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Understanding the Lived Experiences of Jamaican Immigrant Youth in Two
Southern Ontario Cities

By

Kathleen M. Hogarth

B.A., Jamaica Theological Seminary, 1996

M.A., Caribbean Graduate School of Theology, 1998

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Research done with immigrant youth in Canada has been largely focused on educational outcomes. The experiences of Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada have not been explored in great depth in the literature. Canadian statistics show however that Jamaican immigrant youth account for the largest grouping of Caribbean immigrant youth in Canada. Other data sources point to the fact that Jamaican youth are more likely to be criminalized and face added challenges in society because of racial stereotyping. The goal of this thesis therefore was to explore the experiences of Jamaican immigrant youth in Kitchener and Toronto, Ontario through an investigation of the factors that facilitate and impede their positive outcomes.

This research was based on a qualitative method of inquiry gaining the insights of ten Jamaican immigrant youth and five key informants through in-depth interviews. Data was also collected from nine parents in a focus group. The ecological approach incorporating a risk and resiliency construct provided the framework for the research.

The findings showed that the risk factors impacting the lives of Jamaican immigrant youth in this study far outweighed the protective factors they experienced. At every sphere of functioning youth were faced with a myriad of factors impeding their success. In addition, the interplay of these factors at the various levels of the ecological framework further added to the challenges of youth's achievement of positive outcomes. Despite these odds, the majority of youth participants reported experiencing positive outcomes like academic success and social integration.

The exilic experiences of youth supported the need to clearly delineate in the ecological construct the cultural community as distinct from the wider society. Cultural community for many youth was an important factor in shaping their national identities and increasing their sense of belonging within the collective. The findings also raised a number of questions that may give some direction for future research. Questions about how culture impacts youth outcome and its role in the development of resilience emerged. Some of these issues were explored in the discussion of the findings.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The immigrant youth population in Canada is set to expand annually in keeping with Canada's immigration projections. Of the total youth population, 12% (470,335) is reported as immigrants representing diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Statistics Canada, 2001). Jamaica's immigration youth population in Canada also reflects this growth.

Canada has a forty-year history of receiving significant numbers of immigrants from the Caribbean (Thomas-Hope, 2002). Between 1996 and 2001 the Caribbean was the country of origin for approximately 5,180 immigrants to Canada between the ages of 13 and 19 (Statistics Canada, 2001). Jamaica has been the major source of West Indian immigration to Canada with the largest concentration of Jamaicans immigrants living in Ontario (Smith 2006). The 2001 census data showed Jamaica accounting for 120,205 residents who came to Canada under the family reunification and economic classes (Statistics Canada, 2001). These statistics give some indication of the increasing presence and by extension the potential vital role this group of immigrants can play in the changing face of the Canadian society. They also give rise to concerns about how these youth manage in their new environment.

The relative prominence of the Jamaican population in Ontario often leads to the 'Jamaicanizing' of all Caribbean nationals and in some respects all black residents in Ontario as is repeatedly seen in popular media. Research with other black cultures in Canada also alludes to this homogenizing of all blacks as Jamaicans and the labeling of "Jamaican as a negative" (Kumsa, 2005, p. 188). This is problematic for a number of reasons. For instance, the crimes committed by any black person in Ontario are often

attributed to Jamaicans leading to increased criminalization of this group. In addition, such 'Jamaicanizing' of black cultures in Ontario serves to further entrench the stereotypical notions held by society of the Jamaican population.

Bearing these concerns in mind this research was undertaken to explore the experiences of Jamaican immigrant youth in two southern Ontario cities, namely Kitchener and the Greater Toronto Area. The main research questions sought to understand the factors that facilitated or impeded positive outcomes for Jamaican immigrant youth and to explore the role of the family, school environment, peers and the wider community in facilitating positive outcomes for these youth. How the factors that facilitated or impeded positive outcomes were maximized or minimized were also included in the main research questions.

The Immigration Context

Within the youth immigration context there exist multiple challenges. Learning new cultural expectations, language and ways of being are perceived as significant stressors for some. Inherent in the move from home to host country youth are forced to relinquish some of their significant relationships, including family members, friends, and community relations (Falicov, 1998). In the process, the social roles which contextualize their identity and fit in the world is also lost. Feelings of marginalization often replace their sense of competence, control, and belonging (Suárez -Orozco & Todorova, 2003). These changes in contexts, relationships, and roles are highly disorienting and for many youth lead to a keen sense of loss (Ainslie, 1998).

For the immigrant youth, the complexities of immigration are further compounded with the challenges of adolescence (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003; Pottinger &

Williams Brown, 2006). Variables such as language fluency, age, sex, degree of identification with the host culture and the amount of social interaction within the new environment are identified as having significant impact on immigrant youth and their ability to successfully integrate (Seat, 2003). Other research identified potential risk factors or stressors including social isolation, family disruption, unfamiliar school systems, racism and urban poverty (Thompson & Gurney, 2003).

Although the immigration and settlement process may be stressful for everyone, immigrant youth do not have uniform responses to this experience. Some seem to thrive despite the many stressors; others experience negative consequences (Suárez-Orozco & Paez, 2002). This variability of response, termed *multifinality*, suggests that an array of vulnerability and protective factors interact to create divergent developmental trajectories for immigrant youth (Masten, 2001).

A problematic issue for immigrant youth is in relation to their achievement of positive outcomes. Research shows that racial and ethnic minority youth often face poorer educational outcomes in a variety of areas than do their mainstream counterparts (Ruck & Wortley, 2002). The problems minority youth face in school combined with their lived experiences and social realities outside of school are rarely addressed in the literature (Dei et al., 1997). There is a need to understand the factors that facilitate and impede positive outcomes for immigrant youth in all aspects of their functioning including in their familial and peer relationships, school and wider society.

Requirements for youth success have been highlighted in several studies (e.g. Seidman, 1991; Pittman & Cahill 1992; Durlak et al., 2004). However, in relation to Canadian immigrant youth there is still very little attention being given to this group

(Hyman et al., 2000) and it is only within recent times that studies are beginning to emerge (Ochocka, Janzen & Westhues, 2006). Supporting this assertion, Anisef and Kilbride (2003) noted that “their needs, whether the youth came as very young children or as adolescents, have not been systematically documented, nor have services for them been systematically identified anywhere” (p.12). Yet there is acknowledgement that there are a multiplicity of factors impacting the lives of these young people that has the potential to seriously interfere with their functioning and future well-being (Seat, 2003).

The Jamaican Youth Context

Jamaican immigrant youth constitute the largest Caribbean youth population in Ontario. Undoubtedly, they are subjected to many of the challenges highlighted through anecdotal information as well as by various authors examining youth populations. These youth however, may be faced with the additional burden of managing issues such as racial stereotypes and criminalization which some suggest may be heightened for Jamaican immigrant youth (Foster, 1996; Shelly-Robinson, 2004; Philip, 1992).

In addition to trying to successfully manage the many challenges they may face as immigrants, a substantial part of the immigration context for some Jamaican immigrant youth may be tied to their classification as “barrel children”. Social work practitioners in Jamaica coined the term “barrel children” when referring to children who receive barrels of goods from their migrant parents (Crawford-Brown & Rattray, 2002). It is from this context many Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada reunite with their parents. The reunification of the Jamaican “barrel children” form part of the challenge with which Jamaican immigrant youth must grapple. There is a need to understand the experience of

immigration by Jamaican immigrant youth in order to maximize their achievement of positive outcomes in Canada.

The Personal Context

My research interest is grounded in the idea that all persons, regardless of race, country of origin, gender, age or socio-economic status, deserve respect and should be presented with equal opportunities to succeed. My specific focus on Jamaican youth arose out of my personal experience with them during my ten-year residency in Jamaica during which time I had the opportunity to work with youth in various settings.

As a black Caribbean immigrant woman who lived in the same cultural, ancestral and in some ways experiential space as my informants (i.e., being black, immigrant and living in Canada), I brought an insider perspective to the research process. I felt that this was a strength overall. Feminist researchers suggest that using one's own experience is a useful strategy within the research process for the ways that it allows one to frame questions, test insights, and gain the trust of those whom one studies (see, for example, DeVault, 1990; Harding, 1987; Reinharz, 1992). Having the emic perspective helped me formulate appropriate questions during interviews and understand the dynamics of which my research participants spoke. My personal situation also helped to guard against oversimplifying the analysis.

My studies in Community Psychology, my work with the Centre for Research and Education in Human Services along with my experience as a member of an oppressed group, reinforced my belief that a major component of liberation is having a voice, or giving voice to the voiceless. Youth in general often have experiences of powerlessness

and a lack of sense of community. For immigrant youth the challenge becomes greater as the factors of settlement and adjusting to a new country is added.

Terms and Clarification

Before proceeding I want to define some terms that are critical to this study. Recognizing that 'positive outcomes' are largely self-defined and varies from individual to individual, I used the term to mean the achievement of widely accepted societal results (for example good academic performance is generally viewed by society as a positive youth outcome whereas poor academic performance is generally viewed as a negative outcome) necessary for full and equal participation in the wider society and achieving a personal sense of fulfillment about life.

The term 'immigrant' refers to all newcomers legally accepted into Canada. Under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (2001) persons may enter Canada under one of three categories: family reunification, independent or economic class or refugee. Since the refugee class is not applicable to Jamaica the immigrants referred to in this study were drawn from either the family reunification class or immigrant youth related to members of the economic class.

'Jamaicans' referred to in this study are those who were born in Jamaica. Eligibility for this study also meant that they resided in Jamaica up to and immediately prior to immigrating to Canada. Recognizing that the operational definition and nuances of the term 'youth' often vary vastly depending on specific socio-cultural, institutional, economic and political factors, I have used the term to mean individuals between the ages of 16 and 21.

An Overview of the Chapters

Chapter 2 brings together a review of the literature on issues related to immigrant youth. It considers the perspective of the risk and resilience ecological framework within which I examine discourses on several variables within the youth's sphere of influence and their impact on immigrant youth. This chapter also discusses some of the limitations noted in discourses on some of the major factors.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology used in this research, including research approach methods, the process of analysis and the ethical issues arising. This chapter also includes a description of the study participants and the criteria used in selecting them.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study organizing them around the major themes which emerged during the data analysis process. The findings are organized in two sections. The first section frames the context for Jamaican immigrant youth and gives some insight into their pre-migratory experiences. The second section presents the findings within the ecological framework looking at factors in the various spheres of the youth functioning. Recommendations are also presented as they emerged within each of the spheres. Chapter 5 discusses the significance of the findings in light of the literature and my personal journey through the research process. This chapter concludes with a summary of the key findings and identifies areas for further research.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Even though there is a consistently growing body of literature which focuses on immigrant youth, particularly within the past six years, the literature on black immigrant youth in Canada seems to be developing at a much slower pace. The literature on Jamaican immigrant youth is extremely limited. Considering some of the research done on immigrant youth with particular focus on minority youth it was evident that there are multiplicities of factors impacting positive outcomes for youth (Desai & Subramanian, 2003). The discourses in much of the literature also highlight the challenge of simplifying these factors even with the use of multiple categories (Ochocka, Janzen, & Westhues, 2006; Anisef & Kilbride, 2003).

In dealing with the issue of youth performance, some researchers agreed on the necessity to move away from the use of deficit models in explaining negative outcomes (Durlak et al., 2004). They suggested adopting the educational resilience construct described by Wang and Gordon (1994) and Winfield (1991). This approach focuses on success rather than failure (Cooper & Thornton 1999). Durlak and colleagues (2004) noted that when issues involving youth are framed in negative terms they often obscure the fact that there has been many intervention attempts promoting skills and developmental competencies.

One of the ways offered in the literature to frame the issues impacting youth was through the use of an ecological construct. The essence of the ecological perspective as outlined by Kelly, Ryan, Altman and Stelzner, (2000) “is to construct an understanding of the interrelationships of social structures and social processes, of the groups, organizations and communities in which we live and work” (p.133). Central to the

ecological framework is the notion of interdependence of structures. Much of the research conducted from a community psychology standpoint supports the use of such a framework because of its conceptualization of “persons in context”. For example the works of Steele, Trickett and Labarta, (1981), Seidman and Rappaport (1986), Kelly, (2006) are all laden with the ideas of contextualizing social problems.

Bronfenbrenner (1971) presented an “ecological environment,” in which development occurs in relation to a multi-person system. The levels of the micro, meso, exo and macro describe the different social environments that influence youth. The importance of this model is the bi-directionality and interrelation between the levels allowing for description and categorization at four levels and hence a much more comprehensive analysis of factors impacting youth success.

Building on this ecological model Kirby & Fraser (1997), suggested the use of a risk and resilience ecological framework. In this conceptualization, the framework considers the balance of risk (forces contributing to a problem condition) and protective (internal and external resources for the protection against risk) factors that interact to determine an individual’s ability to function adaptively despite stressful life events. This framework fits well with research that has an emphasis on empowerment and the strengths based perspective.

The strengths perspective underlies the concepts of “protective factors” and “resilience” in which people are not only able to survive and endure, but also triumph over difficult life circumstances. The ecological emphasis of the framework expands the focus beyond the individual to a recognition of systemic factors that can create problems as well as ameliorate and transform them.

Micro Level Factors

The *micro system* describes the complex of relations between the youth and the immediate settings (e.g., family, school, peer group) in which they function, placing the youth within the context of these settings. From a developmental perspective, youths' psychosocial characteristics are expected to interact over time with the social contexts in which they live (Caldwell et al., 2004). The literature provided a number of possibilities on factors that might facilitate positive outcomes for youth. Some writers presented these factors on a continuum on which one end lie positive behaviors and situations that are indicative of stable adaptive functioning and at the other end lie behaviors and situations that have the potential to compromise stable adaptive functioning (Compas, Hinden, & Gerhardt, 1995; Arrington & Wilson, 2000). Four micro level factors were identified in the literature: 1) factors unique to the individual, 2) school, 3) family and household stress and 4) youth's psychological sense of community.

Factors Unique to the Individual

Resilience was identified as one of those factors unique to the individual. Despite the odds, a number of youth living in very risky contexts are able to overcome these difficulties and experience successful lives. This ability to transcend adversity is what some researchers referred to as resilience (Werner, 2000). For youth who succeed despite less than optimal conditions, the presence of protective factors may compensate for the risks that exist in their lives and environments (Garmezy, 1993). Protective factors, as defined by Garmezy (1983), are "those attributes of persons, environments, situations, and events that appear to temper predictions of psychopathology based upon an individual's at-risk status" (p. 73).

A growing number of studies are examining the pathways by which some adolescents develop into well-adapted individuals in spite of life stresses (CCSD, 2000; Anisef & Kilbride, 2003; Krahn & Taylor, 2005; Ochocka, Janzen and Westhues, 2006). One of the pathways suggested in the literature for developing resilience was through parental involvement. Some researchers suggested that resilient children generally reside in families characterized by more structure, clear boundaries, and well-defined roles (Johnson-Garner & Meyers, 2003). Despite these advances made in research on resilience, the need to better understand the mechanisms by which some youth develop resilience or by which such resilience can be promoted still exists (Arrington & Wilson, 2000; Scott, 2003).

School

Schooling was another micro level factor identified in the literature which has significant impact on youth outcomes. Much of the research done on immigrant youth has been in relation to school performance. School attendance remains a central focus for many youth between the ages of 16 and 20. Education has a primary role in a youth's ability to acquire social capital, access career opportunities and fully avail themselves of life chances. Some researchers suggested that educational achievement and attainment are central aspects of adolescent development, given their association with a variety of aspects of development and their implications for the ability of youth to negotiate a successful transition to adulthood (Halperin, 1998; Sherrod, Haggerty, & Featherman, 1993; Larson 2000).

The literature consistently showed the difficulties faced by immigrant youth arising out of dislocation and interrupted schooling in attempting to integrate into their

new culture (Beiser, Dion, Gotowiew, Hyman & Vu, 1995; Yon, 2000). Park (2000) attributed the sense of disconnection some immigrant youth face to the challenge of learning either of the official languages or the fact they were not born in Canada. Bateman, (2004) as well as Offord and colleagues (2000) suggested that academic performance acts as a lever for youth's sense of belonging and social and emotional adjustment. They assert that a lack of positive connectedness to the school community facilitates a range of academic, emotional and behavioural problems.

Buhrmester and Furman, (1987) noted that it is within the school environment that youth spend much of their time interacting with their peer groups, developing close relationships with special friends, and exploring different aspects of their self. They inferred from this that youth's sense of being a part of the school community provides an environment that is conducive to healthy development. Greater sense of connectedness to the school was also linked to youth's motivation to succeed in school activities and studies, to participate in school events (Goodenow, 1993).

Another element related to schooling highlighted in the literature that may be challenging for immigrant youth is that of school disciplinary customs. Ruck and Wortley (2002) noted that there has been little systematic research directly exploring racial/ethnic minority student's views and beliefs pertaining to school disciplinary practices. Studies on racial/ethnic minority students in Canada substantiated the fact that these youth are also more likely to be disciplined at school than white students (Dei et al., 1997). Although schools can take a variety of disciplinary actions, suspensions are one of the most severe. Williams (1989) noted that the severity of suspensions lie in the fact that they result in the removal of students from the school and thus a decrease in student's

instructional time. Researchers also suggested that disciplinary problems, such as suspensions, are factors contributing to the high incidence of early school leaving among minority students (Dei et al., 1997). There was some indication from the literature that racial and ethnic minority students often believe that they will receive harsher or more public punishment for engaging in the same behaviour than white students (Marcus et al., 1991; Murray & Clarke, 1990).

Teacher expectation was another factor related to schooling highlighted by researchers as having an impact on student outcomes (Clifton, 1981; Brophy, 1983; Howard 2005; Conchas & Noguera, 2006; Benner & Mistry, 2007). These studies suggested that the expression of low expectations had more influence in lowering student performance than expressing high expectations had on raising performance. One of the most common conclusions drawn among researchers on the topic was that teacher expectations can and do affect student's achievement and attitude. The positive relationship between supportive teachers and immigrant students performance was well noted in the literature (Conchas & Noguera, 2004; Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2003).

There was also a great level of agreement in the literature that low teacher expectation is most commonly associated with low-income youth and minority immigrant groups and particularly black minority students (Alvidrez & Weinstein, 1999; Muller, Katz, & Dance, 1999). Some studies showed that high parental expectation for youth academic achievement may buffer the disruptive processes low teacher expectation may cause (Benner & Mistry, 2007, p.144). However, earlier studies done questioned how much this can be generalized since student experiences often negated such theories (Howard, 2003; Snow et al., 1991).

The literature on schooling related specifically to Jamaican immigrant youth highlighted additional factors not already discussed. Pottinger and Williams-Brown (2006) noted that Jamaican youth may also have to deal with the issue of being “mis-classified educationally”. They suggested that this mis-classification may be due to differences in language, particularly because some may speak a dialect, even though they are coming from an English-speaking country. They further asserted that these youth are sometimes “mis-diagnosed as emotionally disturbed due to their difficulty in adjusting to their new culture” (p.8). Such mis-classification or mis-diagnosis often results in placement in special education or in grades lower than their true abilities thereby affecting their self esteem and future career prospects (Gopaul-McNichol, 1993).

For immigrant youth the issue of language can further complicate their experiences in the school environment. For Jamaican immigrant youth the literature showed that although English is their first language they may speak on a continuum from standard to patois (Scott, 2003). Scott noted that these students often face problems with intonation, grammar and vocabulary (p.103).

Family/ household stress

Family and household stress was another micro level variable identified as having some impact on youth outcomes. Martinez, (2006) stated that “the relationship between stress processes, parenting, and youth outcomes is not well understood” (p.314). Despite this there is a fair amount of research showing the link between youth outcomes and family stress. For instance Rosenthal, (1998) showed that poorer youth outcomes are correlated with high levels of household stress, signified by the presence of three or more stressors such as: finances, numerous geographical moves; unconventional structure or

large size of family (p.417). Similarly, a more recent study looking at youth disengagement from school identified factors such as parental rejection; family conflict; marital discord and inadequate parental supervision as risk factors for early school leaving in youth (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005).

On the other hand youth who experience positive outcomes were identified as those who existed in families marked by structure and supportive relationships. Gibson (1997) supported this thinking. She asserted that “minority youth do better when they feel strongly anchored in the identities of their families... and when they feel supported [within the family processes]” (p. 445).

Some studies done with Caribbean immigrant youth highlighted a challenge with supportive family relationships for these youth. With many Jamaican youth immigrating to Canada under the family reunification class, the reunification process for some may be problematic. Researchers suggested that one of the reasons for such tenuous family relationships for Jamaican immigrant families may be the fact that reuniting often occurs in adolescence – when children are battling with developmental issues of identity and figuring out where they belong (Gopaul-McNichol,1993; Lashley, 2000; Shelly-Robinson, 2004) . They further suggested that the relationship may be even more conflicted by the re-experience of migratory separation when they separate from the surrogate parent and friends they had grown accustomed to over the years (Jones, Sharpe & Sogren , 2004).

Pottinger and Williams-Brown (2006) identified another factor which may challenge family relationships and increase household stress for Jamaican immigrant youth. They pointed out that some youth going through the reunification process may

face reconstituted families with step- parents and siblings having to figure out how to fit in with this new family. They suggested that if this transitioning is not a smooth one for the youth it may lead to further challenges in their settlement process (p.6).

