Nigerian identity, cultivate a Nigerian culture and ways of life, in addition to marrying a Nigerian, in a largely White dominated society like Canada, especially, when this parent consciously or unconsciously excludes his children from participating in their cultural group and association. It would appear

that this parent, who is raising his children, is experiencing significant struggles with the culture conflicts related to his and children's residency in Canada.

Outside of my current study, I have met and engaged some other Black and Nigerian youth in discussions related to their identity and place in Canada. All of them informed me about the challenges of being socialized to be Nigerian or other nationality, complete with the cultures and values, traditional mode of dressing, food and culinary practices, and having these cultures devalued or even ridiculed once they step outside of their family or communities. For instance, my cousin's son in Atlanta, Georgia, was born outside of North America, arriving in Atlanta at the age of 10. One day in 1999, and out of the blues, he requested his father to change his name from Ike Ogbuagu to Ike Willa. Ike in Igbo and English are antonymous. In this regard, Ike in Igbo is not the same as "Ike" in English, as popularized by President Dwight. D. Eisenhower, or Ike and Tina Turner from the popular musical culture. The reason for this request, with which my cousin's son, Ike, inundated his father's sleeping and waking hours, was that Ike, as a name in America, has a culturally neutered connotation. Ogbuagu, on the other hand, is obviously ethnic, which for him endows an outsider and "Othered" status in the United States, than Willa, which was much more akin to the culture he found himself in. It is also plausible that he may have been having a hard time with his name at school and with peers, which situation became the catalyst for his request for a new identity. At the moment, he seems to have accepted his father's explanation that the other name was most probably the family name of the White slave "master," who bought and dehumanized this Black's forebears. I am sure that his father may not have heard the last of this request, as Ike continues to struggle with his identity within a dominant, racist culture.

6.7. Family

The youth stated that the Nigerian family unit in Montréal is very important, indeed the primary agent, both in their construction of identity, the maintenance and sustenance of this identity once constructed, as well as the medium for group survival. They also perceived their families living in Montréal as an extension of the Nigerian Community, without which they expressed a consequent inability to forge and sustain individual, group and cultural identities and rights. Nkenna had this to say.

I think it's very important to our culture, especially because like Canada, because we're not in a place, because we're in a place where we do not see a lot of Nigerians like us. So it's very, very important to us. Because once we go out there and we meet a lot of people, it could be very easy for some people to just...for things to change. So, I think it's, it's very good way, just to remind us that this is where we came from and this is how we do things. And think of yourself this way first. It is important that I think of myself this way (Nkenna, p.17, lines 768-776).

Some of the youth, as in the case of 15 year Obinna, shared that although his family was the most important aspect of his life and existence, he did not find that he was easy to live with, because he wants to do things his own way.

Em, not always easy to live with...I mean, sometimes I can, sometimes, am difficult. My, er, em, yeah, I like my own way (Obinna, p.3, lines 128-137).

It is apparent from Obinna's declaration, that he is in constant struggle with balancing his parents' socialization and cultural expectations, with those he may have learned while growing up in Canada society. Trish and Sophia, who are youth of a mixed race, informed that family was very important to them. They however stated also that they feel more attached to their mother, who is White, but also the primary caregiver, since the parental separation occurred when they were still very young. For Angela, another youth, she admitted to her family being very important, but maintained that she alone, was at the center of, and mattered most in how she sees

and perceives herself. Angela argued that she has to feel good about herself first, before she can let others make such determination for her.

Cos I have to feel good in my own body; I have to feel impressed of myself as a part of my own self. Even though other people can be proud of me, but it's important I like what I'm doing and I like who I am because of me (Angela, p.9, lines 373-376).

Bose's argument is that family is at the root of happiness. She regretted that she does not spend enough time with her parents, who work night jobs, and usually are asleep during waking hours. She stated that sometimes,

I might go a whole week without seeing my father...then when you finally see him, you don't know where to start, you know...that's because pretty soon, you know, if each kid is growing up in that way, nobody will know anybody anymore?" (Bose, p.21, lines 951-963).

In the case of Nkenna, who joined her father in Montréal a few years ago, she stated that her family was important in how she sees herself, but paid particular reference and tribute to her mother.

I think my family is important in how, in how I see myself, because I think they've, they've done a lot...especially my mom. She has suffered a lot and my dad, to like, to bring me up in the right way. I remember when my mom, like spend her, like little money, she has just...[inaudible]...so I make sure that [*respondent becomes tearful, very emotional*]...everything I do, I have to remember when at times, when she had to suffer...[*inaudible- respondent is very tearful and emotional*]... it was just my mom... display]... and they had to fight hard, so like...[*inaudible*] everything I do, I have to make sure...I wanna make sure that all the things they're going through, they're still going through...[*inaudible*]...I can go to school and grow up and make my own money, and be able to take care of them, like they can eat the fruit of their hard labor. So, everything I do, I make sure like it's my family, they are, they are supporting me and even before I got accepted into CEGEP... I really have to work hard and get higher marks, and do this, so and my family support me, so, all the...everything. I try to look on my family, because they've done a lot for me. So, that makes me fight harder and have the high mark and everything. (Nkenna, pp.10-11, lines 451-477).

Nkenna was very emotional during the interview, especially as it related to her parents and her desire to take care of them when she got old enough. Being that her mother was not a Canadian resident at the time of the interview, her absence was profound, and elicited a lot of emotions, as

she narrated the sacrifices that her mother made on their behalf, albeit with limited resources. So, for Nkenna, the question that arises includes whether she sees the process of gaining admission to a CEGEP, then to university, as well as working hard at whatever she did, as a cultural identity or expectation that would present her with more opportunities to be employed, begin earning money and then take over the care of and support her parents, as a reward for raising and supporting her.

In the case of the Nigerian families, especially the parents and other caregivers that I interviewed, both men and women admitted to their family being headed by the men, with their spouses playing supporting roles, although, as they claimed, this to exist on equal footing. This patriarchal stand could have been in light of all the caregivers having been born and raised in Nigeria or their spouses from a Caribbean country, where patriarchal family structures, and their practices, are still very strong. Bruegel (1989); Collins (2000); James & Busia (1993); Langan & Day (1997); Simms & Malveaux (1986); King (1988). All the families and the couples, whom I interviewed, have been married and in long-term relationships, some of them for close to forty years. As if to steer clear of being alluded to as patriarchal, the men did not hesitate to add that this was Canada, where they have to be careful with how they treat their spouses, for fear of social reprisal, but mostly to reduce the incidence of divorce within the community. Paul, a Community leader stated:

Now, our women when they come to here, they change. But they don't change because they've seen something different, and so, but we men now, we want to lead them like true Africans. And so, this kind of conflict is there and the women want to speak up. I've seen some few places where conflict is. And we like to go out with our friends and we stay for hours and come back home. And these women, they're not used to, they're used to that at home, but not here (Paul, p.34, lines 1535-1542).

Stan, a parent, argued the importance of Nigerian men perceiving themselves, and accepting their role and responsibility as family head.

So, right now, the Canadian society concentrates on the females. The male don't even know where they're heading. They don't see themselves as the leaders of tomorrow, or the family leader or the breadwinners. What I have been trying to make my son understand, which of course he sees me as a role model, is that it is important for him as a male, to be the head of his family. Because what the Canadian society is not putting into consideration, in my own opinion, excuse me, if the female is the breadwinner, she's a mother, she's...in fact if she's in charge of everything, it's gonna be too stressful, for one person, in reality. Because you can't be the breadwinner, you be the mother of the family, you be the leader of the family, you gonna break down somewhere. You gonna break down somewhere. But, I am not saying that the females should not have, should not be educated, or should not have an ambition. Don't get me wrong. What I'm saying is, because there's a shift in attention, or in gender attention, the Canadian society is trying to make up for something, or some mistake they think they made in the past (Stan, p. 27, lines 1208-1226).

All the respondents admitted that family was the most important aspect of their Canadian existence and worldview. The parents, youth and Community leaders, all expressed that a strong and vibrant community, especially that of Nigeria, begins with the family and eventually thrusting itself in the evolution of the Nigerian Community here in Montréal. To this extent, the parents and caregivers, as well as Community leaders, agreed on cultural and other normative ways of constructing identities for their children.

I think it's an awareness, because they have realized that their identification is linked, or solely tied up with the origin of their parents. Because, if you really look at Canada...okay, let's go to the White community. If you met an Italian, a Canadian Italian, and you ask him or her, he or she will first tell you, she's an Italian, before she will tell you, oh I'm a Canadian...Canada sees them like, well you're born in Canada, but you are just like an immigrant like your parents. So, when a child grows up seeing things like this ignored or neglected, or being made to feel like they're foreign, so, then they realize that oh, first, we come from where our parents came from. And that brought recognition within their mates in Canada (Stan, p.9 lines 391-411).

And my son, having a close tie with friends, with Nigerian friends, with friends, Igbos and...it's because I'm preparing him for the future. He can't tell me there are no girls, from his own community to marry (Stan, p.31, lines 1406-1409).

6.8. Community, community cohesiveness

The study found that the Nigerian Community, as a sub unit of the Black Community is strong and vibrant. Although the Nigerian youth identified with the Black Community, on

account of their friendships with youths from other parts of Africa, the Caribbean and Canada, they however more strongly believed in the Nigerian Community as the fulcrum of their identity construction. Obinna, when I asked him how he fitted in other communities, Black or White, stated:

If I wasn't raised as a Nigerian, then there is no way I would know about Nigeria, and then I would probably forget...I wouldn't have what I have now. I wouldn't be the same person (Obinna, p.7, lines 303-306).

I feel it's a great, it's a big community. It's em teaches you great things, it teaches you about Nigerians... [inaudible]... (Obinna, p.17, lines 738-739).

... [inaudible]...things that are very important to them are not really important to us... [inaudible]... I fit-in in those communities, but mostly in the Nigerian community, em, yeah (Obinna, pp.18-19, lines 801-842).

Another youth stated:

I feel very, very, I feel very, very good about them. Like it makes me, I even feel proud, because when am going to the Nigerian picnic, it just makes me feel good. To go to somewhere where there is all Nigerians and you would sit down and tell stories and play games together, and we could understand each other very well. So, it's very, very good because we don't, everyday we around the streets, every person you walk past is not a Nigerian. So, it's very, very good to come, once in a while and gather around. So, I think it's very, very good and very... [inaudible]...I have fun hanging around (Nkenna, p.35, lines 1539-1602).

Most of the Nigerian youth perceived, as well as spoke of the Nigerian Community as the key to their identity construction. They also declared that the Nigerian Community helps them to perceive, as well as contextualize themselves in Canada.

Which is our native language. And I think that it is really, really important because we're in a country where there is not a lot of us. So, I think it's very, very important for us... [inaudible] that like are here and that we should gather around, talk and everything. So, to me, even when I go there and I feel bad, like people are not talking to me, but I feel that I can come, there is somewhere that I can come to where people understand me. I can feel free. So, I think it's really important to be a part of the Association. Even if some people say we're, I'm not here for that. But no matter what, you never know what tomorrow might be. You might be rich. You might have all the whole money you want, but tomorrow might come, when you will need these people... [inaudible]...like Nigerians. And you want, there will be no where, because you've never come across them or

because you never wanna have anything to do with them. So, I think it's really important that we belong to the Nigerian Community Association and the Igbo Community Association (Nkenna, p.34, lines 1532-1549).

The study found that consistent with the ethnic and tribal cleavages existing in Nigeria, these tribal cleavages and fervors also exist and are indeed encouraged by the Nigerian Community in Montréal. The Nigerian Community leaders stated that they believed in unity in diversity, whereby tribal or Nigerian ethnic groups living in Montréal feel free to associate with tribesmen, townsmen and women. Dan, a Community leader stated:

Yeah, we have organizations there: We have in the community form, we have the Nigerian Canadian Association. We have Elders in Council. We have "Otu Ndi Igbo", Quebec and some other organizations by other Ethnic Nigerian people who, who are trying to make Canada their home. And in these our organizations we have activities like the picnic in the summer; we have Christmas, what we call the End-of-Year party. We celebrate Mothers' Day and we celebrate Christmas, eh Children's Christmas Party separately... (Dan, p.1, lines 27-35).

They argued that the Nigerian Community, also known as the Nigerian Canadian Association of Montréal does not try to stifle these ethnic Associations in consideration of the many and diverse cultures, languages or dialects that most Nigerians come from and speak. They therefore perceived these tribal associations as serving to reduce the isolation that its members would feel ordinarily in Canada. Having said that, they believed that through language and other cultural norms, the tribal associations would enhance, not devalue or diminish the Nigerian Canadian Association, which is the main umbrella under which all the other tribal associations fall.

Essentially, at the home level, we would speak our own dialect to our children and they and they do understand. In the community level, we can only teach the major Nigerian languages, such as Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba. And eh, one of the reasons is that if you understand any of these languages, back home, you will be able to get by in the place. And number two, because, these are proportionately the larger groups, within the Canadian Nigerians, or Nigerians in Canada. You will find that most of the children we have here, come from that group. It's easy to organize them and teach them that

language. Whereas, er, I come from a minority group, for instance... (Razak, p.5, lines 202-213).

Yeah, you don't do this one consciously, but you just try to behave normally and then come home and they dress in Nigerian style, we eat Nigerian food, we listen to Nigerian music, we watch Nigerian videos and you find that the children like it. (Razak, p.7, lines 315-319).

To this extent, the Nigerian Community, according to the youth, parents and Community leaders performs a matrifocal role. It acts, in concert with parents, as the agency of socialization, identity construction, as well as acculturation into the cultures, norms, mores and values of the Nigerian culture, which would otherwise be largely absent here in the Diaspora. The parents and Community leaders, all agreed that the Nigerian Community provides grounding for all Nigerians, who otherwise would be assimilated and possibly lose sight of their identity and the cultural essence of their being. In achieving the goal of identity construction for the Nigerian youth, the Nigerian Community, either as a whole or in its ethnic and tribal parts, provides many social programs for this purpose. These social programs are geared towards group consciousness, reduction of isolation in a foreign land, education in the cultures and values of Nigeria's various tribal groups, learning of languages for those youth born in Canada and sustaining those of them who already speak it, in order that they do not lose it.

I was informed that the Nigerian Community, being so culturally diverse, also serves to support and protect its members. For example, Christians show solidarity with their Muslim brothers and sisters during Ramadan and other Muslim festivities and vice versa. Nigerians also attend each other's birthdays, Christening, graduation from an educational institution and other milestones. They also show solidarity with them during crises or difficult times, such as passages of its members in Montréal, outside of Montréal or even at home in Nigeria. As the participants explained, some of these programs provided to its members by the Nigerian Community include

summer picnics, Easter and Christmas parties, the latter, complete with a Nigerian Santa Claus. These events, which see a lot of Nigerians attending, provide fora for Community leaders to speak about issues regarding the Nigerian Community (Bloomberger, 1969). These issues relate to introducing new immigrants, forging solidarity among its members, school and educational attendance and pursuance of successful outcomes, jobs, projects for the Community in Canada, as well as those geared towards uplifting and engendering social health and development of the home country. The fora also provide opportunities for Nigerian Community leaders to share important information related to integration and sustenance of its members in the host society, Canada.

One of the Community leaders, Dan, stated during the interview:

How are we going to be able to bring up these children so they are proud of who they are and they are doing well. A couple of times we have done fashion show, we have done beauty contests, we have done AIDS awareness, we have done drug abuse thing, in our community, in order to let the kids understand the difference between what is happening in the society and what we as parents expect them to do. By, by doing that, many things come out of it, in that some of the kids understand fully well that they are not gonna to touch this and they are not going to touch that (Dan, pp.3-4, lines 135-145).

Additionally, the Nigerian Community has advocated and continues to advocate for its members, who are seeking to regularize their status in Canada, through petitioning Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Sometimes members and some of the Community leaders present themselves as advocates and support during any claims with the Immigration and Refugee Board. At other times, the Community would intervene and advocate for its members, when any of its families or members comes into contact with social services, a frightening experience for all families, but especially Black families, due to the latter's historical experience with the systems. To this extent, the Nigerian Community builds social power (Whitehead & Hughey,

2004) on the strength of interpersonal relationships. Another Community leader, Razak, spoke of some of the duties of the Nigerian Community to its membership.

....within the Association, we have Counseling Group, because eh, we do have some parents who've got problems, between themselves. Even their children have go problems. We have had... I would say social disorientation, whereby you have youths who fall into the wrong groups, and then they become a problem, for the parents and the society at large. And, em, let us face it, we are Blacks and therefore, you know, we are very visible indeed. And that has got its own advantage and disadvantages. So, for these youths, their parents are a little bit embarrassed and eh, so is the community. How do you handle that. We have very good social workers within the Nigerian Community, who have been handling cases like that. And, em, it takes time. Some of the cases are very rare, but when we see them, they are very devastating. So, I, you see, I really don't want to talk too much about it, because to really talk much about it, you have to reveal names and then... And the ones we have, there was the case where the father had died, then the mother was left with those children, to fend for them, and she hadn't been long in Canada. The social welfare services people were not em, very, she couldn't understand them very well, so it was a big thing... Exactly! That's what I was saying. It was very difficult and she did want to go home with the children, but em, what happened was welfare came in and Nigerian Community also came in and tried to advise and help. In that case, we weren't able to do much, because find most Nigerians parent, they're workers... So, the time they have to spend on issues like that is not much (Razak, pp.10-11, lines 417- 483).

The Women's wing of the Nigerian Community is also strong, and is strongly encouraged by the parent body to cater to the needs of women who live in Montréal (Booth, 1974). Due to their experience with patriarchy in Nigeria, the Community was reported to strive hard to protect the rights of women in Canada, as well as assist them to forge relationships that will maintain families, by reducing the divorce rate within the Community.

Okay, we want to avoid divorce, so the kids won't suffer. At home so still easy. You divorce a woman, and you can keep the woman involved in the family matters, but here, it's difficult. And so, we want to make the parents understand that if you divorce now, the kids will suffer. And so, we want to make the parents understand, so that by being, helping the parents to stay married and working things together now, they will help the kids to gain, by having...[inaudible]...and by having a family that is intact. And so that will not discourage...[inaudible]...the kids, because if that doesn't happen, I don't know why, most of our kids will get involved in drugs and certain things, and they will be out and do all kind of things, because they want the attention of the parents...So, this is why we did Mother's Day Party last year. I made sure that the women are treated properly. And next year, we might do it differently. Some of them will work on the family units. If we have good family units, who can take care of the kids at an early stage, and they can

provide enough care, and they can provide spend the money, instead of spending the money somewhere, on their kids educationally. And so, this will help the youths. We have the happy family and the family unit is okay, people will do very well. The Mommy is educated, the father is educated, education is important in the family, people will do very well. They will do very well. And so, to have the kids now...one thing we're doing now, we're trying to help them to talk together at the Leadership Programs, so that they can stand up and do everything by themselves and follow...[inaudible]...in doing that. So, apart from that again, I'm looking at the parents, and I'm more worried for the parents than the kids. So... Now, our women when they come to here, they change. But they don't change because they've seen something different, and so, but we men now, we want to lead them like true Africans. And so, this kind of conflict is there and the women want to speak up. I've seen some few places where conflict is. And we like to go out with our friends and we stay for hours and come back home. And these women, they're not used to, they're used that at home, but not here...And so, if they break up, what kind of family unit are you gonna have? And so, at this early stage now, I'm targeting the parents, the parents, to be able to stay together and give adequate care to the kids (Paul, pp.26-34, lines 1176-1549).

Despite the comprehensiveness and variety of programs designed to build solidarity among the Black Collective, some participants spoke about the factions and the divisive reality of building a collective identity and a set of priorities within Black Communities in Montréal. One leader stated that he regretted that during his tenure, as well as currently, he was unable to observe any progress or cohesion of the Black Collective (Ampim, 1993; Banton, 1983). He informed that he experienced that rather than agreeing on how the Black Community would advocate for its members, most of its leadership from various countries, were jostling over mundane issues, while others felt that they and their individual countries were superior to others. As well, issues of youth were marginalized to French-English debates.

Eh, not really, because when I was President, most of the eh, interactions where of the type of how do we as Visible Minorities, get together, to make our voices heard. Which em, em, to my knowledge, was never really resolved peaceably or successfully. I don't know what the situation is right now, but you do find that, em, my experience of the Quebec society is that, among the Ethnic Community, is that, em, there are some preferred communities, or some communities that consider themselves to be the preferred ones. And those are the one who come from French speaking countries, outside Canada of course. Eh, You do find that the problem of integration among all the Black Communities in Montreal, in my time, was not fully resolved. And the youth, didn't really, youth problem, didn't measure much among the discussion that I held at that time.

