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Social integration, leisure and second generation South Asian Canadians

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National Metropolis Conference
April 4, 2008
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Thank you to Atlantic Metropolis Centre for the financial support for Phase 3

The Study: Social integration and leisure

- Part of a longitudinal, qualitative study
- Second generation young Canadians
 - Male and female
- Parents from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh
 - Youth born in Canada or arrived as children
 - All youth attended school in Canada, parents did not
- Data collection, 1996-97/ 2001/ 2007
- 15 participants in total, 4 completed all 3 phases
- Average age at start: 18 years
 - Range 15-21
- Hindu, Sikh, Muslim and Christian
- Varying SES
 - eg. Parents were MD,s, restaurateurs, factory workers, accountants, public housing, unemployed

Studying children of immigrants

- Phase one (PhD dissertation)
 - Stand alone study of leisure and second generation ethnic minority group
 - Sensitizing concepts from previous study of immigrant mothers
 - Evidence of benefits for longitudinal study
- Phase two
 - Social integration over time
 - Challenges, opportunities
- Phase three
 - Final look at community embeddedness, social integration

[This presentation]

- Cross sectional look at Phase three data
- 4 participants
- Late 20's, all employed, university educated
- Major themes:
 - Centrality of Cultural Heritage
 - Transforming worlds
 - Evolving individuality

Centrality of Cultural Heritage

- [Traditional practices are] a way of feeling connected with people. It's a way of feeling connected with people that I've known for years uh, but through them meet other people in other communities. Umm, it's a way of maintaining what I know of certain Indian and certain religious traditions regardless of whether they're authentic or just traditions that we've just kind of created but it's, it's, these are familiar things and things that we share with people that we love and that makes it important for those reasons.
- Alright, so I wore the red (for her wedding). Umm always growing up I thought the red was so ugly that I would wear a white dress but I don't know when it actually came down to it, umm I don't know I wanted to celebrate more of my culture I guess.

Transforming Worlds...

- I think, uhh, one of the things that we really need to do is talk. We need to talk as people, as a society, we need to educate people more on our cultures and our beliefs. And just because one person blows up a building doesn't mean we're all bad people . . . I make it a point every year, especially during Diwali, to umm educate my co-workers and my American friends on the tradition and the festival and what we do and how we celebrate. Everyone seems to enjoy it.
- I think there is a danger in labeling things racism when they may just be childhood taunting and that's not to belittle the experiences of others but it's just first of all it's a very heavy word so we need to be careful of when we use it. Because if we use it too much it really discounts real incidents of racism.
- Our family was party of establishing the mosque, the two mosques there and the community center and uh me and my bother and sister, we, well I'm not gonna say a big part but like we helped, helped a lot with creating youth programs there cause like growing up there and being among the oldest youth in [city] we felt, we realized that there was a great need for Muslim youth to have a place where they could uh like feel self confident and talk about issues that they could be dealing with or whatever. Uhh so yeah, I'm really connected to the community there uh yeah haha

Evolving Individuality

- I think that it really happens through what I mentioned before, you know going to a university and guess what, there's all these different races and you need to make sense of them. Having these friends who are African American, friends who are white, friends who are Jewish, you know, going to a wedding where a Jewish person and a black are marrying despite all the parental uproar because they love each other and seeing that, I think that's the way it happens. And I think you know in Canada, because of the multiculturalism that we do have, I I uh think that that is the only way it really happens. (S)
- Umm, exposure and discussion, uh, when things are different from what we know. There is this process of normalizing this and you know going from fear and misunderstanding, etc, through to a process where it's something that's special because it's different and there's kind of a celebration around it, to the final step where it just the way it is, there's no need to necessarily, I don't know that that's just normal and I think that that process needs to be accelerated haha. (A)
- Yeah, I think yeah I think it [recreation] would help them feel much more welcome and help them learn about society in Canada, and feel comfortable here and help them make connections with other people. Ummm it could assist them and uhh give them opportunity to talk about themselves. A lot of people go through a sort of depression after they arrive here, cause I mean they are leaving their whole social network behind...and they may be struggling and and dealing with things they might not have realized, like how long the winter is here haha (Z)

[One more . . .]

- It's sort of like a prom, without having to go the prom. And when we first came up with this idea some of the older people in the community who were thinking about it from a cultural point of view were like, oh you know that's inappropriate, the prom dresses, and I mean it's just females so you could wear whatever you want but people were hesitant about letting their daughters dress that way or partying or the music...so that was a struggle, so things like that do come up and uh becomes an issue so you have to talk to everyone and sometimes you let things go for awhile and sometimes you try to fight for your opinion.

[Analysis and Discussion]

■ Theoretical frameworks

- Life Worlds (Husserl, Shultz)
- Plurality, Multiculturalism (Bhabha, Tirone & Pedlar)
- Agency theory
- Leisure theory relevant to minority ethnic groups