There were a few studies conducted which framed family reunification as a protective factor (Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., 2000; Canadian Council for Refugees, 2002; Canadian Council for Refugees, 2004). They suggested that the family preservation and maintenance values associated with reunification may mitigate family and household stress. These studies occurred mostly in the grey literature. Although all classes of immigration was considered in these studies there was a large focus on the experiences of refugees.

Sense of belonging

The need to belong is one of the most basic human needs (Maslow, 1970). In fact some researchers suggest that having a sense of belonging and social connectedness predicts favourable outcomes (Walton & Cohen, 2007). Newbrough and Chavis (1986), identified sense of belonging as one of the four core constructs in psychological sense of community. They refer to this construct as “the personal knowing that one has about belonging to a collectivity” (p.3).

Research done with youth populations has shown sense of community as the primary correlate with subjective evaluations of well-being (Pretty et al., 1996). Studies conducted with immigrant youth in Canada indicated that these youth reported that their sense of belonging to this country was weak and was undermined by a strong sense of attachment to their country of origin (Ministry of Education, 2005). Some researchers on Caribbean history suggested that this sense of belonging and community may be

challenging for some Jamaican youth because of the peculiarities of their past. For instance, Shelly-Robinson (2004) noted that questions of identity and belonging remain problematic for Caribbean youth because of their cultural past engagement with slavery. She also asserted that the significance of the search for identity in the lives of Caribbean peoples is closely connected to the immigration experience. “This historical factor [slavery] further compounds the search for an identity when as immigrants we find ourselves in countries where we are regarded as second class citizens and so must struggle even harder to find a place of belonging” (p.3). This notion was earlier purported by Rex (1986) who noted:

“ ... [West Indians] have inherited a legacy of cultural confusion. The slaves were stripped of cultural dignity and pride, as well as their African mother tongue ...The common experience of ancestral African deculturation and European acculturation undermined the cultural self of the West Indian, producing a cultural amalgam under conditions not willingly subscribed to... This cutting off from their African roots and being forced to adapt to the ways of the colonizers has only helped to create a dilemma of identity that still leaves Caribbean people uncertain of what it means to be really a West Indian...” (p. 144)

Highlighting similar challenges migrant populations face in negotiating identity and sense of belong Ahmed, (2000) notes: “migration is defined against identity; it is that which already threatens the closures of identity thinking” (p.82). Much of the diasporic literature brings to the forefront the effects of migration on ones identity and sense of belonging. The writings of Brah (1996), Yon, (2000), Kumsa, (2005), Tetty and Pupilampu, (2005), Bose, (2007) for instance, all reference the intricacy of negotiating sense of belongingness amidst the migratory experience. Writing about Jamaicans in Toronto, Forde, (1984) noted: “most remain cultural outsiders, perpetuation and transplanting the island’s culture in a Canadian environment” (p. 141).

Meso Level Factors

The *meso system* describes the interrelations among these settings (e.g., home-school relations). An important meso systemic dynamic, which Bronfenbrenner refers to as “ecological transition,” involves the shifts in role and setting that occur in the lives of the youth and those responsible for his or her care as a result of maturational processes and life cycle events (e.g., immigration). Several meso level variables were explored in the literature. This review considered parental involvement, social supports and networks and religion.

Parental involvement

Parental involvement and family relationships were highlighted as important factors in facilitating positive outcomes for immigrant youth. Some researchers suggested that family relationships are more influential on youth behaviour than peers, dating partners, or community factors because families are the primary socializers of adolescents (DiClemente et al., 2001). Mack et al., (2007) found that family processes and more specifically maternal attachment was a critical link in determining youth outcomes. They suggested that such attachment is more important than economic or other circumstance in prediction youth risk behaviour (p. 63). An earlier study on parental participation also supported this view (Aalborg, 1998). This study “found that “family support and closeness” had the most powerful overall influence on adolescent outcomes” (p. 1)

In relation to parental involvement the literature revealed a strong positive relationship between parental involvement and positive outcomes for youth. For instance, researchers suggested that the long-term impact of parental involvement in youth’s school experiences positively benefits their academic success through to age 20 (Barnard,

2004). In exploring the role of parental involvement many researchers made reference to the work of Coleman (1988). Coleman's study looked at parental involvement in terms of human capital, social capital and financial capital in which there is the interplay between parental financial, social and human capital and the successful learning experience of their children.

Some of the challenges related to immigrant families and parental involvement were also explored in the literature. While parental involvement was recognized to be an important factor in educational outcomes for youth, it was noted that many youth come from families in which parents are not able to deal with the school system effectively or advocate successfully on their children's behalf (Aalborg, 1998). Differences in nationality, cultural norms and parental educational levels was shown to create barriers that families are unable to overcome alone which brings into sharp focus the need for social supports. Lack of social support may also prevent immigrant parents from becoming adequately involved in their adolescents' lives (Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski, & Apostoleris, 1997). Further, it was noted that it may be extremely difficult for such parents to become established in social networks that will support the difficult task of rearing children in a new and different society (Fuligni & Yoshikawa, 2003).

A limitation pointed out in the literature is that most of the research regarding parental involvement has been conducted with respect to Euro-American student and few research studies have investigated the issue with respect to minority youth (Eunjung, 2002; Lopez, 2001). Parental involvement in relation to Jamaican immigrant youth has its unique challenges. The literature on this topic suggested that the matriarchal and often time single parent family structure may impeded the extent to which parental

involvement takes place (Quinlan, 2006). Compounded with the challenges of migration and settlement, parental involvement in these types of family structures may be even more difficult (Heard, 2007). Another potentially inhibiting factor to parental involvement in Jamaican families particularly in school as argued by James and Brathwaite (1996) is the assumption of parents that schools in Canada operate the same way they do in the Caribbean. Scott, (2003) noted that this assumption leads parents to adopt a false sense of confidence that the school as an institution is meeting the needs of their children (p. 101).

Social supports and networks

The existing body of research, both experimental and descriptive, clearly indicates that youth require supports that are directly responsive to their needs. The literature showed that absent or limited community resources or support networks is highly correlated to poorer outcomes and is identified as a risk factor for youth (Okwumabua, Wong, Duryea, Okwumabua, & Howell, 1999). In addition, researchers pointed out that immigrant youth with less social supports may experience higher levels of stress than those with greater support. (Madhavappallil & Baek, 2006).

Suárez-Orozco and Todorova (2003) noted the importance of peers, community leaders, adults in schools, church members, and coaches in the adaptation of immigrant youth (pp. 22-23). This research highlighted the fact that the difficulties in rebuilding social networks can potentially threaten the psychosocial development of immigrant youth. One of the limitations highlighted in the literature is the failure of the current literature to contextualize the formation of social networks within the macro sociocultural context that shapes the youth experience. Tsai, (2006) noted that “knowledge about

immigrant youths' social network is often embedded in assimilation, ethnic identity, and adaptation literature” (p. 285).

More recent research linked youth's aspirations, particularly around education, to the social supports they have. A study done by Jackson, Kacanski, Rust & Beck, (2006) suggested that youth who perceive limited social supports or barriers to education and work often express lower levels of aspirations to succeed. This study also found that where youth perceived higher levels of supports their aspirations remained unchanged (p. 212).

The literature on peer support and immigrant youth was extremely limited. The few studies that I came across presented peer networks as a context for youth social support. The difficulties in developing these networks for immigrant youth were also noted (Thompson, 2004). Much of the discussion on peer relationships and immigrant youth revolve around school. One of the suggestions as to why the difficulty of forming peer relationships may exist, particularly for black youth was that black peers tend to discourage academic achievement leaving those youth with high academic aspirations the option of associating with other ethnic groups heightening the challenges of peer relationships (Steinberg, Dornbusch & Brown 1992).

Religion

Some researchers linked the positive contribution of religion to adolescent well-being and suggested that religion serves as both a protective influence and a catalyst for positive development (Thompson & Gurney, 2003; King & Furrow, 2004). Studies also showed the positive impact of participation in religious activities on youth's academic performance and decreased participation in risky behaviors or association with risk-

taking peers (Morrissey & Werner-Wilson, 2005). Regnerus and Elder (2003) supported the assertion that religion and religious organizations in particular often serve to promote prosocial outcomes. They suggested that religion is “something not entirely personal or familial but also communal” (635).

Within immigrant communities, religion has been highlighted as a key aspect of several immigrant cultures. Harker (2001) showed some preliminary information that immigrant teenagers report religious belief and affiliation among the protective forces in their lives. In many ethnic minority neighborhoods, the church is often viewed as central to the community (Rutter, 1990). Supports from church centers are both emotional and tangible. It was shown that the religious or spiritual activities available in a community may be resources for positive youth development as they enhance associations among community members, create community and provide sustained sources of activities for youth (Morrissey & Werner-Wilson, 2005).

Beyond youth’s religious affiliations, it was suggested that parental religious practices also influence youth outcomes. Caputo (2004) highlighted this positive relationship between parental religiosity and positive youth outcomes. He noted that religiosity seems to heighten family processes. For instance he suggested that where parental religiosity existed there were higher levels of parental involvement and greater profamily attitudes. This positive family dynamics in turn leads to more prosocial adolescent behaviours (p. 496).

Macro level factors

The *macro system* refers to general cultural or sub cultural “blueprints” for responding to the environment. Gobo’s (1991) cultural-ecological model further

elaborates processes at the macro systemic level. For example, school outcomes in ethnic minority groups are affected by their immigrant status and by experiences in the new host culture (Portes & MacLeod, 1996). These experiences often include discriminatory treatment by the dominant group (e.g., social and political barriers, inferior education). The macro level variables explored in this review were socio-economic status and social class, gender, community characteristics and influences, culture and racism and stereotypes.

Socio-economic status/social class

Socioeconomic status was regarded as a major macro level factor impacting the experiences of youth. Studies showed a high correlation between family socioeconomic status and youth outcomes (Fransoo et al., 2005; Shelley-Tremblay, O'Brien & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2007). Measures of socioeconomic status including maternal education, income, and occupational status were also shown to have significant effects on numerous outcomes including achievement test scores, course failures, and completed years of schooling (McLoyd, 1990, 1998).

The literature suggested that children who grow up in single parent homes are less successful, on average, than children who grow up in two-parent homes. These differences were found to relate to a broad range of outcomes and often persist into adulthood (Furstenberg, Brooks-Gunn, & Morgan, 1987; Haveman & Wolfe, 1991; McLananhan & Sandefur, 1994; Werner, 1985). Some of the literature showed that children from poor families have worse behavioural, emotional and cognitive outcomes than do children from wealthier families (Dooley & Stewart, 2004; Dooley, Curtis, Lipman, & Feeny, 1998; Phipps, 1999; Willms, 2003). In specific relation to black youth

researchers indicated that social class is a frame of reference which, concurrent with race, can provide a double sense of alienation among some Canadian black youth. They suggested that these youth may see themselves as both socially and economically disadvantaged (Dei et al., 1997).

Despite the fact that there is a correlation between socioeconomic status and youth outcomes the difficulty in measuring socioeconomic status when studying younger populations was noted as one of the limitations of socioeconomic measures (Ruck & Wortley, 2002). A contrasting notion on risk factors indicated that adolescent growing up in families with high socio-economic status also possess multiple risk factors (Luthar & Latendresse, 2005). They noted that whereas “stereotypically, affluent youth and poor youth are respectively thought of as being at “low risk” and “high risk,” comparative studies have revealed more similarities than differences in their adjustment patterns and socialization processes” (p. 49).

Gender

Gender was another macro level variable explored in the literature. Educational aspiration based on gender was one of the factors identified. According to Qin-Hilliard (2003), “girls from immigrant families across most ethnic groups tend to have higher educational aspirations and higher educational attainments than their male counterparts” (p. 92). Although the high school completion rate for females was shown to be higher than that for males, studies indicated that females who leave school early are at a greater disadvantage than their male counterparts because they face an increased risk of unemployment, poverty and lack of social support (Biggart, 2000; HRDC, 2000). In addition, some research showed that it is the educational level of mothers (not fathers)

which is likely to impact their children's educational attainment levels (HRDC, 2000). Early school leaving for young women can have a more far-reaching generational impact than can leaving for young men. On the other hand some researchers noted that the correlates of delinquency are found to be similar in males and females (Junger-Tas, Ribeaud, & Cruyff, 2004).

Gender also appeared to be a significant force in shaping patterns of adaptation among immigrant youth. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) contended that, "gender enters the picture in an important way because of the different roles that boys and girls occupy during adolescence and the different ways in which they are socialized" (p. 64). Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard (2003) suggested that males are more likely to experience poorer academic outcomes because of the limited support and guidance their school contexts offer them (p.105).

Community characteristics and influences

The role of community in the attainment of assets that lead to positive outcomes for youth has not been well explored (Morrissey & Werner-Wilson, 2005). There is however some literature substantiating the influence of neighborhoods on academic outcomes of youth (Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, Klebanow, & Sealand, 1993; Duncan, 1994). Some researchers suggested that adolescents who grow up in neighborhoods with a higher percentage of affluent families complete more years of schooling and have lower school dropout rates than those from similar families who grow up in poorer neighborhoods (Brooks-Gunn et al., 1993; Duncan, 1994). Similarly, the presence of affluent neighbors was shown to have a positive impact on the development of youth living in poverty (Swanson et al., 2003).

Researchers largely agreed that the communities in which youth operates are primary venues for their development. It was noted however that the capacity of communities to support youth development varies greatly (Newman, Smith & Murphy, 1999). Some researchers pointed to this variance in community capacity as a determinant for youth outcomes (Hoffmann, 2006).

Culture

Within the discussion on the determinants of positive outcomes for youth culture emerged as a factor that may be tied to many of the other factors impacting immigrant youth. The literature suggested that how one grouping of youth experiences the various factors impacting them might be significantly different from how another cultural grouping of youth experiences the same factors (James, 2000, Gibson, 2000). In support of this Aronowitz and Morrison-Beedy (2004) pointed out that “cultural ecology, an African American–derived theory, claims one group’s norms are not appropriate for judging those of another group, as the environmental demands on one group may dictate a set of behaviors necessary for coping with its circumstances different from those required by another group” (p.1). Applying this cultural ecology theory other researchers suggested that the integration process in the host society varies in such a way that there is a cumulative disadvantage for some immigrants or a cumulative advantage for others that is not accounted for by compositional characteristics (Kao, Tienda, & Schneider, 1996). Within this theoretical approach some researchers talked about the failure on the part of the host society to support the adaptation of immigrant youth. Particular focus was placed on youth from historically disadvantaged ethnic subgroups (Zhou, 1997).

Giving due regard to culture in attempting to understand the behaviours and outcomes of immigrant youth was a key element discussed in some of the literature (Jurkovic et al., 2004; Ogbu 1981). The differences in values based on culturally rooted influences were noted by Ogbu (1981). Ogbu's framework for valuing cultural differences highlighted the importance of understanding the social reality of ethnic minority groups from their cultural viewpoint rather than from that of the dominant cultural group. Jurkovic et al., (2004) noted that "research conducted from a dominant cultural perspective has led to the proliferation of deficit models to explain the behavior of non-mainstream children and their families" (p. 84).

Some researchers raised the question of the role of culture in exploring the variability in social mobility patterns among different immigrant groups (Vermeulen & Perlmann, 2000). Vygotsky in his social development theory suggested that the role of culture is central in the developmental process. He also noted that "all learning is culturally mediated, historically developing, and arising from cultural activity" (Bateman, 2002).

Racism and Stereotypes

The issue of racism facing visible minority youth featured prominently in the literature. Richardson, Richardson and Richardson (2000) talked about the social construct of race. They suggested that the foundation of Canada is built on racism and that attempts to dismantle such structures are futile because "the structure of the society is such that it will find a new way of oppressing these same people" (p. 118). Other authors shared the view that racism constructs black youth as culturally and biologically inferior thereby limiting their achievement (James, 2003; Dei, 2005).

In some of the literature it was noted that racism in the Canadian society is more of a hidden activity embedded in the fabric of the society. As noted by Jakubowski (1997), although Canada has ideologically “deracialized” the racial discourse by not explicitly using racist or racial categories, nevertheless this discourse may and often does, have racist effect (p. 43). The literature spanning over two decades highlighted this very notion. Walker (1985) noted that although “legal reforms have restrained openly hostile behaviour, they have not affected the essential factors leading to discrimination.... the basic issue in Canada has been racial stereotyping” (p. 24)

On this basis such entrenched racism some researchers highlighted the need to adopt an anti-racism framework to understand and report on the issues of adaptation of immigrant youth in the Canadian society (Desai & Subramanian, 2003). They noted that “this framework is particularly useful in understanding the complexities of the lives of youth living in a racialized society because it moves beyond a narrow preoccupation with individual prejudices and discriminatory actions to examine the ways that racist ideas and individual action are entrenched and (un) consciously supported in institutional structures” (p. 131).

Often embedded in the discourses on racism was the issue of stereotyping. The literature noted that there is often a pronounced effect of stereotyping on the achievement of black youth. For example, James (2000) explored how stereotypical notions about the ability of black youth are fed into the educational system predisposing them to poorer outcomes. With this in mind he pointed out that success for black youth means overcoming the “ethnocentricity of the curriculum as well as the stereotypes...manifested in the culture of the high school community” (p. 56). Other studies found that there is a

negative relationship between racist or ethnic discrimination and self-esteem, (Noh, Beiser, Kaspar, Hou & Rummens, 1999), and that discrimination had a depreciating effect on positive self-esteem and in fact enhanced negative self-esteem (Verkuyten, 2003).

Summary

The value of utilizing an ecological approach viewing persons within contexts was well understood by many researchers. However, the literature on the various factors impacting the lives of immigrant youth was still largely focused at unidimensional levels. In some instances there seemed to be the siloing of youth experiences without showing the interdependence of factors affecting their lives. For example, there is a substantial amount of literature exploring the mechanisms through which youth can achieve positive outcomes. Much of this literature however is focused on youth's educational achievement and youth's school performance.

The literature on minority immigrant youth in Canada is still relatively thin and the body of research on Caribbean immigrant youth, including Jamaica, is represented by only a few authors. Although several factors at various levels within the ecological framework were explored, the factors impacting the outcomes of Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada remain uncharted. This research adds to the existing literature on immigrant youth. More importantly, the potential problems faced by Jamaican immigrant youth as a result of issues of racial stereotypes and the 'Jamaicanizing' of Caribbean cultures are not at all addressed in the literature. Given the dearth of literature on Jamaican immigrant youth, it is hoped that this study will add depth to the understanding of the experiential realities of Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Research Purpose and Approach

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of Jamaican immigrant youth in Kitchener and the Greater Toronto Area. Exploratory in nature, the study sought to investigate the factors that facilitate and impede positive outcomes of Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada between the ages of 16 and 21. This was a qualitative study that allowed for in-depth understanding of the issues experienced by Jamaican immigrant youth. I used qualitative methods because they have been proven to be particularly valuable in giving voice to disadvantaged people and providing contextualized understanding of people's experiences. "Qualitative research presents researchers with an opportunity to listen to people tell their life stories and the method yield rich and complex data." (Warr, 2004).

This study was approached from particular disciplinary, theoretical and personal perspectives. Each brought certain strengths and weaknesses to the research process. An ecological perspective within a risk and resiliency framework was used in this research. The risk and resilience ecological framework holds a number of advantages for research in this area. The framework offers a balanced view of systems in that it looks at both risk and strength, and recognizes the complexity of individuals and the systems in which they are nested.

Much of the previous work on immigrant youth has adopted a unidimensional focus at a singular unit of analysis (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003). However, more recent research like those conducted by Seat (2003) and Janzen and Ochocka (2003) show that positive outcomes in youth are influenced by both individual as well as systemic factors.

Various factors (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, attitudinal variables) were explored through this research at the micro, meso and macro levels of analysis that may impact positive outcomes for Jamaican immigrant youth. This comprehensive approach combines positive development outcomes with that of risk behavior that has not been explored with great depth in previous research (Scales, Benson, Leffert & Blyth, 2000).

In its ontology, epistemology and methodology, this research was rooted in the constructivist paradigm. In this approach realities are socially and experientially based. There is a recognition that although some elements of reality are often shared among many individuals and even across cultures, they are “dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the construction” (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). The purpose of this inquiry matches perfectly with the constructivist paradigm in its aim to understand the realities of immigrant youth. According to Guba and Lincoln, (1994) the aim of constructivism is “understanding and reconstruction of the constructions that people (including the inquirer) initially hold, aiming toward consensus but still open to new interpretations as information and sophistication improve” (p. 113).

Research conducted from the standpoint of the constructivist paradigm is value-driven and the relationship between the researcher and the researched cannot be understated. Researchers on the topic note: “research findings are mediated through the values of the researcher and the participants and the importance of the researcher working and being in solidarity with research participants who are oppressed and disadvantaged is emphasized” (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005 p.67).

Understanding the complexity of the issue under study and the multiplicity of factors underlying the research I exercised caution as a researcher in not reducing the

study to singular units of analysis. This is in keeping with Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1989) ecological theory of human development. In this theory he presented a taxonomy of hierarchical ecological systems, moving from the most proximal to the most remote, which influence the developing person. I structured the research keeping this ecological metaphor in mind.

Research Questions

The following four key research questions were used to guide the research approach and assist in the formulation of data collection methods and tool design:

1. What are the factors facilitating and impeding positive outcomes for Jamaican immigrant youth?
2. What role does family, school environment, peers and the wider community play in facilitating positive outcomes for Jamaican immigrant youth?
3. How are the factors facilitating positive outcomes for Jamaican immigrant youth maximized?
4. How are the factors impeding positive outcomes for Jamaican immigrant youth minimized?