But I know that in my last period as President, they have a Nigerian Youth Leader, who was very, very active in all the communities. His work among the youth, transcended all the communities...And eh, I don't, I cannot recall, eh whether he was able to kind of bring all the communities from various countries together. But I know that within the Nigerian Community, he was able to organize them very, very strongly and they performed wonderfully. So, I really don't know whether there's any answer to that question. I don't have it (Razak, p.18, lines 794-821).

The current apparent impasse in the cohesion of the Black Collective in Canada appears to be an ongoing problem since more Blacks were admitted or immigrated into Canada. With particular reference to Montréal and its mostly French structure, Kennedy-Dubourdieu (2006) stated that although cohesion has been a desirable outcome in many societies, those in which there is a large multicultural, multiracial population face complex realities in attaining this goal. Indeed, one of the youth, Nkenna, stated that the problem of racism was for her more salient between Black populations from different countries than between White and Black populations.

Nkenna had this to say.

Yeah, from Haiti. Like they don't, they more like look at you, like oh what are you thinking you are? Who do you think you are? They look at you, like am the best. You, you don't wanna believe they're better than you. So, the more, like the racism is between we that are Black, compared to whites. To me, I've seen more of Black people compared to White to Black... Well, most times when you see them and you try, let's say... [inaudible] this is a Black person, let me ask this person a question, and maybe you try to talk to them and they won't, they, when you say hi to them and say oh I have a question, they will not even look at you. They just pass by you. They'll probably even answer your question in a very rude manner or something. But when you, you might even see a White person, you, you like ask the person, the person will be more like willing and ready to help you compared to most of the Black people. And which is something that have been really, really, really, that has surprised me a lot... I, I was thinking it was more like, was more like White on Black. Even, I've watched on TV, and I've seen, and I've heard. But to me, it's happened to me, most to me, more like Black/Black, instead of White/Black... It doesn't make me feel bad because they're Black. It doesn't make me feel bad, so and mostly a lot of them don't consider themselves, the Haitian people, they don't consider themselves as Africans. They believe they're Haitians and that's where they are from. So, to me, when they do things like that, it doesn't make me feel bad. They're not better than me. Their country is not better than my country. They were not brought up better than me. You consider yourself the best. I consider myself the best. That's been our way, so when they do it, it doesn't make me feel bad at all (Nkenna, pp.29-30, lines 1310-1359).

According to several participants, there appears to be present, an unfortunate but strong internal Black Community “othering.” This “othering” results in feelings and expressions of superiority, prejudice, as well as competition between Black people representing different ethnic or cultural groups. However, it is also important to note that racism can only occur in the relationship of power, which Blacks in Canada, especially a youth or adult from Haiti for that matter, or Black residents in Canada, currently do not possess (Blum, 2002). How these expressions and interactions shape, as well as reflect racist discourses, when considered within Black Communities is important to address. Addressing these discourses, stand to assist the Black Collective to be better placed to struggle and overcome more serious issues of White oppression and domination. The internal struggles among Blacks present as a huge and self-immolating distraction from organizing against the discourses of race and racism, which permeate and define their world in North America and possibly other societies, where Blacks are in the minority.

6.9. School, education & educational outcomes

The interview outcomes indicate that Nigerian youth, and their parents before them, have paid large financial and emotional premiums towards their education and educational attainment. I will use the following instance to buttress the argument that Nigerian youth have experienced school and education in a positive way. Of the ten (10) Nigerian youths I interviewed, most of them in 2004, two girls were outstanding, as they had already graduated from the university in their early twenties. In 2004, the rest of the youth were either in high school or preparing to enter CEGEP. As I compile the outcomes of this study in 2007, another entered university, while the rest were now entering, completing CEGEP or expect to be enrolled into a university in Montréal in the fall of 2007 (Radwanski, 1987). Regrettably, the youth interview excerpts showed that although their parents were well educated, they however have mostly been herded into menial

jobs, therefore social exclusion by the Canadian society (Jones, J.M., 1997). The youth expressed angst that their parents have been so unfairly treated. Some youth, like Adaeze, fears that a positive school and educational outcome for her and other Nigerian youth may not necessarily translate into successful career outcomes on account of racism.

Sometimes, I'm worried or concerned about when I finish school and if when I become a *[profession expunged from text to protect respondent's anonymity]*, if I'm actually gonna be able to get a job. I don't know, I don't know, maybe because I'm a girl; also because of the fact that I'm Black. If I'm gonna be able to get a good job... [inaudible]...even though I might be as competent as someone else. In a way, I have that, like not holding me back, but maybe like working against me, maybe. And I'm worried about that (Adaeze, p.11, lines 485-492).

It would appear that most of the parents and caregivers had acquired sound education and academic knowledge prior to their immigration into Canada and residency in Quebec, as highlighted by Torczyner (1997) and Torczyner & Springer (2001). When these parents arrived in Canada, a lot of them experienced labor related discrimination. This was ostensibly based upon the immigrants' foreign degrees, which many administrators in government and the labor market have been complicit in and would prefer to call lack of "Canadian experience." Most of the parents informed that they returned to school to acquire North American certificates, as well as so-called "Canadian experience," but without concomitant social and economic mobility. In this vein, and despite many disappointments, these parents, of whom *I am one*, have striven to impress it upon their children to attend school at the highest levels and also derive successful school experience and outcomes. Why? The parents' resilience appear to lie in their strong belief that the Canadian society may yet evolve to accommodate their children, having currently lost hopes in their own ability to alter the current state of affairs.

The youth, parents and Community leaders, agreed that they take education very seriously and have pursued its attainment, mainly, and not only to acquire new knowledge, but

also to expand existing ones. The Nigerian Community members all, especially the adults, argued that the acquisition of a sound education may not necessarily place their children on equal footing with members of the majority population, but that a sound educational attainment would give them a "fighting chance." They further argued, that without a sound education, the children face significant and possibly insurmountable marginalization and the strong possibility of social exclusion in Canada. The parents' argument is that some of them as parents attended school in Nigeria, retrained and acquired knowledge in Canada, for use in the labor markets in Canada, yet were excluded. They further argued, that it would be worse for a Black youth who did not attend school with successful or even exceptional outcomes. For these parents, they believe that the Black and Nigerian youth and their families have to work many times as hard as Whites to even be considered, an argument that (Torczyner, 1997) strongly supports. One of the parents, Stan stated:

If a White man...if it took a little effort for a White man to attain or achieve something, we would have to put ten times that effort, in order to be recognized (Stan, p.16, lines 724-726).

Because, I mean, I've been in Canada, for a reasonable number of years and I experience a lot, both when I was in school, and in the labor force. Trying to get a job...okay, I will go back, I will just give you an example. When I was at Concordia, a company advertised that they needed a lab. technician. They didn't need experienced lab technician. During that time, I was in my first year and I qualified for that job. I remember very well, because all the requirements they have asked for, I had it. When I went for the interview; first I, yeah, the school called the guy, that they found somebody. Then he arranged what day I should come. When I got there, well, it wasn't...call it an interview, but it wasn't an interview, because they made the school choose the student that was most qualified. When I got there, you could see the shock in the guy's face that they sent a Black person. This guy hammered me all kinds of questions, both relevant and irrelevant, stupid questions. It had nothing to do with the academic work, you know? Just asking stupid questions; you could just see, he was very uncomfortable. He told me okay, he will look into it. Did you know that he hand-picked a drop-out student from high school, trained him, yeah, instead of giving me the job? I mean, the list could go from here to tomorrow (Stan, p.17, lines 742-765).

Paul, a Community leader, made the same observation about Canadian race-based inequities and the advantages of a Black youth having a successful educational outcome.

Now, even though they changed in that way here, there's something still there; their color is still there, okay? How can they deal with their color? Accent wise, they've dealt with it, but the other side, they cannot deal with that. So they got a problem there... Yeah, they cannot erase that. So, now they call somebody for job now, they say, oh yeah, the job is available. But as soon as the kid arrive now, they see their color now, and it's okay, I'll call you back later on (Paul, p.11, lines 475-487).

Now, it's something that we're hearing today, now, if you're a Quebecois, you can have any job you want, with your secondary school degree, diploma. But as an African or a Nigerian, it is difficult for you to find this kind of job, with your secondary school diploma... By the White kid. He would be given by his uncle; somebody will give him something. Maybe his father is rich and will give him something. You do not have that advantage. So the best thing is for you to go to school, so you can compete with them. So, this is one of the things, the problems we have with education. Why should you go to school and others are not going to school, when education is not valued in the Quebec society? So, what we say now is do well so, and you can compete with them, because if you study now, if you have education, you can never lose, it will be an advantage to you (Paul, pp.19-20, lines 845-876).

Dan, a Community leader in his own argument stated:

Most of these kids are in Toronto but their parents live in Montreal and they get their education in Montréal but they are not here. So, is it maybe because of jobs? If I come hard on it I will call it discrimination, because er, if these kids cannot find their jobs definitely they have to leave their parents. And go to where they will be where they will be understood or whatever. (Dan, p.5, lines 223-229).

6.1.0. Resiliency as a form of resistance

In light of these expectations by Nigerian parents and Community, I was strongly informed that the Nigerian youth have done very well in educational and other sectors. What this means is that Nigerian youth have shown high resiliency, despite concerns and due to parental ethical values with regard to education and educational attainment. The findings also indicate that their parents' experiences with, and narratives of post-educational exclusions have not significantly hampered Nigerian youth school and educational attainment and progress. The

question here is, “how do we account for this resiliency among the youth, despite their cognizance of their parents’ narratives of woes, based mainly on racism and exclusion?” One account is the possibility that the youth have thrived, due to the consistent and sustainable cohesiveness of the Nigerian families and Community, the interests they have shown, as well as contributions they have made towards the success of their youths in Canada. Another apparent reason for this resiliency and success may be that the youth are aware of the interests and apprehensions over their success, shown by their extended families in Nigeria. Culturally, Nigerians in Africa perceive their family members in Canada as their “ambassadors” to Canada, but more poignantly as their “meal ticket.” To this extent, this expectation is not lost on the Nigerian youth, which may be one of the reasons for their resilience and success. Indeed, the Nigerian youth is aware of the unwritten competition between families in Nigeria, and in Canada to a lesser extent, over who has the greater number of university graduates and educated elite. In this case, it would appear that the Nigerian youth would not wish to disappoint their parents and caregivers, but rather be a source of pride through achieving educationally.

For instance, the adult respondents, all spoke about many Nigerian youths attending McGill and other institutions in various faculties, including medicine. Indeed all spoke about a Nigerian girl, who graduated in 2003 from Concordia, as that year’s Valedictorian. They stated that she has been called to the podium more times than they cared to count, as well as taken home several prizes, awards and scholarships. They also informed that this same youth was now in her final year in medicine at McGill, and has become a role model for many Nigerian youth, who are striving and competing to enter medical school. At the time of going to press, I was informed that the said girl has now graduated from McGill University in medicine and already

begun her residency in a Canadian hospital. Another Community leader, Razak, shared his observation regarding academic accomplishment among Nigerian youth.

I would say from my own experience, Nigerian youths have distinguished themselves and they've made the Community very, very proud. And eh, I cannot, you know, I can cite instances of brilliance and academic achievement, among Nigerian youth, not only here in Montréal, but all over Canada. We have, as at the time I was going home, for a visit last year, we had two Nigerian girls doing medicine in McGill...one of whom distinguished herself so incredibly, that during the convocation in Concordia, before she went to McGill, to do her medicine, the whole Center, that is Place des Art, where the convocation was held, there was standing ovation for this girl. She received all the awards that were there to be received, governor general... (Razak, p.12, lines 509-524).

All the participants had expressed very low dropout rates, and this is seen by community members to be consistent amongst Nigerian youth as a whole. I was informed, during the interviews that this girl is not the only one, as there may at the current time be three or more medical students from the Nigerian Community at McGill and many others undertaking advanced education. This deposition is consistent with the role and persistence of Nigerian parents, Community leaders, and more poignantly some Black medical doctors and practitioners, mainly and originally from West Africa. I was informed that these medical practitioners have established a mentoring program for Black youth in Montréal, aimed at stimulating, as well as directing their interests towards the sciences and particularly the medical profession. Every Nigerian youth in Montréal speaks about this mentoring program, but especially competes with other Nigerian youths to win the scholarship associated with the mentoring program. It is possible that the existence of the mentoring program and the possibility that the Nigerian youth perceives it as a means of attaining a professional career, especially in medicine, endows them with the type of resiliency that transcends and perhaps overshadows the discourses of race, racism and marginalization.

6.1.1. Why are Nigerian youth experience different from those of their parents?

In all, there is an inconsistent finding, that whereas the Nigerian parents and caregivers appear to, as well as stated that they have not thrived in Canada, the youth, on the other hand have done well and so far, appear to be thriving in Canada. Why? It may be partly explained by incremental advances in labor force participation, equity provisions in law being enforced and expansion of Black-owned and supported businesses in Canada over the past decade.

Additionally, the Nigerian youth have become exposed to, adept at, and utilize media, such as the Internet, networking, interpersonal relationships and other means of communication to enhance their social mobility and ability to survive in Canada. It would also appear that the Nigerian youth, while cognizant of the obstacles of racism that their parents have endured, have chosen not to dwell or be covered by it, but rather developed resistance and resilience to these discourses, by refusing to consent to being defined and mired by them. The Nigerian youth may have also developed resistance and resiliency to the discourses of race and racism, due to their perception that they have come to stay in Canada, as well as have translated that the survival and future of their families and Communities currently rests on them. Nkenna stated:

...and they had to fight hard, so like...[inaudible] everything I do, I have to make sure...I wanna make sure that all the things they're going through, they're still going through...[inaudible]...I can go to school and grow up and make my own money, and be able to take care of them, like they can eat the fruit of their hard labor...I try to look on my family, because they've done a lot for me. So, that makes me fight harder and have the high mark and everything (Nkenna, p.11, lines 469-485).

Nigerian youth appear to clearly understand and by the successful outcomes in most of their endeavors reject the racist discourses used by the majority population to define them. To this extent, it is fair to surmise that they have expressed resilience, by doing well, as a conscious or even unconscious means of raising the social status of the Nigerian Community and Blacks in Canada. By so doing, it would appear that they are attempting to deconstruct and defeat the

stereotypes and pathologies assigned to Black youth and the Black Community by mainstream Canada. Nkenna stated:

Em, I think so, because most times, when people look around on Blacks and they think oh, we don't do anything rather than smoke weed, and drink. But it's not all...we're not all about that. We work hard to get all we want. We work very, very hard to get what we want. So, even like most times...that's one thing when you're watching TV and they show Africa and they show...they never go to the good part and show what's happening in the good part of Nigeria...in Africa. They always go to the bad part. We know things are not so good for us. But like, don't go to where things are bad, go to where things are good and show, like oh, as we're suffering, we're enjoying too in our suffering. It's very important that like...open your TV and you're looking at the TV, and all you see, they're showing the bad part of Africa (Nkenna, p.14, lines 623-636).

On this account, it is possible that the Nigerian youth perceives that being fixated on, resigning, or succumbing to these discourses, as their parents and caregivers appear to have done, would translate into group "suicide" for them, their families, and the Nigerian and Black Communities. On the other hand, there is the possibility that these Nigerian parents and caregivers, due to their experiences, may have become "fixated" on the negatives of their lived experience, therefore feel a sense of hopelessness for themselves. In this equation, they either have been unable to integrate new technology, specialization and retraining, or failed to explore other avenues for integrating into the Canadian labor market. Indeed, there is a fatalistic thinking that these parents and caregivers have consented, but mainly acquiesced to the popular cliché about being "beaten, broken and bowed by the system," rather than develop techniques to challenge it and attempt to deconstruct it. It is possible that the Nigerian parents and caregivers, most of who arrived in Canada, when the vogue and aim was to complete their studies and return to Nigeria, are trapped in that dream of one day returning to Nigeria. In view of this, and because they may have planted their "psychological roots" in Nigeria, they therefore continue to view themselves as outsiders, which in turn places limits on their pursuit of meaningful integration in Canada. It seems, that often parents put aside their own aspirations and concentrate on the 'successes' of their children,

invoking all hopes and dreams of the future for the next generation, a common experience amongst immigrant communities in general. While an appropriate coping mechanism for this generation, it places additional pressures on children to succeed, pressure, which Nigerian youth in this study have largely accepted and integrated.

6.1.2. Gender discourses

The study found that most of the Nigerian parents and their children have been culturally socialized into accepting the gender stratification amongst Nigerians. For the youth, and amongst the families that I interviewed, they appear to have been socialized and indeed, internalized the cultural and linear expectation by their parents, when it comes to gendered discourses. For instance, the parents all expect their children to be married to the opposite gender, raise children, as well as remain married, as they are fearful of spousal separation and divorce. All the boys admitted to being treated differently, but not necessarily due to gender. In Uche's case, he took exception to being compared to his much older and apparently more successful sister. He stated that he is often in trouble with his parents, due to their constantly comparing his progress against that of his sister, which he detested. His parents appeared to be satisfied with the fact that their daughter was doing well and desired for their son to follow in her footsteps. I asked Uche how he perceived that his parents were treating him.

Um...differently, I would say. For instance, there is one thing that keeps going on in the house, how higher [*sibling's name was expunged from the text*] puts her heat and how I put mine. You know, if I don't have my heater on, they pity on me, if I do have it on, they yell at me, so I don't know, you know, um? They expect [*sibling's name expunged*] can do really, really well in school, and they're and um...well I don't expect myself to do as good as her 'cos I don't wanna be her. You know, 'cos then, if I immediately start getting 90% in everything, they're gonna say I wanna become a doctor. I don't wanna be a doctor, I wanna do [*youth's profession of choice expunged to protect his anonymity*] or get to [*professional choice was expunged*]. Am not her...You know, um...my dad expects me to do well in school, although am lazy, so... [*laughing*]...as I said before, that's a bit of a problem ...um...yeah! (Uche, pp.35-36, lines 1158-1619).

In the matter of the other two male teenagers, they clearly admitted to being treated differently by their parents on account of their gender. Obinna stated clearly:

I'm successor to my daddy, yeah. I'm the person after my daddy. If anything happens to my daddy, I have to be the successor (Obinna, p.19, lines 864-866).

Interestingly, he did not agree that he was receiving any more favors than his sisters. He was convinced that his father was tougher on him than he was on the girls, due to the cultural norms, and as one of the expectations of being a Nigerian male. He has a lot of non-Nigerian and Canadian friends, whom he perceived as not having this type of cultural expectations or burden placed on them. I asked Obinna if he has friends outside of the Nigerian Community and if these male friends had the same gender and cultural expectations placed on them.

Not really, not really... No (Obinna, p.21, lines 944-948).

Obinna's sister, Adaeze, disagreed with his claim that their parents were tougher on him, and has taken her complaint straight to their mother on a number of occasions. She was only able to assuage her feelings by stating that their father only was responsible for the favoritism towards the son. Adaeze was clearly upset at the gendered, preferential treatment accorded her male sibling.

I would say that my brother is treated differently than...than...hmm, well, I think he's treated differently than me at his age, and I think that he's treated differently than my sister right now, because he's a boy. He gets away with a lot of things, and he has a lot more, like freedom than I had, or that my sister has... Well, I think that we're all expected to like do well in school and everything in that, but I feel like, like if my brother doesn't, it's not as bad as my sister's marks or if I...[inaudible]...At school. Or if like my brother goes somewhere with his friends and comes back too late, they're more lenient than if my sister would go and come back later than she's supposed to...I think it's because, it could also be because of changing times, but it's because of gender, because of the fact that my sister is at that same age as my brother is almost now, and I could see the differences between the two of them as well... Sometimes it's like, I think it's unfair, and like I tell my mom, she's always like, it's usually just my dad that lets my brother get away with a lot of things, I don't know, because he's his son [*laughing*] (Adaeze, pp.23-24, lines 1049-1104).

Karim, another teenage male, was unambiguous about his claim that the differential treatment he was receiving from his parents was culturally imposed. He informed that he was culturally being groomed to continue and perpetuate his family's name, as opposed to his sisters, who are expected to marry, change their names and perpetuate their family of procreation.

I am treated differently. Em, when it comes to...I can even say that since my parents come from Nigeria, they do have that sort of mind set...*[inaudible]*...so that does affect what they're doing...And it's not like, it's not that I'm more or less important to them. It's just that they see for me, that I should accomplish different things from them. Like my, both of my parents think like, they expect all their children to become successes, and they probably won't expect anything less than that. But well let's say, when it comes to things like em, like chores and helping around the house, they don't really expect that as much from me. Like they do, I obviously have to do certain things, but when it comes to my sisters, it less for me. Em, there's also things like marriage, moving away. Well my dad says and I are not moving away, it's just my sisters, it's like you know, leaving the family, sort of in like, making new families and I describe it as in continuing the family. And he says I'm gonna be living in this house, not really like living in this house, but just like continuing like the *[family name expunged from the text]*...name (Karim, p.29, lines 1292-1314).

