MOVING ON UP?
BLACK FAMILIES' PURSUIT OF THE SUBURBAN DREAM
&
THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THEIR CHILDREN

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Abstract

My thesis will explore what Black children of the northwest Brampton community of Fletcher's Meadow can expect in terms of life opportunities. The term 'life opportunities' is a catchall phrase that incorporates many of the socio-economic factors that contribute to quality of life. More specifically, when I think of the term "life opportunities," I am referring to the prospects of becoming a homeowner; living within a safe, crime free community; and having bright, educational opportunities. I view these as desirable traits that, regardless of location, families aspire to. The interplay of these factors contribute towards one's social mobility, meaning that if one did not have the means to own their home, lived in a neighbourhood with rampant crime and their children had limited educational opportunities, it would be safe to assume that one would not want to remain in that environment given the opportunity to leave.

The intent of my thesis is to contribute to the modern exploration of Blacks in a suburban Canadian context that has only recently started to be explored. I wish to examine how life opportunities present themselves in this new landscape. The significance of this work is considerable in terms of its importance to the Black Canadian community, mainstream society, and academia. The ultimate goal is to create awareness within and beyond the Black community with respect to the present realities of living within a suburban context and highlight any opportunities and challenges they have and continue to endure. Concurrently, I wish to provoke continued dialogue, informed discussion, as well as inspire further research in the area of Black studies in Canada.

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In the words of my father, Onwards and Upwards!

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Introduction

The past shapes the present, and the present shapes the future. Exploration of current Canadian social issues often requires a detailed exploration of the past in order to understand the many events that contribute to today's lived reality.

Canada's population continues to rise; however a high percentage of this growth is due to immigration. As the key immigration centre for several decades, Toronto can no longer sustain the waves of immigration due to a combination of a lack of affordable housing and infrastructure. The surrounding suburban areas have been developed in an attempt to capture the "overflow" of people wishing to live in the larger city. Yet over time, these surrounding suburban areas have become cities and destinations unto themselves and the borders between Toronto and these neighbouring areas are non-existent.

Toronto and its suburbs are not the first metropolis to undergo this process. In fact, this process of suburbanization has become a familiar one over time, as many cities throughout Canada and the United States have also undergone similar processes. What makes Toronto's suburbanization process unique is the same factor that has become Toronto's defining international trademark – multiculturalism. The unique interplay of various cultures, races and ethnicities has produced a unique megalopolis comprised of various communities. These communities are dynamic settlements that are reflective of the changes in immigration as well as the movement of people over time. In examining

these communities various trends become apparent and an opportunity to study them is readily available.

When looking at the process of suburbanization in one Greater Toronto Area (GTA) suburban community, Fletcher's Meadow in northwest Brampton, we can observe the various forces that are at play in the establishment of a new suburban entity. In its relatively short history, this community has garnered more than its fair share of media attention for a variety of reasons ranging from praises for its planning to issues with race and crime (The Brampton Guardian, 2007). As a community, Fletcher's Meadow is less than 10 years old with a host of available amenities; yet, what truly sets this neighbourhood apart is its racial makeup. Unlike many of the other suburban communities that are springing up across the GTA/905 area code, consisting of mostly White families with a lack of a core concentration of Black[1] families, Fletcher's Meadow represents a mixed community that appears to have a significant Black population.

On any given evening, as one walks the streets of this new community, it is not uncommon to see three, four or even five Black families out for a walk, or Black children playing in the park. Making your way into the local supermarket, you would not have to search to find Black people shopping, talking and carrying on with the day-to-day routines that make up suburban life. Also, at the smaller local plaza one can find a West Indian grocery store located between the Italian Pizza Store and the South Asian video store, a perfect example of small business meeting the needs of the local community.

[1] The use of the terms 'Black' and 'White' to denote race is a social construct, the meanings of which constantly change and are based on the time and context in which the terms are being used. For the purpose of this paper, the use of the term Black is referring to everyone of African and Caribbean descent who can be identified as a visible minority (not including East & South Asians). The use of the term White refers to all those of European descent who cannot be identified as a visible minority.

Every morning on my way to work, I see scores of children making their way to school. A football field separates the two local high schools, one public, the other Catholic. As the steady stream of students go their respective ways, Black children actually make up the majority of students that I see. These schools are not small in size nor population. In fact, both buildings have three full floors, whereas most high schools have two and a half at best. In the case of the public school, Fletcher's Meadow S.S., it has the largest population of any high school in the Peel District School Board exceeding well over twenty-five hundred students (Peel District School Board, 2009).