Methods

I used qualitative methods in undertaking this study. Data gathering was done through semi-structured interviews with key informants and youth and a focus group with parents. According to Patton (2002), utilizing multiple tools allowed for data source triangulation and the achievement of both breadth and depth of knowledge. Taylor and Botschner (1998) notes that "conclusions reached in spite of the error and biases of these

different perspectives warrant greater confidence than those reached as a result of just one approach.” (p.75)

Key Informant Interviews: The purpose of using key informants in this study was to gain expert insights or perspectives on the issues impacting the lives of Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada. Toward this end I selected five key informants and conducted face-to-face interviews with them. These interviews were used as a means of inductively building the other data gathering methods. The information gathered from key informants helped to frame the questions that were later asked of youth.

Youth Interviews: I conducted ten interviews with youth to allow the voice of Jamaican immigrant youth to significantly inform the study. The basis of this research was to understand the experiences of these youth therefore hearing their stories was critical to the credibility of this qualitative inquiry. Youth interviews were conducted in Waterloo Region and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

Focus Group: As part of the qualitative inquiry I facilitated one focus group with nine parents of Jamaican immigrant youth. The focus group was used as another means of triangulating data sources. Since parents are key stakeholders in issues pertaining to youth, their insights were used to understand the immigration experiences of their children.

Sampling of Participants

Purposive sampling was used in recruiting participants for this study. Patton (2002) argues that the logic and power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information rich cases to study in depth. The sampling criteria used for participants are outlined in table 1.

Table 1: Sampling Criteria

Overarching criteria		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in the study • Willingness to talk about their experiences 		
Key Informants	Youth	Parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience working with Jamaican immigrant youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legally residing in Canada for a period no less than one year and no more than 7 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent of a youth residing in either in the GTA or the Waterloo Region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representing one of three stakeholder groups: -Teacher/Community leader -Service provider -Researcher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residing in either in the GTA or the Waterloo Region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent of a youth between the ages of 16 and 21 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working either in the GTA or the Waterloo Region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between the ages of 16 and 21 years 	

The specific residency requirements for youth participants in the sampling criteria were chosen for two reasons. Firstly, I felt that residency periods less than one year may not have allowed youth to gain sufficient breadth and depth of experience necessary for achieving the purposes of the study. Secondly, the cut off at the upper end was chosen because some of the questions asked of youth required them to compare home and host cultures. Seven years was a safe timeframe to still have a vivid enough memory of home and of experiences in Canada.

Recruitment of Participants

Recruitment of key informants was done through internet and document searches for researchers on the topic and advertising among members of the Jamaican community. Youth participants were recruited through networking with community agencies serving Jamaican immigrant youth in Scarborough, Toronto and Kitchener. In addition I posted flyers at two malls in Scarborough and two malls in the Jane and Finch area inviting interested youth to contact me. The snowballing process was also used in recruitment as

some youth who contacted me also invited their friends to get involved in the study. Through these processes approximately twenty-six youth expressed interest though not all met the sampling criteria. Parent who participated in the focus group were also recruited using the snowballing technique through the informal networks I have with the Jamaican community and through the same community agencies that helped in the recruitment of youth participants.

Description of youth participants

Ten youth were interviewed (5 were males and 5 females). Five of them lived in the GTA and five in Waterloo Region. Table 2 below provides a summary of the variables for youth participants in terms of residency, gender and location.

Table 2: Summary description of youth participants

Years of Residency in Canada	Gender	Location
1 –2	1 male; 1 female	GTA (M); Waterloo Region (F)
3	1 male; 1 female	GTA (F); Waterloo Region (M)
4	1 male; 1 female	GTA (M); Waterloo Region (F)
5	1 male; 1 female	GTA (F); Waterloo Region (M)
5+ -7	1 male; 1 female	GTA (M); Waterloo Region (F)

Of the ten youth participating in the interviews three were children of parents who immigrated under the economic class. The other seven immigrated under the family reunification class. Nine youth were current students; eight attending public school and one attending an alternative school. One youth participant was not enrolled in school at the time of the interview. In addition five youth were employed; two fulltime and three on a part time basis.

In terms of family composition, youth lived in households with biological parents (two parents or single parent), blended families or with extended family members. Of the ten youth participants three resided with both mom, dad and siblings. Four were in single parent homes one with dad only and three with mom only. One youth resided with aunt and uncle and two others resided with dad and stepmother in blended families.

Description of Key Informants

Of the five key informants one was a youth worker associated with an organization serving a wide Caribbean population. The second was a university professor with extensive research experience working with Black youth including Jamaican youth. The third key informant was a religious leader of a large Caribbean serving church with over 65% of the congregation being Jamaicans. The fourth key informant was a youth worker and researcher who worked extensively with Jamaican youth and the fifth key informant was a teacher who is also Jamaican and whose professional and volunteer activities involves a large Jamaican youth focus. Three of the key informants interviewed were males and two females.

Four of the five key informants were immigrants to Canada, three of which were of Jamaican background. All had worked with immigrant youth for a period greater than five years. Of the five interviews conducted, three were done in Toronto (2 researchers, 1 service provider) and 2 in Waterloo Region (1 service provider/leader and 1 teacher).

Description of Focus Group Participants

There were nine parents who participated in this study (seven females and two males). Three were single parents and two lived in blended families (one parent with

child/children join another parent with existing child/children). All parents were residents of the GTA.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Data analysis was done from the theoretical standpoint of grounded theory. In this approach the data gets molded into the codes and categories that represent it as opposed to trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame or my analytic preconceptions (Miles & Huberman, 1987). An inductive analysis of the data was conducted and identified themes were strongly linked to the data (Patton 2002). The analysis of the data was done in three sequential stages: transcription, coding and formulating themes.

Transcription

The first step in the analysis process was transcription. The audio recording of each interview was transcribed verbatim. Fieldnotes made after each interview were also transcribed. With one exception, where interviews were scheduled on the same day, transcription of each interview and fieldnotes was done before conducting the next interview. This on-going transcription strategy allowed me to interact at a deep level in the early stages with the data and to probe more deeply with other participants in areas that were particularly insightful.

Coding

Coding was done as a second stage in the analysis process. Once the interviews were transcribed the transcriptions were read and reread adding notes about non-verbal cues and impressions noted in the fieldnotes (Patton, 2002). With each reading of the transcripts I engaged in the process of making codes noting them in the side margins of each page. I then organized the data in discrete categories that responded to the interview

questions. A partial list of codes was developed which was gradually modified and expanded with new codes derived as I continued with the systematic reading of the transcripts. In subsequent readings of the transcripts some codes were broken down into sub-codes. For example 'accent' was initially coded as language. As I reread the transcripts and codes I recoded 'accent' as a sub-code of 'language'.

Formulating Themes

The third stage in the analysis process was the formulation of themes. The question that guided this stage of the analysis was: "what are the dominant patterns emerging from the data that would give a comprehensive picture of youth's experiences and answer the research questions?" In developing the themes I did a comparative analysis of the codes across individual participants and across stakeholder groups. Codes were then pulled out and clustered based on the number of times they occurred and similarities of the issues they represented. Areas of divergence also existed as I looked for patterns in the data.

Determining what was significant was done following Patton's (2002) guidelines for determining substantive significance. He suggested using some of the following kinds of questions to determine significance: "How solid, coherent, and consistent is the evidence in support of the findings? To what extent and in what ways do the findings increase and deepen understanding of the phenomenon studied? To what extent are the findings consistent with other knowledge? To what extent are the findings useful for some intended purpose?" (p.467).

Ethical Issues

All participants were informed that their participation in this study was voluntary and that they may withdraw at any time without consequence. Each participant signed consent forms in order to participate in the interview and focus group. Separate consent forms were also signed by participants for the interview to be audio taped. Any direct quotations or paraphrasing of participants' comments were made without reference to any identifying characteristics of those participants; participant anonymity was respected at all times. Consent forms emphasized confidentiality and outlined the study and its potential risks. Minimal risks were associated to this study. It was anticipated that participants may recall feelings, both positive and negative, related to the retelling of their experiences as immigrants. As such all participants in the second phase of data collection were provided with a list of counselling resources in their community that they may use in the event they experienced emotional upset as a result of participating in the interview. However, no participants exhibited adverse reactions to the interview during the process. To the contrary a few participants expressed their appreciation for being able to tell their stories and talk about their experiences in a way that they did not feel threatened.

In order to minimize any inconveniences that may have arisen from participation, every effort was made to accommodate participants' preferences regarding time and as much as possible the place of the interviews. For example three interviews took place at participants' homes. Two interviews were conducted in a church while others were conducted in places like a coffee shop or community centre. At the end of the interviews youth participants were given an honorarium for their participation.

Although parental consent was not required for youth since all study participants were 16 years or older, as a means of respecting cultural norms, I verbally requested consent from four parents of youth participants since in the course of recruiting these youth I came in contact with their parents. Other youth participants were recruited through organizations and therefore no contact was made with parents or other family members.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore the factors that facilitate and impede positive outcomes for Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada. Data was collected through ten individual interviews with Jamaican immigrant youth, five key informant interviews and a focus group with nine parents of Jamaican immigrant youth. Through an inductive data analysis process themes were identified and illustrated with quotes. The analysis revealed that there are various factors which facilitate or impede positive outcomes for youth. Recommendations also emerged from the data as to how some of these impeding and facilitating factors may be minimized and maximized for the achievement of greater youth success.

The findings of this study are arranged in two major sections. In the first section the context for framing the Jamaican immigrant youth's experience in Canada is presented. In the second section the findings are arranged using the risk and resiliency ecological framework. In each sphere of the framework (youth, family, peers, school and community), there are two major sub-sections. The first sub-section deals with facilitating and impeding factors to youth's positive outcomes. The second sub-section presents the recommendations for minimizing or maximizing these factors as they emerged from the data.

The Context for Jamaican Immigrant youth

In attempting to understand the experiences of Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada participants felt it was important to frame their experiences in context. Key informants in particular noted that youth outcomes cannot be looked at in a vacuum without giving due regard to the contextual framework in which their experiences and outcomes are

imbedded. This idea, that it is context which brings meaning to experiences, was also latent in the discussions with youth and parents. There were three contextual issues arising out of the findings; historical background, youth and parental expectation and the differences between home and host community.

Historical background

The historical context of Jamaican youth pre-migratory experience was seen as an important factor to consider when looking at post migratory functioning. There were two elements raised in this regard by key informants. Firstly, they talked about the impact of slavery on shaping the personality of the Jamaican youth. Secondly, they talked about the impact of slavery on Jamaican family relationships.

Some key informants suggested that slavery has inculcated in the psyche of the Jamaican people the need to be both aggressive and resilient. Two key informants talked about the fact that the slaves that reached Jamaica had to be the strongest of the lot because they had the longest journey through the slave passage. Survival of the journey given the conditions of the slave trade therefore required extreme amounts of physical and mental fortitude. They suggested that it is this mental fortitude borne in the Jamaican youth which often sets the stage for their functioning as immigrants in Canada.

“This is sometimes why they are seen as aggressive because they understand what it is to struggle and they don’t take foolishness from anyone.” (Key Informant)

In relation to slavery’s impact on Jamaican family relationships some key informants felt that the strategic and systematic separation of family units during the West Indian slave period continues to have an impact on family cohesion. Some informants suggested that the significance of such impact is accentuated in the context of immigration.

“While not much research has been done exploring this issue, there is enough empirical evidence suggesting that slavery has had a huge negative impact on Caribbean family relations which in turn impact youth outcomes.” (Key Informant)

Youth and parental expectations

Parents noted the importance of taking into account the expectations they had for their youth once they came to Canada and how these expectations impacted youth outcomes. Most parents conceded that their motivation for bringing their youth to Canada revolved around their expectations that their children would have greater opportunities for success and would actually achieve greater levels of success than they ever did. For some parents moving to Canada was a way of vicariously living out success through their youth. One father noted:

“I want to give my child the opportunities I did not have growing up. That’s why I moved here, so that my son would have more opportunities to succeed.” (Parent)

Another parent talked about pushing her daughter to succeed both academically and in sports because she felt she needed to rationalize the sacrifice she made by coming to Canada through her daughter’s success.

“I hold her to very high standards; I expect the best of her because she is the reason why we came to Canada. She must succeed or else all of this would have been in vain.” (Parent)

Similarly, youth immigrated to Canada with expectations of what life should be like in Canada. Some youth gave concrete examples of how their immigration experiences were affected by their pre-migratory expectations. Based on all they had heard about Canada combined with the life they lived in Jamaica they built grandiose dreams of what they would be immigrating to. The gap between pre-migratory expectations and the reality youth faced upon landing in Canada seemed to impact their settlement. Managing

their expectations while at the same time accepting the reality of life in Canada proved daunting for some youth and added to the multiplicity of factors they had to deal with as immigrants.

“I thought I was coming to a paradise place...like heaven. It took a lot of time to get used to this reality.” (Youth)

Differences between home and host community

Three factors were raised by participants regarding the differences between home and host country and the impact these differences have on Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada. The differences identified were 1) differences in climatic conditions, 2) differences in spirituality and the role of religion and 3) differences in the type of housing.

Firstly, participants noted the difference climatic changes had on youth adjustment in Canada. Some suggested that issues which seemed normal and mundane for the average Canadian, such as snow, may have a huge impact on the youth who had not experienced it before. Youth in particular noted the challenge of getting used to climatic conditions so diametrically opposed to what they were accustomed to. Regardless of length of residency some youth felt that there was a possibility they may never get used to the climatic change. Furthermore, this was regarded as one of the least desirable features of living in Canada because there was no hope it ever changing.

“When I saw snow for the first time I was really excited. But after a few days of the cold the excitement wore off and I’ve been hating it ever since.” (Youth)

Secondly, participants talked about the differences in spirituality and religion as it is lived out in Canada. Both key informants and youth pointed out the centrality of religion in the Jamaican society and in the life of many Jamaican youth. They also highlighted the

challenges youth may experience in practicing their religious beliefs in Canada as they would in Jamaica.

“In Jamaica religion is a central feature occupying a prominent place in the life of many youth. There is at least one church for every square mile in Jamaica. That alone should tell you how important religion and spirituality is for the average Jamaican.” (Key Informant)

“In Jamaica all we know is Church and school. You come to Canada and suddenly talking about Church and your faith is taboo. As a spiritual person it is hard to live out your faith here. At least you can't do it in the way you would in Jamaica.” (Youth)

The third major difference noted by participants between home and host country was around the issue of housing. Some youth participants found the concept of apartment living to be a strange and vastly different experience from what they were accustomed to in Jamaica. One youth in particular describe his shock and ensuing disappointment when he came to Canada to see his mother living in an apartment.

“I thought we owned the apartment building. I used to go knocking on all the doors asking my mother which one is my room. She used to tell me get in the house; I told her I was in the house so it was kind of confusing” (Youth)

Two youth shared their challenges with having to live in an apartment building. In their cultural context they associated apartment living with poverty and getthoism. Having to now live in this kind of housing was a cause of embarrassment for them.

“In Jamaica we refer to the apartment buildings as tenement yard. Only the people who couldn't afford real housing lived there. To come to Canada and have to live in that kind of situation is embarrassing. I come from a much better life than that.” (Youth)

Factors Facilitating and Impeding Outcomes for Jamaican Immigrant Youth

Based on the interviews of key informants, youth and parents, it was evident that Jamaican immigrant youth faced multiple challenges at various levels of their functioning

in Canada. The findings are organized within the spheres of the youth, family, peers, school and the wider society.

Youth Related Factors

There were several factors identified by study participants as it related to youth. Youth's resiliency and determination was recognized as a facilitating factor. Unrecognized mental health issues and experiencing self as different were highlighted as impeding factors to positive youth outcomes.

Resiliency and determination

Key informants spoke of the resilience and determination Jamaican immigrant youth exhibit as a protective factor in their lives. Some suggested that their cultural historical engagement with slavery, as negative an experience as it was, may have helped to culturally train them to adapt to adverse conditions. Factored in to the immigration experience this resilience and inner determination can work towards their achievement of successful outcomes.

"I think as a people it is our secondhand experience with slavery that has psychologically trained us to beat the odds and triumph in the face of adversity." (Key Informant)

Youth also talked about their resiliency and determination as a protective factor. Some youth noted that the level of success they achieved was based largely on their determination to succeed. One youth in particular noted that although she faced tremendous challenges as a new immigrant to Canada she persevered because her determination to be successful was greater than the hardships she faced. For example she shared:

"When I came here [to Canada] my mom was working two jobs and still we didn't always have everything we needed; even bus fare was a challenge...but

I knew I didn't want to become my mother and so at whatever cost I know I needed to do my best." (Youth)

Unrecognized mental health issues

There was commonality among all participant groups about the challenges, both emotional and psychological, experienced by Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada. Some participants pointed out how the experiences with mental health issues are intensified for Jamaican immigrant youth. Others talked about the various ways mental health issues are expressed.

Key informants felt that partly due to cultural norms, arising mental health issues may be neglected, denied or simply not recognized by Jamaican youth and their parents. It was suggested by three key informants that in the Jamaican culture mental illness is stigmatized and tabooed and to admit that mental health issues may be a challenge somehow reflects failure on the part of that individual or family. Bearing this in mind they noted that in their experience both parents and youth often think it is therefore better to suffer silently and unaided than to bring shame on the family by admitting the challenge and seeking help.

"We come across a lot of Jamaican youth that are suffering from depression and suffering through a mental illness that the family doesn't recognize or the caregiver doesn't recognize. A lot of times it is viewed as they are acting up or they are misbehaving." (Key Informant)

Parents also observed the effects of the Canadian migratory experience on their children in regard to their mental health. Some parents spoke of the effects in terms of their children being depressed and withdrawn to the extent that it affected normal functioning and required specialized treatment. One parent shared how the migratory

experience left her daughter feeling so devastated and hopeless that she felt suiciding was her only way out.

“My daughter became depressed to the point of being suicidal and our relationship changed significantly...she blamed me for taking her away from her friends and family in Jamaica and bringing her here... We’ve been here for six years now and it is only within the last year my daughter has started to regain herself.” (Parent)

Youth also shared about their experiences in dealing with the emotional and psychological aspects associated with the move from Jamaica to Canada. Their responses were not uniform. While some youth internalized their experiences and became depressed or nonchalant, others channelled their emotions outwardly sometimes masking the underlying depression and inner turmoil. Two participants shared how they withdrew from social relationships even with family and their depression became a deeply internal experience.

“I just stopped feeling because to feel meant I would be hurt and I was really tired of the pain.” (Youth)

Other participants shared about not making attempts at reaching out for help to deal with their emotional distress. The findings showed that males in particular were more likely to mask their depression with outward shows of aggression or other self destructive actions. Of the three males who shared their experiences with depression, two told of how they felt they had to hide their depression with acts of machismo.

“I felt there was no way I could let them see me depressed. My mother suspected and the school counselor confirmed it but I just changed my m.o. [mode of operation]. I started smoking, staying out late and just getting into trouble...Now looking back at it I know it wasn’t the smart thing to do but I had to do something and I figured getting into trouble was better than having to see a psychiatrist.” (Youth)

Experiencing self as different

Experiencing self as different was for many youth a significant challenge to their functioning in Canada. Some youth shared that their awareness of their difference came to life since moving to Canada. Two youth noted that being different is not in itself problematic. Where the challenges arose for these youth is in their perception that society had stigmatized them because of their colour and their cultural background. Youth felt that their experiences supported this perception.

“I never really saw myself as different until I moved in to a white world and suddenly realized that I stood out like a sore thumb...it’s one thing to be different it’s a totally other story when your difference is seen as a bad thing. It still is hard to accept that to be black is bad but that’s the Canadian reality for you.” (Youth)

Another way participants engaged in the discourse about experiencing self as different was in highlighting issues of lowered self-esteem. Key informants, in particular who worked with Jamaican immigrant youth, noted that these youth were more likely to “question their abilities.” Parents who were able to see their youth both pre and post migration also felt that they lost their sense of who they were and “questioned their sense of worth.” In general parents and key informants were of the same opinion that Jamaican youth seemed to experience a kind of erosion of their sense of self and their identity once they move into the Canadian society. Some pointed out that this erosion of self was seen in the shifts in their personality from being vivacious and outgoing to being quiet and taking a back seat.

“They seem to be kind of understated, they are not willing to speak up, they lose their sense of self; their self-esteem is compromised...they almost participate in making themselves invisible.” (Key Informant)

“Jamaican culture and Jamaican youth are pretty vivacious they laugh a lot, they’re joyful, they’re upbeat I don’t see that I know that that happens in

Jamaica but I see Jamaican youth who are fairly new immigrants and I don't see that joy in them." (Parent)

Recommendations to address issues in the sphere of youth

There were two recommendations from the findings that could possibly maximize facilitating factors and minimize impeding factors for Jamaican immigrant youth.

Participants recommended that 1) youth develop and maintain personal drive for success and 2) youth not live out the negative expectations of the world around them.

Develop and maintain personal drive

At the individual level, personal drive was the number one factor noted by all study participants. In fact most youth placed the greatest emphasis on their personal ability to transcend the barriers they faced and owned the responsibility to succeed. Similarly, key informants and parents argued that at the foundation of youth success is their personal motivation for wanting it.