Karim appeared to argue for gender-based role differentiation, when he claimed that his parents expect him to accomplish different things from his sisters. He further argued, that although his family is Nigerian, Muslim, and expect him to succeed his father, this does not mean that they have assigned any inferior or subordinate roles to his female siblings, whether in their home or when they enter into any relationships.

Some of those parents and Community leaders, who have both female and male offspring, expressed clearly defined, and identified culturally relevant gender expectations for their children. The caregivers, especially the fathers, all stated that they treat their children equally and regardless of gender. One would agree with their arguments that they send all their children to school, regardless of gender, pay their fees, feed, clothe, shelter and protect them equally. However, they appeared not to have perceived how their cultural, patriarchal and gender stratification orientation may have outcomes for a reproduction of gender oppression against

their female children. This stance appears to be on account of the rule of inheritance or succession existing in Nigeria and some other countries, based on primogeniture, where the first son inherits from his father. For instance, Marcel stated that his son, who, by the way, is the middle child, is currently being groomed and expected to be the head of the family, should anything happen to him.

I treat them equally, education, whatever I give one, is the same. And they have to make their own life, choose their own life, but I help them as much as possible, to make sure that I give to all of them the same training, the best I can do for any of the children. But you have to understand that we have culture, which speaks very, very loud, and my son is er, is my son. It's not because he's a boy, or because he's just like me, but because he has to deal with the culture. And the culture, if he doesn't take what I have, anything I have will be gone. The women cannot play any role there. Well, first of all they'll be married out, but the culture plays the foremost role. This is how it is. Back home in Nigeria, our parents don't have wills, but we have a culture. The culture takes care of the whole thing. The culture and our tradition takes care of the whole thing. We know that the first son takes possession of the father's property, whether you like it or not. And if you don't have a male child, your brother takes, takes everything you have (Marcel, pp.20-21, lines 897-921).

Indeed, for Marcel, it is all about culture, which appears to be somewhat conflicting, indeed, convoluted by the realities in Canada. He may have unwittingly, but injudiciously transplanted his Nigerian cultural realities into Canada, with its attendant untenability. For instance, Marcel is now in Canada, where he has been residing for over twenty years. Additionally, he is married to, and resides with his current wife and mother of his children, including this male child, who was born post migration into Canada. Marcel also has two daughters, one of whom is much older than the boy. It would appear that Marcel's emphasis on culture may have negated the important fact that he is now in Canada and that most of the property he was alluding to are in Nigeria, where he visits infrequently. On this account, I wondered how feasible and actualizable this expectation is, that he his son will eventually return to Nigeria to manage his estate. Therefore, if Marcel, who was born in Nigeria and has businesses there, is only able to visit Nigeria

infrequently, it would be fallacious to conceive that his son, who was born here and has little or no physical concept or able to contextualize himself in Nigeria, will return to Nigeria to manage his estate.

For one of the parents, Gloria, who is originally West Indian, she presented as one whose gender expectations are sometimes in conflict with current realities. On another level, when she expressed that her expectation was for her son to be the man of the home, it negated the equality of status that the Canadian society expects between a man and woman, married or not. This is because in Canada there is the expectation that a couple is equal, and together regarded as partners and heads of the household, rather than the head of the household being solely assigned to the male partner. In this way, Gloria it would appear, assigned a subordinate role to her son's future spouse, thereby unconsciously reproducing some of the patriarchal discourses, which have been applied to define Blacks and ethnic societies.

We taught him that it is very important for them to know, to be the man of his, the home and the provider and be there for his children and what is expected is expected of him as a father, as a husband... (Gloria, p.41, lines 1868-1871).

In conclusion, it appears that Nigerian parents, especially fathers, have internalized pre-migration patriarchal and gender differentiation and discourses, into which they were socialized and currently, but unwittingly applying this in their relationships with their children here in Canada. They present as sincere, when they express a desire to treat their daughters and sons equally. However by continuing to apply Nigerian cultures in differentiating and assigning roles to their male and female children, they have unconsciously presented as reproducers of gender oppression. In the same vein, the women, most of whom have culturally assigned superordinate roles, first to their spouses as the head of family, and different roles and expectations to their

children, present as acquiescing to gendered oppression, even when they are direct recipients of this oppression.

6.1.3. Integration into Canadian society-Fitting in

Integration presents as a loaded and often challenging state of being, because it is in a continuous state of flux. In light of integration being in a constant state of change, because it is dynamic, humans are always subjected to different forms of integration (Vargas-Reighley, 2005). For example, when a family moves from one city block to another, even one that is very close by, there is a disintegration that would transform into a new integrational process. This is because one would be meeting, running into neighbors, as well as exposed to new sets of ideas and environment, which tend to impact on their previous concepts and sometimes, beliefs and identity. To this extent, one, who claims to be integrated in a particular environment, may be unintegrated or disintegrated in another setting, leading to an array of comfort or discomfort. In the matter of adolescence, it can easily be conceptualized as a period of discontinuity and continuity. There are, according to Vargas-Reighley, the innate propensities for youth to undergo major biological, psychological and poignantly sociocultural transformations, which are complex and fluid. Youth differ in their respective capacities to adapt to these changes, shed them and when necessary begin the process all over. Nigerian youth have been struggling with integration into the Canadian society for a variety of reasons, some surmountable and others like color and ethnicity, which are insurmountable and ineradicable attributes. This struggle with integration encompasses youth, who recently landed from Nigeria or Africa, either with their parents, or arrived, due to a successful family reunification application. The other is the Nigerian youth born in Canada to immigrant parents, who must struggle between two or more cultures, in order to integrate into a predominantly monocultural, racist society.

In the case of Nigerian or other Black youth, it is possible to evaluate the extent to which they have integrated, through the occurrence of healthy family relationships, adaptation to the host country's normative ways of life, as well as the youth's capacity to successfully live and conduct activities of daily living in the new society. Other parameters for measuring integration, especially among youth is through the existence of successful school and educational outcomes, and maintenance of friendships and healthy peer relationships with other youths, from within and other nationalities. The process of integration is further enhanced by the presence of, interest in, and active participation by parents, caregivers and significant others in their lives. Other factors contributing to a healthy and successful integration include the existence of a vibrant community, which contributes to their grounding or connectedness, identity, acceptance and enhancement of a sense of group consciousness. Nigerian youth interviewed in the current study declared that they have integrated, due to having experienced positive school and successful and educational outcomes. Bose, a university graduate stated:

Oh, they would say she's a good girl, you know, she's always, she has her first degree. She tries her best... Some people will see me as studious. And em, they will say they are very proud of me for what I have accomplished. And em, they're pretty much happy with where I am today. It's hard to describe... [laughing]... (Bose, p.4, lines 172-177).

My teachers, they would have said that I was a quiet student but I picked up the information quickly. I was motivated to do my work. They would say that. And that I cared about the information they were putting across to us (Bose, p.7, 271-274).

Em, I would say that am responsible. I would say that mmm...I would say that I'm smart and pay attention to my studies a lot and I also pay attention a lot to, like, like, how would I say it, what others think of me or how I'm perceived, how, like my image...[inaudible] (Adaeze, p.2, lines 88-92).

Hmm high school was fun, I had a lot of friends. It was a small school, so everybody, like knew each other. We were all in each class, all the same people in each class, for five years so we all knew each other, and we all knew the teachers personally. So, that was good (Adaeze, p.8, lines 360-364).

I'm attending CEGEP right now. This is my last semester and then, I plan to go to university after (Trish, p.1, lines 22-23).

Well, I'll say I'm a good listener, because I am. I would tell them I enjoy learning... [inaudible]...and I'm a quick learner. Well, again depending on the subject, but most subjects, I'm a quick learner (Trish, p.6, lines 252-255).

As a parameter for integration, the youth presented as having a negligible school drop out rates and have continued to successfully, some, outstandingly complete high school, CEGEP and university in the Arts, Sciences, Engineering, Law, and Medicine. Most are not on the job market yet, although they confidently stated that they could hold their own against all comers. What remains to be seen, by means of a longitudinal study, is how the attainment of these academic laurels have translated into attractive careers in Montréal or other Canadian cities.

In other areas, the youth have made significant strides in starting and sustaining their relationships among Black and White peers. The youths, all clearly stated that they have Black, White, Indian, Mexican, and Arab friends, among others, from an array of races, countries, cultures, and religious backgrounds. This is consistent with Lum (2003) description of bicultural identity.

There are others who are considered to be bicultural as they are comfortable with both Black and White society. They may have both Black and white friends, and they usually work in settings in which they have to exhibit double consciousness in which they function well in both the African American and Anglo-American culture. They typically adjust their behaviour to the identity of the persons with whom they interact and demonstrate bicultural competence (p.222).

The Nigerian youth also claimed to fit in with other cohorts, without regard to race, color, ethnicity or language. Indeed, in language, the Nigerian youths born in Canada, but especially those who arrived in Canada within the previous two years have learned and sometimes mastered the two dominant languages, English and French. Most have no discernible accent, when they speak English or French. Angela, who had been in Canada for only two years stated:

I go to French school and I just started learning French, so I'm trying to feel comfortable. And it's my first year in a regular, complete French school. So I'm trying to feel comfortable with the language and... Yeah, it's good and except in French, I passed but... which I don't feel bad about it because I just started learning it and I'm doing good in it, so I'm fine with that (Angela, pp.13-14, lines 574-604).

Adeaze, who is in the same cohort, but has lived longer in Canada, attended English and French schools and stated that she was currently proficient in both languages.

...even though we're studying in French, we're able to write our exams in English if we want, just write our exams. I know that some of them actually write the exams in French, in English, and are not comfortable writing in English, or even speak... writing in French, sorry, or even speaking French. So, in that way, I think that because I studied in French in high school and in elementary school, I'm more comfortable in French-speaking and writing in French (Adeaze, p.16, lines 697-704).

The Nigerian youths' success with respect to integration into the Canadian society is well documented in this study. The only conflicts expressed by the youth were with respect to their perception and knowledge of the existence of racism in Canada. Although most of the youth denied that they have directly experienced or have been the subject of racism, they however stated that they were apprehensive that they may become subjects of racist acts when they graduate from school, on account of their color, ethnicity and race.

Sometimes, I'm worried or concerned about when I finish school and if when I become a lawyer, if I'm actually gonna be able to get a job. I don't know, I don't know, maybe because I'm a girl; also because of the fact that I'm Black. If I'm gonna be able to get a good job... [inaudible]... even though I might be as competent as someone else. In a way, I have that, like not holding me back, but maybe like working against me, maybe. And I'm worried about that (Adeaze, p.11, lines 485-492). *(Please refer back to previous use on p.191).*

Em, I doesn't exist in the... [inaudible]... Affirmative Action, but there's no such thing as Affirmative Action here in Canada, but... [inaudible]... it's still said that Blacks and others are expected to have a quota but they don't give the quota or that kind of thing ... They don't look for the quota, but for some reason, they always get the quota. So, I don't know how that works (Funmi, p.29, lines 1125-1134).

They get this quota, you know, a certain, you know, they tend to hire all these all White people in your field, that doesn't look right. You have to have a little... [inaudible]... and em, Black definitely... [inaudible]... It makes me uneasy. It make me uneasy, it makes me wonder how far I can get to somewhere, without being seen as well we just have to

choose another person...[inaudible]...I want to get somewhere because of my work, not because of my color...It is! It is, you know, I think, I read somewhere that people, when we go and see like a doctor's office, for some reason, you know, they tend to speak to your race and your gender. So, for example, if all you're getting is Black American, Black Canadians coming to your office, it does not speak to the population. You know, you want people to come to you because you're good, not because of your gender or your color and that's a hindrance, you know, if they are looking at... [inaudible]... (Fumi, pp.25-26, lines 1138-1165).

Conversely and regrettably, most of their parents and caregivers stated that they have not fared as well, when it comes to integration into mainstream Canada, including Montréal. The parents and caregivers stated that they continue to struggle with integration in their communities, with how White Canadians see and perceive them, and importantly with finding appropriate employments and pursuing successful careers in their fields of specialization. To this extent, they appear to have become weary of the Canadian society, therefore, and sometimes have applied their own lived experience and narratives, in socializing their children into understanding what goes on here, but especially how to negotiate the Canadian environment. One of the parents, Gloria, stated.

Canadian environment. Yes. That is it because, if they don't know, they gonna get into trouble. Because that's the way the system is. They gonna get into big trouble and these are the things we tell them. But we do not tell them in a way that is like the world is against you, but this is a fact...These are facts and is reality and we cannot hide it from them. But at the same time, we don't want them to carry this baggage on their shoulder as though they should be afraid and they should be scared of anybody. No. They have to stand firm and stand tall and be, you know, be themselves. But at the same time, they know what is going on. They know what the system is all about, they know what to expect (Gloria. p.20, lines 880-894).

Paul, one of the Community leaders appeared to believe that the Nigerian youth may have become overly integrated into mainstream Canada. He expressed apprehension over the loss of his ethnic language by his children and other Nigerian youth, as well as his plan to remedy the situation so that the Nigerian youth does not lose his language and culture.

One of the things that I'm seeing now, something that they are losing now, they started losing language. Very few of them are still speaking my language very well again. One of them can't speak our language very well again. Ordinary "doo" which is thank you, she can't even say it again. She had to ask me. So, this is one of ...One of my daughters. Now she's started losing that (Paul, p.3, lines 127-137).

So, kids as we see them here, language is one issue that we have a problem with. Okay, because even though our kids behave well as Nigerians, they have two Nigerian parents, even though they were not born here, they are losing that culture, that of the language. I remember that language is a very important part, as far as you know, ethnic background is concerned. Now, I don't know if you know some old story, some story about somebody, a visitor comes to the house and the parents told the child to go and bring something. And because they don't understand the language, and whatever that person is saying now, the child is now responding in English. And therefore, there is no secret now...So, language is an issue, and so because of that now, when we do it, when we started the Association, if you look at the Constitution, it says, we want to give language courses, so that these kids can retain their language. And retaining their language, they can communicate with their parents, communicate with their friends, those who can speak the Nigerian languages (Paul, pp.4-5, lines 174-201).

These are my thoughts. For instance, and as I showed at the onset of the study, my children were all born in Nigeria, where, in addition to being able to speak English, they also spoke Igbo, my own ethnic or tribal language. They spoke no French at all, as this is neither Nigeria's colonially assigned lingua franca, nor did the French occupy Nigeria as British imperialism had. Since coming to Canada however, their mastery of the English language has continued, in addition to having learned, and some, mastering the French language. On the other hand, most are currently unable to speak Igbo, my own language, and barely struggle to understand a few words, since my wife saw a need to reground them in that language, for fear of losing their cultural essence. Why have they lost the ability to speak Igbo? Igbo language has lost out in the competing priorities of Canadian residency, because it is not the language of integration and power, and only relevant to those Nigerians who speak it. As well, it is my summation that it will not lead to an upward mobility in the context of Canada.

6.1.4. Employment and occupation

Nigerian youth, on account of their age, are yet to evolve in the areas of labor market, employment and occupation. Indeed of the ten (10) youth that I interviewed, only one stated being currently hired into a substantive position. The rest of the youth are not fully on the labor force and currently still acquiring all forms of formal and informal education, in order to gain appropriate employment and life-long careers. When they work, it is often part-time or to raise their pocket money for the satisfaction of the normal consumer items associated with their age cohort. The Nigerian youth, as the study found, are neither predominantly working to pay their tuition fees nor other household bills. On the above situation, the youth did not speak to the issue of employment as it concerns them directly. What they did speak about was the status of their parents' employment and careers, which did not paint the Canadian society in a palatable light. The Nigerian youth spoke about, as well as expressed chagrin at the fact that although most of their parents were quite well educated, both while resident in Nigeria and currently here in Canada, this education has only translated into underemployment, some, in their most menial forms.

Nigerian parents, caregivers and Community leaders understand the need for their children to have a sound education, to assist them forge attractive career paths. They have therefore paid significant premiums on ascertaining that they reach this goal. The parents have gone and are still going to extraordinary lengths to finance their children's education. The priority placed on education and success, on the part of immigrant parents and the challenges, with respect to parents lowering their own status and sacrificing themselves to create dreams for their children is noteworthy, but creates some dilemma. This dilemma exists, because their children's relocation and high mobility, related to successful educational outcomes, exposure to

racism, as well as the concomitant decline in Nigerian identity becomes the price to pay for this success. Despite the finding that the Nigerian youth was yet to evolve in the labor and employment sectors, some of the Nigerian Community leaders firmly argued that the youth of Nigerian descent were already on the labor market, but not here in Montréal or any other part of Quebec. One of the Community leaders, Dan, regretfully stated:

Yes, the issue of our kids being worried is on record, because a couple of years ago, most of the Nigerian parents living in Montréal had their kids attending university like Concordia Loyola and McGill. And after graduation they are not here in Montréal. I don't know what that is. Probably is language problem that is driving them away. Most of these kids are in Toronto but their parents live in Montréal and they get their education in Montréal but they are not here. So, is it maybe because of jobs? If I come hard on it I will call it discrimination, because er, if these kids cannot find their jobs definitely they have to leave their parents. And go to where they will be where they will be understood or whatever. Because in Montréal here we are supposed to have our kids live here and work with us and then the number of our community will expand. Instead of we bring up our kids and they're gone...Because they want a place that they can have jobs. And some families like one I know has moved from Montréal, in order to be with the children in Toronto. When we don't have, like somebody come from Montréal, from Nigeria tomorrow, before you know he is living in Toronto or is living in Ottawa. He has come originally to stay in Montréal. So that instead of our number increasing, the number continue to diminish, so that bother us...that's a great worry. And right now, Montréal is losing a lot of people to Calgary...These are the worries that bother many of us as community leaders. And it is something that we are thinking of what to do to be able to avoid many more of it happening. Because for me especially myself being in Montreal for over thirty-something years, I feel, figure out that cannot live anywhere else but here. At my age I cannot move from here now here to Los Angeles. [laughing]. So my Montréal is home, so I am here. But for the young people, it's not easy, it's not easy like that. The young people want opportunity where it is available for them. So that's why it's kind of concern to us as community leaders. Then to be able to put an end to it. It's just something that is in the air. For we see it, bothering us. So, it's like that (Dan, pp.5-6, lines 218-273).

Five (5) parent participants stated that they trained either in Nigeria or in both Nigeria and here in Canada as professionals. Despite this, four (4) out of the five (5) parents are currently employed in janitorial services. The fifth (5th) parent is employed in a Blue-collar job. The parents stated that after graduation, they interminably searched for employment in their field of

training. When they could not find work in their field of expertise, they accepted whatever they could find, in this case as office cleaners, and have remained there ever since. Stan stated:

I didn't come to Canada, to do the kind of profession I'm doing today...Janitorial job (Stan, p.36, lines 1625-1634).

One of the respondents spoke about how he was promised a substantive posting, on the completion of his PhD, to the position that he was already occupying and successfully performing the organizational mandate. Once he finished his PhD, the management created loopholes, which culminated in his frustration, subsequently forcing him out of the organization. Management then turned around and gave the position that he had been working at and apparently standardized, to a less qualified White man. During the study, these parents and Community leaders spoke exasperatingly about how they have been short changed and excluded within the Canadian labor market. Some have even regretted coming to Canada, except in so far as the Canadian society still holds, as they hope, some future for the enhancement of their children's lives.

And still, they still don't accept you. It's like hey, who's this guy, where are you coming, you know? Who's this Black guy? By the time he comes in here and looks around, and wonder how many of our stuff would be missing. You can read it in their face... Which makes you wonder, what does the Canadian society actually want you to do? If you're not working, oh, you're ripping the society. You're working, who gave you the job? What kind of good paying job do you have that warrant you drive a car of this type? (Stan, pp.36-37, lines 1639-1654).

Stan continued:

If a White man...if it took a little effort for a White man to attain or achieve something, we would have to put ten times that effort, in order to be recognized. One thing to be recognized, another thing is to be accepted, you know. You can just be recognized, oh yeah, yeah, yeah, you did it, but you've not been accepted. And in your place of work, everybody tries to isolate you (Stan, p.16, lines 724-730). *(Please refer back to previous use on p.192).*

This is not to say or concede, that there are not several Nigerians, who have experienced appropriate employments and successful careers as medical doctors, lawyers, engineers, professors, teachers; even social workers, in Montréal and beyond. There are. The challenge is about a larger percentage of Nigerians, who are qualified in their chosen fields, finding, retaining and successfully navigating career paths in their chosen fields, rather than working in whatever, and with substandard emolument, due to their “accident of birth” as Blacks. The issue of employment, occupation and career, which Nigerian parents, caregivers and Community leaders have expressed being excluded from, brings us to the analysis of race and race discourses.