It is because of this seemingly larger and more concentrated Black population within Fletcher's Meadow that I am interested in examining how this community has come to be and why it has taken on the demographic composition that it has. Historically, the move to the suburbs has come to signify prosperity and upward mobility. The sense of having "made it" has long been associated with the idea of having a house, spouse, kids, a dog and a white picket fence. Even as one makes their way through the streets of this fledgling community, the characteristic stamp of any suburb is clearly visible – a repetitive architectural style of all of the houses. Remove the people, and one can easily feel as if they ventured into any Canadian lower-middle class suburbia a la the Stepford Wives. Yet, it seems that the notion of progress and upward mobility that a community such as Fletcher's Meadow should and would represent for any other racialised group does not seem to hold here. In fact, there appears to be a significant amount of negative backlash towards this community on the part of the public.

A prime example of this can be found in the many stories I heard from colleagues and neighbours (none of whom happened to be Black) about their observations of the many Black families in Fletcher's Meadow and the "fact" that the government secretly worked with developers to provide money to encourage residents from the Jane-Finch neighbourhood of Toronto to move to Fletcher's Meadow. These conversations provided anecdotal evidence of the pervasive, negativity surrounding Fletcher's Meadows. Even the mayor had to acknowledge and categorically deny these rumours saying that they were unfounded and based on bigotry. The relationship between Blacks and the Jane-Finch community has often been made, based on decades of negative media coverage, with the most recent instalment being the recent police raids tied to gang activity. The prevailing sentiment of an under-the-table deal coupled with the unfavourable attitude towards individuals residing in the Jane-Finch community extended that corollary to northwest Brampton.

The notion that Black families would only be able to live in this suburban neighbourhood because of what amounts to a government handout disturbed me to say the least. What about the suburban dream? What about working hard and taking advantage of an opportunity when it presented itself? For all the families that call this community home, does living here embody the suburban dream? Is that dream a reality or just a fabled myth? Did they emigrate from Toronto in search of something better? Is life better here or is it the same as Toronto, just a different postal code? What about securing a better future for one's children? Can children living here realize the dreams of their parents and make real their own? In order to answer these questions, I decided to

narrow my focus to that of children. It is my belief that the success of a generation can be measured through the prosperity of its children. As such, my thesis will explore "By moving to this new suburban landscape, what can Black children of the northwest Brampton community of Fletcher's Meadow expect in terms of life opportunities?"

The term 'life opportunities' is a catchall phrase that incorporates many of the socio-economic factors that contribute to quality of life. More specifically, when I think of the term "life opportunities," I am referring to the prospects of becoming a homeowner; living within a safe, crime free community; and having bright, educational opportunities. I view these as desirable traits that, regardless of location, families aspire to. The interplay of these factors contribute towards one's social mobility, meaning that if one did not have the means to own their home, lived in a neighbourhood with rampant crime and their children had limited educational opportunities, it would be safe to assume that one would not want to remain in that environment given the opportunity to leave.

A Personal Investigation

The investigation of this topic is also of particular interest as I am a resident of the Fletcher's Meadow Community and I am at a stage in my own life where I am examining where my family and I have come from, compared to where I am currently, and where, by my own standard, I think I may be in the next ten years. What is obvious, but is being blatantly reaffirmed for me, is the fact that regardless of race, culture, ethnicity and one's socio-economic status, everyone wants the best for him/herself and his/her children. What differs are the resources that people have at their disposal and the social constructs they must operate within in order to provide the quality of life they desire or feel entitled

to. When one takes into account socialization in terms of culture, race, ethnicity and socio-economic status, the results that can be created from that common desire are as numerous as there are people to tell the tale. As an educator within the public education system I have witnessed, and in some cases been party to, a vast array of many such tales. Yet, what I have found most striking is not the differences that exist between each of the children and families I come in contact with. Rather, it is their similarities that bind them to Fletcher's Meadow in this moment and space in time. Similarities that speak to desired life opportunities.

The backdrop for these opportunities is Brampton. From my many discussions with students, parents, teachers, administrators, scholars, social workers and high school guidance counsellors, the understanding that for many Brampton is viewed as a place of betterment is understood and accepted. Consequently, this begs the question as to whether or not Brampton is living up to the expectation as a place of betterment for these families. More specifically, does Fletcher's Meadow provide the proper context for the desired life opportunities to occur?