"A lot of it is about your own personal drive, if you lack the confidence, lack self esteem or you're a negative type person, you may not achieve." (Youth)

"They have to want to be successful. You can lead a horse to the water but you can't force him to drink." (Parent)

Don't live up to negative expectations

Not living up to negative expectations was the second major recommendation participants shared. Key informants strongly emphasized that despite the negative expectations placed on Jamaican immigrant youth by the society, they did not have to live these out.

"Youth doesn't have to live out stereotypes... one doesn't have to perform to expectations...one doesn't have to respond to low expectations." (Key Informant)

Similar to key informants parents suggested that youth do not have to step in the path that is laid before them but should be able to chart a new course for themselves and in so doing prove society wrong. One parent in particular articulated that despite the tremendous amount of energy and fortitude youth would require to move in a direction opposite to that which society is pushing them, they can do it.

“Youth do not have to fulfill the negative prophecies of society. They have within them what it takes to succeed.” (Parent)

Youth also spoke to this issue. Three youth pointed out that the negative expectations of society expressed toward Jamaican immigrant youth should not determine their actions or outcomes. These youth felt that each individual had the ability to personally decide how they will live their lives despite the pressure of society.

“People can say what they want, but it’s really up to me to decide how I will live. Not because they think I will do bad things mean I have to.” (Youth)

Family Related Factors

There were no facilitating factors identified within the family structure that can facilitate positive outcomes of Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada. Five impeding factors were highlighted by study participants: 1) fragmented families, 2) separation and reunification, 3) disenfranchised and without voice, 4) stressful family relationships and 5) lack of parental involvement.

Fragmented families

The fragmentation of the family structure was discussed as one of the factors that played a key role in impacting the outcomes of Jamaican youth in Canada. There was unanimity among the five key informants about the challenges fragmented families pose

to youth outcomes. Some people suggested that fragmented families compromises the youth's support structure and potentially minimizes the role of the family in the life of the youth. There was a general sense from participants that having intact families may predispose youth to greater levels of success .

“One of the main issues is that the family structure is somewhat fragmented or family has been separated. When this happens we must take into consideration the impact it has on the children in the family and even more so when they are in the immigration situation.” (Key Informant)

“The youth that come in their teen years unless they come into an intact family... they flounder.” (Key Informant)

The impact of fragmented families was also expressed strongly by youth participants. Some youth spoke of the complexity of living in such family relationships. Four youth shared about the paradoxical emotions of being happy to be in Canada and reconnected with a parent yet at the same time experiencing emotions of fear and anxiety concerning their current family situation. Intense anger and, in one instance, hatred for the new members of their family were also expressed.

“It's hard man. More times I don't know what these people want from me...and you know what? More times I really don't care.” (Youth)

“Sometimes I find myself wishing I had a dad” (Youth)

Parents also saw the fragmentation of the family as challenging for youth. Some felt the greatest challenge was helping youth to understand that the choices they made as parents were necessary in making a better life for them. Three parents talked of the utility of their present situation noting that it was the means through which they could make the reunification process happen otherwise separation from their children may have been much longer or indefinite. A few parents also spoke of the ongoing effort required to be effective parents given such fragmented family relationships.

"I love the family I've made for myself here and I equally love my children who are not from here but how do I get them to understand that it's not one or the other. I've tried everything and still they don't get it." (Parent)

Separation and reunification

One of the ways in which key informants discussed the issue of family was in light of reunification and the potential problems attendant with this class of immigration. It was noted that many Jamaican youth immigrated to Canada to live with parents whom they have not had the opportunity to know for a long time. This situation posed significant challenges for youth in terms of adjusting to a new family and its culture. Participants identified a number of issues arising from the separation and reunification processes. The two most strongly spoken of were emotional and psychological disconnection and deep-seated resentment.

Emotional and psychological disconnection

The emotional and psychological disconnection resulting from family separation was highlighted by all participant groups. Although both parents and youth who experienced this process shared about the absent parent's active attempts at maintaining contact through remittances such as food, clothing and money, they also highlighted the challenge of maintaining emotional connectedness. Key informants suggested that many of these youth eventually come to Canada with a great sense of estrangement from the people that are supposed to be family.

"I really didn't have a mother, and by the time I came here I really didn't want one." (Youth)

"The things that really concern me are the young people coming into to families that are not able to serve them because they've been separated for so long." (Key Informant)

Youth spoke further to the emotional and psychological disconnection as a result of the separation and reunification process. Some youth discussed this factor in terms of not knowing parents and the limited or lack of context in which to frame the new family situation. The disconnection youth experienced was also evident in the language they used when talking about their families. There was a clear sense of estrangement and aloofness as some youth described their family relationships.

“It was difficult getting accustomed to these people. I didn’t meet my dad until I was about twelve and so I didn’t have a relationship with him. When I was in Jamaica I know that he was in Canada and that’s pretty much all I knew; I didn’t know his family; I’d never seen them; never met them. The same thing with my step-mom; the same thing with the kids; I didn’t know these people.” (Youth)

“I lived with my mom and grandparents before immigrating to Canada to be with my dad who had been here since I was 2 years old...the transition was very hard because I didn’t know him and I missed my mom and grandparents so much.” (Youth)

Parents also noted the psychological disconnection with their youth. The strongest common factor raised by parents was the difficulties they experienced in communicating with their children. Seven out of nine parents talked about the significant challenges they had with their youth’s manner of communication. Their experiences ranged from dealing with youth who were totally withdrawn and uncommunicative to those whose communication was very intense and verbally destructive. Two parents felt their challenges were severe enough that they needed professional help.

“I left my son in Jamaica at the age of 5 and brought him here at the age of fifteen...I realize that it is really difficult for me and him to communicate. It’s like he’s from Mars and I’m from Venus so it’s hard and we are having a bit of a problem right now.” (Parent)

“As a parent not being with my child for six years I expected some level of detachment. I expected though that we would talk about it. I didn’t expect that

he would totally shut down on me. When he isn't absolutely silent his words are so harsh and explosive." (Parent)

Deep-seated resentment

Deep-seated resentment was another factor identified by participants that often presented as a major impediment for Jamaican immigrant youth. Key informants were particularly keen on this point. They suggested that some of these youth come in to the reunification process harbouring resentment and anger at being left behind. The fact that in some instances the absent parent has gone ahead and created a new family also fuelled anger and resentment for youth.

"Most of them come to fear the issue of reuniting with their parents because they are so resentful that they've been left behind for so long." (Key Informant)

Contending with a new father seemed to be an area of sensitivity for some youth, particularly the males. Of the three males who came in to family relationships with new fathers, two expressed strong negative emotions towards the family relationship in general and towards the new father specifically. These youth shared examples of deliberate efforts at defying the authority of the new father at the same time they conceded that their behaviours contributed to worsening family relationships.

"'im wha treat me like lickle pickney, who 'im think 'im is? Me affi show 'im who ah boss." (Youth)

"I couldn't understand what he's trying to do or say. His rules are like from back in the days...sometimes you don't want to do what they say but you have to because you live in their house." (Youth)

Parents also talked about the anger and resentment they saw in their youth. Two parents in the group were able to identify anger as a challenge with their youth once they separated. They also noted that as the separation process lengthened the anger intensified

and the reunification process did not seem to ease it. Parents agreed that youth who experienced the separation and reunification process exhibited feelings of anger and resentment in varying degrees. It was mentioned by other parents that youth who came as part of an intact family unit also had significant challenges with anger and resentment about being taken away from the friends and culture that they knew and loved. The example most commonly shared by parents was youth rebellion as a means of coping with their feelings.

“Once I left Jamaica I began to feel the pressure from my family to send for my son because he became difficult to deal with. He started hanging with the wrong crowd and as he got older started smoking weed, it’s like my family couldn’t control him.” (Parent)

“When I met my son for the first time at the airport our relationship was cold, I could see the resentment. It was like I took the child from the people he loved, the people he wanted to stay with and I realized it wouldn’t be pretty, it wasn’t going to be easy.” (Parent)

Stressful relationships

Key informants did not speak much to this factor however the experiences shared by parents and youth underscored this as a potential risk factor for youth. A number of parents felt that their family relationships were characterized by high levels of stress. There was consensus among parents that since moving to Canada family tensions were heightened due to many contributing factors like limited or no employment, lack of social supports and networks and increasing demands on the family. They also pointed out that the increased level of stress often between parents has significant impact on their children.

“I know our constant quarrelling affect him. We try to be normal when he’s around but he isn’t dumb, he knows, and you can just see it on him...he’s so sad.” (Parent)

*"I felt guilty as a parent, uprooting my kids and bringing them here, so when they acted out I just showered them with gifts and anything I thought they would want ... Unfortunately, this is now the pattern in our relationship."
(Parent)*

Youth also highlighted the tensions in their family relationships. Four youth spoke to this issue placing a lot of the responsibility for the family tension on parents' failure to adjust to the Canadian system. Two others attributed blame to themselves for some of the family stress. One youth expressed deep burden of guilt, feeling that the only reason her family moved to Canada and is facing the level of stress they are is because they want to make a better life for her. Whether these youth carried the blame for the high levels of stress in the family relationships or delegated it to another source, there was a recognition from each of them that such stress levels were destructive to the family unit and it impacted them negatively as individuals.

"We've been in Canada for four years now and my dad still hasn't found a job. He's so stressed out and he's stressing everybody else out." (Youth)

"I don't know why we came here. Clearly it's not working, my parents never quarreled like this before, every day, I think we should just go back home, it was much better then." (Youth)

Family relationships were further stressed because of the pressure placed on youth to perform. Most parents noted that by virtue of being an immigrant and being black their youth were considered the underclass of Canadian society. They felt that Jamaican immigrant youth have to perform way beyond and above their white counterparts to succeed. Many parents felt that this issue was not well understood by youth. As a result a few parents resorted to placing additional pressure on their youth to out-perform their white colleagues.

"They [Jamaican youth] have to work twice as hard to get half as far in this society and they don't seem to understand that. Do you think their 'white

friends' are going to tell them that? No! I have to make sure they know it."
(Parent)

Disenfranchised and without voice

In the experience of all youth participants the decision to come to Canada was not theirs. In fact they had very little say, if any, in the decision making process. While parents generally felt that the decision was a good one for their children the experiences of their youth felt the decision making process impacted them negatively. For some youth they felt the disenfranchisement began at the pre-migratory stage. They asserted that once they arrived in Canada they continued to be muted when it came to major decisions affecting their lives. Seven out of ten youth felt that they were given limited opportunities by their families to make decisions about their lives.

"My parents keep saying that coming to Canada was the best decision, but best for who? Certainly not for me." (Youth)

"Imagine me ah 17 years an meh cah jus say to me frein dem meh ah go someway. Can you imagine dat? Me affa get permission from my parents, dem affa mek de decision." (Youth)

The experiences of disenfranchisement in the family structure were highlighted primarily by youth who experienced family separation and reunification. Some youth believed that they were less favoured in their new Canadian family structure and two youth questioned whether they really had a place in the family. Youth also talked about their feelings of being scorned and rejected by the Canadian born step siblings.

"They look at me like I'm some piece of leftover. They all think they're better than me." (Youth)

The majority of parents however did not feel that youth were disempowered in the home because of the immigration experience. If anything parents insisted that youth gained in this regard. A few parents spoke of the new power imbalance created by the

Canadian system which they felt places greater stress on rights without placing equal stress on responsibilities. This idea was however challenged by two parents who felt that despite the changing family dynamics parents do not necessarily need to relinquish their parental power because of fear of the system but needed to find more creative ways of parenting.

“Back home children respected their parents; here they speak to you any way they feel like because they know you can’t do anything to them.” (Parent)

Lack of parental involvement

Lack of parental involvement was seen as an important factor by participants in all three research groups. The reason for this lack however, differed between the groups. Key informants in talking about the lack of parental involvement tied it to cultural norms in the Jamaican society. Two informants argued that the Jamaican society supports a hands-off approach by parents particularly as it relates to the education of Jamaica youth. Others suggested that the more collectivistic nature of the Jamaican society afforded parents the ability to be less involved without jeopardizing youth success.

“In Jamaica parents leave education up to the educators in the West Indies the teacher is almost an extension of the parent in Jamaica they want you to succeed.” (Key Informant)

“In the Caribbean there is still this notion that it takes a village to raise a child. So there is that supportive network of people who instinctively become involved in the lives of the youth, whether it be the pastor at church, the teacher in the school or the neighbour down the street. There is more of the looking out for each other and that does not happen here to the same extent.” (Key Informant)

Parents supported the notion that parental involvement in the lives of Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada was lacking. Two parents noted that although they recognized more needed to be done, having to work multiple jobs just to keep the family

surviving negated greater involvement. In the experiences of two other parents enrollment in academic programs to enhance their international qualifications as well as full time employment competed with meaningful involvement in their children's lives. Most parents indicated that prior to coming to Canada they were more involved in the lives of their youth. However, the circumstance arising in Canada particularly around employment and academic upgrading forced them to become less involved.

"I feel right now that I'm in a catch 22 situation. If I don't get more involved they suffer but if I don't work two jobs just for the bare necessities they also suffer. Which one do I sacrifice? It's hard you know." (Parent)

"The impression I get sometimes from people is that we don't know how to be involved with our children. But that's not true. The circumstances right now is what is dictating our actions. It wasn't always like this." (Parent)

Recommendations to address issues in the sphere of the family

Participants largely supported the notion that the role of the family has a significant impact on the outcomes of Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada. Two recommendations were offered for maximizing the positive impact of the family in the lives of these youth: 1) increase family supportiveness and 2) increase parental involvement.

Increase family supportiveness

The findings of this study showed that the impact of strong family ties and support play a vital role in the overall outcomes youth experience. The experiences shared by some youth highlighted the impact supportive family relationships have on positive youth outcomes. Some youth wanted greater levels of parental involvement in their lives. A couple of youth said that parental involvement could have prevented some negative situations in their lives. For example they shared their experiences with the justice system and pointed out that it could have been averted had their parents intervened at some time.

These youth felt that their parents' preoccupation with their own lives did not allow for meaningful involvement.

"My parents were really too caught up in their own stuff to even realize that I was getting into trouble. We really barely ever saw each other except maybe on Sundays but even then they were too busy." (Youth)

There was similarity in the responses of key informants and parents that where supportive family relationships existed there was a reduction in household and individual stress and increased positive outcomes for the family in general and the youth specifically. In particular, key informants suggested that youth outcomes at various ecological levels were positively impacted where they experienced increased levels of family support.

"Where youth experiences supportive family relationships marked by love and respect they are more likely to achieve greater levels of success both at the personal level in terms of their sense of self and personal fulfillment and at the broader level in terms of academic and employment outcomes." (Key Informant)

Parents also suggested that youth outcomes can be improved as a result of youth experiencing supportive family relationships. One parent gave a personal example of seeing significant changes in her son's social and academic performance once she started to be more supportive of his efforts. A few parents suggested that supportive relationships at home may provide the balance in the lives of youth to propel them to succeed despite the harshness they may face in society.

"Our children experience so much negativity and oppression out there. They need to come home to a supportive and loving environment if they are to thrive in this society. We need to make our homes places that our children want to come to. They need to know that no matter what they have parents who will support them." (Parent)

The data analysis showed that most youth expressed the need for greater family support. Some youth highly correlated their outcomes to their sense of feeling supported by their families. More specifically, three youth directly associated their success to the support they received. Conversely, one youth noted that he could have been more successful had he experienced greater family support.

“Had it not been for my family and the way they supported me in everything I do, I don’t think I would have been half as successful as I am today. When I was going through my rough time in school and with my friends, it was my family, particularly my mother, that would always be there for me... and that made a world of difference.” (Youth)

Increase parental involvement

Greater parental involvement in all aspects of the youth’s life was recommended by participants from all three study groups. Youth felt that greater effort was required on the part of their parents in charting the outcomes for their lives. Three youth participants spoke very passionately about the need for parents to be more involved and aware of their youth’s social activities. They felt that if youth were left alone they were more likely to be involved in negative behaviours.

“Make your kids get a job and find something to do. Don’t make them idle, get them to do certain things or volunteer certain places.” (Youth)

“If parents insist things will be better.” (Youth)

The majority of key informants and focus group participants felt that parental involvement was impeded by parents’ general lack of understanding of the Canadian school system and the wider society. Towards this end two suggestions for increased parental involvement were made. Firstly, it was recommended that parents increase their understanding of school expectations for their involvement. Secondly, participants

suggested that parents need to understand the different nature, particularly the more individualistic nature, of the Canadian society.

The suggestion to increase parental knowledge of school expectations was put forward most forcefully by key informants. Most key informants felt that Jamaican immigrant parents still needed to transform their cultural mindset of the educational system being totally responsible for the schooling and academic achievement of their children. They suggested that this culturally scripted notion is not apace with the functioning of the educational system in Canada.

"I think parents need to abandon the idea that the educational system will take care of all the academic needs of the child. That may happen in the Caribbean but it certainly is not the way it works here [in Canada]. The faster parents make that change in thinking and get involved the better the outcomes are for the child." (Key Informant)

Parents also supported the need to facilitate more positive outcomes for their youth by increasing their understanding of the Canadian educational system. Parents noted the difference between the Jamaican and Canadian school systems. There was general consensus among parents that what is expected in the Canadian school system is greater partnership between the school and the parent in determining the academic outcomes of youth.

"We need to educate ourselves so that we can become a part of the partnership required for successful education of our youth." (Parent)

The second suggestion related to increasing parental involvement was the need for parents to understand cultural differences. The general sense was that parental involvement could potentially be limited if they did not understand the cultural context in which they and their youth operated. Key informants suggested that if some of these cultural issues are not addressed within the family youth are more likely to be performing

and achieving at levels below their Canadian counterparts. Three key informants pointed out that the success of Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada depended on families openly facing and discussing these elements of cultural differences which may stymie parental involvement.

“If youth are to be successful these hard issues need to be challenged within families.” (Key Informant)

Parents highlighted two areas of cultural thinking that needs to be addressed. Firstly, the more collectivistic nature of Jamaica as opposed to the individualistic nature of Canada. Three parents agreed that while Canada may be safer than Jamaica in some regards there exists greater opportunity for harm because there is no “looking out for the other.” As one parent said:

“Whereas in Jamaica you could still rely on the community to keep a watchful eye, here it is every man for himself, there is no community and therefore you have to play a much more active role if you want to see you children succeed.” (Parent)

Secondly, parents talked about different ways to discipline their children. Some parents noted that the way children are sometimes disciplined in Jamaica may not be widely accepted in the Canadian culture. An example shared by parents was physical punishment using whips or other instruments which in Canada is in conflict with the law. Both parents and youth also noted the cultural notion of “children being seen and not heard.” It was generally viewed by participants that this practice limits children’s assertiveness and impacts negatively on their confidence.

“What is required is learning new ways to accomplish the same goals; there are many ways to skin a cat.” (Parent)

Peer Related Factors

A limited number of peer related factors emerged from the data. Participants identified supportive peer relationships as a facilitating factor. They also talked about the difficulties experienced by Jamaican immigrant youth in forming meaningful friendships as an impeding factor.

Supportive peer relationships

Three parents noted that the outcomes of their youth were positively impacted by their peer relationships. Two parents thought their youth were adjusting quite well because they befriended youth who were raised with similar values. Another parent who strategically chose to live in the same neighbourhood with extended family felt that her youth benefited tremendously from having his cousins as his best friends. For these parents the negative influence of peers was not so much of an issue. In fact for these three parents they felt their youth were doing well partly because of these supportive peer relationships.

“The good thing about having these friends is that they have this kind of a safety net. If one is going astray the others can always pull him back...and I don't have to worry too much about who they're hanging out with.” (Parent)

Difficulties experienced in forming meaningful friendships

Difficulties in forming meaningful friendships were common to the experience of most youth. Out of the ten youth participants seven shared about the difficulties they encountered in trying to make friends. Key informants gave some insight into why this challenge may exist for some youth. Two key informants talked about how difficult it is for youth to begin again the process of developing friendships in adolescence. They

suggested that engaging in negative peer relationships may be an action by default rather than by design.

“It’s hard for many of these youth to start over again particularly at this stage of development. Essentially what they are required to do is put themselves out there, become vulnerable; admit that they need relationships, in order to make new friends. Often times they end up falling into the wrong crowd because sometimes it’s more a matter of who is willing to accept them than the youth seeking out these types of negative relationship.” (Key informant)

Youth and parents attributed the difficulties in forming meaningful relationships to three factors: 1) lack of trust, 2) ethno-cultural differences and 3) the impact of negative stereotypes.

Lack of trust

Issues of trust emerged as a challenge for many youth. In the early stages of their immigrant experience youth described their eagerness to make the connection with other youth as they tried to fit into their new society. However, time after time the trust they placed in these relationships was broken as they realized that their friendships were relationships of convenience or, as in the case of two youth, pity. In some instances youth experienced deliberate attempts by these friends to harm them. All but two youth at the time of the interview seemed to have given up on the idea of meaningful and mutually beneficial friendships with Canadian youth. One youth described it:

“I thought they were my friends, I really believed it, only to find out that they really did not want to be around me, when in a group they started calling me nigger, chased after me and laughed. I could not believe it; I really thought they were my friends.” (Youth)

Ethno-cultural differences

A number of parents talked about the difficulties their youth experienced in forming meaningful relationships. They however attributed this problem to the fundamental

ethno-cultural difference between Jamaican youth and white youth. They suggested that the value system in the two cultures is tremendously different and ascribed greater worth to the values Jamaican youth are raised with. Values like respect for others and that ability to value the needs of others were felt to be lacking among Canadian youth.