6.1.5. Race, racism, prejudice, discrimination & exclusion

Of the ten (10) youths, whom I interviewed, only Uche categorically stated that he has experienced racism directly, leading him to experience conflicting identity, pride and anger. He narrated his experience in the hands of a White woman at a McDonald restaurant, whom he alleged to have kicked his bag, rather than request him to remove it. He informed additionally, about his frustration at being watched wherever he went to in the downtown and other areas of Montréal.

I feel happy to be Black, because it's not, it's not easy being Black...it's like a costume, I don't think that Black people have to dress up in Halloween cos' I mean, it's tough being Black. You go around town, people are scared of you; they look at you all the time...it's trep annoying...I get that all the time. For instance, I was at McDonald's, I was eating? And my bag was next to me? This lady? This White lady comes by...with her friend...and she's like 40, 50 something, she just kicks my bag aside and then I look at her, I look up at her and she's giving me this dirty face...*[long pause]*...I didn't yak, but if that happens next time I would say something, because I didn't really appreciate that. She could have just asked me to remove my bag...yeah but then I had to be happy where I am from... (Uche, p.8, lines 329-341).

Uche's experience as possibly a direct recipient of racism, as well as the socialization he received from his parents about racism and an “Othering” Canadian society, led him to make

very strong statements related to his future relationships with any one who is White. Uche narrated, that he has been taught by his parents, as well as gained insight into the existence of Black and White relationships that is largely lopsided in the Whites' favor. For this reason, he stated that he has been strongly admonished by his parents, as part of his socialization, identity construction and sustenance, never to date or marry a White girl. His argument was that Blacks were the recipients of inhuman acts, domination and exclusionary practices by Whites. He pointedly asked me if a hundred or even forty years ago, any Caucasian, heterosexual girl would have agreed to kiss him.

Exactly, but when you see a White person and you're friends with them, you have to think about it. A hundred years ago, when, if you were a slave, would they have been friend with you?...Exactly! Would those White girls have, um, would a White girl have kissed you back then? It won't happen, so you've got to think about that, with your relationship with that Caucasian person be the same a hundred years ago, or forty years ago in the 60's, when racism was like out of control, you know? And my parents helped me with that, they helped me with who I am. Why it should and should not be (Uche, p.10, lines 433-445).

Uche also believed that his father was underemployed on account of Canadian racism.

My Dad has a PhD...he...he can be a doctor. When he came here, he can't even...like I heard on the radio, um they're talking about how um professional Black...um...what's the word am looking for...?...Professionals in from the Caribbean or Africa? When they come here, they can't do anything. You know, they, they neglect Black people. My Dad went from being a doctor to being a carpenter. That's not right (Uche, p.21, lines 915-925).

In Funmi's case, she stated that her family has the same issue with enduring Canadian exclusionary practices, in terms of jobs and employment.

I guess my biggest worry is this whole idea that Canada is not prejudiced, because it is. Everyone of them tries to say they are color blind, and I hate that word, because being color blind, means that you forget that you guys were ever wronged. And so it's just, a friend of mine actually said that to me, she's like oh, well, you know I'm color blind, and I went bananas. There's nothing to show that you're color blind because...They're in denial, they're in denial. Our history is based on inequalities, prejudice, discrimination, race wars. It would be different if things hadn't happened in all of our history and to say well... *[inaudible]*...it doesn't cover anything. So, that, I think one of the biggest things,

because I know that when I'm walking on the streets, the first thing people see, I'm Black. That's the number one thing, so you can't when you get used to me, you realize okay, well she's Black but she has personality, she's a person. But the first thing you see is being Black. And going to the mall even, you know? People, when you go into a mall, people see you're Black, they look at you. They don't want to address you or come to you for a close look and say, if she's Black, then she's poor or something. You know they do nothing but following them, security guard just follows you wherever. This idea that being Black is being deviant and that's seriously prejudicial and I think that really comes across sometimes as Canadian culture. Em, I would like to think that the higher, you know the higher education you have the less prejudicial you would be, but no, [laughing] (Funmi, pp.24-25, lines 1086-1116).

Funmi and the other eight (8) youth admitted strongly about the existence and vibrancy of racism, but denied that they have directly and so far experienced it. Most of them appeared to glean their information from their parents' narratives of racism, racialized identity and prejudice. This finding is interesting on three accounts. The first is that there is a possibility that the nine (9) Nigerian youth have not directly experienced racism because the attitude of White Canadians towards minorities, especially Blacks, are beginning to change for the better. On this account it would appear that the Canadian society has become more "tolerating" of "others" who are not Caucasians or White. The second possibility may be that Whites have, since 911, found other scapegoats, or "New Blacks," as represented by Arabs, Middle Easterners and Muslims. The third possibility may be that the Nigerian youth, due to their age cohort, are yet to be viewed by White Canada as a threat. Nine (9) of the ten (10) youth participants in the study are still in school, or doing part-time jobs, therefore may be perceived by Whites as currently posing no significant threats. Racialized discourses can be "hidden," therefore less discernible and overt as discrimination or prejudice.

The fact that Nigerian youth participants admitted to having knowledge of White racist attitudes towards Blacks, as well as feeling bad about it, may lead them to feel hopeless or helpless. They therefore deny it, or in order to protect themselves, may be refusing to speak

about it. It is also possible that Nigerian youth, due to their parents' sacrifice, may wish to protect them, make them feel good, as well as leave them with a sense that they are integrating, by claiming that all is well, while this may be far from the truth. Finally, there is the possibility that class may present with a modulating effect on racism, as Black youth, who do well in school are perhaps more likely to be treated better by the teachers, who hold power in this domain. The jury is still out on what these Nigerian youth would be saying in ten years time, when they would have completed school and begun to vie or compete for jobs and employment with the rest of White Canada. The precedence for this assumption is that after all, did not their parents before them successfully complete school in Canada and elsewhere and are still living on the margins?

Five (5) parents and two (3) Community leaders were interviewed for this study. All admitted to the existence of racism, racialized identity, prejudice and social exclusion. All also admitted to having been direct or indirect recipients of racist behaviors or attitudes from White, Canadian citizens. Whereas two (2) parents, Femi and Tamara, were unsure as to whether what they experienced in one incident that they narrated, was racism, the other six (6), which includes the three (3) Community leaders, were sure and unequivocal that they have been recipients, even victims of racism and exclusion. This is not to say that Femi and Tamara did not believe and or are not convinced that racism exists, is alive and well in all aspects of Canadian society. Four (4) parents stated indignantly, and did strongly believe that they are socially and economically where they have found themselves today because of racism. For instance, Stan spoke about his first experience with racism, having just arrived in Canada as a student. He was hired as a security guard, with an understanding between the employer and Immigration Canada that he and other students would be posted at locations where they could perform their security duties and simultaneously be able to study. He narrated:

Yeah! Guard, Security Guard. At that time it was very difficult for us because we were all students. And if you got a job, you needed work permit. And then they had to re-write your student visa, because this would be attached to it. That was the first time I understood what Security job was about. And then, as a Black person, they never gave us good location to work. I was sent to a construction site. You see this Kanata now this guy "bi" [lives], it was bush. They use to drive us all the way there... They refused to give me key to the room, where there is heater. I was left outside... Winter! You say all kinds of weather, Winter! I froze... Twelve hours. And they chose the Black ones. Everywhere the job was difficult, because when we did security guard, it was an agreement between the company and Immigrations, that they will give us a place. In short, that was the language... Where you could study, but at the same time watch the place. If you were White, you were given a place like that. But as a Black person, you are either sent to a place like that or they give you a place where you have to punch... By the time you finish punching, it's time to start all over again (Stan, pp.35-36, lines 1564-1609).

He stated however, that the treatment was different for other security guards who were White.

Stan argued:

No time to read. No time to even go and pee. So, that's where the racism started... Where I'm sitting today, it's racism that put me there... When I came to Canada... I didn't come to Canada, to do the kind of profession I'm doing today. (p.36, lines 1612-1617).

It is interesting to observe that all the parents, despite their claim that their educational attainment and successful outcomes did not translate into upward social mobility in Canada, maintained that a sound education by their youth will eventually break these barriers. The parents and Community leaders believe that if the youth continue to excel educationally, especially in those sought-after professional fields, White employers of labor, who would be in dire need of their services, for the sake of their "bottom line," would have little option than to hire them. As if with one voice, all the parents, caregivers and Community leaders agreed that their children should remain in and complete school, not only at the highest levels, but also pursue sought-after programs, for instance in medicine. They argued strongly, especially in the case of Paul, a Community leader, that with Nigerian youth graduating in disciplines like medicine, it would be difficult for the employer, no matter how racist to refuse to hire them. Paul

argued, that in Canada, there is a shortage of medical doctors, which would make not hiring qualified ones, irrespective of race, color or gender self-defeating.

I have attempted in chapter six, to articulate and analyze the emergent themes from the phenomenological interviews with the Nigerian youth, their parents and caregivers, as well as the Community leaders. I tried to speak to, as well as attempt an analysis of the socialization and acculturation process for the Nigerian youth, with proven outcomes in their identity construction, first as Nigerians, and second as Canadians. I also analyzed outcomes related to their school and educational successes, with the study finding that Nigerian youth have experienced successful educational outcomes. They have also integrated well in the Nigerian and Canadian societies, by having friends and relationships across racial, ethnic and gender lines. My study has shown that whereas the youth was quite aware of racist discourses and their negative impacts on their parents and caregivers, their own experience with racism was imperceptible, or that they have developed resilience and positive resistance to it. On the other hand, the parents and community leaders admitted to, and appear to have endured racism, racialized identity and social exclusion, in employment and other social spheres of the Canadian society. The parents and caregivers also appear to have succumbed to these discourses in ways that may have contributed to their miring on the fringes of Canadian society.

On a positive and redeeming note, the Nigerian Community, as the study showed, has served, for the youth, their parents and caregivers, as well as Community leaders, as a rallying ground for individual, family and group support. This Community and group support then present as a vehicle for Nigerian and Black Community resilience, resistance, as well as a platform for deconstructing the “Othered” location, where they were designed by White Canada to be been mired. Chapter seven, which is the concluding part of this study, examines this Black

Community resiliency, the forms that they can and do take, as well as the linear progression of some expected outcomes derivable from the application of these forms of resistance.

Chapter 7

7.0. Encapsulating the Research Findings

7.1. Resolution of identity issues with Black & Nigerian youths

When I arrived in Montréal with my daughter some years ago, I perceived profound identity crises among Black youths here (Kadzin, 1995; Peters & McMahon, 1996; Russell (1997); Gillborn and Mirza (2000)). These identity crises, as I presumed, was a fall-out from their encounter with a dominant, racist society. Owing to racism and stereotypes, the dominant population appeared not to notice or acknowledge the challenges that these youths faced each passing day. Most of the Black youth, whom I encountered during this period, were from the Diaspora and had limited knowledge regarding their cultural origins, African or West Indian. As stated earlier in this study, and according to the 1991 Canadian Census figures, there are approximately 504,290; and for the 2001 Canadian Census figures, 662,200 persons designated in the social category called Black. Of these, a large number or 61 percent reside in Ontario while 25.2 percent live in Quebec. There is almost a negligible presence of Blacks in other provinces across the rest of Canada. In this vein, and still according to these figures, the Canadian Black Community is considerably younger than the Canadian population as a whole, with approximately 3 out of 10 members of the Black Community being under the age of 14 (Foster, 2005; Grandea, 1996; Mensah, 2002; Milan & Tran, 2004; Torczyner, 1997). The implications of these findings include the fact, that the visibility of Blacks in Montréal and Canada is highlighted by the higher percentage of young persons in the youth care and judicial systems, resulting in conflicts in society due to identity conflict (Torczyner, 1997). My study of the Nigerian Community has outcomes showing that Nigerian youth is clear and unambiguous about their identity and the agencies of derivation. This realization, however, does not preclude

the expectation that growing up in Canada, they will struggle with identity issues, as well as have occasions, when they would question who they are, where they are, and where they are-headed, because they will.

According to Torczyner, there are 6 percent fewer adult Black men than women in Canada, with twice as many single Black women in the Black Communities (8.1 percent in Black population; 3.6 percent in the total population) as in the total population in 1991 (p.24). Therefore, it is highly probable that young Black persons, including some Nigerian youths in Montréal will be residing in single, female-headed households. Nigerian youth are already residing in poor, single, female-headed households, due to increases in divorces and other Canadian conditions, except that I could not feature those due to my sample size. This condition presents as a recipe for all sorts of internalizing but mostly externalizing conduct disorders by the youth, which I have already described in chapter four. In short order, the issue is that being Black in Montréal, poor, in a gendered, single parent family, present rather significant risk factors (Dwivedi, 1993). When a Black youth in this type of environment “falls through the cracks,” there is a tendency to highlight their problems, while overlooking groups of White people, who are equally disadvantaged (Cantile, 2002).

Walker, Spohn and Delone (2000) have suggested that the disproportionate percentage of Black youths and families highlighted in arrests, trials and institutional custody has underpinnings, not necessarily related to legal justice, but more manifestly to race, family dynamics, class, socioeconomic dispositions and possibly identity confusion. During my Bachelor of social work internship, I applied, and was fortunate to be accepted as a Youth Delegate or Probation officer with the Young Offenders branch of Batshaw, Youth and Family Services. I observed that most of the contravening youths, by a percentage to their population,

were Black youths from the Diaspora. It was not long before I was made privy of some Nigerian youths on the agency's caseloads, although for professional reasons, I was not assigned, and was not privy the content and outcomes of the cases. The common denominator with these youths was that they were struggling with identity issues, some of which related to their place within the Canadian society. Usually, their encounter with the Young Offenders Act revolved around shoplifting, massing in groups, which the youths refer to in their own parlance as "hanging out," and resistance to police and law enforcement agents. Once, during a Community event and discussion that was unrelated to the Young Offenders, one Nigerian youth who obviously had confronted racism, told me about being "sick and tired" of the questions regarding where he came from, even when he was born here in Montréal, had never been to Nigeria, as well as had no noticeable accent. In consonance with the mentality of Canadian "Othering," one of the Nigerian youth, Obinna, aged 15 years at the time of my interview with him in 2004, informed that some of the teachers in his school asked him questions about his country of origin, as well as that of his parents. But the real fact is that Obinna was born in Canada, has no accent, and if any, it is the Canadian accent, if anything like a Canadian accent exists. He also knows very little about Nigeria. It would appear that his teachers regarded him as a permanent immigrant, to warrant questioning him about his country of origin at every turn.

That being said, the current study provides a context of hope that with the right influences and family, as well as community support, Black youth in Canada can not only survive, but thrive in exemplary ways.

7.2. Resistance, resiliency and successful outcomes

Nigerian youth have survived and continue to thrive as shown by their successes in the educational and other sectors. In the context of the stereotypical Black youth pathology, these

successes by Nigerian youth in the educational sector strongly suggests a high degree of resiliency, despite concerns and due to parental ethical values with regard to education and educational attainment. The study also showed that their parents' narratives of post-educational and post-migration exclusion, rather than present as obstacles to their success, have on the contrary become the "spurs" that have enabled Nigerian youth achieve exemplary educational outcomes. It is highly plausible that this resiliency and its accompanying successes are owed to the consistent and sustainable cohesiveness of the Nigerian families and Community, the interests they have shown, as well as contributions they have made towards the success of their youths in Canada. It is also plausible that this resiliency and success may have emanated from Nigerian youth cognizance of the interests, and mostly apprehensions shown by their extended family members in Nigeria over their success in Canada. As "cultural ambassadors" to Canada, Nigerians in Africa perceive their family members in Canada as their representatives, but especially as their path to emancipation from a failing local economy. The youth in this study expressed being aware of these expectations, which may be complicit in the pressure to succeed and the resilience required and procured to achieve this success. There is an unwritten competition among families in Nigeria, and also in Canada, over who would produce more socially successful family members. The Nigerian youth is aware of this, as well as understand that only through exemplary school and educational outcomes can they make their parents, family and community proud and truly "stand out" in "competition" with other families.

During the study, the participants, particularly the adult respondents, all proudly spoke about many Nigerian youths attending McGill and other institutions in various faculties, including medicine. They also spoke about their expectations of the role of the youth to engender sustainable progress within the Nigerian Community, when they complete their studies and enter

the labor market. At the time of compiling the study outcomes, several Nigerian youth have graduated at the top of their class in the arts and sciences, including medicine, from various universities in Montréal. The participants also expressed very low dropout rates amongst Nigerian youth, as contingent on the role and persistence of Nigerian parents, family, Community leaders, and more poignantly some Black medical doctors and practitioners, mainly and originally from West Africa. Some of the participants informed me that these medical practitioners have established a mentoring program for Black youth in Montréal, aimed at stimulating, as well as directing their interests towards the sciences, particularly medicine. They also stated that Nigerian youth have successfully competed for scholarships and awards granted as part of the mentoring program, and which they have used to support themselves while studying at CEGEP and universities. I was informed that upon graduation, these Nigerian youth have become sources of pride for their parents and families in Nigeria and Canada, as well as the Black Community. In addition, they have become role models for most Nigerian youth, who are now striving and competing to enter university in medicine and other faculties. In the end, the study clearly showed that Nigerian youth has expressed amazing strength, which in turn appears to have provided them with the type of resiliency and prosocial skills that transcend and perhaps dwarf the discourses of race, racism and marginalization.

7.3. Summary of Findings

Nigerian youth interviewed for this study were socialized, acculturated, and mostly derive their identity construction from their parents, caregivers, community leaders, from the Nigerian Community and to a lesser extent, the Black and Canadian Communities. Although cognizant of the narratives and discourses of race and racism, the Nigerian youth appear not to

have been significantly and negatively impacted by these, due to their construction of resistance and resiliency. These facets of resistance and resiliency are evidenced by their successes at school, amongst Black and White peers, within the Community, as well as their manifestation of full integration into the mainstream Canadian society. Parents, caregivers, community leaders and the Nigerian and Black Communities, as agencies of this identity construction and formation, on the other hand, have been fragmented and continue to endure exclusionary relationships with the rest of White Canada. These are represented by marginalization in employment and the social contract, as well as other systemic practices that have continued to mire parents, Community leaders and by extension the Nigerian and Black Communities on the fringes of Canadian society. Despite this reality, the study also found that a strong individual, family, community involvement, advocacy, cohesiveness and group consciousness, remain the fulcrum for survival of the Nigerian youth and their families. A strong individual, family, community advocacy, and group consciousness was as well, offer pertinent tools to resist and deconstruct the status quo, other discourses of oppression and their reproduction. Without these, the Nigerian and Black youth have no other recourse and appear by default, “wired” to pass to their children, the narratives of exclusion and marginalization, as well as many injudiciously transplanted gender socialization, such as are currently being passed on to them by their parents, caregivers and Community leaders.

In view of these research outcomes, I have dedicated this final chapter to highlighting the social, cultural and educational implications of the study. This final chapter also suggests directions for future research, located in a longitudinal study of the current research participants. Here also, I explore some of the challenges, but especially dilemmas of my ethnographic approach in the study of identity construction by Nigerian youth.

7.4. Possibilities arising from the research

It does not appear that any Nigerian in Montréal or Quebec has ever undertaken a research study of the Nigerian Community, since their numbers began to gain strength from the 1980's and 1990's. If this is so, then this research provides an opportunity to make an inroad into, with a view to understanding a Community that most in Canada only superficially recognize as an oil producer. Some of the possibilities that this research on the Nigerian Community will provide, would be an understanding of who its members are, where they came from and how membership is recruited, where they are going or intend to go, as well as what lived, individual and collective experiences and narratives they have experienced.

Another possibility of this research would be the giving of "voice," to the extent that this giving of "voice" engenders or becomes empowering and emancipatory for a silenced minority within a dominant, racist society (Freire, 1997, 2000). It is not so much the "voice" that my study is expected to give to the Nigerian Community, especially youth like Uche, Nkenna, Trish, Sophia, Obinna, and parents and Community leaders like Stan, Tamara, Gloria, Femi and Razak that is the key, although it is important that their "voices" be heard loud and clear. What the key is, remains the extent to which this giving of voice for adults, parents and caregivers, endows an empowerment trickle-down effect on the children and youths. This trickle-down empowerment of children and youth is expected to permeate and perpetuate the communal cultural and traditional psyche, as well as assist them take hold of their Canadian citizenship, which the constitution, as well as the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms have already granted them (Buechler, 2000; Ladson-Billings and Tate IV, 2006; Whitehead and Hughey, 2004).