Akin to the topic I am exploring now, there is one particularly defining moment in my life that has had a profound impact on me, and has served as the impetus of this paper, namely, my moving from Scarborough to Caledon as a teenager. This move enabled me to gain perspective and insight into who I was, who I was perceived to be, and who I wanted to be. The move signified that as a Black male, born in Canada of Caribbean descent, my parents were able to attain upward social mobility. While we resided in Scarborough, I, along with all my personal and family friends, as well as those

of my parents, were of the same socio-economic background – lower middle class.[2] I was never in want of anything, but I was taught the value of what I had through an appreciation and respect for my parents' struggle to attain it.

However, by the time I was 16, I was able to note a key difference between many of my friends and myself. My family did not remain as we always were; we continued to move 'up',' being defined as a move to a bigger house, in a higher socioeconomic community in Caledon. Through this move, the perspective I gained was one which allowed me to see the limitation of where we were living and the opportunities that were now available to me - opportunities such as socializing with a wider array of people from similar cultural, racial and ethnic background in Scarborough, but at a higher socio-economic level. This is not to say that people of upper middle class background were not present in Scarborough. Rather their presence was not felt within my life as they did not comprise a large segment of the population of my school, and as such were removed from my day-to-day reality. This simple fact translated into a significant difference that had a profound impact on my life, my socialization and the lenses through which I viewed my experiences.

However, although I was now able to associate with people of higher socio-economic backgrounds, they were not the same in terms of race, ethnicity, and culture. I lived in Caledon and went to school in Brampton, since at the time that was the closest Catholic high school serving students in north Brampton and all of Caledon. This too would become a key distinction, as there were literally only a handful of other visible

[2] As defined by (Gilbert, 1998)

minorities living in Caledon. The majority of visible minorities were residing in Brampton.

Despite the fact that Brampton was still viewed as suburbia, my not living there meant I was not living in the "hood." Truth be told, my house in Caledon was a stone throw from the Brampton-Caledon border, but was still far enough apart socio-economically speaking, to be of significance. Consequently, I was not like the other Black students at my school - I was different. The difference being I was not living up to the stereotype of what it meant to be Black, namely living in the "hood" and excelling in sports (especially basketball) with aspirations of going onto university with sports being my meal ticket. For many Black youth, through the social pressures of school, the media and the influence of family, living this myopic version of life became synonymous with 'Blackness.' And although some of my peers strived to live up to this definition, many endeavoured to exceed it, but few were successful. Looking back, for those who were not successful in their attempt to rise above this contrived characterization, it was as if they prevented the establishment of any other notion of 'Blackness' to take hold. They did not lay a solid foundation to allow for future options. They allowed themselves to be defined rather than defining themselves.

I aspired to go to university and while I excelled in sports and music they did not define me. By having a strong academic standing and being recognized for my athletic and musical ability, I had created options for myself. I highlight the complexities of my situation not as points for further discussion since these are beyond the scope my thesis. Rather, I present them to draw attention to the factors that play a significant role in

shaping who I am. Navigating what would become my two worlds – Scarborough and Caledon, afforded me a certain amount of social currency, as I was viewed as someone who had moved 'out' and 'up' from Scarborough, as well as someone who was from the real 'hood' and yet not ensnared by it.

Purpose of Study

It is through my personal journey that I have arrived at my topic of exploration. Fletcher's Meadow is home to a wide array of people of various cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. However, I wish to focus on the Black population, knowing that the context in which Black people are usually examined within Canada is often an urban one. Black people are often relegated to newscasts associated with crime and violence or sports and entertainment. Black History Month provides an annual opportunity to look at Black people beyond this scope; however the portrayals and representations of Black people during this time have become stereotypically cliché. More often than not these representations tend to reside in the past without constructive methods of examining the present and looking to the future. I feel that this point in time marks a significant break in social history for Black people, as it would seem they are now participating in the immigrant dream en masse. The intent of my thesis is to contribute to the modern exploration of Blacks in a suburban Canadian context that has only recently started to be explored. I wish to examine how life opportunities present themselves in this new landscape. The significance of this work is considerable in terms of its importance to the Black Canadian community, mainstream society, and academia. The ultimate goal is to

create awareness within and beyond the Black community with respect to the present realities of living within a suburban context and highlight any opportunities and challenges they have and continue to endure. Concurrently, I wish to provoke continued dialogue, informed discussion, as well as inspire further research in the area of Black studies in Canada.