“They are raised differently, their values are so different I don’t want my kids adopting their values.” (Parent)

Parents also suggested that ethno-cultural differences diminished the freedom Jamaican youth had to discuss sensitive issues like racism which may be central to their lives. Some parents pointed out that negotiating meaningful friendships in the face of these relational tensions was a difficult task. For example, one parent noted:

“White kids don’t experience life the way black kids do in a predominantly white society. Back home if something really bothered them and they didn’t want to talk about it with their parents they could talk to a friend but here how do they talk to their “white friends” about racism, something that is so pervasive in their life, they can’t ... I don’t mean to say that white and black kids cannot be friends but certainly racial issues can prevent meaningful relationships” (Parent)

The impact of stereotypes

The stereotypical notion that Jamaicans are notorious was one of the factors that worked both for and against youth when it came to making friends. Although all study participants talked in some way about stereotypes, three parents and one youth spoke specifically to the impact stereotypes had on forming friendships. Three parents talked about their youth remaining on the periphery because they were perceived as being too bad of an influence for the good kids to hang around. On the other hand these parents felt that the youth who were on the fringes of society for other reasons tended to gravitate more towards Jamaican youth because they boosted their image.

“They aren’t really interested in a friendship only in the fact that hanging out with a Jamaican makes them look good. If you’re in the company of a Jamaican suddenly you become untouchable that’s the only reason why they want to be their friends” (Parent)

Friendships based on stereotypes formed the part of the experiences of one youth. He noted that he made friends with relative ease suggesting that it was his “Jamaicaness” that attracted people to him more than anything else. In retrospect however, he conceded that these friendships were short-lived and detrimental to his success.

“Looking back on the people who befriended me I would say that it was not so much about me as a person they were attracted to but to me as a Jamaican. People associate Jamaicans with ‘bad man’ and so to have you as a friend is a good thing for some people...and I played the role well. I was lucky though, I smartened up early enough to know that I needed to cut them off if I wanted to go anywhere in life.” (Youth)

Recommendations to address issues in the sphere of peers

There was one suggestion from the data about how the potentially negative impact of peer relationships might be minimized. Youth and parents talked about youth exercising caution in choosing friends.

Exercise caution in choosing friends

Although many participants talked about “abandoning” or “forgetting about” peer relationships, underlying much of the discussion on the negative impact of peer relationships was the suggestion for youth to exercise caution when choosing their friendships. “Staying away” from negative relationships was the most common suggestion by youth and parents. Four youth and a number of parents linked youth success to the types of friends they had. One youth noted:

“I’d be successful if it wasn’t for some kind of people you know...I need to stay away from certain bunch of people and work my way up.” (Youth)

School Related Factors

The importance of schooling was foundational in the discussion of all study participants. All key informants emphasized the positive correlation between good academic performance and youth success. Parents placed significant emphasis on the educational achievement of their youth and the importance of successfully completing school was noted by most youth participants. In general youth identified the completion of high school as the basis on which they could pursue good paying jobs, further academic pursuits or achieve greater measures of success in society. Some youth tied finishing school to being able to maintain a sense of dignity.

“If you don’t finish school you have nothing man. At least finish school so you can keep your head up.” (Youth)

For youth schooling was the area in which they faced some of their most daunting challenges. Participants identified greater access to resources as a facilitating factor for positive youth outcomes at the school level. There were impeding factors arising from the data analysis: 1) difficulties negotiating school and work, 2) unclear boundaries, 3) challenges with language, 4) low teacher expectation and 5) functioning below their abilities.

Greater access to resources

When talking about how life had changed since immigrating, youth generally noted that going to school in Canada was “easier” than they experienced it in Jamaica. For some the economic hardship they experienced in Jamaica prevented them from always having the textbooks they needed whereas in Canada the texts were provided for them. One youth noted:

“School here is much easier. You don’t have to worry about how you are going to get textbooks or uniform or anything like that. It’s all provided.”
(Youth)

Parents also noted the ease with which student had access to some resources as a facilitating factor for youth success. For example some parents talked about the fact that many schools in Jamaica did not have computer access. There was consensus among parents that the availability of these resources creates great opportunities for youth to be successful.

“The fact that schools provide students with the textbooks they need, computer labs and library services is a huge benefit to youth. These are things most of our youth were not privileged to have back in Jamaica.”
(Parent)

Difficulties negotiating school and work

The concept of working and going to school at the same time was new and challenging for most youth interviewed. Three youth talked about the negative results of their efforts at balancing work and school. One decided to give up school in order to work, the other two gave up work as they tried to optimize performance at school.

“It’s difficult even the work. Kids work while going to school, back in Jamaica we don’t.” (Youth)

Key informants also talked about the difficulties youth experience in negotiating school and work. Most felt however, that finding the balance between work and school is a significant factor for youth success in Canada. One key informant further highlighted the importance of charting a career course while in school as opposed to thinking only about finding a job.

“In Jamaica people gravitate towards jobs as opposed to gravitating towards careers because of what is available. When they come to Canada and they are expected to gravitate towards the career path. They are unsure how to respond so they rely on the school system which fails them in terms of getting

them ready to think to change that mindset of jobs as opposed to careers.”
(Key Informant)

Unclear boundaries

The laxity perceived in the Canadian school system was also new and challenging for many youth. Parents and youth suggested that the rigidity in the educational system they were accustomed to in Jamaica allowed for more clearly defined ways of communicating and being. Some youth expressed their difficulties in functioning within the classroom environment that lacked clearly defined limits of student behaviour and communication.

For example one youth expressed:

“What bothers me is how these students talk back to the teachers. They are so rude, they cuss, I even saw one student spit at a teacher. We could never do that in Jamaica. We’d be gone, expelled, but here there are no consequences. Students do whatever they feel like...we just weren’t brought up that way.”
(Youth)

The challenges of unclear boundaries were echoed in the discussion with parents. Some parents felt that the lack of limits sends a negative message to youth about what is acceptable classroom behaviour and what is not. One parent highlighting this challenge noted:

“In the Jamaican school system kids know where the boundaries are. They know that they respect their teachers, they say good morning or so when they go to class, they aren’t rude and talk back to the teachers... Then they come here and observe certain behaviours and they feel that somehow there are no rules, they can do anything they want, they can tell the teachers anything, they can walk out of class...” (Parent)

Some youth also spoke of getting used to a new set of rules regarding the technical aspects of school. Four youth talked about their initial challenges with getting used to not having to wear uniforms. One youth found the experience to be liberating. Another youth felt however that the ‘uniformless’ system allowed for greater emphasis to be placed on

dress and it detracted from students focus on academics. A few parents expressed similar thoughts, suggesting that the system perpetuated the divide between students from different economic classes and further alienates youth who are facing economic challenges.

“The mental picture I had of Canada was different when I got here...School was totally different. I had to get used to the fact that I had to wear casual clothes to school instead of wearing uniform which I was accustomed to, not pay school fees, not buy my own books, I get the books from the school and different rules that I had to know about school here and know how to talk to people.” (Youth)

“I find that clothes is a major issue for the youth in school. They always have to try to keep up with what’s cool and what’s in style. What happens to the youth who can’t afford to? They end up doing all sorts of crazy things just to get money to be in style. I think that’s unnecessary.” (Parent)

Challenges with language

More than half of the youth who participated in this study identified language as a challenge. Of the ten youth participants six had been enrolled in English as a Second Language programs. The impact of enrollment however was perceived differently among youth. Some youth shared about the positive impact of the ESL program on their language skills. Two youth felt it was in their best interest to formally learn the English since they only spoke patois.

“I didn’t have no choice, I only spoke broken English, I had to take classes to learn to speak it [English] properly.” (Youth)

Three youth interpreted being in ESL classes as a negative experience. They felt that there was no clear reason for being forced into such programs since there was nothing inherently wrong with their command of the language. The issue of language became problematic for these youth when they sensed that they were not being honoured, or their language was not being honoured. One youth felt that being enrolled in the ESL program

was less a problem of his ability to speak English and more the fact that teachers did not understand his accent.

“I did not have a problem with English or writing or anything like that, but they tried to put me in ESL classes. I think because they did not understand my accent ...but that’s their problem not mine, why should I have to pay the price for their problems?” (Youth)

Most key informants pointed out that, in principle, Jamaican youth may not need ESL programs because they come from the English speaking Caribbean. In practice however, they felt that the nuances of the language and accent may present a challenge for these youth. Four of the five key informants made mention of the challenges to communication youth may face because of these cultural idioms and nuances.

“One of the things we hear a lot of is that they need to take ESL classes and a lot of Jamaican parents balk at that because they think we speak English in Jamaica we don’t need ESL. I think somehow there are some language barriers not because they don’t understand the language or they can’t handle English but somehow I think it has to do with social norms and cultural idioms that they don’t know as yet and so their communication might be a little off initially. But I think somehow it translates into a lot of them not doing as well in school as they should.” (Key Informant)

The findings showed however that language was not a major issue for all youth participants. While there were those who experienced great challenges and resulting setbacks, there were others who simply moved through the system without ever having to think about language or the accent associated as a barrier or challenge to their academic pursuits. Three youth noted that while they were aware that their accent was different they were never singled out as needing support to enhance their communication skills or language ability.

“Language was never really a problem for me. In school everybody knew I wasn’t Canadian and so I guess they never expected me to have a Canadian accent or speak like a Canadian. They understood me just fine.” (Youth)

Low teacher expectations

Low teacher expectation was a critical factor raised by all study participants. Key informant generally felt that while all immigrant youth may be exposed to this issue in varying degrees, it is intensified for Jamaican youth. Some key informants suggested that the stereotypical notions of who Jamaicans are and what they are good at, inform teacher expectations. For example, in the stereotypical line of reasoning, academics is not one of the Jamaican youth's strengths. Due to this it was felt that teachers are not likely to raise the bar on excellence for these youth.

"The issue of schooling cuts across the board but it is so intensified for the Jamaican youth. In the school system, when we talk about teachers having low teacher expectations of student, this is a problem that goes for other students but you notice that for these [Jamaican] youth because of the perception that is out there they are viewed in a certain way and therefore the question of low teacher expectation is cut for them in a very different way." (Key Informant)

More than half of the youth participants talked about their experiences of low teacher expectations. Most youth felt that teachers expected them to fail because they were Jamaicans and that there was a greater sense of nonchalance among teachers about Jamaican youth's academic performance in comparison to the performance of other youth.

"It's like they [teachers] don't expect anything from you...you see it in the way they treat you as opposed to how they treat other kids in the class. If I fail it's no big deal because we are Jamaicans we supposed to be dunce." (Youth)

Youth also talked about low teacher expectations in terms of their perceptions of the laxity of the Canadian school system in comparison to the Jamaican school system. Six out of ten youth felt that when compared with the Jamaican school system the Canadian system failed to prepare them for academic excellence. Whereas in Jamaica youth felt

they were pushed and supported to “be their best”, they did not experience the same level of support in Canada.

“School back home makes you more like an academic person than up here [Canada]. They just want you to be the best you can down there [Jamaica]. Up here sometimes, certain teachers, they don’t really want you to do as much. They just want you to do a little job and that’s good for them. Down there [Jamaica], you have to be the best you can to get into certain college or university...up here [Canada], they just settle for anything.” (Youth)

“Back home they would push you to do the work, but here it’s like the teachers don’t really care, all they care about is the money.” (Youth)

More than half of the parents participating in this study also felt that there was much less emphasis on academic excellence in the Canadian school system. In fact they suggested that the educational system “promotes mediocrity” and “suppresses aggressive attempts at excellence” instead labelling such personal drives to excel as negative and excessive competitiveness.

“There just doesn’t seem to be that interest in getting students to excel, or maybe it’s just our youth. There is no attempt to stimulate them or excite them about learning.” (Parent)

“You know I called the school once because I was concerned about my son performing in the 70th percentile, he is normally a high achiever. I was told he was doing great and I should not place any pressure on him to perform. Now since when is mediocre great?” (Parent)

Functioning below their abilities

Participants in all three research groups talked about Jamaican immigrant youth functioning at lower levels in the academic system than they are capable of. Three major reasons were suggested by participants as to why this takes place: 1) failure on the part of the educational system to understand the needs of Jamaican immigrant youth, 2) unwillingness of educators to recognize prior learning and 3) marginalization within the school context.

Key informants in particular suggested that there is a failure on the part of the Canadian school system to understand the needs of Jamaican youth. Most felt that the Canadian education system lacked the competency to understand and deal with the cultural differences and arising needs represented by Jamaican youth. Some noted that this lack of understanding in part leads to youth's disengagement in the academic arena.

"I don't think that there is a lot of cultural competency with the school board or the fellow community to understand the experiences or needs of Jamaican youth." (Key Informant)

"Academically they may be bright but they pretty much have to struggle on their own and show what they are made of. If they are getting any support and understanding it would be from black teachers like myself. But many schools do not have Black teachers. In my school out of a staff of over one hundred we are very fortunate we have three black teachers on staff." (Key Informant)

Youth mostly talked about the failure of the system to recognize their prior learning. In the experiences of the majority of youth participants the Jamaican educational system was far more advanced in terms of their academic readiness and preparedness for academic achievement. Some youth noted that whereas their ages corresponded with the grades they were placed in when they immigrated, they were far more advanced academically. Four youth felt they were only re-learning in the Canadian school systems what they had already learnt in Jamaica and that this forced re-learning led to academic disengagement and lack of motivation to perform.

"I was surprised when I came to Canada because some of the things I started learning... those were things I already passed through when I was there [in Jamaica]... I would go to class and just sit there, bored. Other times I couldn't be bothered so I'd just skip school." (Youth)

"It's like we were one step ahead in Jamaica then we came here and it was totally different...it's a bit slower." (Youth)

Key informants talked about the devaluing of the prior learning and experiences of Jamaican youth once they enter the Canadian school system. Three informants highlighted the link between failure to give due recognition to the prior learning and academic performance. One key informant noted that where this devaluing of learning occurs youth are more likely to have poorer academic outcomes.

“Their education isn’t viewed as valuable and neither is their experiences viewed as valuable... Undoubtedly there are going to be performance issues for these youth and the impact is usually seen in their poor academic performance.” (Key Informant)

Parents raised the issue of marginalization as a reason for youth functioning below their abilities. Some parents expressed that their youth were deliberately set back and discriminated against because they are Jamaicans. A few also youth suggested that their experience of being treated unfairly by teachers in the classroom was because of the racist tendencies of their white teachers. One youth shared his experiences of being disrespected by teachers on the basis of his colour. He noted:

“Certain teachers in the school don’t like us... teachers have the right to disrespect us because we are black and they’re white but when you disrespect the black kids they are going to retaliate more.” (Youth)

Recommendations to address issues in the sphere of the school

There were two suggestions for minimizing potentially impeding factors and maximizing facilitating factors in the sphere of the school. Firstly, participants felt that the composition of staff in the education system need to more accurately reflect the population it serves. Secondly, participants suggested that there is a need for building greater cultural competency among teachers and school officials.

Reflect the population served in the education system

The reflection of the population served in the education system was discussed in two ways. Firstly, some participants felt that the school curriculum needed to be adjusted to incorporate the history of Jamaican and Black Canadians. Two key informants suggested that restructuring the school curriculum in this way would be a step in the right direction. There was also general consensus on this in the parent focus group.

“It’s not that a Black Canadian history does not exist, it just isn’t taught. Jamaicans played a significant role in the history of Canada and that needs to be known so that Jamaican youth can begin to identify with something Canadian. The history of Blacks need to be incorporated into the school curriculum.” (Key Informant)

Secondly, participants also suggested that the face of staff needs to be reflective of the students they serve. While youth were fairly silent on this matter, parents and key informants spoke quite emphatically. They suggested that taking such action would serve to decrease vulnerability and increase a sense of stability in Jamaican and Black youth.

“The absence of Black teachers in the classroom sends a very negative message to Black youth about their capabilities and potential. We desperately need to address the hiring practices of school boards to build up the ratio of Black teacher to Black students.” (Parent)

Build cultural competency among staff

Most participants suggested that more needs to be done in order to understand the needs of Jamaican immigrant youth in the classroom. Three key informants suggested that finding ways of addressing the attitudes and behaviours of teachers and staff to work effectively with youth of different cultures may lead to youth being more engaged and stimulated in the learning process.

“One of the principal elements of engaging immigrant youth is first understanding their needs and then finding ways to meet those needs. Increasing the cultural competency among staff is one strategy that could

significantly benefit these youth. We may see a reversal in the level of disengagement from school which currently exists among Jamaican students.”
(Key informant)

Similarly parents felt that such attempts at “increasing the cultural competency” among school officials was a necessary step in better serving the needs of Jamaican immigrant students. One parent suggested that because the immigrant youth population in Canada is on the rise it becomes even more important for the educational system to address the ways they serve immigrant youth.

“Given the current immigration thrust you would think at the bare minimal the school system... would put measures in place to try to understand and serve youth better.” (Parent)

Society Related Factors

There were several factors at the societal level which impeded or facilitated positive outcomes for Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada. Volunteerism was identified as a protective factor promoting positive outcomes for youth. Three risk factors were highlighted: 1) the negative impact of stereotyping, 2) negative media messaging and 3) the pervasiveness of racism and discrimination.

Volunteerism

Key informants identified volunteerism as a facilitating factor for youth success. Three informants suggested that volunteering helps youth to develop a sense of “community connectedness” and gain the skills and experience necessary for transitioning into the workforce. In fact one key informant felt that volunteering played a critical role in youth finding employment.

“Volunteering is a big issue in Canada if you want to get a job...It also helps to connect youth to their community and really enhance their integration into society.” (Key Informant)

However three key informants noted the failure of many youth to engage in volunteer activities. They suggested that this unwillingness on the part of Jamaican youth to become engaged in volunteer activities only widens the chasm of their disconnectedness from their community. Two key informants linked youth success with their involvement in volunteer activities.

“The youth you give the time to volunteering are often the ones who are successful.” (Key Informant)

“For the Jamaican youth a big part of not getting involved is cultural. But they have to recognize that not participating in volunteer activities is to their own detriment. Volunteering is one way any immigrant can really become connected to their community.” (Key Informant)

The negative impact of stereotyping

All study participants identified negative stereotyping by the wider society as one of the major issues affecting Jamaican immigrant youth more than any other youth grouping. Key informants noted that the existence of these stereotypes as a problem. Although they were quite keen in noting that the issue of stereotyping is the same across the board for black youth in general, they felt it was dissected differently for Jamaican youth given the extent to which such stereotyping is intensified for this grouping. Two key informants argued that whereas other youth may be involved in criminal activities for instance, Jamaican youth are more likely to be criminalized because of who they are. Some key informants felt that attempting to overcome such stereotypes can be a major challenge for any youth because of the tremendous amount of pressure it places on the youth in addition to the fact that there are no built-in safeguards for the youth to deal with it.

“Jamaicans are expected to be roughnecks ... hoodlums and illiterates and society is shocked into disbelief when they encounter a Jamaican youth who does not live up to this picture.” (Key Informant)

“It [stereotypes] puts too much pressure, to much stress on them... and it is further compounded by the fact that there are not enough safeguards and mechanisms in place for them to deal with it. This is one reason why the problem of stereotyping is so huge.” (Key Informant)

There was consensus among youth about their experiences with and the impact of negative stereotyping on them. Eight out of the ten youth interviewed felt that their likelihood of success would be much higher if the Canadian society would give them a chance. Youth felt that the society has predetermined expectations of them and forces them to perform according to these expectations without expending the energy to understand the uniqueness of the individuals.

“They’ve [society] already made up their minds that we won’t do well or that we will only achieve so much and no more.” (Youth)

“They [society] expect you to fit into this box and so they define the space in which you perform and how well you perform.” (Youth)

Parents also talked about the impact of negative stereotyping on youth. Some felt that society has its spoken and unspoken expectations of Jamaican youth to underachieve and follow through with negative behaviours. Two parents talked further about how these diminished societal expectations predisposes Jamaican immigrant youth to poorer outcomes.

“Society sets these youth up to fail because they already have it in their minds that they will amount to no good and therefore they do nothing to promote their success.” (Parent)

Negative media messaging

Many participants felt that the negative media portrayal of Jamaican youth further supports societal perceptions and perpetuates youth’s experiences of being

misunderstood. Some argued that society relies heavily on the media to cast their reality as they know it. The sensationalism of media quite often means it is the acts of crime and violence committed by Jamaican youth which are given media coverage further entrenching the stereotypes the society have already formulated about them.

“Society bases their knowledge on the media, on what they have heard and read...the stereotypes are further perpetuated by the high level of crime attributed to Jamaican youth though in many cases it is youth from other Caribbean backgrounds who are the perpetrators of these crimes.” (Key Informant)

“Anytime you see a Jamaican on TV it is in a negative role. Even the ads that are supposed to be so called promoting Jamaica all they show you is pictures of Rastafarians or somebody smoking a spliff sitting idly on the beach. No wonder they think Jamaicans won't amount to anything.” (Parent)

The pervasiveness of racism and discrimination

Actions taken against youth because of their race and heritage were also challenging for some youth. For some youth the experience was significant enough to be a debilitating factor in their everyday functioning. For example one youth shared how his experience with discrimination limited his choices in the use of public transportation:

“I refuse to take the bus home. If my mom can't pick me up I'd rather walk than have the bus driver look at me like I am a piece of shit.” (Youth)

Some youth talked about being overwhelmed by the newness of experiencing racism. Three youth shared their difficulty in even knowing what to do with the experience. These youth felt they were powerless to act in these situations and the experience incited in them a sense of anger.