As it stands currently, children and youths represent the most adjudged vulnerable members of the Black, Nigerian Community, as well as other marginalized groups, Black or

White in the Canadian society at large (Hudson, 2002). Furthermore, and with respect to the possibilities of the research, and the giving of “voice,” is my personal struggle prior to coming to Canada, and more so since my arrival, to express myself, my opinions, beliefs, lived experience and narratives in a written, retrievable format. The outcomes that I expect would be that those others, who have, and share similar lived experiences, can be assured that they are not alone. It is my hope that the study might offer an emboldened step forward to express themselves in the hope of experiencing some form of catharsis, any catharsis. In the proceeding sections, I will attempt to articulate some of the more ascertainable possibilities and later, dilemmas of my research study of the Nigerian Community in Montréal.

My assumption is that the ethnographic research approach, which I have applied here, as a tool of inquiry, will provide an opportunity for Nigerian youth in Montréal to speak to their lived experiences. It would also provide them some latitude to express their worldviews and opinions about how they perceive their families, within the Nigerian and Black Communities on the one hand, and the Canadian society on the other. The Canadian society is represented by school and educational institutions, peers and the sociopolitical institutions that they must come in contact with everyday of their lives. I believe that such a study, as I have conducted may also assist them to organize and better be able to deal with their confrontation with the subjectivities of the “Other,” represented by their status as immigrants, as well as confrontation with a minority status, race, racism, prejudice, discrimination, and exclusion (Breton, 2005; Clarke, Hoban, and Powell, 2002; Day, 2006; Frank and Smith, 1999; Hall, 1995; Hoggett, 1997; Lee, 1999; Smith, 1999). More profoundly, how, and in what significant ways the Nigerian Community and the Black Collective have contributed to their identity formation in Canada.

7.5. Social Work and Educational implications

The major implications for social work and education of my ethnographic study of the Nigerian Community, and by extension, the Black Community, is its ability to quest for how Nigerian youth construct and have their identity constructed for them. The corollary is to find reasons for, as well as sustainable means of resolving issues related to identity or indeed, identity crisis, at school and educational institutions, as well as the Canadian society (Bennett, 1999; Castells, 1997; Davis, 1997; Pickvance, 1999). This is because it is in schools and educational institutions that skills and expertise are imparted, learned and acquired, for application in the pursuit of careers and positive social, economic and political mobility (Garibaldi, 1986; Gillborn, 2006; Giroux, 1992c). These crises appear to arise, inevitably, on account of the Black youth being raised, and growing up in a predominantly, White, racist society such as Montréal. The final implication is the quest for understanding the culture, values, norms, mores, and lived experience of Nigerians living in Montréal and by extension, Canada. This culture and socialization process then translates and becomes implicated and complicit in identity construction for Nigerian youth.

Culture is the sum total of life pattern passed on from generation to generation within a group of people and includes institutions, language, religious beliefs, habits of thinking, artistic expressions, and patterns of social and interpersonal relationships (Hodge, Struckmann, & Trost, as cited in Lum, 1999, pp.2).

This is so because culture, including the transmission of norms, mores and values, and identity crisis, present with an immense impact on Nigerians and Blacks adults, but more profoundly on youths (Cummings, 1995; Guthrie, 1970; Lum, 2005; Santrock, 2007; Tse, 1997). This quest for identity also has ramifications for how Black or Nigerian youths and their Communities, as a minority group, survive within a predominantly White, racist society, especially as located, and sometimes reproduced within the Canadian educational and other social institutions (Dei 2002;

Guppy and Davis, 1998; Moodley, 1992; Nieto, 2000). Goldschmid (1970) stated that apart from education, Blacks come into contact with the Canadian systems and society in the area of government funding, political participation and franchise, as well as economics and enterprise.

In formulating and experiencing identity, Black youths in general, more than youths of other ethnic groups or cultures, have experienced negative outcomes in their interactions with others from the dominant society. Some of these are represented by the way teachers, social services and law enforcement agents, especially the police, have been known to deal with Black Youths (Dominelli, 1989, 2004; Rodgers, 1975). Recall that Obinna, one of the youth respondents in the study, reported being asked by his teacher where he was from, even though he was born and currently being raised in Montréal. Sometimes, the police routinely harass, arrest, and brutalize minority youths, due to stereotypes assigned to wearing a braid, bandanas, baggy pants, or “hanging out” with Black cohorts. Some have also been fatally shot by police for some frivolous reasons. I have already stated how the spate of racially motivated labeling and arrests have seen Black youths over-represented within the Canadian juvenile justice system, not essentially because they commit more crimes than the general population. Davis (1997) has argued, that other more established cultural communities, having a common identity or who do not experience dynamics that bring their identity into question, have fared better.

The contextualization of identity issues with Nigerian and Black youths, as I had designed, was to, explore, and I hope it succeeded in exploring and deconstructing the issues of preconceived notions and stereotypes regarding Blacks generally. The other, is the dilemma of Black and Nigerian adolescents, in the Canadian social systems, especially within the educational systems, and among peers, as they balance two or even more sets of values (Banks and Banks, 1997; Banks, 1997, 2006; Bennett, 1999; Stephan, 1999; Yamamoto, 1997). A strong

corollary was the impact of the broader society in shaping this sense of personal identity.

Phinney, Lochner, & Murphy (1990) argued that minority individuals, especially adolescents of school-going age, must need to resolve two major issues or conflicts, which emanate from their identification as members of a non-dominant group within a dominant, multicultural society. For some youth, especially Black youth, Lum (2000) stated:

Caught in an acculturation trap, individuals move away from cultural maintenance and toward identification with the majority society. Reacting against their ethnic cultural past, they dissociate from the language, behavior, and values of their cultural roots (p.12).

There is a general consensus about the ignorance and prejudicial stereotyping towards Black youths and their group. Phinney et al. (1990) state that this, as well as the existence of two sets of norms and values: those of their own culture and those of the dominant groups, for better or for worse, produce concomitant impact and stress on their life development.

For the minority Black adolescent, including the Nigerian child, who is a recent arrival to the Canadian social matrix, the implications appear even dire, in the absence of a strong support system. For Black youth, the psychological complexity of ethnicity posits a hypothesis, that their inability to understand issues related to their ethnic identity, in an apparently ethnically heterogeneous society, may predispose them to poor self concept or identity disorders (Dentler and Hafner, 1997). These disorders have implications for school failure, criminal behavior, depression, mental disorder or even suicide (Comer & Poussaint, 1992). Fortunately, my study found that presently, the Nigerian youth was doing well, has a strong family, community and social network. The Nigerian youth in this study, unlike Black youth generally has been excelling at school, expressed being fully integrated into Canadian society, and has negligible to zero involvement in criminal behavior and contraculture. It is noteworthy that any debate on the participation of Nigerian and Black youths in the Canadian educational system invariably

focuses on their socialization into the Canadian social matrix. In this regard, it would be pertinent to explore, how alienating education curricula that expunge Black contributions, (Hooks, 1993) as consistent with Uche's angst about Canadian education and pedagogy, discriminatory ideas and the class situation of the majority, become perpetuation vehicles for disidentification and disassociation of Black youths with the school system (Bennett, 1999; Dei, 1996, 2000; Edwards, 1996; Gillborn & Mirza, 2000; Kaplan, 1999; Neito, 1996, 1999).

For most minority youth and especially those who are termed "Black" or of African descent, there appears to be nothing in their social experience, educational, or school curricula that validate their existence and experience as a Black person (Deiter, 1999; Jaine, 1995; Milloy, 1999). "Racism and other forms of discrimination, particularly sexism, classism, ethnocentrism, and "linguicism," have a long history in our schools" (Farley, 1995, p.35). In Montréal and elsewhere in Quebec, there is a noticeable or visible absence of any contributions by Black people to the Quebec and Canadian society (Rich and Cargile, 2004). Others are Whites' hold to property and privilege, which creates a depersonalizing environment for Black youths at school, absence of adult support, absence of belief in their ability to succeed, and continued invisibility even when they drop out (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; Marx, 2006; Sleeter and Grant, 2007; Rizvi, 1993, 2003). If Blacks are struggling or unable to define themselves, therefore, social work professionals and educators attempting to do so will only succeed at administrative imposition and labeling, as it exists in this bizarre relationship to questions of knowledge and power (Essien-Udom, 1962; Shapiro, Sewell and DuCette, 1995; Villegas, 2002). Loof (2005) summed it up aptly:

Children do not grow in a vacuum. They cannot be understood apart from the historical, geographical, and socioeconomic characteristics of the area in which they develop. As evaluators, we are reminded, ever and again, that the children we see are members not only of families but also of wider groups, whose training patterns affect them a good

deal. To do our work well, we need to be aware of these cultural patterns; only then will we be able to understand the child's own functioning and that of his family in an adequate way (p.1).

7.6. Enhancement of awareness of the Nigerian Community in Montréal & Canada

Nigerians, just like members of other African countries are recent phenomena in Canada, having begun arriving here mostly since the 1970s (Mensah, 2002; and Torczyner, 1997). To this extent, and in the particular case of Nigeria, little is known about them, as research focusing on the experiences of Nigerians in Canada has yet to be undertaken. My conduct of ethnographic, phenomenological research on Nigerians in Montréal has provided an opportunity to understand further, the experience of Nigerians in Canada and particularly the challenges of identity construction among Nigerian youth. The study also revealed how experiences affect their cultural perception, their perception of the Canadian society and ultimately identity construction. By extension, this research mirrored the Nigerian youth worldviews, as well as hopefully assisted other Black Diaspora youths and their families in articulating some information about their roots (Trueba, 1998). Especially, it highlighted the similarities and divergences that define Black persons and other minority and majority Communities in Canada. This ethnographic research, hopefully, also exposed members of the dominant culture to the cultural world of Nigerians in Montréal. The study especially divulged the inherent diversity that exist, but little of which is either perceived or even acknowledged by the dominant culture, due to White privilege (Dixson and Rousseau, 2006; Kennedy-Dubourdieu, 2006; Marx, 2006). In the final analysis, it is my fervent aspiration that this research may become instrumental in assisting the reduction of the internalized stereotypes by the dominant culture about Blacks and Nigerians, especially youth. Additionally, my expectation is that the study will provide the vehicle for the integration of this minority, marginalized, excluded community, represented by parents and community

leaders, like Razaq, Stan, Femi, Tamara and Gloria, among others, as well as youth like Uche into the mainstream Canadian society (Harris, 2003; Swain, 2002; Yosso, 2006). Mobasher and Sadri (2004); Porter (1965) argue, that the exclusion of people of color is based mainly on their residency having been based on a different entry process from those of the Anglo-Europeans.

7.7. Dilemmas & Challenges of the research

As comprehensive as the possibilities of this ethnographic research may appear to be, it was not without its challenges and dilemmas. These dilemmas, as I will be describing them, present in theoretical, structural, logistical, social, political and cultural realities. Oftentimes, we set out to carry out a project or venture with very good intentions. However, it is not uncommon that we may encounter circumstances that are beyond our control. These circumstances may delay, stifle, thwart, hijack, or continue to present as obstacles to our best thought-out plans and good intentions. I have provided below, some of the dilemmas and challenges of my study and the ethnographic research approach, with respect to identity formation among Nigerian youth.

7.8. Dilemma of confidentiality

Babbie (1999, 2004) and Sieber (1992) suggest that confidentiality overlaps with issues of privacy and assurances of anonymity. Confidentiality in a research process, involves the treatment of information gathered about participants. This is due, to a natural feeling by people that their privacy has been compromised or even invaded upon, when such is obtained without their consent. People will also feel an invasion of their privacy, if information they gave was divulged with or without their consent, in addition to ways that they deem inappropriate. The understanding of “private” depends on the individual or group involved. For some, it will be cultural, while others may be religious beliefs, gender, sexuality, age, occupation and social

class. As an ethnographic researcher on the Nigerian Community, one of my dilemmas was trying to determine the degree of confidentiality I promise and the reality of my ability to protect the informants' anonymity. Consistent with ethnography, it is possible, for instance, that my use of pseudonyms and alteration in some of the participants' biography, even in an ethical way, may not have sufficed to protect their anonymity within the Nigerian Community. The Nigerian Community in Montréal is quite small; therefore, most of the people know one another, including some of each other's idiosyncrasies. Unlike most ethnic groups, with large homeland populations, the population of Nigerians in Montréal is rather small. Most of the people know one another, and everyone who is not in deliberate hiding, is known and identifiable in specific ways. To forestall the divulgement of identifying information, I have substituted the participants' names with pseudonyms.

I also faced the dilemma of confidentiality or anonymity, due to a particular characteristic of social research. This peculiarity is in so far as the privileged status of a communication between a doctor or attorney and their clients is not equal to those of social researchers, especially in ethnography (Beins, 2004; Cassell and Jacobs, 1987). Ethnographic research, such as I conducted on the Nigerian Community in Montréal, entailed the use of letters, emails, correspondence, and data, which may be archived. It is true that through the "sanitization" of data in the case of surveys, it is now possible to replace identifying responses, such as names and addresses, by assigning them case numbers. In the case of ethnographic data, personal markers such as styles of expressing opinions, anecdotes, narratives and mannerisms, may render my ability to "sanitize" or remove them difficult, or render their concealment for the purposes of identification unattainable.

Still on the issue of confidentiality, some of the participants in my study wished for their actual names to be used, as well as for their responses to be applied to future projects, in addition to the one in which they were directly involved. In that case, it can be challenging to ensure and maintain anonymity, when there is the possibility of applying their responses and data in the future. The question that arose included, were they able to comprehend the ways in which this current data could be used in the future, such that they are able to make informed decisions that will not undermine their own interests? (Alderson, 1998). In view of some of the respondents' request for their actual names to be used, they may be disappointed, when they do not see this as being the case. It may also lead to questioning the benefit of their participation in the research (Beins, 2004; Cassell and Jacobs 1987; Crick, 1992). I have also applied member-check with the participants, and received approval to use pseudonyms, to ascertain that confidentiality was maintained and assured, despite stated dilemmas.

7.9. Ethical and political dilemmas

In so far as this research was intended to advocate, and plot emancipatory paths for oppressed groups, especially Blacks and Black youths, then the research methodology has a political undertone. My assertion finds truism to the extent that the validity of its findings depends in part, on my political position and experiences as the researcher. Politically, it will be naïve to think that my research was not influenced by political stances and social values of larger social institutions in which I am located, such as represented by the McGill University and the Montréal urban Community. These entities are, to my mind, still struggling with how to deal with the increasing presence of Blacks in their midst. Hammersley (1992) has shown that social research is a collective, rather than an individual's problem-solving process. In this sense, this research study must be submitted to a broader professional Community, which in this case

includes my PhD advisors, the faculty of graduate studies and research, McGill University and the general public, for critical scrutiny and possible development. With respect to the study, there were many questions that arose for me, especially from the maze of an “Othering” society. The most poignant was and still is, “how then do I successfully pursue the process of an emancipatory research for my Community and the Black youth, in ways that the emancipation is reproduced and perpetuated? My dilemma was against the knowledge that previous and on-going researches and dialog on marginalization and emancipation of vulnerable populations in Canada, of which Blacks feature prominently did not see the light of day?” This for me was a major political dilemma.

Again, perspectives on politically grounded research, present with many outcomes that raise important questions, one of which is about who is most qualified to conduct a research on oppressed groups? The main question for me was to understand what really comprises political experience of resistance to such perceived oppression. As noted earlier, simply being Black, male, educated, and an ostensibly marginalized researcher do not translate into being an anti-racist, anti-oppression researcher (Motzafi-Haller, 1997). The political dilemma laid in my ability to combine my experiences, which includes oppression, and “disgorging” it from my subconscious to the conscious, in ways that meaningfully informs research. The information given to research, then, has the capacity to produce politically engaged and socially relevant research and outcomes.

7.1.0. Ethnic/tribal & religious obstacles

I have described in the earlier sections of the study, how some of the biggest and most profound obstacles to the development of Nigeria within the committee of nations, were expressed in ethnic, cultural, religious and political conflicts (Campbell, 1995 and Martin, 1983).

Although these factors are less visible among the Nigerian population in Canada, they do however exist, are practiced, without regard to location or circumstances, and to a large extent, define the nature of interactions between one Nigerian and another. For example, the Nigerian Community in Montréal is divided along ethnic and tribal lines. This condition infers, that belonging to a particular ethnic group, enhanced one's mobility within that group. Conversely, it diminished this mobility outside of the group. Indeed, ethnic solidarity of Nigerians, as exemplified by cultural meetings and activities is more highlighted and cherished than national solidarity. Although the Nigerian Community, represented by the Nigerian Canadian Association of Montréal as an organization is strong, it is however not as vibrant as the Nigerian ethnic or tribal organizations. There exist the Igbo Association, Yoruba Association, AkwaCross Association, Edo Association, etc., to which most Nigerians in Canada belong and give more priority.

In view of this situation, one of the dilemmas of my research was my initial apprehension or consciousness of how I may be received in trying to gain access to Nigerians belonging to these disparate groups. This was especially so, with those whom I perceived to be entrenched in the exhibition of extreme tribal or religious fervor. Nigerians in Africa and here in Canada are generally skeptical persons. The skepticism is due to their experiences with insiders, as demonstrated by ethnic rivalries, and outsiders, as shown by their individual and collective experience with imperialism and racism. They are even more skeptical, when one is identified as a member of another ostensibly rival ethnic group. As observed earlier in this study, the ethnic rivalries of the 1960's, suborned and maintained by Britain, were mainly responsible for the Nigerian Civil War. As well, the on-going economic, political and social instability in that country stem from British imperial legacies, when it is not directly manipulating events. It is

even clearer that matters have not been helped, by the recent imperialist ideology and escapades of the United States of America in Afghanistan and Iraq.

There was also the issue of religion, which I described and analyzed earlier in the study. Nigerians practice many types of religions, among which are Islam, Christianity and some form of Ancestral worship or Animism. As shown earlier, a case can be made for *Purdah* or *Awere Kulle* in the Hausa language. *Awere Kulle* is an Islamic religious practice of keeping women from being in contact with men, who are not their husbands. When the women step out for inevitable reasons, their faces are veiled, to prevent them from being seen by anyone except the husband. In some extreme cases the husband never allows his wife in *purdah* to venture outside during daylight except as a group. This Muslim religious practice is still very much alive in Nigeria, especially in the predominantly Muslim North. Indeed I have observed, as most others, that there are still some Muslim women from the Nigerian and other ethnic groups here in Montréal and other parts of Canada, whose faces are regularly veiled, perhaps for religious and chaste reasons (Bullock, 2002). The practice of *purdah* appears not to be strictly adhered to by Nigerian Muslims here in Canada, due to the attendant logistical impracticality of such practice. Although I interviewed some Muslim families, these did not practice *purdah*. If this was the case I am sure that it would have been nearly impossible for me to gain individual and private access for the purposes of an interview, to a married, deeply religious Nigerian Muslim woman here in Montréal or elsewhere in Canada. In another part of this study, I gave an example of my experience, a few years ago, when I inadvertently or forgetfully, reached out to shake the hands of a Muslim friend's wife during a Nigerian picnic at Angrignon Park in Montréal. On this account, religion is a very strong factor among Nigerians. Although prior to conducting the study, I feared that it may impact on or even stifle my ability to gain access to some members of

the Nigerian Community in Montreal, this, thankfully was not the case. Additionally, religion did not come up as a major variable for the participants and might be an area for future research.

7.1.1. My (Researcher's) Insider/Outsider dilemma/conflict

In view of the learning process, the ethnographic study of Nigerian youth identity construction in Montréal exposed me to the insider, outsider dilemma and sometimes conflict (Colic-Peisker, 2004). The study also provided me with some modalities for negotiating this dilemma. In the course of the study, I was an insider, because, here in Canada, I am defined as a Black male from Nigeria, having been socialized into some of the cultures and values commonly shared by many Nigerians, in Africa and others, presently here in Canada. I was an insider, due to my experiences with colonialism and designation as a colonial subject. I was also an Insider, due to my association and experiences with emigration, re-acculturation, Black and Nigerian Communities, racism, racialized identity, powerlessness and in most ways, the acquisition and application of resiliency as a form of resistance. However, during the research, I was an outsider because, unlike most Nigerians in Africa and here in Canada, I am regarded as well educated, ostensibly belonging to a higher social and economic strata while resident in Nigeria. Since coming to Canada, I have also been viewed as well educated, due to my certification with two McGill University degrees and currently working towards a doctoral degree. This class situation is what most other Nigerians in Nigeria and Canada may perceive to be beyond their widest imaginations. I was also an outsider due, to being currently viewed as being employed and maintaining a stable and perhaps so-called prestigious job in social work. My outsider status is further ramified by my professional and formal way of dressing during normal business hours, as members of my Community and those from other communities have observed during such interactions.

Members of the Nigerian Community, with whom I am in regular contact, sometimes become curious and desire to learn more about my profession and what I do. Owing to the scope and mandate of the Ontario Child Protection Act, they sometimes hear me speak about interventions with cross-cultural and sometimes elite families, including within diplomatic circles in my area of jurisdiction. Some of them do hear me speak about preparing court papers, attending court and legal proceedings, subpoenaed as an expert witness, obtaining warrants for apprehension of minors at risk. They listen to what I have to say about Child Protection applications, affidavits and sometimes apprehensions of children from their natural parents and caregivers, where child abuse has been suspected or verified. While maintaining confidentiality of the client and clientele information, these Nigerians listen to me as I describe the court processes and procedures, including presenting expert evidence and other court required testimonies. In all these, they wonder if I am still one of them. When I declare that I still am, they wonder at and express opinions about the enormous “power” that I have as a “Black” man. For a Black man or indeed a woman, they sometimes express bewilderment that I am able to so “audaciously” enter even a White man or woman’s home and space, with or without warrant or escorted by a peace officer, for the purposes of investigation, intervention and sometimes apprehension and placement in foster care of at-risk children. However, what they fail to articulate, and rightly so, due to the binary of power existing between us, is the fact that my power is exercised through a mandate and act of parliament, rather than my own personal, raw power and audacity, which I do not possess.

This awe about my so-called “power” as a “Black outsider,” is even more manifest with persons of the African Diaspora, whose forebears bore the brunt of the White man’s subjugation that is owed to slavery. Some of them, as well as some Nigerians, who have been touched by the

child protection and social services mandate, perceive and do comment about my acquired status. They sometimes see my so-called power as a child protection worker, in terms of a reversal of the experiences of Black families, which I strongly protest that it is not. They perceive the disproportionate number of their children in care as attributable to being apprehended and placed in care by White social services workers having enormous powers. On my part and in reaffirming professionalism, the ethnic and color neutrality of the mandate and profession of social work, I also inform them that I do apprehend and place Black children in care, when imminent risk factors have been established.

In ascribing this outsider status to me, it matters very little to them about the authenticity or superficiality of this imposed status, because most Nigerians in Montréal and Canada are, and may continue to remain on the factory floors and sweat shops for sometime to come. It matters little to these Nigerians, who may see me as an outsider due, to my current status, that not too long ago, my employment was blue collar, as a cleaner or a building maintenance personnel; the title used, when there is a need to apply semantics in order to create a less demeaning profile of a cleaner. It also matters very little to them that currently and here at my place of work as a child protection worker, I am confronted each day with “otherness,” marginalization, racism and the expression of a racialized identity. They are unable to comprehend, and most times I do not burden them with the fact that on occasions, some of the White clients, whom I have the mandate to investigate, do not wish to meet with me due to my racial category as Black. Sometimes, a few have, on account of racism, expressly requested that their files be reassigned to a White worker. Or, that this state of affairs has meant that as a Black person, I am expected to prove myself interminably. It also matters little to them, that I agonize each day over the rather limited number

of Black professionals at my place of work, which composition has consistently failed to reflect the population that it serves.

Those from the Nigerian Community, who perceive me as an outsider, as a result of a higher-class status, which they have ascribed to me, may never understand my fears, due to systemic racism, that I may never reach the highest attainable point in my chosen career. The practical observation is that it was quite recently, indeed, in 2004, that I observed the first Black in a supervisory position at my place of employment, although a good number of them have attained all the educational and experiential prerequisites for such positions. I am sure that it may become akin to pulling teeth, to see a Black worker rise or be appointed to a management position in this place. Or, that just like the rest of them from the Black and Nigerian Communities, and regardless of the level of my educational and social attainment, I am still treated as a pariah by some Whites from the dominant population. Indeed, these Nigerians may never be aware that some White Canadians, even professionals, will still hesitate to sit by me on a metro car seat, public transit or public places, as if my dark skin color will somehow besmirch them and their items of clothing; or perhaps that sitting by me will cause some mutation in their pigmentation. Some Whites even clutch their bags and purses tightly, when our paths cross each other's in a derelict alley or surprisingly, even on the open streets.

I am also an outsider due, to the fact that I conducted interviews of fellow Nigerians, who may feel judged by me. Worse still, some may have already, in the course of the study, exhibited some Hawthorne effects that saw them not revealing, overcompensating or consciously concealing some of the truth in their responses (Babbie, 1989, 1999, 2004; Obligation, 1994). It is not unlikely, although none of the respondents voiced it, that some may have even rejected me, first as an outsider and worse as both an impostor or and a White lackey. In exposing my

insider/outsider dilemma as it concerned my study of the Nigerian Community in Montréal, I invoke the argument of (Reed-Danahay, 1997) in the application of the ethnographer's self to study and understand others. Here, it is possible for the ethnographer as in my case, to become neither simply the collector of data about others, nor even the data that are primarily the self's response to others, but become the other, as well as the self of the researcher. Reed-Danahay explained this phenomenon as most commonly occurring in native anthropology. In the case of native anthropologists, natives who are deemed to be representatives of "Third World" countries or disadvantaged groups in the West, undertake ethnographic research of their own people. It is at this point that the issue of belonging creates dilemmas for ethnographers in their claim to insider knowledge, as typified in the findings by Lal (1996) and Colic-Peisker (2004). Lal, who is of South Asian descent was undertaking postgraduate studies research in the United States that required her to return to her native New Delhi, India. Although Lal was perceived by the Western academia as a native ethnographer, her sojourn to India presented her with far more complex realities, than she anticipated that she was forced to re-examine her own identity. Lal's research was among women factory workers, whose communities and world she knew little about, although she was familiar with the city and the setting. In this way, she became a native returning to a foreign country. How so? Lal was awakened to the reality of her "outsiderness" and dilemma, due to class. She shared, and was an insider, due to having the advantages of language, gender and Indian identity. Conversely, she differed markedly, and was a complete outsider, due to her class differences with these factory women being more significant than the other similarities. This made her aware of her "dislocation even within that space that I had thought of as home" (p.193).

It is important to further clarify the impossibility or naiveté of assuming that the issue of an insider in any given situation, especially in my study of Nigerians was unproblematic, because some of the process was. Indeed, it is difficult to think of any individuals who, upon sensible reflection, constantly feel a complete insider in any situation even within their own family. Narayan (1993) therefore advises that anyone interested in conducting ethnographic research, must at some point, find themselves feeling detached even from the most familiar and inclusive group. The only time when an ethnographer (Panourgia, 1995) can most readily be assumed to have an insider knowledge or perspective, occurs not just during research of one's own society or group, but with his or her own family; especially on the issue of death and bereavement. In her ethnographic study of death and the social organization of dying in the modern Athens, Panourgia was both the self and other. She presented an analysis of the social practices, family transformations and cultural meanings surrounding the transition of her grandfather, who was very close and dear to her. She also participated in the event, as a favorite granddaughter, and was with him for many months before his passage. In spite of this, she claimed to still be unable to simply assume her insider's knowledge to be true or completely unquestionable. Panourgia elucidated:

although one might be a member of a family, one will not, a priori, be included in all aspects of and intimate relationships of that family, whereas a non-family member who has been accorded inclusiveness might....In other words, simply by being of the country/culture/group/family, one is not automatically guaranteed infinite and interminable self-knowledge (pp.10-11).

My summation behind Lal (1996) and Panourgia's arguments is that I am first and foremost a Nigerian, despite also being a Canadian citizen. The fact that I am a Nigerian, living in Canada and having resided, and still being considered as one from Montréal means so many things, including the fact that I speak one of Nigeria's major ethnic languages, Igbo. The fact that

I am a Nigerian, also means that I engage in and share some of the cultural beliefs and norms, including food, religion, and mode of dressing, agreements and sometimes disagreements with issues concerning Nigeria. However, this assumption of an insider status was challenging to take for granted, due to several cultural, tribal and social dissimilarities existing between a large percentage of Nigerians in Montréal and myself, which I have already discussed earlier in this section. In this regard, and for the reasons already established and enunciated, my dilemma stemmed from the fact that I cannot truthfully claim intimate knowledge of Nigerians in Montréal. This is especially true with respect to the youth, whose physical, social, cultural, political and psychological make up, encapsulated as identity construction are still at their formative stages. This dilemma has now been exacerbated by my relocation to Ottawa, from where I now only occasionally travel to Montréal to be with distant, and extended family members, friends, peers and those from other tribal/ethnic groups. Where, then, lies my claim to intimate knowledge and the privilege of the knower? This is my dilemma.

7.1.2. Where do we go from here?

In light of this study being embedded in phenomenology, its default therefore implied the use of open-ended questionnaire. Open-ended questionnaire gave me consent to seek and elicit answers and feelings, in line with the lived experiences of the Nigerian respondents. The interviews evoked certain fundamental issues and questions that form the basis of where we need to go from here. This is so, because this study, appearing to be first of its kind amongst the Nigerian Community, then leads us into the need to further explore the frontiers of these recent immigrants to the Canadian society. Importantly, the study leads us to sincerely and critically evaluate the accompanying issues, indeed, “teething problems or matters,” related to

immigration, adaptation and integration, socialization, identity, gender discourses, work and employment, and relationships within the Nigerian Community. On the outside, which is the Canadian society, we confront and are confronted by the problems or matters of race, racism, marginalization and social exclusion, including, but not limited to school, education and educational attainment and outcomes, for the Black youth in Montréal and the rest of Canadian society. Some of the emerging themes and issues from the study include:

How can Nigerian youth, whose lived experience approximate all youths in the Black and other immigrant Communities, identify with their respective Communities, while simultaneously self-identifying as Canadians? And how can they assign as equal a weight to this Canadian identity, as their own ethnocultural identity?

How do we integrate Nigerian and other immigrant youth into Canadian mainstream society to eliminate their “Permanent Immigrant” status?

In what ways can we in the Canadian society engender and sustain successful school experience and outcomes in Nigerian, Black and other immigrant youth?

How can the educational systems, from the elementary to university level, evolve a multicultural, all-inclusive curriculum and pedagogy, to the extent that Nigerian, Black and other immigrant youth cease to feel alienated, with the consequent disidentification with the educational systems at all levels, and other incidental rights and privileges of Canadian society?

What factors contribute to successful outcomes in the educational sector for Blacks and other minorities?

What machinery or plans have the Canadian systems in place to be inclusive and reduce the marginalization and exclusion of minority parents in the labor force?

What factors contribute to successful outcomes in the labor force for Blacks and other minorities?

How can Black parents within a dominant, racist society, and as primary agents of socialization and acculturation of the youth be encouraged to impart and sustain prosocial skills and identity to their children?

What are the impacts of class, poverty and gender on identity construction among Black youth?

What are the impacts on identity construction of being defined as “mixed race” within the Black, minority Community and White dominant society?

This study attempted to understand identity issues with Nigerian youth, with a view to articulating how the youth define, identify, have identity and identities constructed and assigned to them by their parents, significant others, Nigerian, Black Communities and the larger Canadian society. The study engaged Nigerian youth, their parents and Community leaders in a dialog, culminating in narratives that exposed and attempted to explicate their individual, family and group Odyssey in Canada. For the parents, caregivers and Community leaders, the quest for narratives of their journey led to the revelation of several issues or problems. These issues found location in, and were accompanied by immigration, adaptation, acceptance, race, racism, prejudice, discrimination and exclusion in activities of Canadian citizenship, especially, but not limited to work and employment, as well as political and social participation. We also gained insight into the speedy integration into the Canadian society and resiliency of Nigerian youth to the discourses of race, framed in its exclusionism. This integration is highlighted by their exhibition of successful outcomes in the social systems, comprising their families, the Nigerian and Black Communities, as well as school and educational systems, peers, relationships and the

larger Canadian society. As the study indicated, the Nigerian youth is well rounded here in Canada. However, the Nigerian youth residing in Canada is also deracinated and has loose or reduced connection to homeland, community or language. If sincere attempts at sustaining the current prosocial skills and resiliency that they have acquired, there is the possibility of a domino effect, whereby parents' current socialization of their young, woven into the narratives of fringing and exclusion may eventually be transferred to their youth. In effect, and where no proactive, collective action not considered, the narratives may also present as recipes for "adaptation and integration regression," as well as eventual maladaptation of the Black youth in Canada.

All the Nigerian youth as interviewed, were at different stages of their physical and social development, with peers, at the school, educational, social and political awareness levels. It may well be worthy to pursue a longitudinal study of these youth that I interviewed, in a bid to document their developmental and evolutionary process and progress. Mainly, the longitudinal study would unveil whether or not they have maintained the same successful school and educational outcomes, and positive social adaptation, as was the case during the period of study. Alongside Nigerian youth, it may be worth the while to undertake a study of Black and other youth and families from other countries and ethnic groups, resident in Montréal, as well as other parts of Canada on their identity construction in Canada, in order to fathom their perception of the Canadian society. This study's aim would be to critically evaluate how their lived experiences approximate or are dissimilar with findings regarding Nigerian youth and their families. Furthermore, I believe that a longitudinal study may be in line with understanding if, and how the Nigerian youth have maintained their cultural and ethnic identities. It would also

uncover if and how they have made a paradigm shift to become full and “real” Canadians as against “Permanent Immigrant” types, such as White Canada has assigned them.

It may also be worthy, as a corollary, to structure alongside the youth, a longitudinal study of their parents, as well as the Community leaders. This study is against the finding that this cohort’s integration into the Canadian society, owing to and their expressed internalization of racism, racialization in employment, relationships and exclusion from social and political participation, even after so many years of Canadian residency and citizenship, appears ephemeral at best and at the worse non-existent.

7.1.3.

Conclusion

The following was an attempt to understand how Nigerian youths in Montréal construct their identity. In the categorization of Blacks by the respective Canadian governments, all persons of color, particularly those whose origins are from Africa, the Caribbean and South America have been lumped together in a social category called Black. In view of this categorization, any attempt at comprehending identity construction of Nigerian youth, inevitably captures the identity construction of all Black youths in Canada, due to their similarities in shared and lived experience, as well as certain cultural aspects. In chapter one, which was the introduction, I sought to explain what the rationale for the research was, which in this case was the understanding of identity construction by Nigerian youth, as well as the agencies of this construction. I also evaluated why this study was important, in the sense that understanding identity construction by Nigerian youth, was the first step in the comprehension of their integration into the Canadian society. This understanding is in light of immigration, of their

parents to Canada, the birth of some of the Nigerian youth in Canada, as well as the socialization and adaptation process in Canada.

As a backdrop to understanding identity construction by the Nigerian and Black youth, I explored the origins of Blacks in Canada, as made up of those from the era of the Black Loyalists, Underground Railroad and emancipated Black Slaves; those from the West Indies, who are the more populous; and the recent African entrants into Canada. I explored the Black population in Canada, as well as where they have large concentration, mainly Toronto and Montréal, with a limited number scattered all across the other provinces of Canada. I examined the impact of racism on identity construction, family and community cohesion among Nigerian youth and their families in Montréal, as well as how this identity construction has influenced their integration into, and perception of the Canadian society. Chapter two examined my theoretical framework in understanding this identity construction by Nigerian and Black youth. Again, the issues of race, racism, prejudice and exclusion, experienced by Black parents and caregivers, as well as the Black Community featured prominently in the identity construction among the youth. I applied, in the theoretical framework, anti-racist, anti-oppression theories, to evaluate and explicate power, privilege and language. The discussion on race, racism and racialized identity found other dimensions in their effects, particularly of racism on the Black Community. The exploration of how race, racism and racialized identity impact on Black youths was linked to observed outcomes within the juvenile justice system, especially the Young Offenders Act. I made further excursion into the impacts of racism in the context of the school, the educational system and outcomes, as well as its concomitants for integration into the Canadian society. My idea was to see how race, racism and racialized identity impact on Black youths in the form of individual, systemic or institutional racism.

In this, and using relevant literature, I dialoged and explicated the dynamics of power in a racist society, as a fulcrum for the conceptualization and contextualization of the relationship between power, powerlessness and oppression. Especially, I provided an explanation of how power can, and is consistently applied by Whites of Western European origins, in the oppression of Blacks and other ethnic minorities, including Black youths. The discussion and dialog on power and powerlessness forayed into understanding White privilege. The dialog on White privilege, underscored how this privilege, although interminably harnessed and exploited, yet remains undiscussed and unrecognized by Whites themselves. A further exploration of the concept and dynamics of power and powerlessness explained how this power is carried over or reproduced and expressed in institutional or systemic racism. Not only that, but how this power and its attendant manifestation as institutional racism and devaluation of the “other,” is reproduced and sustained in all facets of the Canadian society, including language. Additionally, I explored how language, especially English, and French in Canada, can be tools of communication, instruction and mode of imparting knowledge. The antithesis as I also explained, was how language as a tenet of power can, and is used by the dominant group, to cajole, but mostly control and exclude Blacks, and other minorities from the rights and privileges of Canadian society.

In chapter three I explored an understanding and explanation of the Nigerian Community, who are the main subjects and respondents for this research. Among others, this understanding was located in the articulation of their geographical spread, history, ethnic configuration, religion and religious practices. Other areas dealt with political practices and allegiances. I approached an understanding of the Nigerian Community, as I conceived it, from two dimensions. The first was to understand the body politic of Nigerians in Nigeria, Africa. This ethnographic understanding

was then applied in an attempt to understand them here in Canada. First, as people forced into nationhood, but belonging to disparate ethnic and cultural groups or tribes, religions, political allegiances; and mainly as unwilling colonial subjects of British imperialism. It was important to note how and if indeed, the ethnic, religious, cultural, political variables, as well as imperialist experiences of Nigerians found similarities and expressions in how the parents socialize their children. My intention was to explore how the cultivation of identities by Nigerians, based on the earlier indicated media of construction, was especially and inextricably tied to their experiences with domination, discrimination and exclusion by the majority Canadian population. Chapter four was the literature review, which explored some literature relevant to the inquiry. To the best of my knowledge, I tried to link the discussion to the problematic of identity negotiation among Black and Nigerian youths, who are at the epicenter of this paper, while simultaneously locating myself in the debate. In order to assist the reader and myself, to understand the subject, I defined some concepts related to the study. Some of these concepts designed to find the social location of Blacks in the Canadian society included the exploration of ethnicity and community. I evaluated the Black Community, by contextualizing it as an assigned and ascribed social category. I also defined it in terms of contiguity, collective and group experience. Other variables related to the definition of community, included cultural similarity, physical characteristics, common goals and interests.

Using the demographic approach I attempted to explain the concept of Black and the Black Community, from the Black and Black's point of view. As well, I examined how those outside the community have defined and conceptualized Blacks and the Black Community. The next section was my attempt to explain identity issues among youths, generally. Exploring identity issues amongst youths gave me the platform for exploring and differentiating how Black

and Nigerian youths construct their identity in a racist society, from those of White youth. Some of the vehicles that I examined for being instrumental to the construction of identity included immigration and birth, to parents from a minority culture and community. I also evaluated the role of racism, racialization, prejudice, discrimination and social exclusion in Black youth identity construction. The other agencies for identity construction were school and educational institutions, the media, peer group and the influence of role models. Others were parents, caregivers and significant others. I explored how the evaluation of parental and caregiver successes in negotiating the Canadian environment, the fear of racial prejudices, discrimination and social exclusion, could become involved in both positive and negative identity formation for Black and Nigerian youths. Chapter five was my methodology, which was based on ethnography, phenomenology and autoethnography. Autoethnography allowed me to situate myself within the research, as a researcher and subject. My data collection method or process, which is also a tent of ethnographic research, included observation and participant observation. Participant observation gave me the scope to integrate and ingratiate myself with other Nigerians, who, even when they know that I am one of them, still cringed at the thought of my researcher status. In addition to this, I applied in-depth, open-ended questionnaire-based interviewing, which I already described as phenomenological interviews, to uncover meanings attached to the lived experiences of Nigerian youth, parents, caregivers and Community leaders in Montréal. I also explored and utilized other data collection methods including books, and particularly a voice recorder for data gathering purposes.