“I never know nothing or heard anything about racism until I come here. I never heard anything about racism when I was growing up back home so when I came here it just hit me like that and then that just make me really angry.” (Youth)

Recommendations to address issues in the sphere of the society

Participants talked about several ways in which integration into the Canadian society can be made easier for Jamaican immigrant youth. The suggestions most often mentioned by participants were: 1) make use of positive role models 2) address negative stereotypes and 3) provide cultural specific resources.

Make use of positive role models

A number of participants identified the need for positive role models an important factor to promote positive outcomes for Jamaican youth. One key informant suggested that the presence of role models might serve as a protective factor especially for youth at risk.

“Youth need to see people of their own kind in positions of influence; their absence sends a very negative message to youth about their abilities and capabilities.” (Key Informant)

Youth also mentioned the value of positive role models in helping them achieve success. However, several youth noted that it was easier to find negative role models than the ones who would motivate them to succeed. Some youth cited as an example the overrepresentation of Jamaicans in the judicial system and at the same time their under representation in positions of power and influence.

“Some of the people I hang around take me down the wrong road I need people to help me get somewhere and cut off the ones that ain’t going no where, but the good ones are hard to find.” (Youth)

Reasons for the difficulty in finding positive role models were also given by parents. Two parents suggested that given the ‘whiteness’ of the Canadian society positive black role models are scarce. This argument however, was not supported by other participants. In fact one key informant noted that there is no scarcity in role models. The challenge as

this informant viewed it was more in making the connection between youth and role models.

“There are quite a number of role models...that will bend backwards to encourage and give guidance to young people so they don't fall in the roughs.” (Key Informant)

The role of the existing Jamaican community was highly criticized in this regard. Key informants and youth pointed out that the Jamaican community has a vital role to play in helping newcomer youth integrate into the Canadian society. Some however felt that the Jamaican community did little by way of providing the skills and networks that would help their youth better integrate into the society.

“The Jamaican community that already exists in Canada does not play an active role in integrating newcomers, further promoting feelings of displacement in youth.” (Key Informant)

“When you don't see your own people in the place bigging up themselves it can be a real demotivator. I would love to be with my people but there is no community. I'm always on the lookout, searching trying to make a connection because that is important to me.” (Youth)

Address negative stereotypes

The voices of youth were strongest in highlighting the need to address negative stereotypes. Youth felt that if the wider society would give them a chance they would be successful. Echoed in the responses of youth participants was the notion of treating each youth as a unique individual and abandoning stereotypical notions which confine and disempower them. Specifically one youth noted that treating all Jamaican youth the same because of the negative actions of one is a practice that should be discontinued:

“Try not to stereotype too much you've got to stop that. Treat people as individuals. Not because one Jamaican youth do something bad it's not all of them are like that. Jamaican youth have a harder time because of that stereotype.” (Youth)

Key informants suggested that one of the most meaningful ways of dealing with the negative stereotypes facing Jamaican immigrant youth was through education and greater cross-cultural communication. They pointed out that the larger society was ill-informed about Jamaican youth and that the role of the media may be significant in addressing such stereotypes.

“Our society at large needs to be better informed. There needs to be greater cross-cultural communication addressing issues of stereotypes. The media is probably the best avenue for reversing the typecasting they popularized about Jamaicans.” (Key Informant)

Provide cultural specific resources

Key informants recommended the provision of cultural specific resources as a means of alleviating some of the pressure Jamaican immigrant youth may face in the Canadian society. In particular two key informants suggested providing physical space where youth may feel secure and comfortable to become involved in structured and unstructured activities.

“Youth need a space of their own where they can feel comfortable to participate in extra curricular activities without being under the microscope of the dominant society.” (Key informant)

Further, key informants suggested facilitating activities similar to those youth were accustomed to in Jamaica. For example one informant suggested that cultural community centres host domino tournaments or create greater opportunities for youth soccer. It was suggested that the intent of these measures was to provide a springboard for youth integration into the broader society.

“The aim is not to further isolate Jamaican immigrant youth from the rest of society, but to make them secure enough that they can then successfully transition into the wider society.” (Key informant)

Summary of Findings

The findings showed that Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada are faced with many challenges at multiple levels of functioning. There were both facilitating and impeding factors in Jamaican youth's achievement of positive outcomes. The risk factors for these youth however, greatly outnumbered the protective factors they experienced. At the individual level youth must negotiate the challenges they encountered primarily in relation to their mental health. The findings showed that as a result of their immigration experience and the interplay of factors at the various levels of functioning, youth experienced a range of mental health challenges from issues with self esteem to suicidal ideations and attempts. Resiliency as a protective factor at the individual level seemed to be interwoven throughout the spheres resulting in greater positive outcomes despite the plethora of risk factors.

Family, school, peers and the wider society played a significant role in the lives of youth and in their achievement of positive outcomes. The greatest number of risk factors emerged in the sphere of the family. Youth also seemed most vulnerable in this sphere because there existed no protective factors to mitigate risk at the level of the family. The factors associated with family separation and reunification were major issues for most youth. While there were no protective factors the findings suggested that increasing family supportiveness and parental involvement were critical ways of minimizing these risk factors.

Peer relationships were also problematic for many youth. Generally youth experienced significant challenges in forming meaningful friendships. These difficulties were most commonly attributed to the lack of trust youth had in the underlying

motivations and agendas of their peers in engaging in relationships with them. Ethno-cultural differences and the impact of stereotypes also presented relational tensions that often negated meaningful relationships.

Many participants recognized the opportunities for success afforded to youth through greater access to resources offered in the school system. However, youth also faced a significant number of challenges in this sphere. Low teacher expectations and having to function below their abilities were elements with which youth struggled. The challenges for youth were increased as they had to reorient their cultural notions about working while in school as well as dealing with a less rigid classroom structure than they were accustomed to. Seeing more of themselves reflected through the staff make-up and curriculum were factors that could possibly minimize risk in the school system.

Societal factors undoubtedly influenced the challenges at many of the other spheres of the youth's functioning. The interwovenness of negative stereotypes for instance was seen at the level of youth, peers and the society. Youth's integration into the society through volunteer activities was the only protective factor at this level. However, it was felt that supports like positive role models and providing cultural specific resources may minimize the risk youth face in the society. Table 3 gives a summary description of the findings.

Table 3: Summary of Findings

Protective (facilitating) Factors	Maximizing protective factors	Risk (impeding) Factors	Minimizing risk factors
Youth			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Resiliency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop and maintain personal drive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Unrecognized mental health issues ■ Experiencing self as different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Don't live up to negative expectations
Family			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Separation and reunification ■ Emotional and psychological disconnect ■ Deep-seated resentment ■ Disenfranchisement ■ Stressful relationships ■ Lack of parental involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase family supportiveness ■ Increase parental involvement
Peers			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Supportive peer relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Difficulties experienced in forming meaningful friendships ■ Lack of trust ■ Ethno-cultural differences ■ The impact of stereotypes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Exercise caution in choosing friends
School			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Greater access to resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Difficulties negotiating school and work ■ Unclear boundaries ■ Challenges with language ■ Low teacher expectations ■ Functioning below abilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reflect the population served in the educational system ■ Build cultural competency among staff
Society			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Volunteerism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Negative impact of stereotypes ■ Negative media messaging ■ Pervasiveness of racism and discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Make use of positive role models ■ Address negative stereotypes ■ Provide cultural specific resources

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Achieving positive outcomes as a Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada is not an easy accomplishment. The findings of this study showed that the risk factors for Jamaican immigrant youth in the Canadian society far outweigh the protective factors. There also seemed to be less safeguard mechanisms in place to support these youth in achieving personal, relational, academic and societal success. It was clear that promoting successful outcomes in Jamaican immigrant youth must be embedded in a framework of responsibility both at the individual and the systems levels. Youth's achievement of success at any given level was dependent on outcomes at another. For instance it was clear from the findings that youth's academic success was directly impacted by their own personal sense of well-being, their family interactions and their sense of belongingness to the cultural and wider community.

There were some important insights about the experiences of Jamaican immigrant youth emerging from this exploratory study. The importance of the ecological approach is discussed as one of the key learnings and contribution to theory of this research. The input this study made to the body of knowledge is imbedded in the discussion on comparisons between the findings and literature. My personal reflections of the research process as well as limitations of this study are also presented.

The importance of the ecological perspective

The use of an ecological approach in conducting research has been shown to be important particularly when looking at youth outcomes (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003; Janzen & Ochocka, 2003). This approach takes into consideration the complexity of individuals

and the systems in which they are nested. It recognizes that youth outcomes are influenced by both individual and systemic factors (Seat, 2003).

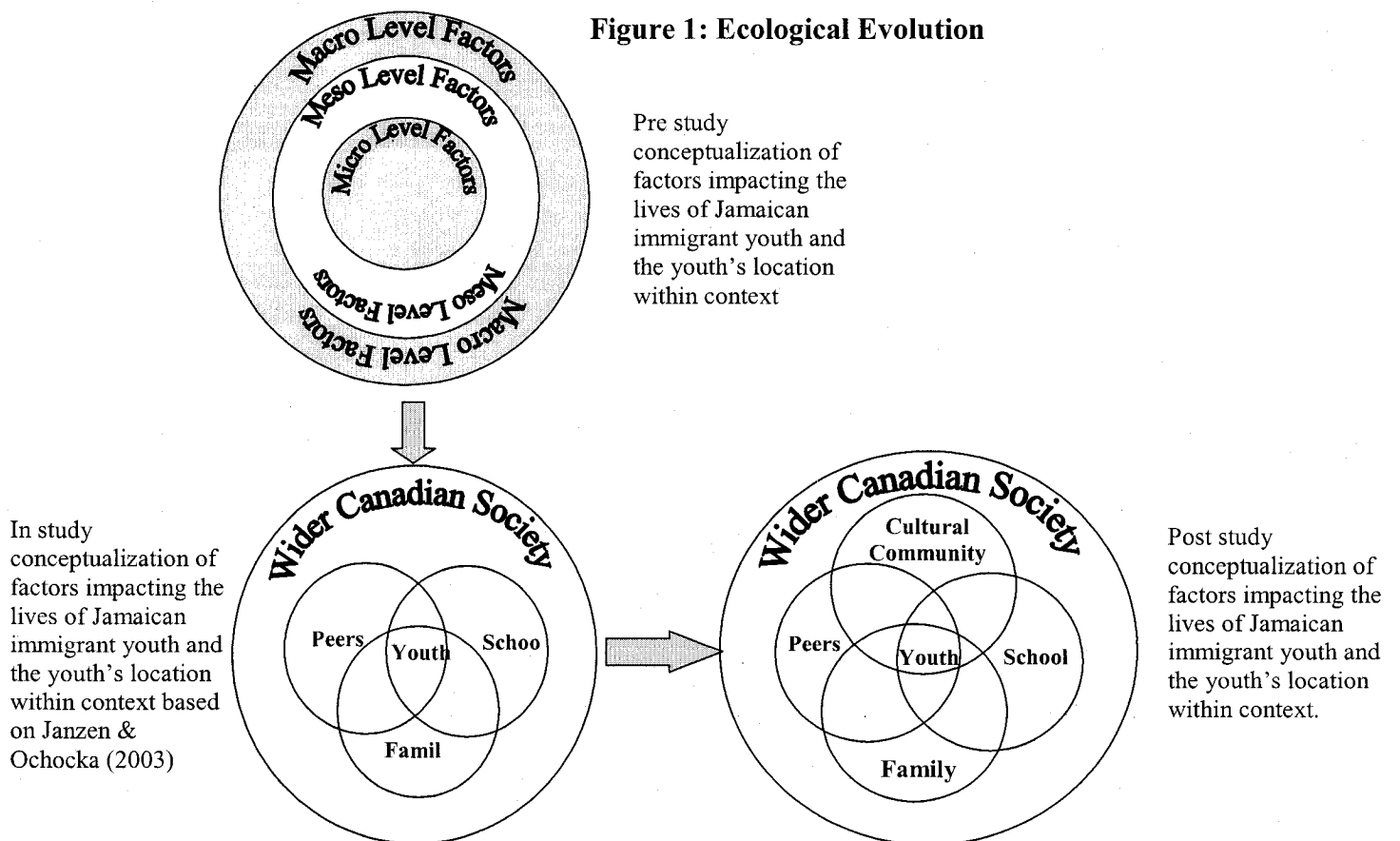
I began this study using the ecological framework as conceptualized by Bronfenbrenner, (1989). This approach considered the ecological systems from the most proximal to the most remote which influence the lives of youth. The structure looked at the various micro, meso and macro factors impacting the lives of immigrant youth.

This hierarchical approach was useful in understanding that the factors influencing youth outcomes are not unidimensional. The data however showed a great level of interplay and interdependence of factors at the various levels. For instance, societal level factors such as stereotypes and discrimination were interwoven into all the other levels of the youth's sphere influencing their actions and reactions at each level. One sphere could not be easily disarticulated from the other. Nearing the end of the data gathering process I became aware of the ecological model presented by Janzen and Ochocka (2003). This model took into consideration the interconnectedness and interwoven nature of the myriad of factors impacting the lives of immigrant youth and seemed more appropriate for reflecting the experiences of study participants. This approach also emphasized the fact that the spheres of youth's influence, i.e. youth, family, peers, school, and the wider society, are not discreet categories, each well contained and uninfluenced by the other. It also supported the findings in showing that there was not homogeneity in youth experiences within these spheres. There was no one experience that was "the" Jamaican immigrant youth experience. For example, although the sense of dislocation and loss experienced by youth was a familiar theme, individual

experiences within the same context were different based on relationality and individual reactions.

The importance of the cultural community in the lives of Jamaican immigrant youth was clearly highlighted in the discourses with study participants. The absence or presence of this community seemed to be a critical factor in how youth negotiated and achieved success. For example some participants linked greater levels of achieving success in the society to greater levels of involvement of the Jamaican community in youth's lives. The impact of the cultural community on the lives of youth suggested adding another sphere to the model. I therefore incorporated the cultural community as a distinct entity from the wider Canadian society (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1: Ecological Evolution



The evolution of the approach, though challenging, was a critical learning experience. The importance of including the cultural community as a distinct entity in the ecological framework when dealing with ethnic minority populations is a key theoretical contribution emerging from this research.

Comparisons between the findings and the literature

This study validated much of the research already done on the factors impacting immigrant minority youth. There was convergence between the findings and the literature on several of the factors that would facilitate youth success. There were also areas of divergence between the literature and the findings highlighting the need for further exploration into some of the issues impacting the lives of Jamaican immigrant youth.

Assuming Rosenthal's (1998) theory is correct in that poorer youth outcomes are positively correlated with high levels of household stress signified by the presence of three or more stressors, then according to the data gathered, Jamaican immigrant youth are more likely to experience poorer outcomes because of the high number of stressors identified in their family life. Youth's experiences told the story of compounded family stress. Parental unemployment or underemployment, the negotiation of a new and different culture, in some instances the dynamics of the family and youth's sense of disenfranchisement all conspired to increase family stress levels. The absence of social networks and supports not only limited families' ability to manage stress but added to the frustration they were already experiencing. The area of departure between the literature and the findings is that some youth, despite such high levels of household stress and multiple risk factors, still achieved positive outcomes like academic success, meaningful family and peer relationships and integration into society. This may be an indication that

the issue is not the number of risk factors youth are exposed to but the value or significance youth attribute to these factors as evidenced through their impact.

Determining the relationship between the existence of risk factors and the extent of their impact on youth outcomes is one of the implications of this study and an area worth further exploration.

Factors associated with “barrel children” were quite significant. The “barrel children” in this study seemed to be faced with added challenges in negotiating the immigration and settlement process than those youth who did not live that experience. Similar to the literature produced by Pottinger and Williams-Brown, (2006) the data in this study showed that reestablishing emotional connectedness was one of the major impeding factors “barrel children” had to contend with.

Unrealistic expectation was another impeding factor associated with the “barrel child” experience in this study. Youth participants who were “barrel children” seemed to express greater unrealistic expectations about life in Canada than other youth participants, particularly as it related to material possessions. Expectations like moving in to “a 12,000 bedroom house” or “getting everything just like that” were common among barrel children. It seemed that while receiving the barrels of goods in Jamaica these youth failed to make the association between the barrels they received and the work it took on their parent’s part to send those barrels. Youth seemed to have made a connection between the barrels they received and the place from which they came. When these unrealistic expectations were met with the reality of life in Canada they impacted negatively on the youth’s functioning and their ability or willingness to settle.

The literature on the topic is also fairly scarce and therefore limits comparisons between the findings and the literature. One of the ways further comparisons can be made however is in relation to socio-economic class. The term “barrel children” in the Caribbean is used in non-complementary ways and is associated with low socio-economic class. The literature showed that youth of low socio-economic class are predisposed to higher risk factors and poorer outcomes (Dooley & Stewart, 2004; Willms, 2003). Socio-economic class therefore may be one of the contributing factors to the increased challenges of “barrel children”. The distinctiveness of some of the issues highlighted in the findings however, is another implication that further research may be useful in exploring their experiences and particular settlement needs.

The class of immigration was an important variable in understanding the needs of Jamaican immigrant youth and the factors affecting their achievement of positive outcomes. Though all immigrant youth participants were faced with some measure of loss through the migratory process those immigrating under the reunification expressed greater needs for support at multiple levels. At the individual level they needed support in managing their expectations and emotional struggles with issues of loss and resentment. At the family level they also needed supports as they attempted to negotiate increased family tensions in part resulting from individual level factors and getting used to new family structures and dynamics.

Consistent with the literature e.g. Gopaul-McNichol, 1993; Lashley, 2000; Shelly-Robinson, 2004, this study showed that separation and reunification within the context of migration profoundly disrupted familial attachment relationships and resulted in emotional problems for many youth. The risk factors associated with reunification

seemed much greater than the protective factors highlighted in some of the literature e.g. Jones, Sharpe & Sogren, 2004; Canadian Council for Refugees, 2004. The findings of this research showed that reunification itself may be a risk factor given the intensity of the negative emotions and dynamics associated with it. However, based on the limited literature on migratory reunification, the impact of reunification on youth outcomes is not well understood.

Familiar themes in diaspora literature emerged among the youth participating in this study. The feeling of being outsiders; being at home and yet not at home (Ahmed, 2000; Kumsa, 2005) were central to the experiences of many youth. Notions of the exilic and the sense of dislocation and disconnectedness were common threads weaved throughout the fabric of youth's experiences from the individual to the societal levels adding to the complexity of youth's experience. The association in the literature with diaspora and forced migration leads one to question the possible reconceptualization of immigrant youth as forced migrants since the decision to migrate is most often a parental decision and not the youth's. How can the experiences of youth migrants inform diaspora literature is another question worth further investigation.

The importance of educational achievement was consistently highlighted by researchers in relation to acquiring social capital and successfully transitioning into adulthood (Halperin, 1998; Sherrod, Haggerty, & Featherman, 1993; Larson, 2000). The findings of this study suggested that Jamaicans place a high utility on the value of education. Parents and youth closely linked success to education. The value placed on education by the Jamaican immigrant youth and their parents may be viewed as one of the factors that would facilitate their achievement of positive academic outcomes. It is

this culturally ascribed value of education which may be in part fostering the drive of these youth to succeed and the presence of which may stymie the risks they face in the academic arena.

Whereas much of the findings about the impact of low teacher expectations were supported in the literature e.g. Howard, 2005; Benner & Mistry, 2007, not all youth who experienced low teacher expectations performed poorly. Some youth responded to low expectation of teachers by attempting to out perform or exceed way above and beyond teacher expectations. Culturally ingrained ideologies of valuing education seemed to have played a more critical role in academic performance than the expectation of teachers.

One of the factors that seem critical to youth success is the collective responsibility of their cultural community. While some researchers suggested that families may have more influence on early adolescent behaviours than peers, dating partners, or community factors because families are the primary socializers of adolescents, (DiClemente et al., 2001) this research provided insights that somewhat deviated from this view. Ideally parents would like to have the greatest influence in the lives of their youth however, the findings showed that for a number of Jamaican immigrant youth, their community; expressed through various forms, and their peers have overriding influence. In some instances the absence of the Jamaican community or minimal role it played in the lives of some youth had as much impact as its presence in the lives of others.

Whether or not the Jamaican community existed in their experiences, youth expressed great affinity to it and they seemed to prefer the separation of the Jamaican community as distinct from the wider Canadian society. This may be attributed to various factors such

as the absence of parents for youth who immigrated under the family reunification class and who had lost that connection with the family they've immigrated to and at the same time lost connection with the family they've emigrated from. For the immigrant youth who experienced estrangement in the family through the immigration process the other spheres of influence seemed to have played a greater role in their lives.

While there was an imbalance between protective and risk factors, the few protective factors which emerged seemed to have carried significant weighting. One of the factors which seemed to play a positive role in the outcomes of Jamaican immigrant youth was resilience. The literature pointed to the need to further understand how resilience is developed and nurtured (Arrington & Wilson 2000; Scott, 2003). The findings seemed to suggest that Jamaican youth's historical cultural engagement with slavery may have contributed to their development of resilience. In this regard resilience may be viewed as being engendered through the cultural environment in which the youth developed. However, the fact that not all youth participants, though they had the same cultural background, displayed the same level of resilience indicates that there is still the need to understand the role culture plays in the development of resilience.