In chapter six I rendered the narratives or what I referred to as the ‘Voices’ of the Nigerian Community. Here, and in their own voices, Nigerian youth spoke about how they construct their identity, as well as how they identify themselves within the Nigerian and Black

Communities. These voices also spoke to how Black youth identify themselves outside, as well as are identified and perceived by the Canadian society. The youth spoke about their experiences with family, at school, among peers, at work, at play, within the Nigerian Community, the Black Collective and the larger Canadian society. The narratives also examined the impact of immigration, with respect to how their parents and community leaders have socialized and constructed identity or identities for their children since their arrival in Canada. Additionally, how Nigerian parents feel about the Nigerian Community, but more poignantly the Canadian society, in terms of their experiences with racism, racialization, prejudice, discrimination in employment and exclusion in social and political participation. Still in chapter six I examined and analyzed the emergent themes from the interviews and narratives of the Nigerian youth, parents, caregivers and Community leaders. The most pertinent themes arising from the interviews and study included socialization, identity & identity construction, conflict and confusion. The others were family, gender discourses, school, education & educational attainment and outcomes, community, community cohesiveness and group consciousness; integration into Canadian society-fitting in; and lastly employment and occupation, race, racism, prejudice, discrimination and experiences with exclusion.

The research found that Nigerian youth derive their identity construction first from family and parents, followed by the Nigerian Community, the Black Collective and the Canadian society. The Nigerian youth also primarily self-identified, as well as are identified by parents, caregivers and Community leaders as Nigerians, without regard to their place of birth. Also in order of importance, as well as how they perceive themselves, being Nigerian and the expectations by parents that they perceive and be perceived as Nigerian is paramount in importance than being perceived as Canadian. Nigerian youth hold positive perception of the

Canadian society and have experienced school, peers and the Canadian society in a positive way. Nigerian youth declared that they fit in within Canadian society, as well as have adequately integrated into the Canadian society in most ways, including language. We found that Nigerian youth expressed their experience with racism, racialization, prejudice and social exclusion, or its internalization as minimal or currently non-existent. On the other hand, Nigerian youth recognized and understand that their parents and caregivers have been victims of a racist society. Paradoxically, this understanding appears to have enhanced the youths' resistance and resiliency, resulting in successful outcomes within their families, the Nigerian Community, at school, with peers, at work and in their integration into the Canadian society. They also recognize that their parents' confrontation with racism and racialized identity, have resulted in limited positive experiences and outcomes, particularly in integration into the Canadian society. They understand that their parents have been excluded and marginalized especially in gainful, merit and qualification-based employment in Canada, due to racism, prejudice and discrimination by the White Canadian society. We also found that the not-so-positive experiences of Nigerian parents, caregivers and community leaders, have largely defined how they have socialized their children into identifying themselves, as well as perceiving the Canadian society. Owing to the perception by Nigerian parents that they have been excluded from the Canadian society, they expressed apprehension that it would only be a matter of time before their children and youth begin to have equivalent experience. Owing to this apprehension, the parents have charted a course of resistance by teaching and socializing their children to identify first as Nigerians before Canadian. Some parents have also tried to express resistance to Canadian "othering" by encouraging their children to return to Nigeria, where they perceive them to be accepted and included.

Chapter seven concluded this study with my attempt to explore and encapsulate some of its possibilities and gains, especially social work and educational implications of my research. Chapter seven also included some of my “balancing act” in trying to conduct this study. As a researcher and researched, these balancing acts were located in some of my insider and outsider dilemmas, as well as the dilemma of my methodology. In the final section of this chapter my emphasis was on exploring different types of resistance that could be applied by Black youth and adults alike. These strategies were aimed at dealing, not only with the marginalization and exclusion brought on by power and possessed by the dominant group over and above all other minorities. It also proffered strategies for negotiating a healthy, Black identity in the ecosystem of Canada, through education and successful educational outcomes. In the concluding part of chapter seven, I presented some directions for future research, including the need for a longitudinal study of the Nigerian Community, youth and parents. As well, I suggested the study of other Blacks from other nationalities, as a way to fully comprehend identity construction and the issues emanating from balancing one’s culture and lived experience, with those of a larger, stronger and marginalizing society.

7.1.4.

Epilog

There is no doubt that conducting a study on identity issues, especially as it relates to Nigerian youth, living within a dominant culture is interesting as well as challenging. It is interesting, especially, if the writer like myself is from the same culture as those that I write about and still struggling myself, as it were to understand. This is so because, articulating such discourses, as a member, allows me to enter the fray from an insider perspective. After all, I have children, adolescents and young adults as members of my family, from whom I can draw all sorts

of inspirations and analogy. As an adult from the Black Community, I am also able to draw inspiration and analogy from what I have experienced in the intergenerational, sometimes, assimilational processes. This is possible, due to my origins within this culture and exposures to the majority and other cultures.

The most noteworthy aspect of undertaking and articulating this study was to stimulate discussions, where Black discourses, related to their experiences in a racist, alienating, White society, have been left in the backburners of Canadian society's kitchen. Conversely, conducting a research of this magnitude can, and did present such challenges, as finding the necessary materials to buttress what one already knew, especially since this is the way of academia. It can also be challenging, when, during the process of a passionate rendition, through writing about my, and group's experiences, I suddenly become cowed and sometimes, begin to mince words by the apprehension that the White privilege of some of my readers, who read this, may leave them feeling a sense of discomfort. I am also apprehensive that what I articulate, especially the discourses of race, particularly, White privilege and its invisible, but negative impacts on Blacks, may be so annoying that it could even attract sanctions, by my superordinates, even when these sanctions are moot. My experience, supported by what I have written in this study, is that sometimes these sanctions are not moot or insinuated, but have presented themselves in ways that I have found to be unpalatable to chew and digest. This apprehension is also owed to my experience-based knowledge that any expressions by Blacks, especially males, about injustices perceived to have been perpetrated against them by the White majority is stereotypically assumed to stem from anger, primitive, Darwinian aggression and belligerence. This perception, as wrong and as misinformed as it may be, is reproduced when I begin watering down and

limiting what I write and how I write it, in order not to offend those in positions of authority from the dominant culture, some of whom must evaluate me academically and otherwise.

I once was chided by someone in authority at McGill that “it is not so much what you say that is threatening and annoying to the rest of the (White) students in your class and faculty, than the way you say it.” In view of this, I undertook this study and presented the outcomes as dispassionately as feasible, as well as not as a diatribe, but a means of understanding and applying my experiences in the understanding of the cultures and lived experiences of Nigerian youth, Nigerians in Montréal and Blacks, wherever they may be located. I believe that the successful conduct and dissemination the study outcomes on identity issues with the Nigerian and Black youth, and their parents and Community leaders, as a minority, marginalized group, would assist in diminishing and resolving obstacles to negotiating Black youth identity and ultimately integrating into the Canadian society. To an infinitesimal extent, the research may present as the fulcrum upon which I, as the researcher and as a member of the group may come to terms with my own identity.

Amongst Nigerians and all Blacks of African descent, there are a myriad of languages and words used in their everyday interactions that are rather challenging to understand. Whereas, some of them were bequeathed by the colonialists to natives, who hybridized them, others are indigenous. It is true that in Nigeria alone, and as shown in this comprehensive report, there are over 250 ethnic groups, and literally hundreds of languages and words used to describe events occurring in their everyday lives. If those like me who are originally from this country and continent, is struggling with the understanding of these words, even within my own ethnic group- the Igbo, imagine how magnified the challenges would be for my readers to understand them. Most of those who will read this study may never have heard any of the languages written or even spoken. It is for this reason that I offer the glossary below to ease some of those difficulties.

Ahmaddiyya and the Anser-Ud-deen: Two of some of Nigeria's Islamic sects.

Ajami: Hausa language and writing of Arabic script.

Ala: god of earth, land and harvest amongst the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria.

Amadioha and Eze elu: god of thunder and lightening revered among the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria.

Ashanti: One of the major ethnic groups and language in Ghana.

Aware Kulle: Purdah or Islamic ordinance of secluding married women in the home to prevent others, especially males from coming into contact with them. Muslims claim this practice for the promotion of dignity of women.

Bakwai: Legitimate or "true" off-springs of the pre-colonial Hausa Kingdom in Nigeria.

Banza Bakwai: Illegitimate or "bastard" offsprings of the pre-colonial Hausa Kingdom.

Biram, Katsina, Daura, Zaria, Rano, Kano and Gobir, Zamfara, Gwari, Kebbi, Nupe, Yauri and Kwararafa: City-states that comprised the ancient and present Hausa Kingdom of Nigeria.

Benin kingdom: An ancient kingdom located in the former Midwestern Nigeria.

Efik: An indigenous South-Eastern Nigerian group located near the old Calabar Oil Rivers.

Egba, Ekiti, Ijebu, Ijesa, Ondo and Oyo: Major ancient and current cities in Western Nigeria.

Ekpe: Rite of passage into the warrior class among the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria.

Enugu: The former Eastern Nigerian regional capital.

Fulani: Light skin-colored ethnic group in Northern Nigeria, originally Berbers.

Harmattan: Dusty and dry wind also called the North East Trade winds blowing from the Sahara Desert from late November to the end of February.

Hausa: The major ethnic group located in Northern Nigeria. Majority are Muslims.

Ibibio: Minority ethnic group located in South-Eastern Nigeria. Also, a language of the people.

Idoma: Minority ethnic group located midway in Nigeria at the Rivers Niger and Benue confluence.

Iko: Concubine

Ile-Ife, Oyo: Large cities in the past and present day Yorubaland in the West of Nigeria. The mythical founder and leader of all Yoruba is said to have found and settled the Yoruba here.

Igbo: One of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria. Also known as the enclave of the defunct republic of Biafra.

Ijaw: One of the minority groups in the Delta region of Nigeria.

Iri ji: New yam harvest and festival or thanksgiving among the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria.

Kanuri: An ethnic group located in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria near Niger Republic.

Mgbede: Fattening room for a betrothed young Igbo, Efik or Ibibio girl. She is fed and disallowed to work for a considerable length of time to “pig” her out, therefore render her more desirable and eligible for marriage.

Middle Belt: Fertile alluvium half way across Nigeria and populated by the Idoma, Tiv and Igala.

Patua: A form of English language spoken in the West Indies, especially in Jamaica.

Pidgin English: A form of English language that is found and spoken mostly in Nigeria, and believed to have developed when the Portuguese first arrived in Nigeria in the 13th Century.

Twɪ: A Ghanaian ethnic group. Also spoken as a language.

Obasi di n’elu: God Almighty. The “Zeus” of all Igbo gods.

Oduduwa The Yoruba, claim that the Oduduwa was the mythological founder of the Yorubas. He was said to have descended from heaven to found the cities of Ile-Ife and Oyo.

Okonko: Right of passage from boyhood to manhood and warrior class among the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria.

Olodumare: God Almighty among the Yoruba. Other deities include the *Orisa-nla* (the arch-divinity); *Sango* (god of thunder and lightning). Other minor gods, which are still fervently revered and worshipped, are *Oya*, *Osun*, *Sopona* (god of smallpox), *Ela*, *Yemoja*, and *Esu* (Satan)

Ofo and ogu: Insignia of office held by the family patriarch among the Igbo and used to worship, praise or curse.

Oni of Ife and Alaafin of Oyo: The Kings of the Yoruba. In the olden days, they held the power of life and death. For the purpose of checks and balances, the constitution also made it

mandatory for them to keep a poisoned chalice near their thrones. If they are declared autocratic, they were obliged to drink the contents of this chalice to end their lives and tyrannical rule.

Oyinbo: White man or woman.

Qur'an: Koran. Muslim equivalent of the Bible.

Sarki: Emir or leader of Hausa Muslims.

Umunna: The most significant family unit among the Igbo. It also includes the extended family.

Yoruba: One of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Nok: Terra cotta found among the Nok culture in Nigeria. An ancient culture renowned for its archeological finds in art and sculpturing.

8.0. Appendices**8.1. APPENDIX I****Research Ethics Board – II: Application for Ethical
Consideration of Proposed Research Involving Humans.****MCGILL UNIVERSITY****RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD-II****Ethical Considerations of Proposed Research Involving Humans**

Title of Project: In Search of Communal Identity: The Role of the Black community in Identity Formation among Nigerian Youths.

Applicant's Name: **Buster C. Ogbuagu**

Dept: **Social work**

Phone#: [819] 684-1315 {H}
[613] 747-7800, ext. 2656

Fax#: n/a Email: lionkiller100@hotmail.com

Mailing Address (if different from dept.): **22 Croissant de la Paix
Gatineau [Aylmer Sector], Quebec.
J9H 3X8**

Status: Faculty ___ Postdoctoral Fellow ___ Other (specify) ___
Ph.D. Student x Master's Student ___ Undergraduate ___

Type of Research: Faculty Research ___ Thesis x
Honours Thesis ___ Independent Study
Project ___

Course Assignment (specify course #) _____
Other (specify) _____

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Faculty Supervisor (if applicable): Professor Shari Brotman Email: shari.brotman@staff.mcgill.ca

Faculty Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Other Researchers Involved: n/a

List all funding sources for this project and project titles (if different from the above). Indicate the Principal Investigator of the award if not yourself.

There are no alternate titles for the proposed research. Additionally, I will be the only researcher, and have no external funding sources.

1. Briefly describe the research topic.

THE PURPOSE

The purpose of the study is to explore and understand identity formation among Black youth of Nigerian origin, in order to better articulate how they formulate their identity. It is also to explore the roles and impact of various agencies, including family, Nigerian/Black community, school and the wider Canadian community in identity formation (Cornell & Hartman, 1998). The quest for understanding identity formation among Black youth of Nigerian origin holds the expectation of uncovering issues for Black youth. Additionally, this understanding may present as a means of questioning or even deconstructing socialization and developmental theory as it applies to this cohort (Hayno, 1979).

The issue of race and racism play significant roles in identity formation for Blacks and Black youths, as shown in how they experience school, peer and community environments (Dei & Calliste, 2000). Primarily, Black parents would have initially socialized the youths into viewing the Black culture and values, as a part of their essence within the Canadian society. However, once the youths are "weaned" and thrust into the wider society, they soon discover that those cultures and values, which they held dear are irrelevant within the dominant culture. They also discover that the practice and sustenance of them attracts severe sanctions of further discrimination, ostracism, and even a pariah status (Cornell & Hartman, 1998).

The main research questions for this study are:

4. How do Nigerian youths in Montreal construct and perceive their identity?
5. How do they make meaning of this identity?
6. What are the roles of the multiple systems/agencies in mediating identity construction by Nigerian youths? The multiple systems include those that are located in:
 - ❖ Peers
 - ❖ School and the educational environment
 - ❖ Family
 - ❖ Community-Black
 - ❖ Religion-mosque, temple and church
 - ❖ Mainstream Canadian society

Perspectives of three main cohorts will be examined-the youth themselves, parents/guardians/caregivers and key Nigerian Community leaders, in an effort to understand these identity issues.

The interview process will focus upon:

- ❖ what the youths say, how they feel and what they perceive about their identity, socialization process, relationships, concept of family, school, peers, community, etc. (Dei & Calliste, 2000; Wolcott, 1992).
- ❖ what parents and caregivers say about their socialization process; how they socialize their children in Canada; perceptions about how the youths along gender and ethno/cultural lines, construct and perceive their identity; what parents/caregivers perceive to be the implications of these identity constructions by youths in the personal, family, and community dynamics, as well as interactional processes, against the backdrop of racial, colonial, power/powerlessness, hegemonic and Eurocentric discourses (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001).
- ❖ what community leaders say about Nigerian youths and their construction of identity in Canada, and the implications of these constructed identities on the Nigerian family and community cohesiveness.
- ❖ how linked or discontinued with one another, these perceptions, assumptions and stands are and their implications on the overall identity construction among Nigerian youths.

2. Who will the participants be?

The research participants will comprise Nigerian youths in Montreal, between the ages of 13-23. Others will be Nigerian parents/guardian and caregivers, as well as community leaders residing in Montreal, from the diverse ethnic and tribal groups (Malinowski, 1961). These groups represent stakeholders, informants and gatekeepers. I intend to have a population and sample size of 18 Nigerian participants in order to saturate themes and ideas. On account of this, I intend to target youths, stakeholders, formal and informal gatekeepers, within the Nigerian community, for recruitment both as participants and informants for this study. The potential participant pool will not necessarily be representative of all the Nigerian ethnic/tribal groups, as the research is primarily on understanding Nigerian youth's common identity issues in Canada. I also intend to solicit their narratives about living in Canada (Van Maanen, 1988; Dobbert, 1982). Of these, 10 will be youths-boys and girls, who will comprise adolescents and young adults from the Nigerian community between 13-23 years of age. For this purpose, and in the case of these children, some of whom are young, but who are the obvious subjects of this research, the consent of formal gatekeepers such as parents, guardians, caregivers, and community leaders/coordinators will be sought. The other 5 participants will be their parents, guardians and caregivers, not necessarily related by blood, while the last 3 will be community leaders.

3. How will participants be recruited? (Attach copies of all written or spoken material that will be used in recruiting subjects, such as newspaper ads, posted notices, verbal announcements.)

The Nigerian Canadian Association of Quebec, based in Montreal, as a general umbrella of Nigerians in Montreal, will be contacted. As well, the various viable Nigerian ethnic and tribal groups will be contacted. In order to elicit their cooperation, the researcher will send an Information letter to the Nigerian Canadian Association secretariat, as well as to the various Nigerian ethnic/tribal groups resident in Montreal.

Potential research participants considering participation will be encouraged to contact the researcher directly if they so choose, or agree to be contacted. Individuals or Nigerian community ethnic groups, wishing to nominate a potential participant will be requested to encourage the potential participant to contact the researcher. On this account, the researcher will not establish contact with potential participants, without the potential participant first providing consent [a] to have his or her name and contact information released, [b] for the researcher to contact him or her, and [c] under-age consent also from parents and caregivers.

Copies, representing proposed Advertisement and Information letter for the various potential participants and age cohorts from the Nigerian Community are attached. Additional to these will be by word of mouth, including snowball sampling.

4. How will organizational/community/governmental permission be obtained (if applicable)?

The Nigerian Canadian Association of Quebec and other Nigerian ethnic/tribal organizations, where the researcher wishes to advertise and elicit potential participants, will additionally receive an Information Letter [*as stated in item 3, above*], along with copies of advertisements [*also as stated in item 3, above*].

5. How will data be collected, i.e., what will the participants be asked to do?

The researcher intends to conduct Qualitative, ethnographic interviews (Mishler, 1986; Patton, 1990; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995) over a ten-month period, with a minimum of 18 individuals, interviewed as a significant component of the proposed research. There will be two interview phases. The first will be of the Youth, followed by interviews with parents/caregivers and community leaders. The researcher will elicit the cooperation of each participant in private, semi-structured, open-ended interview questions, with the researcher, designed to elicit discussions focused on meaning (Schutz, 1967; Marshall & Rossman, 1995). The approximate length of each interview is 2 hours.

Each interview is intended to explore with each youth participant, parents/caregivers and community leaders, their perception of where they fit in Canada. The interview will also aim to explore with each participant, his or her experiences with identity and how they perceive their identities to have been constructed (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Thomas, 1993).

Duly signed consent forms will be obtained from all participants, prior to conducting the interviews.

Copies of the proposed Informed Consent Form and Interview Guide are attached.

6. Does the study pose any risks to participants? If so, please state why these are necessary and explain how you plan to deal with them.

There are minimal to no risks to participants. The risk of emotional distress, as a result of the disclosure of negative or even positive experiences in Canada is possible. If any risks are anticipated, the potential participants will be advised of such risks, as well as benefits, prior to the commencement of the interview.

When these interviews evoke emotional distress, participants will be provided with a repertoire of referral information to local social service providers, who have the know-how to deal with issues emanating from their participation in the interviews.

7. Does this study involve deception? If so, please state why this is necessary and explain how you plan to deal with potential negative effects (e.g., by post-experimental debriefing).

There will be provided for each participant, a letter of Information, with the following content:

- a. The research purpose
- b. The goals or aims of the research
- c. What requests are being made of the participants

The study does not involve any type of deception, before or after the participants have signed on. To ensure clarity of purpose and goal of the research, the information contained in the letter will be reviewed with each participant prior to the interview, as well as when ever possible.

8. How will you document informed consent to participate in the study? (Attach written informed consent form. If written consent is not possible, how will you document verbal consent? If it is not possible to obtain informed consent, explain why this is the case.)

An Information Letter will be issued to each participant, outlining the purpose and expected outcome of the research. The Information letter will also explain what is expected of the participants. In order to accomplish this, each participant in the research will be required to:

Express their understanding, as well as satisfaction with its content. It is possible that the current rendition of the Information Letter and Informed Consent Forms may not be clearly understood by the youths, who are the focus of this research, due to its academic nature as well as the developmental stage of this age cohort. The Principal Investigator will explain these important documents in an age appropriate way, so that they will be understandable and meaningful to the youths and other participants.