Culture seemed to be a mediating factor in many of the actions and outcomes of Jamaican immigrant youth. For instance the findings suggested that parental involvement, academic achievement, early integration into the workforce and volunteering were all impacted by culturally scripted notions about how and when these should take place. The question of how culture impacts youth outcomes is not prominent in the literary discourses and may warrant further exploration.

From the insights of this study it seemed that both the individual and the collective have significant roles to play if Jamaican immigrant youth in Kitchener and the GTA are to achieve positive outcomes as defined by themselves and the wider society. At the individual level there is a need for Jamaican youth to perform and achieve differently from how they've been acculturated. The data gathered from all perspectives suggested that in order for Jamaican youth to achieve success in these two cities they must develop new ways of thinking and being. However, the actions of the collective greatly impact the outcomes of the individual therefore also requiring adjustments on the part of the family, peers, educational system, cultural community and wider society.

Implications for Action

While the small sample size of this study limits action, it does not preclude it. As part of the contractual agreement of this study the findings will be shared in written summary form with research participants. Undoubtedly, some may wish to address some of the issues raised by this study through their work. There are two areas in particular, which carry significant implications for action. Firstly the importance of the cultural community in the lives of Jamaican immigrant youth and secondly, addressing the needs of "barrel children".

The significance of the cultural community in the lives of youth

Because both the absence and presence of the cultural community played such a critical role in the outcomes of youth, taking this into account when developing strategies for engagement with Jamaican immigrant youth might be useful. The literature supports this notion of giving due regard to the impact of culture and the cultural community (Jurkovic, 2004). The question of how do we engender greater positive involvement of

the Jamaican community in the lives of these youth is one that should occupy program planning agendas of educators and service providers in particular, in activities relating to Jamaican immigrant youth.

Addressing the needs of Jamaican immigrant youth

Some of the experiences and needs of Jamaican immigrant youth were distinctly different or heightened from those of other immigrant youth as seen in the literature. The needs of “barrel children” presented an even greater level of complexity than those of other Jamaican immigrant youth. How then do we address these needs in a way that would increase their likelihood of achieving success? The findings imply that action to address the needs of Jamaican immigrant youth and “barrel children” must involve an awareness of some of the uniqueness of their needs.

Since many youth spend a great proportion of their life in the educational system, it might be incumbent upon schools to take action to deal with some of these needs. For instance, engaging in raising public awareness within the school environment could serve to address issues of negative stereotyping that so adversely affect the outcomes of these youth. Similarly, community agencies serving immigrant youth and other supporters of youth can engage in acts of advocacy with youth against the media to begin to dismantle the destructive media portrayal of Jamaican immigrant youth in the Canadian society. Hearing the voice of these youth and allowing for their voice to meaningfully impact service options might also prove valuable in action planning.

Limitations of the study

One of the limitations of this study was in its sample size. This research was undertaken as an exploratory qualitative study and used a sample which is not

representative of Jamaican youth in Canada. Although saturation point in the data was reached where patterns of recurring themes were emerging, further studies are needed to confirm the themes coming from this small qualitative study before any generalizations or broad scale applications can be made. Additionally only youth between the ages of 16 and 21 were interviewed. The challenges and experiences of younger and older youth would undoubtedly yield greater insight into youth experiences. A combination of a wider age range of participants may give a more comprehensive picture of the experiences of Jamaican immigrant youth. Similarly, this study only interviewed youth in urban cities. Although one of the cities was large and the other small, the perspective of youth in rural cities may reveal other insights useful to a study of this nature.

The approach to this study was another limitation. Participatory action approaches to research with disadvantaged groups are found to be much more useful in giving participants voice (Patton, 2002). Although the study was located in the constructivist paradigm it was neither participatory nor action oriented. Using participatory action approaches would have allowed for greater involvement of youth and the community in the research process and therefore increase the possibility that the findings would be acted upon. Guba and Lincoln, (2005) notes that the inquiry is often “incomplete without action on the part of the participants” (p. 198). Nevertheless the study provides a good snapshot of the experiences of Jamaican immigrant youth in Kitchener and the GTA and a good starting point for further research and action.

Reflections on the research process

Feminist researchers argue for the use of oneself in the research process. Especially with parents I saw the value of being an insider, that is, being Black, being

Caribbean and having a strong link with Jamaica. In recruiting parents, it was very often the discussion of these elements of my personhood that seemed to win their trust. Parents were eager to participate and offered to find additional parents to attend the focus group interview. The fact that I was pursuing higher education somehow seemed akin to a personal achievement for them.

Some youth were not as embracing and approached participation in the study more as a business venture. For example, two youth began by negotiating for an increased honorarium. Youth who were eventually recruited were all agreeable to the process. I was at times surprised at the openness with which youth discussed what seemed to be very sensitive matters. I went in to the process expecting some youth to have reservations about being audio recorded, but even for youth shared intricate details about their personal lives it did not seem to matter that the interviews were recorded.

When I initially proposed this research I indicated that a named transcriber would transcribe the data. After conducting the youth interviews and being cautioned particularly by one youth to “nuh tell nobody dis yuh know,” I decided to personally transcribe all youth and focus group interviews. Although I trusted my transcriber to protect the data, I felt I would be more credible in the eyes of some youth participants if I were the only person working with the information they shared. In retrospect, involving myself in the transcription allowed me very early on to immerse myself in the data which I believe had a positive impact on the analysis.

Reflecting on new insights gained as a result of having conducted this research I must concede that although I lived in Jamaica and studied and worked in the area of psychology with children and youth I did not have quite as good a grasp of the “barrel

children” phenomena as I thought I did. Where my personal conceptualization was lacking was in regard to the impact of this state of living on the young person once they left Jamaica. Conducting this research gave me a glimpse into the other world of the youth who was a barrel child.

APPENDIX A

INVITATION LETTER TO KEY INFORMANTS

Hello...

My name is Kathy Hogarth, I am a graduate student at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo. I am looking for individuals such as you who have extensive experience working with Jamaican immigrant youth to help me with a project as part of my degree requirements. The goal of this project is to understanding the lived experience of Jamaican Immigrant youth in Canada. I think that the data collected from such a research may provide meaningful insights in attempting to meet the needs of Jamaican youth in Canada. Also given the fact that limited attempts has been made to explore the experiences of Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada the data gathered from this study can significantly benefit research in this area.

This research will comprise of 10 in-depth interviews with Jamaican immigrant youth, a focus group with parents of Jamaican immigrant youth and 6 key informant interviews with individuals who have direct and indirect experience with Jamaican youth. Findings of the research will be utilized in a number of ways including journal articles for scholarly publications and briefs and summaries tailored to specific audiences.

Your participation in the study is very important. As a key informant you will have the opportunity to share your experiences, to voice your concerns and propose ideas that can be beneficial to immigrant youth in Canada. Your ideas, thoughts and insights will contribute extensively to the body of knowledge regarding immigrant youth and the information you provide will help in constructing the interview schedule for youth interviews and the parent focus group.

Should you agree to participate the interview will take approximately 60 –75 minutes and will include discussion around 7 or 8 questions regarding your perspective on and experiences with Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada. There will also be a face sheet to gather socio-demographic information such as your type of employment, years of serving this specific youth population etc. Your participation is voluntary, and if you agree to participate you have the right to refuse to answer any questions and you can end the conversation at any time.

It is possible that you might find it difficult to talk about your experiences with or perspectives on Jamaican immigrant youth. Your participation is voluntary, and if you agree to participate you have the right to refuse to answer any questions or you may discontinue your involvement in this study at any time. If you choose to withdraw, any information you provided will be destroyed immediately. I will give you a list of counselling resources in your community that you can refer to in the event that you experience emotional upset as a result of your participation in this interview. In order to minimize any inconveniences that may arise from participation, every effort will be made to accommodate your preferences regarding time and place of the interviews.

Any personal information that is obtained about you during the course of this study (from the interview as well as the Face Sheet) will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will not appear in any reports (published or unpublished) as a result of this study. If any quotations from you will be used you will be able to vet these before they are published. You may also participate without being quoted. In the event that any identifying information (i.e. names of parent/guardian, teachers, school, etc.) is revealed during the interview, this information will be omitted from the transcript. My thesis supervisor and the transcriber will also have access to the information you provide but they are similarly bound by this confidentiality agreement. All data collected will be stored in a secured location. Once the study is completed audiotapes, face sheets and transcription will be destroyed (face sheets, consent and transcription by shredding and audio tapes will be erased before disposal). I will provide you with a short summary of the research

Experiences of Jamaican Immigrant Youth

results when I complete the study in Fall of 2005.

Please feel free to ask any questions at any time before, during or after the study. You may call me at (519) 884-0710 ext. 2236 or call my thesis supervisor, Dr. Joanna Ochocka at (519) 741-1318. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant please contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Board of the Wilfrid Laurier University, Dr. Bill Marr at (519) 884-0710, extension 2468.

Thank you for taking the time to consider your involvement with this project. If you would like to participate or have any questions please feel free to contact me. I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

.....
Kathy Hogarth, Principal Investigator
Community Psychology Program
Wilfrid Laurier University
Phone: (519) 884-0710 ext.2236
Email: hoga1930@wlu.ca.

APPENDIX B
WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY
KEY INFORMANT CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project:

Understanding the Experiences of Jamaican Immigrant Youth in Canada

Investigator(s):

Principal Investigator: Kathy Hogarth

(519) 884-0710 Ext. 2236

Advisor:

Joanna Ochocka

(519) 741-1318

Before you consent to be part of this research study, please take the time to carefully read and consider the following information that describes the purpose, the possible benefits, and other information about the study.

Purpose of the Research:

The purpose of this study is to explore the factors that promote and impede positive outcomes for Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada. Using multiple data sources the aim is to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences of this immigrant group. This study will use 10 one-on-one in-depth interviews with youth, a focus group with parents and 6 key informant interviews with other stakeholders (teachers, community agency personnel) regarding their perspectives on the experiences of Jamaican immigrant youth.

Description of the Research:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will meet one-on-one with a researcher for an interview to discuss your perspective on Jamaican immigrant youth to Canada. The interview will last approximately 60 - 75 minutes. As part of the interview you will also be asked to fill out a Face Sheet. This socio-demographic survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Because we would like to audio record the interview, we request that you complete an additional consent form before proceeding with the interview.

Potential Harms, Injuries, Discomforts or Inconveniences:

There may be minimal risk that you will find it difficult to talk about your experiences/perspectives of immigration. You will be provided with a list of counselling resources in your community that you can refer to should you experience emotional upset as a result of your participation in this interview. In order to minimize any inconveniences that may arise from participation, every effort will be made to accommodate your preferences regarding time of the interviews. We will also ensure that there is no cost to you.

Potential Benefits:

You may not benefit directly from this study. However, your insights may be used to assist in designing the interview tools for youth participants and the parent focus group and will benefit research in this area.

Confidentiality:

Confidentiality will be respected and no information that discloses the identity of the subject will be released or published without consent unless required by law. This legal obligation includes a number of circumstances, such as suspected child abuse, expression of suicidal ideas, where research documents are ordered to be produced by a court of law and where researchers are obliged to report to the appropriate authorities.

Any information that is obtained about you during the course of this study (from the interview as well as the Face Sheet) will be kept strictly confidential unless release is required by law. Any research data obtained in this study will not identify you by name, only by a coded number. Your name will not appear in any reports (published or unpublished) as a result of this study. If any quotations from you will be used you will be able to vet these before they are published. You may participate without being quoted. In the event that any identifying information (i.e. names of parent/guardian, teachers, school, etc.) is revealed during the interview, this information will be omitted from the transcript. All data collected will be stored in a secured location. Once the study is completed audiotapes, face sheets and transcription will be destroyed (face sheets, consent and transcription by shredding and audio tapes will be erased before disposal).

Participation:

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed. You have the right to omit any question(s) you choose.

Consent :

By signing this form, I agree that:

- 1) *The study has been explained to me. All my questions were answered.*
- 2) *The possible harms and discomforts and the possible benefits (if any) of this study have been explained to me.*
- 3) *I know about the alternatives to taking part in this study. I understand that I have the right not to participate and the right to stop at any time.*
- 4) *I am free now, and in the future, to ask any questions about the study.*
- 5) *I have been told that all research information will be kept confidential, except where release of information is required by law, e.g., suspected child abuse.*
- 6) *I understand that no information that would identify me, will be released or printed.*
- 7) *In addition to Kathy Hogarth (principal investigator), Joanna Ochocka (thesis supervisor) and Bessie Schenk (transcriber) will have access to the information I provide in this interview.*

I hereby consent to participate.

Name of Participant

Signature

Investigator's Signature

Date

- I give permission for quotations to be used from the information I provide
- I do not give permission for quotations to be used from the information I provide

Name of Participant

Signature

For answers to questions about research subjects' rights and research-related injury, please contact Dr. Bill Marr, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-0710, extension 2468.

APPENDIX C

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY
AUDIO RECORDING CONSENT FORM
REQUEST FOR SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

Title of Research Project:

Understanding the Experiences of Jamaican Immigrant Youth in Canada

Investigator(s):

Principal Investigator: Kathy Hogarth

(519) 884-0710 Ext. 2236

Advisor: Joanna Ochocka

(519) 741-1318

You may contact both of these at anytime during this research.

I hereby consent to the use of an audio recorder during participation in this research project. There will be no identifying information on these recorders and the audio files containing my interview will be destroyed or erased following transcription. I understand that I am free not to participate in this study and that if I agree to participate I am free to withdraw from this study at any time.

Name of Participant

Signature and Date

Name of Investigator

Signature and Date

I understand that a short summary of the research results will be available to me at the end of this study in the Fall of 2005. I would like to receive this summary ___ Yes ___ No

If yes, please indicate a mailing address and/or email address to which this summary can be sent:

Name: _____ Organization (if applicable): _____

Street Address: _____ City: _____

Province: _____ Postal Code: _____ Email: _____

For answers to questions about research subjects' rights and research-related injury, please contact Dr. Bill Marr, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-0710, extension 2468.

APPENDIX D

Interview Schedule for Key Informants

Guideline Questions

1. **What are the main issues facing Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada that would differentiate them from any other immigrant youth grouping?**
2. **a) What are the indicators or signals that would tell us someone is successful as a Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada?**
b) What are the indicators or signals that would tell us someone is not successful as a Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada?
3. **a) What are the factors that help in promoting successful outcomes in Jamaican immigrant youth? (*probe at ecological levels*)**
b) In your experience, what percentage of Jamaican immigrant youth is successful or not successful in achieving positive outcomes?
4. **What preventing and facilitating mechanisms need to be in place to support Jamaican immigrant youth in achieving positive outcomes?**
5. **Do you have anything else you would like to say/add?**

APPENDIX E

IN NEED OF

Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada

- Are you a Jamaican youth between the age of 16 and 21?
- Have you immigrated to Canada within the last 7 years?
- Do you currently live in the Greater Toronto Area?
- Would you like to share your experience as an immigrant youth in Canada and be remunerated for doing so?

If you answer yes to all of the above questions you may be able to help us understand the experiences of Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada and we would like to talk with you.

To make an appointment for an interview or to learn more about this research project please call Mr. LaRose at the Jane Finch Concerned Citizen Organization (416) 880-2870 or email Kathy at hoga1930@wlu.ca

Email: hoga1930@wlu.ca Ph: Mr. LaRose (416) 880-2870
Email: hoga1930@wlu.ca Ph: Mr. LaRose (416) 880-2870
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Email: hoga1930@wlu.ca Ph: Mr. LaRose (416) 880-2870

APPENDIX F

INVITATION LETTER TO YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

Hello...

My name is Kathy Hogarth, I am a graduate student at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo. I am looking for Jamaican immigrant youth such as you to help me with a project as part of my degree requirements. The goal of this project is to understanding the lived experience of Jamaican Immigrant youth in Canada. I think that the data collected from such a research may provide meaningful insights in attempting to meet the needs of Jamaican youth in Canada. Also given the fact that limited attempts has been made to explore the experiences of Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada the data gathered from this study can significantly benefit research in this area.

This research will comprise of 10 in-depth interviews with Jamaican immigrant youth, a focus group with parents of Jamaican immigrant youth and 6 key informant interviews with individuals who have direct and indirect experience with Jamaican youth. Findings of the research will be utilized in a number of ways including journal articles for scholarly publications and briefs and summaries tailored to specific audiences

Interviews will take approximately 45 minutes and will include discussion around 7 or 8 questions regarding your experiences as an immigrant youth in Canada. There will also be a face sheet used to gather socio-demographic information such as your age, family composition, type of school you attend etc.

Your participation in the study is very important. As a person you will have the opportunity to share your experiences, to voice your concerns and propose ideas that can be beneficial to other immigrant youth in Canada. Your ideas, thoughts and insights will contribute extensively to the body of knowledge regarding immigrant youth. If you decide to participate in the interview you will also be paid \$15.00.

It might be possible that sharing your experiences as an immigrant youth in Canada may cause some emotional discomfort. Your participation is voluntary, and if you agree to participate you have the right to refuse to answer any questions or you may discontinue your involvement in this study at any time. If you choose to withdraw, any information you provided will be destroyed immediately. I will give you a list of counselling resources in your community that you can refer to in the event that you experience emotional upset as a result of your participation in this interview. In order to minimize any inconveniences that may arise from participation, every effort will be made to accommodate your preferences regarding time of the interview. The interview will take place at a location that we mutually agree on. I will also ensure that there is no cost to you.

Any information that is obtained about you during the course of this study (from the interview as well as the Face Sheet) will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will not appear in any reports (published or unpublished) as a result of this study. If any quotations from you will be used you will be able to vet these before they are published. You may also participate without being quoted. In the event that any identifying information (i.e. names of parent/guardian, teachers, school, etc.) is revealed during the interview, this information will be omitted from the transcript. My thesis supervisor and the transcriber will also have access to the information you provide but they are similarly bound by this confidentiality agreement. All data collected will be stored in a secured location. Once the study is completed audiotapes, face sheets and transcription will be destroyed (face sheets, consent and transcription by shredding and audio tapes will be erased before disposal). I will provide you with a short summary of the research results when I complete the study in Fall of 2005.

Experiences of Jamaican Immigrant Youth

Please feel free to ask any questions at any time before, during or after the study. You may call me at (519) 741-1318 ext. 231 or call my thesis supervisor, Dr. Joanna Ochocka at (519) 741-1318. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant please contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Board of the Wilfrid Laurier University, Dr. Bill Marr at (519) 884-0710, extension 2468.

Thank you for taking the time to consider your involvement with this project. If you would like to participate or have any questions please feel free to contact me. I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

.....
Kathy Hogarth, Principal Investigator
Community Psychology Program
Wilfrid Laurier University
Phone: (519) 741-1318 ext.231
Email: hoga1930@wlu.ca

APPENDIX G
WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY
YOUTH CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project:

Understanding the Lived Experiences of Jamaican Immigrant Youth in Canada

Investigator(s):

Principal Investigator: Kathy Hogarth

(519) 884-0710 Ext. 2236

Advisor:

Joanna Ochocka

(519) 741-1318

Before you consent to be part of this research study, please take the time to carefully read and consider the following information that describes the purpose, the possible benefits, and other information about the study.

Purpose of the Research:

The purpose of this study is to explore the factors that promote and impede positive outcomes for Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada. Using multiple data sources the aim is to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences of this immigrant group. This study will use 10 one-on-one in-depth interviews with youth, a focus group with parents and 6 key informant interviews with other stakeholders (teachers, community agency personnel) regarding their perspectives on the experiences of Jamaican immigrant youth.

Description of the Research:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will meet one-on-one with a researcher for an interview to discuss your experience as an immigrant to Canada. The interview will take approximately 60 –75 minutes and will include discussion around 7 or 8 questions regarding your experiences as an immigrant youth in Canada. As part of the interview you will also be asked to fill out a Face Sheet. This socio-demographic survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete and will gather information such as your age, family composition, type of school you attend etc. Because we would like to audio record the interview, we request that you complete an additional consent form before proceeding with the interview.

Potential Harms, Injuries, Discomforts or Inconveniences:

There may be minimal risk that you will find it difficult to talk about your experiences/perspectives of immigration. You will be provided with a list of counselling resources in your community that you can refer to should you experience emotional upset as a result of your participation in this interview. In order to minimize any inconveniences that may arise from participation, every effort will be made to accommodate your preferences regarding time of the interviews. We will also ensure that there is no cost to you.

Potential Benefits:

You may not benefit directly from this study. However, your insights will be summarized and provided to you to understand immigrant youth experiences in Canada. In addition the responses you give would benefit research in this area. You will also be paid \$15.00

Confidentiality:

Confidentiality will be respected and no information that discloses your identity will be released or published without consent unless required by law. This legal obligation includes a number of circumstances, such as suspected child abuse, expression of suicidal ideas, where research documents are ordered to be produced by a court of law and where researchers are obliged to report to the appropriate authorities. Any information that is obtained about you during the course of this study (from the interview as well as the Face Sheet) will be kept strictly confidential unless release is required by law. Any research

data obtained in this study will not identify you by name, only by a coded number. This confidentiality agreement extends to the individual who will be transcribing the data and my research advisor. The information you provide may be used in several publications including journal articles and executive summary bulletins, tailored to specific audiences e.g., educational institutions, service providers and community members. Your name however, will not appear in any reports (published or unpublished) as a result of this study. If any quotations from you will be used you will be able to vet these before they are published. You may participate without being quoted. In the event that any identifying information (i.e. names of parent/guardian, teachers, school, etc.) is revealed during the interview, this information will be omitted from the transcript. All data collected will be stored in a secured location. Once the study is completed audiotapes, face sheets and transcription will be destroyed (face sheets, consent and transcription by shredding and audio tapes will be erased before disposal).

Honorarium:

You will be given a \$15 honorarium to recognize the time you took to participate in this study.

Participation:

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed. You have the right to omit any question(s) you choose. At anytime please feel free to ask questions that may serve to clarify any issue relating to this study.

Consent :

By signing this form, I agree that:

- 1) *The study has been explained to me. All my questions were answered.*
- 2) *The possible harms and discomforts and the possible benefits (if any) of this study have been explained to me.*
- 3) *I know about the alternatives to taking part in this study. I understand that I have the right not to participate and the right to stop at any time.*
- 4) *I am free now, and in the future, to ask any questions about the study.*
- 5) *I have been told that all research information will be kept confidential, except where release of information is required by law, e.g., suspected child abuse.*
- 6) *I understand that no information that would identify me, will be released or printed.*
- 7) *In addition to Kathy Hogarth (principal investigator), Joanna Ochocka (thesis supervisor) and Bessie Schenk (transcriber) will have access to the information I provide in this interview.*

I hereby consent to participate.

Name of Participant

Signature

Investigator's Signature

Date

- I give permission for quotations to be used from the information I provide
- I do not give permission for quotations to be used from the information I provide

Name of Participant

Signature

APPENDIX H

Interview Schedule for Jamaican Immigrant Youth

Guideline Questions

- 1). What are the main issues you face as a Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada?**
 - a. Have you experienced any challenges with the language used in Canada?
 - b. Have you experienced any challenges in the way people react to you?
 - c. Has family relations changed as a result of immigration?
 - d. Have you experienced any challenges with the Canadian school system?

- 2). Tell me about your life in Jamaica before immigrating to Canada in terms of:**
 - a. School
 - b. Family relations
 - c. Peers
 - d. The wider community

- 3). How has life changed since you've immigrated in terms of:**
 - a. School
 - b. Family relations
 - c. Peers
 - d. The wider community

- 4). What does success mean for you?**

- 5). What factors do you think would help you in being a successful youth in Canada?**

- 6). What in your experience are the barriers that would challenge your success in Canada?**

- 7). What advice would you give to other Jamaican youth who have immigrated to Canada?**

8). What advice would you give to parents of Jamaican youth who have immigrated to Canada?

8). What advice would you give to others who work with Jamaican youth in Canada?

9). Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience as an immigrant youth in Canada?

APPENDIX I

DEMOGRAPHIC SHEET FOR INDIVIDUAL YOUTH INTERVIEWS

Participant Identification Number: _____
Interview Site: _____
Date of Interview: _____

1. What is the name of the city, town where you live? _____
2. How long have you lived here? _____
3. What is your current status _____ employed _____ unemployed _____ student
4. *If student*, which school are you currently attending? _____
5. Is this a ___ public school? ___ Catholic school? ___ private school?
___ other? (specify _____)
6. In what city/town is this school located? _____
7. What was the last grade that you completed? _____
8. Do you live at home with either one, or both, of your parents/guardians? ___ Yes ___ No
If yes, please indicate the members of your household (and how many): _____
9. If you do not live at home with parents/guardians, with whom do you live? _____
10. How old are you now? _____
11. With which gender do you identify? ___ male ___ female ___ other (specify: _____)
12. In what year did **you** first come to Canada? _____
 - a. How old were you when you first arrived? ___ (if unsure, give approximate age)
 - b. Did you arrive:
_____ together with other family members
_____ separately to join family members already in Canada
_____ together with family member(s) to join family already in Canada
_____ on your own
13. What is your current immigration status?
___ naturalized citizen

Experiences of Jamaican Immigrant Youth

- landed immigrant (i.e. permanent resident under the Immigration Act, 1976)
- visa student under the Immigration Act, 1976 (Canada)
- in Canada on the authority of another visa under the Immigration Act, 1976
- other; please specify _____

14. *For some people, religion may be an important part of their ethnicity or culture, while for others it is not.* What is your religion, if any? _____

15. Using a scale of 1 to 5 - where 1 is not important at all and 5 is very important - how important is your religion to you?

- 1 – not very important
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 – very important
- refused
- don't know

APPENDIX J
WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY
FOCUS GROUP CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project:

Understanding the Experiences of Jamaican Immigrant Youth in Canada

Investigator(s):

Principal Investigator: Kathy Hogarth (519) 884-0710 Ext. 2236
Advisor: Joanna Ochocka (519) 741-1318

Before you consent to be part of this research study, please take the time to carefully read and consider the following information that describes the purpose, the possible benefits, and other information about the study.

Purpose of the Research:

The purpose of this study is to explore the factors that promote and impede positive outcomes for Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada. Using multiple data sources the aim is to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences of this immigrant group. This study will use 10 one-on-one in-depth interviews with youth, a focus group with parents and 6 key informant interviews with other stakeholders (teachers, community agency personnel) regarding their perspectives on the experiences of Jamaican immigrant youth.

Description of the Research:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will meet with a researcher and approximately 8-10 other parents for a group interview to discuss your perspective on Jamaican immigrant youth to Canada. This interview will last approximately 75 minutes. As a part of the interview you will be asked to fill out a Face Sheet. This socio-demographic survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Because we would like to audio record the interview, a separate consent form will need to be completed.

Potential Harms, Injuries, Discomforts or Inconveniences:

There may be minimal risk that you will find it difficult to talk about your experiences/perspectives of immigration. You will be provided with a list of counselling resources in your community that you may refer to should you experience emotional upset as a result of your participation in this interview. In order to minimize any inconveniences that may arise from participation, every effort will be made to accommodate your preferences regarding the time of the interview. We will also ensure that there is no cost to you.

Potential Benefits:

You may not benefit directly from this study. However, your insights will be summarized and provided to you to assist in your understanding of Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada. In addition the responses you give would benefit research in this area.

Confidentiality:

Confidentiality will be respected and no information that discloses the identity of the subject will be released or published without consent unless required by law. This legal obligation includes a number of circumstances, such as suspected child abuse, expression of suicidal ideas, where research documents are ordered to be produced by a court of law and where researchers are obliged to report to the appropriate authorities.

Any information that is obtained about you during the course of this study (from the interview as well as the Face Sheet) will be kept strictly confidential unless release is required by law. Any research data obtained in this study will not identify you by name, only by a coded number. Your name will not appear in any reports (published or unpublished) as a result of this study. If any quotations from you will be used you will be able to vet these before they are published. You may participate without being quoted. In the event that any identifying information is revealed during the interview, this information will be omitted from the transcript. All data collected will be stored in a secured location. Once the study is completed audiotapes, face sheets and transcription will be destroyed. There are however limitations to this confidentiality agreement. We cannot assure the confidentiality of group members although we request that focus group members keep the responses of other individuals confidential.

Participation:

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed. You have the right to omit any question(s) you choose.

Consent :

By signing this form, I agree that:

- 1) *The study has been explained to me. All my questions were answered.*
- 2) *The possible harms and discomforts and the possible benefits (if any) of this study have been explained to me.*
- 3) *I know about the alternatives to taking part in this study. I understand that I have the right not to participate and the right to stop at any time.*
- 4) *I am free now, and in the future, to ask any questions about the study.*
- 5) *I have been told that all research information will be kept confidential, except where release of information is required by law, e.g., suspected child abuse.*
- 6) *I understand that no information that would identify me, will be released or printed.*
- 7) *In addition to Kathy Hogarth (principal investigator), Joanna Ochocka (thesis supervisor) and Bessie Schenk (transcriber) will have access to the information I provide in this interview.*

I hereby consent to participate.

Name of Participant

Signature

Investigator's Signature

Date

- I give permission for quotations to be used from the information I provide
- I do not give permission for quotations to be used from the information I provide

Name of Participant

Signature

For answers to questions about research subjects' rights and research-related injury, please contact Dr. Bill Marr, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-0710, extension 2468.

APPENDIX K

Interview Schedule for Parent Focus Group

Guideline Questions

- 1). What do you think are the main issues facing Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada?
 - a. Challenges with the language used in Canada?
 - b. Challenges in the way people react to them?
 - c. Changing family relations as a result of immigration?
 - d. Challenges with the Canadian school system?

- 2). Tell me about your youth's life in Jamaica before immigrating to Canada in terms of:
 - a. School
 - b. Family relations
 - c. Peers
 - d. The wider community

- 3). How has his/her life changed since you've immigrated in terms of:
 - a. School
 - b. Family relations
 - c. Peers
 - d. The wider community

- 4). What does success mean for you?

- 5). What factors do you think would help Jamaican youth in being successful in Canada?

- 6). What in your experience are the barriers that would challenge their success in Canada?

- 7). What advice would you give to Jamaican youth who have immigrated to Canada?

- 8). What advice would you give to other parents of Jamaican youth who have immigrated to Canada?

- 9). What advice would you give to others who work with Jamaican youth in Canada?

- 10). Is there anything else you would like to share about your child's experience as an immigrant youth in Canada?

APPENDIX I

RESEARCH QUESTIONS CODING

Research Questions	Key Informants	Youth	Parents	Themes
What are the main issues facing Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada?	<p>Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Their accent highlights their difference making it more difficult to fit in Low communication because of the difficulties some youth experience with speaking the language or their experience of difference because of their accent they shut down <p>Schooling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academically set back (they were far advanced academically than the grades in which they were placed in the Canadian system)¹ Diversity: students don't see themselves reflected in the classroom: "one thing that is lacking is diversity among educators" Culturally different² 	<p>Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to speak English well spoke only patois Has a good command of English but forced into ESL Accent⁴ <p>Schooling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiating the difference in culture; the "new freedom" "I had to get used to the fact that I had to wear casual clothes to school instead of uniform, not buy my own books and that students could be rude to teachers without reprimand, I still have difficulties dealing with that." "Back home they would push you to do work but here it's like the teachers don't really care, all they care about is the money" 	<p>Schooling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of boundaries (quite a culture shock from the very rigid and disciplined school system in Jamaica) Failure to engage resulting in demotivated youth: "They are placed in grades way below their abilities so what they are supposed to be learning they've done so a long time ago... there is nothing there to stimulate them" <p>Family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor communication: "[because of the long separation] I realize it is really difficult for us to communicate. It's like he's from Mars and I'm from Venus so it's hard and we are having a bit of a problem right now" 	<p>1. Disconnected with a keen sense of loss⁶</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The fracturing of identity in experiencing themselves as different and the questioning of their capabilities and their worth through the negative messages from school, peers, often times family and the wider society Disconnected from peers or unable to form meaningful relationships marked by mutual respect Emotionally disconnected from parents due to long separation Disconnected from family (in some cases the youth immigrated to a new family with whom he/she had no prior

¹ "I don't think there is a lot of cultural competency within the school board or the community to understand the experiences of Jamaican youth"

² Requires the youth to think differently but there is no one to help them realize that this shift is necessary or to show them how to make that shift. By the time the youth figures it out they wasted so much time that could have been better spent and endured so much pain and confusion that really was unnecessary. An

Research Questions	Key Informants	Youth	Parents	Themes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low teacher expectation • Family • Reunification³ discussed in light of the separation issue • Resentment for being left back on the one hand and resentment for being made to come. (This resentment is either internalized leading to self destructive behaviours, or externalized leading to socially disruptive behaviours [compare with the findings from parents]) • Disenfranchisement created by the reunification process leading youth to believe they really don't have a place in the family • "New family" • Fragmented families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Disrespecting abilities: "I didn't have a problem with English or anything but they try to put me in general courses even though I wanted to do advance" ▪ Disrespecting person: "teachers have the right to disrespect us because we are Black and they're white, but when you disrespect the black kids they're going to retaliate more" Family relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ difficulty in terms of "getting to know these people who you didn't have a relationship with" waiting for more getting less ▪ Society's reaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Denied innocence: "when I first entered the justice system I was not guilty of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in family structure and relations • Resentment⁵ over forcing them to come to Canada "when I met my son for the first time at the airport our relationship was cold, I could see the resentment. It was like I took the child from the people he loved, the people he wanted to stay with and I realized it wouldn't be pretty, it wasn't going to be easy" Depression • Religion • Falling away from the church/not wanting to identify Peers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No meaningful relationships "They act as if they like them but then they do things that show 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relationship • Disconnect from society (social dislocation) because they have little or no social networks or support "The Jamaican community that already exist in Canada does not play an active role in integrating newcomers" promoting feelings of displacement in youth. The wider society has also labeled them as "a thing to be feared" 2. Disempowered and without voice • Lack of power and control • Forced to come to Canada (it was their parent's decision not theirs) • Forced into ESL classes (building up further

aspect of this cultural difference is seen in the area of career readiness gravitating towards jobs as opposed to careers in Jamaica. "the school system fails them in terms of getting them ready to change the mindset of jobs as opposed to careers"

³ The issues for the Jamaican immigrant can be even more complex when immigrating under the family reunification class. The prolonged loss of contact between parents and children often lead to resentment and emotional detachment

⁴ Where school officials not understanding accent makes it into the youth's problem (so society's problems is forced on the youth, the youth is then treated as the one with the problem and forced into services to deal with the problem)

⁵ The anxiety and eagerness felt about the prospect of coming to Canada often changes to anger and resentment once they land and begin to see that things are not what they expected

⁶ "The youth that come in their teen years, unless they come into an intact family, church culture etc, they flounder"

Research Questions	Key Informants	Youth	Parents	Themes
	<p>further challenge the youth support structure and potentially minimize the role of the family in the life of the youth</p> <p>Stereotyping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminalization—the black Jamaican youth is the quintessential criminal • “Jamaicans are expected to be roughnecks...hoodlums and illiterates” • Negative media portrayal <p>Identity issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compromised self esteem (they lose their sense of self “whereas they were vibrant and respected in their country it is as if here they don’t see themselves as being respected and they don’t want to speak up and say what they think...they almost participate in making themselves invisible” 	<p>what they were charging”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dishonoring difference: “they think we are stupid” “when you come from a different place they treat you as if you’re dumb or something” ▪ Denoting blame: “it’s like more times just for being black you get blamed for certain things” <p>Racism and stereotypes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work/Jobs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It’s difficult even the work; “kids here work while going to school. Back in Jamaica we don’t” 	<p>they really don’t” When people who you really believe are friends turn around and call you nigger and do things to physically hurt you how are these people friends?”</p> <p>Racism</p> <p>“everything here is filtered through the lens of colour”</p>	<p>resentment for the system)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forced into grades below their abilities • Forced their problem onto the youth

Research Questions		Key Informants		Youth	Parents	Themes
What are the indicators or signals of success for the Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada?	<p>School performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving good grades⁷ • Involved in extra curricular activities <p>Community connectedness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteerism⁸ “the youth who give the time to volunteer are often the successful ones” • Workplace integration: “At an early age often helps to prepare youth with tools for later success” <p>Strong and positive family relationships</p> <p>Positive peer influence</p> <p>Personal satisfaction with life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong sense of self; grounded in their identity as Black Jamaican youth/ a balanced cultural identity 	<p>School performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finishing school • Pursuing post secondary education <p>Employment outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial success: making lots of money <p>Achieving personal goals</p>	<p>School performance⁹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To excel I school • Pursuing post secondary education <p>Well adjusted and happy</p>			
What are the indicators or signals failure for the Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada?	<p>Ethnocentrism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to fully integrate in the Canadian society • Gravitating towards.... • Inability to identify with ones culture or historical 	<p>School performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not finishing school <p>Negative societal involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with the criminal justice system 	<p>Doing drugs</p> <p>Wrong crowd</p> <p>Family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dysfunctional • Marked by constant bickering and fighting 			

⁷ All KI emphasized the positive correlation between good academic performance and youth success

⁸ Volunteerism and youth in the workplace are two central features of the Canadian society that’s remarkably different from the Jamaican context. Success in these areas requires the youth to make a break with cultural norms. When these features become a part of the Jamaican youth’s life it is an indication that integration into the Canadian way of thinking and being is taking place.

⁹ Expectations in the Caribbean for Caribbean children are very high. Most parents expect that their children succeed over and beyond what they’ve been through. Once in Canada the expectations remain the same

Research Questions		Key Informants	Youth	Parents	Themes
		<p>identity “impacts their functioning in the Canadian society and inadvertently leads to a sort of development retardation Invisibility Delayed social and cultural development School performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poor grades ▪ Drop out ▪ Delayed post secondary pursuits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Going to jail ▪ Involvement with gang and gang violence ▪ Doing drugs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Depression and suicidal thoughts <p>School performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Skipping school ▪ Drop out 	
<p>What are the factors that help in promoting successful outcomes in Jamaican immigrant youth?</p>	<p>Individual responsibility¹⁰</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resilience “youth doesn’t have to live out stereotypes...one doesn’t have to perform to expectations” ▪ (overcoming stereotypes) ▪ Determination (positive aggression) “Jamaican are very aggressive and once they put their minds to do something, they achieve it” ▪ Identification with cultural community ▪ Religion/ Church <p>Family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ supportive family 	<p>Individual responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal drive: “if you don’t have the confidence, lack self esteem or you’re a negative type person, you may not achieve” <p>Collective responsibility</p> <p>Societal expectation “to be given a chance by society”</p>	<p>Individual responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Personal drive: “They have to want to be successful...you can lead a horse to the water but you can’t force him to drink” <p>Family responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parental involvement; “becoming more interested in the things our children are interested in” ▪ Role modeling for our kids showing that we are willing to learn and explore new things and encouraging them to do 	<p>Develop new ways of thinking and being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to discipline in the Canadian context and get the same results as you would in the Jamaican context “there are many ways to skin a cat” • Communication patterns 	

¹⁰ “We cannot talk about putting initiatives or structures for success in place without talking about responsibility; both individual and collective responsibility”

¹¹ KI making reference to links within the cultural community which are evident in other ethnic communities (each helping the other out, ensuring that they have jobs, making the necessary links in order to ensure success) but absent in the Jamaican and wider Caribbean community.

Research Questions	Key Informants	Youth	Parents	Themes
	<p>relationships: “where youth experiences supportive family relationships marked by love and respect they are more likely to achieve greater levels of success both at the personal level in terms of their sense of self and personal fulfillment and at the broader level in terms of academic and employment outcomes”</p> <p>Parental involvement in the education of youth: “We have to find a way to educate the parents so that they can become part of the partnership required for successful education”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Changing patterns of communication <p>Collective responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bridging youth into the culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mentorship/ providing positive role models • Finding interesting and affordable ways to engage youth • Providing cultural specific resources; spaces where they can feel comfortable “where they 		<p>the same</p> <p>Collective responsibility</p>	

Research Questions		Key Informants	Youth	Parents	Themes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can call home” Community networks¹¹ The role of the media: “there is so much emphasis on failures let’s also talk about successes...expose these to the youth and to the community at large and learn from these success stories” 			
<p>What are the barriers that would challenge success for Jamaican immigrant youth in Canada?</p>	<p>Social assistance as an enabler</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dependency by parents and creating a cycle of dependency Negative role modeling <p>Stereotypes</p> <p>“Not enough safeguards or mechanisms for youth to address issues of racism and stereotypes”</p>	<p>Peers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative peer influence <p>“Some of the people I hang around take me down the wrong road”</p> <p>Family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antagonistic relationships. “all my mother do is nag me all day so to get away from her I end up on the mall or just doing things that sometimes get me in trouble” <p>Engagement with the justice system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative experiences with law enforcement <p>Lack of personal motivation</p>	<p>Peers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falling in with the wrong crowd. In an attempt to fit in these youth may gravitate to others who are also on the periphery of society <p>Family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships characterized by high levels of stress Cultural differences: “In the Caribbean the education of children is primarily up to the educators but here the education system expects some kind of parental involvement” 		

¹² “They expect you to fit in this box and so they define the space in which you perform and how well you perform”

¹³ This becomes an issue for parents and youth because what was permissible in Jamaica is not acceptable in Canada. Youth feel this is one way in which they have greater power while on the other hand parents feel their hands are tied. It is not so much that they disciplined differently but knowing that they had the ability to in itself served as a disciplinary measure

Research Questions		Key Informants		Youth		Parents		Themes	
				<p>Personal Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overly idealistic expectations about what life in Canada would be like not matching with the reality of what is <p>Societal expectations¹²</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Society expects them to fail: "they've already made up their minds that we won't do well or that we will only achieve so much and no more" 	<p>Society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The emphasis on rights without equal emphasis on responsibility impacting the way discipline in the family is handled¹³ 				
What advice would you give			<p>Schooling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish school "education gives you a lot more options" • Get involved • Parenting is your job just do it "if you insist things will be better" 	<p>Schooling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finish school "this is the foundation on which your future rests" <p>Educate yourself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Know the system It is different and requires different modes of communication than you were used to ▪ Give it up: "Life could be a lot less stressful if you stop holding on to what was and deal with what is....you are no longer living in Jamaica, you are in Canada deal with it" ▪ Participate: "Don't just leave it up to society" Seek help when needed: "If you had problems 		The utility of education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental influence has the potential to significantly affect outcomes • Understand and appreciate difference 		

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Research Questions	Key Informants	Youth	Parents	Themes
			integrating as an adult why should you think it is any easier for your children, they need help so seek the help"	

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