Peruse and sign the consent form, prior to participating in the interviews.

In the event that a particular research participant is only able to accede to verbal consent, a verbal rendition of the contents of the consent form will be made to the participant. The participant will acknowledge understanding of what was read, as well as state his or her agreement on audiotape.

Attached, is a copy of the proposed Informed Consent Form.

9. How will participants be informed of their right to withdraw at any time?

Research participation is entirely voluntary, and research participants will be informed through the Information Letter and Informed Consent Forms of their right to withdraw at any stage of the process. Participants will also be informed of their right to make off-the-record comments or statement, as enunciated in the Informed Consent Forms and Information Letters.

10. How will subject/data anonymity and confidentiality be maintained?

Confidential materials, identified as [transcripts, audiotapes] will be appropriately disposed of at the end of the research, when the policy of McGill University determines so, or when these materials no longer become pertinent to the research process, which ever applies. The proposed steps to achieving this include the following:

At no time, during the research process or after, will participants be identified by their names. There will be a transcription of all audiotapes, followed by the erasure of identifying information from the transcripts. Pseudonyms, chosen by the participants themselves, will be substituted for participants' actual names, for pertinent application in the transcripts and thesis.

Derived interview Information, including contacts established with participants will not be divulged either verbally or in writing.

Prior to final disposal, all materials of confidential nature, comprising transcripts, contact information as submitted by participants, as well as audiotapes, will be under lock and key at the home of the Principal Investigator and only accessible to him. Where necessary, these materials will be left in the office of the Thesis Advisor in the School of Social Work.

11. Please comment on any other potential ethical concerns that may arise in the course of the research. If the proposed research involves testing subjects in situations where particular problems may arise, please explain how researchers will be trained to handle matters in a sensitive and professional way.

At this point in time, there are no other identified or ascertainable potential concerns to document.

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Sample of Certificate of Ethical Acceptability for Research Involving Humans.

McGill University

ETHICS REVIEW

McGill University

ETHICS REVIEW
RENEWAL REQUEST/FINAL REPORT

Continuing review of human subjects research requires, at a minimum, the submission of an annual status report to the REB. This form must be completed to request renewal of ethics approval. If a renewal is not received before the expiry date, the project is considered no longer approved and no further research activity may be conducted. When a project has been completed, this form can also be used as a Final Report, which is required to properly close a file. To avoid expired approvals and, in the case of funded projects, the freezing of funds, this form should be returned 3-4 weeks before the current approval expires.

REB File #: 138-0504

Project Title: In Search of Communal Identity: The Role of the Black Community in Identity Formation among Nigerian Youths

Principal Investigator: Buster C. Ogbuagu

Department/Phone/Email: Interdisciplinary Ad Personam PhD-Social Work & Integrated Studies in Education
Faculty Supervisor (for student PI): Dr. Shari Brotman

1. Were there any significant changes made to this research project that have any ethical implications? ___ Yes ___X___ No
If yes, describe these changes and append any relevant documents that have been revised.
2. Are there any ethical concerns that arose during the course of this research? ___ Yes ___X___ No. If yes, please describe.
3. Have any subjects experienced any adverse events in connection with this research project? ___ Yes ___X___ No
If yes, please describe.
4. ___YES___ This is a request for renewal of ethics approval.
5. ___ This project is no longer active and ethics approval is no longer required.
6. List all current funding sources for this project and the corresponding project titles if not exactly the same as the project title above. Indicate the Principal Investigator of the award if not yourself. NONE & N/A

Principal Investigator Signature: *Buster C. Ogbuagu* Date: ___ April 17, 2006 ___Faculty Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____
(for student PI)

For Administrative Use	REB: ___ AGR ___ EDU ___ REB-I ___ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REB-II
___ The closing report of this terminated project has been reviewed and accepted	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The continuing review for this project has been reviewed and approved	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expedited Review	
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Review	
Signature of REB Chair or designate: <u><i>Lynda McNeil</i></u>	Date: <u><i>May 4, 2006</i></u>
Approval Period: <u><i>May 18, 2006</i></u> to <u><i>May 17, 2007</i></u>	

Submit to Lynda McNeil, Research Ethics Officer, James Administration Bldg., rm 419, fax: 398-4644 tel:398-6831

(version October 2002)

Advertisement for Recruitment of Research Participants.

B. Ogbuagu
Participant Recruitment Advertisement

**Nigerian Youth Speak Out!!!:
about yourself, your interests,
school, community & concerns in
Canada.**

If you are:

a Nigerian youth

aged between 13 & 23.

Or

**a parent/caregiver or guardian of a
Nigerian youth**

**are wondering where you belong in Canada, & willing
to speak out about your experience with friends, @
school and the community as part of a research study?**

then you need to be speaking to me

[819] 684-1315 - [collect calls accepted]

OR

lionkiller100@hotmail.com

Your privacy is guaranteed

**Research is a part of a Doctoral thesis conducted by a student of Social Work
& Faculty of Integrated studies in Education @ McGill University.**

**Supervisor: Professor Shari Brotman. [514] 398-7070.
shari.brotman@staff.mcgill.ca**

Information Letter to Potential and Recruited Research Participants.

B. Ogbuagu
Participants' Information Letter

IN SEARCH OF COMMUNAL IDENTITY: THE ROLE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN IDENTITY FORMATION AMONG NIGERIAN YOUTHS
--

BUSTER OGBUAGU**Dear Future Participant:**

This letter is to request your participation in a research, conducted as a part of Doctoral thesis. I am a Doctoral Candidate [student] in Social Work and Educational Studies, at McGill University. My doctoral thesis is intended to understand the contribution of the Black/Nigerian community in the Identity formation or construction among Nigerian youths.

I am interested in understanding how Nigerian youth describe themselves and how they feel about their experiences in school, with family, friends and their community.

The views of three main groups of Nigerians will be examined-the Youth themselves, parents/guardians/caregivers and key Nigerian community leaders, in an effort to understand these identity issues.

The interview process will focus upon:

- ❖ what the youths say, how they feel and what they perceive about their identity, socialization process, relationships; concept of family, school, peers, community, etc.
- ❖ what parents and caregivers say about their children's experience in the family, at school and within the community, racism, colonialism, power/powerlessness.
- ❖ what community leaders say about Nigerian youth identity in Canada and the impact these experiences on the Nigerian family and community cohesiveness.

Consenting to be a part of this research, will involve your participation in a tape-recorded interview, lasting approximately two hours in duration. Your being a part of this research is completely voluntary, without an obligation to continue, should you choose to end your participation at any time during the research.

You will not suffer any penalties, including the denial of services, if you choose to end your participation.

If you agree to be a part of the interview and research process, you will neither be identified by name, nor the information that you provided, be used to identify you, either verbally or in

writing. Identifying information will be removed from transcribed audiotapes, following their analysis.

I hope that you will be willing to participate in this study, which will contribute to a body of knowledge, not only about Identity Formation among Nigerian youths, but also to Black youth identity and Black community cohesion in Canada. Should you have any comments, questions or concerns, you are at liberty to contact me at any time, at the addresses and telephone numbers listed below. You could also contact my Thesis Advisor, Professor Shari Brotman at shari.brotman@staff.mcgill.ca, or by telephone at the School of social work at [514] 398-7070.

Thank you for your interest in this research.

Buster Ogbuagu
Doctoral Candidate
School of Social work
&
Faculty of Integrated Studies in Education.
McGill University
[819] 684-1315
[613] 747-7800, ext. 2656
lionkiller100@hotmail.com

Informed Consent Form-Youth.

B. Ogbuagu
Informed Consent Form-Youth-1.

**IN SEARCH OF COMMUNAL IDENTITY: THE ROLE OF THE BLACK
COMMUNITY IN IDENTITY FORMATION AMONG NIGERIAN YOUTHS**

BUSTER OGBUAGU

INFORMED CONSENT FORM-YOUTH

Page 1 of 3

I agree to be a part of this research on the understanding that:

The purpose of the study is to understand how Nigerian youth describe themselves and how they feel about their experiences with family, at school, with friends, their community and the Canadian society. I have received a copy of the letter that explains the goals of the study, as shown in the Letter to Possible Participants.

I, as well as other Possible Participants, will be interviewed for about 2 hours using a tape recorder.

The study that I may be part of is being done by a student, as part of Doctoral studies at the School of Social Work and Faculty of Integrated Studies in Education at McGill University. Buster Ogbuagu, the student researcher, can be reached at [819] 684-1315 and or [613] 747-7800, ext. 2656, as well as on the Internet at lionkiller100@hotmail.com

Dr. Shari Brotman, an Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work, McGill University will be supervising my work. She can be reached at [514] 398-7054 or at shari.brotman@staff.mcgill.ca.

When I accept to join this study, the interview will be held at a place that is acceptable to me and to the Student Researcher.

I know that I am not being forced to join this study. If at any time, I choose not to continue as part of the study, I will not be in trouble for this decision.

If I am no longer interested in the study, I have the right to ask the researcher to remove any part of the interview concerning me. This decision will not affect me or any service or services that I may need now or in the future.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM-YOUTH

Page 2 of 3

This agreement includes having my interview on audio tape. I also have the right to speak, without being tape-recorded.

If I feel uncomfortable with any questions asked, I have the right not to answer them. At any time, I am allowed to ask any questions that I like, request for explanation or speak about anything that bothers me about the interview or study.

Unless I give permission, the student researcher will keep anything I say secret, throughout the study.

Except where I permit, my real name and identity will not be included in any publication. Any information that is made known will be in such a way that it will not be connected to me.

Only the Student Researcher and his Supervisor/s will be allowed to see or listen to any information recorded or written about me. The interview cassettes and notes will be stored in a place where no one who is not allowed will not see, read or listen to them. All notes and audiotapes will be destroyed one year after the thesis has been handed in.

A thesis will be produced at the end of the study, the summary of which will be made available to me.

The Student Researcher believes to the best of his knowledge, that I and others helping him with the study will not be at risk or suffer any harm for being a part of the study. It is possible, however, that I or some other participants, as members of a minority group, may experience some emotional problems or discomfort while telling stories of our experiences in Canada.

If I experience any emotional problems during the interview, or before the end of the study, the Student Researcher will make sure that I am provided with assistance, which may include social/psychological counseling and other supports.

As a participant, I am aware that I will not be receiving any direct, personal benefit from my participation in the research. However, being a part of the study will help me and other Canadians know more about Black youths, their families, communities and experiences at school and the community.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM-YOUTH

Page 3 of 3

Consent to audiotape Interview:

I, _____

_____ Give Buster Ogbuagu, Student Researcher, consent to audiotape the interview.

_____ Do not give Buster Ogbuagu, Student Researcher, consent to audiotape the interview

Consent to be acknowledged or remain anonymous:

I, _____

_____ Do not wish to be identified or my person acknowledged.

_____ Wish my views to be known and my person acknowledged.

Name

Signature

Date

Parent/Caregiver

Signature

Date

[For youths 13-18 years old]

Buster Ogbuagu,

Signature
Principal Investigator

Date

INFORMED CONSENT FORMS-ADULT

B. Ogbuagu
Informed Consent Form-Adult- 1

<p>IN SEARCH OF COMMUNAL IDENTITY: THE ROLE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN IDENTITY FORMATION AMONG NIGERIAN YOUTHS</p>

BUSTER OGBUAGU

INFORMED CONSENT FORM-ADULT

Page 1 of 3

I am consenting to participate in this research on the understanding that:

The purpose of the study is to understand how Nigerian youth describe themselves and how they feel about their experiences with family, at school, with friends, their community and the Canadian society. I have received a copy of the letter that explains the goals of the study, as shown in the Letter to Potential Participants.

I, as well as other Potential Participants, are being requested to participate in an audio-taped interview, lasting not more than two hours in duration.

The proposed research is being carried out by a student, as part of Doctoral studies at the School of Social Work and Faculty of Integrated Studies in Education at McGill University. Buster Ogbuagu, the student researcher, can be reached at [819] 684-1315 and or [613] 747-7800, ext. 2656, as well as on the Internet at _____

As student researcher, I have been assigned a Program and Thesis Advisor, who will supervise my work. My supervisor in the School of Social work is Dr. Shari Brotman, Assistant Professor, McGill University. Contact with her can be made at [514] 398-7054 or at shari.brotman@staff.mcgill.ca.

Where I accept to participate in this study, the interview will be held at a location that is acceptable to me and to the Principal Researcher.

I have volunteered for this study and not in any way been forced to participate. If I choose to end my participation at any time during the research process, I will not be in trouble for this decision.

If I choose to end my participation in this study, I have the right to request the removal from the record, of any portion of the interview involving myself. This decision will not affect me or any service or services that should be due to me.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM-ADULT

Page 2 of 3

This agreement includes having my interview audio-taped. I also have the right to speak off the record, without being tape recorded.

If I feel uncomfortable with any questions asked, I have the right not to answer them at any time during the study.

I am encouraged to ask any questions, request for explanation or express any concerns that I may have, at any time during the research and interview process.

The student researcher will keep anything I say confidential and protected at all times during the interview and study, except where I state otherwise.

Except where I give consent, my real name and identity will not be included in any publication. Any information that is revealed will be in such a way that I will not be identified.

Only the Principal Investigator and his Thesis Advisor/s will be given access to any raw data, made up of transcripts of audio-taped interviews, audiotapes, received in the course of the research. All confidential information will be housed in a secure location, in order to prevent any unauthorized persons from reaching them. All transcripts and audiotapes will be destroyed one year after the submission of the thesis.

A thesis will be produced at the end of the research, the summary of which will be made available to me.

The Principal Investigator believes to the best of his knowledge, that the participants in this research, including me will not suffer any potential risks for being a part of the study. It is possible, however, that I or some other participants, as members of a minority group, may experience some emotional problems or discomfort while telling stories of our experiences in Canada.

If I experience any emotional problems during the interview, or before the end of the study, the Principal Investigator will make sure that I am provided with assistance, which may include social/psychological counseling and other supports.

As a participant, I am aware, that I will not be receiving any direct, personal benefit from my participation in the research. However, I will be contributing to a body of knowledge about Black youths, their families, communities and experiences at school and the community within the Canadian society.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM-ADULT

Page 3 of 3

Consent to audiotape Interview:

I, _____

_____ give Buster Ogbuagu, Principal Investigator consent to audiotape the interview.

_____ do not give Buster Ogbuagu, Principal Investigator consent to audiotape the interview

Consent to be acknowledged or remain anonymous:

I, _____

_____ Do not wish to be identified or my person acknowledged.

_____ Wish my views to be known and my person acknowledged.

_____	_____	_____
Name	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Buster Ogbuagu,	Signature Principal Investigator	Date

General Interview Guide.

B. Ogbuagu
Interview Guide p.1.

IN SEARCH OF COMMUNAL IDENTITY: THE ROLE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN IDENTITY FORMATION AMONG NIGERIAN YOUTHS
--

BUSTER OGBUAGU

GENERAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

Section One: Introduction

Review the following with each participant, prior to making the inquiry:

1. Purpose and goals of the research:
2. Participants' Information Letter and Consent Form:
 - a. Ascertain that participant has reviewed and understand the contents, clarifying the contents, where necessary.
 - b. Following participant's verbal agreement, obtain signature on Consent Form.
 - c. To avoid ambiguity, verbally review with the participant, the entire contents of the Information Letter and Consent Form and if necessary, obtain a voice-recorded consent.
1. Ascertain with each participant that he/she understands that the interview will be audio-recorded and obtain a second consent prior to the commencement of recording.

Section Two: Interview

Interview Questions

SPECIFIC INTERVIEW GUIDE: YOUTH

1. "How did you get to know about this research?"
2. I am interested in how Nigerian youth describe themselves and how they feel about their experiences in school, with family, friends and their community.
3. Can we start by your telling me a bit about yourself? How would you describe yourself to others?
4. Would you describe yourself the same way to family, friends at school, your teachers and others?
5. Why might you describe yourself differently to different persons?
6. How do you think that people-your family, friends at school/community and teachers see you?
7. Who or what is important in how you see yourself?
8. Where were you born? Would you describe yourself as a Nigerian? Why or why not?
9. How important is being of Nigerian ancestry to you? Is it important to your parents about how you see yourself? Is it important to them whether you think yourself first as a Canadian or Nigerian?
10. Do you participate in school activities? What is your experience like at school? Why do you think school has been so good? If not so good, why?
11. Are you or your family involved in any community activities, church, mosque or others? What are they like for you? Do you think these are important to you? Why or why not?
12. How do you spend your time?
13. Is there stuff that concern, worry, make you wonder or even mad?

14. What kind of stuff do you like to do and those that you think really “suck.”
15. Are there stuff that you will be more comfortable telling your friends and not family and vice versa? If so, what kind of stuff and why or why not?
16. What is important to you?
17. How do you feel about the Nigerian community?
18. Describe your experience[s] outside of the Nigerian community-with Blacks or those from other nationalities. What does “fitting in” mean for you?
19. Do you have [a] brother[s] and or [a] sister[s] at home? Are you all treated in the same way or are the boys treated differently from the girls?

SPECIFIC INTERVIEW GUIDE: PARENTS, CAREGIVERS & GUARDIANS.

1. I am interested in how Nigerian youth describe themselves and how they feel about their experiences in family, school, friends and their community.
2. Where were your children born-in Nigeria, Canada or elsewhere?
3. How do you describe your child/children here in Canada?
4. Would you describe them differently if they were still in Nigeria?
5. How do your children define or describe themselves?
6. How important is it to you about how your children see themselves?
7. Have you ever wondered where your child/children fit in Canada? What does “fitting in” mean for them? As a parent/caregiver what does “fitting in” mean to you?
8. Who or what do you think is/are important in your children’s lives, definition and perception of themselves?
9. Are there issues that the children would prefer to speak to you about and those that you think they would prefer to discuss with friends and peers? What are some of these issues? Why do you think they would or would not prefer to speak with you about them?
10. How important is it to you that your child/children think of themselves first as Nigerians or Canadians and vice versa?
11. Would you like to speak about your child/children’s experiences in Canada-at school, with teachers, church, mosque, friends and community?
12. Would you think that these experiences have been positive or negative? Why or why not?
13. Are you and your children involved in any community activities? What kind of activities and what is it like for them to be involved? If they are not, why not?
14. Would you like to talk about gender expectations among your children?
15. What are important to you in these gender expectations?

16. Do your children understand these gender issues? If so, what feelings have they expressed to you about them? If not what do you think are their reasons?
17. Do your experiences with racism affect how you see or deal with your children? How? Why or why not?
18. As a parent/caregiver and one from African ancestry, what hopes, goals, aspirations and fears do you occasionally or constantly entertain for your children here in Canada?

SPECIFIC INTERVIEW GUIDE: COMMUNITY LEADERS.

1. I am interested in how Nigerian youth describe themselves and how they feel about their experiences in family, school, friends and their community.
2. Do you ever wonder where the Nigerian youth fits within the Canadian society?
3. Are there knowledge-based issues that you think are concerning or even worrisome to Nigerian youths? What concerns do they mostly come to you to express?
4. How do you think Nigerian youth have experienced school, school environment-including teachers, peers, the curricular/learning process and the community? Have these experiences been positive or negative? Why or why not?
5. How would you describe Nigerian youth?
6. How do you think that people see Nigerian youth?
7. How do Nigerian youth see themselves?
8. As a community leader, what do you consider to be your role in the life of the Nigerian youth?
9. What things preoccupy your thinking about young people's identity or feelings about themselves?
10. What in your opinion is important to young people in your community of today?
11. Tell me how your experiences with racism have defined the way you see, interact and deal with Nigerian youth?

Section Three: Summary or Recapping

1. Ascertain that the following information have been obtained:

The participant's age

Participant's gender

2. Cease recording and advise the participant that you have arrived at the end of your inquiry.
3. Explore the participant's emotional status. Where necessary, provide immediate referral to appropriate counseling and support services.
4. Check in with the participant[s] about any questions, comments or concerns that they might have.
5. Advise the participant of the possibility of obtaining a copy of the study outcome, when complete, in addition to contact information if he or she is so disposed.
6. Express gratitude to the participant for participating in the research study.

IMPORTANT INTERVIEW RELATED DATA TO BE COLLECTED

The following are some important interview related data that will be collected from the research participants.

1. Age of participants.
2. Gender.
3. Number of children in the family.
4. Number of family members.
5. Composition of the family-single parent family, two parent family
6. Whether a male or female heads the family.
7. Sibling composition-how many females, how many males?
8. Language/s regularly spoken in the household.
9. Religious practices and preferences.
10. Place of birth.

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