Chapter 1 of my paper will be dedicated to exploring various social theories and investigating how these theories apply to the situation in northwest Brampton. In Chapter 2, I will provide a brief overview of Blacks in Canada over the past 50 years, specifically that of Toronto. The chapter will focus on the gradual shift from an urban context to a suburban one. In Chapter 3 I will focus on the history of Brampton and its emergence as a major suburban centre for immigration and development. This chapter will also examine the infrastructure that supports Brampton's growing and changing population, with particular attention being paid to the challenges infrastructure has faced trying to keep up with the increasing demands of the population. In Chapter 4, using the outlined theoretical framework, I will determine the greatest likelihood Black inhabitants can expect in terms of their life opportunities in Fletcher's Meadow. In conclusion, Chapter 5, will not only restate the aforementioned chapters and their main points, but also provide possible and probable future outcomes of this topic.

Fletcher's Meadow is a vibrant community still in the early stages of its growth. Despite the negative backlash that the significantly sized Black population has garnered by some inside and outside of the community, Fletcher's Meadow is still a diverse and rich community with a growing number of amenities being built to serve the increasing

population. New residents to this community can expect to see many immigrants fulfilling their dream of being home owners, and they can also expect to see a great level of pride being taken in the maintenance of their homes as is evidenced by the vibrant landscaping on people's lawn, parks filled with the laughter of children playing and children making their way to one of 14 schools serving the community. However, these are only superficial and cosmetic indicators of success. A proper assessment of whether or not Fletcher's Meadow constitutes an upwardly mobile community must include an assessment of the life opportunities afforded to the children that live here. More specifically, that assessment must include the Black children for whom educational, social and financial success (as determined by life opportunities) has been an elusive ideal for so long. My thesis will indicate as to whether or not Fletcher's Meadow marks a significant suburban break from the urban norm or merely represents a shift in location but not in lifestyle.

Chapter 1: Defining Location

The beauty of Canada can be found in its diversity. The many peoples that call Canada home have come from a variety of backgrounds and have migrated to Canada from their countries of origin in search of a better life – for themselves as well as their families. Due to the interplay of numerous factors such as job opportunities, available housing and access to education, many immigrant families simultaneously seek out and are drawn to key points of entry within Canada. These entry points end up being "way stations" for families looking to establish themselves within the larger Canadian fabric. The key point of entry for most immigrants is Toronto and with each year, an increasing number of people have laid roots and called this city home. As Siemiatycki, Rees, Ng, and Rahi (2003) point out, over time many of these families have seen an increase in their socio-economic standing. Many, at one point, had to scrape to get by, and were forced to live in neighbourhoods that were often not the communities closest to employment opportunities. However, these families (mostly of European decent) acquired the resources to move out into neighbourhoods that were less transient and better-defined success. Towards the end of the last century, a new pattern in immigration started to be established. Many immigrant groups (mostly non-European) started to bypass the city of Toronto, for its suburbs in order to establish themselves. Researchers such as Siemiatycki, Rees, Ng, and Rahi (2003), have been examining this trend over the past 25 years as wave after wave of immigrants arrive on Canada's doorstep looking for opportunities to call this country home.

Location has always been important in determining the likelihood of success for any given individual. For those who have arrived in the last ten years and looked to the northwest portion of the GTA, Fletcher's Meadow was one of the neighbourhoods that many immigrant groups looked to for new opportunities. This community represented a new location in close proximity to a large urban centre and new possibilities. It has seen tremendous growth in a very short period of time. Geographically, Fletcher's Meadow is located in the city of Brampton, only 40 minutes from downtown Toronto by car. It is a community bordered by Wanless Dr. to the north, McLaughlin Rd. to the east, Creditview Rd. to the west and Bovaird Dr. to the south. Within these boundaries several immigrant groups have established themselves, with the Black population comprising the second largest visible minority population in the community (Statistics Canada, 2008a). With the traditional focus being on urban settings, the examination of Fletcher's Meadow as a suburban, immigrant point-of-entry is reflective of the major shift in traditional Canadian immigration trends. However, this shift also means there are very few models to use for comparison. Thus, by examining patterns in Toronto, one will be able to see whether or not northwest Brampton holds true to existing models and social theories.

When examining Blacks within the larger Canadian context, the process of assimilation comes into play. Assimilation is the process by which minorities gradually adopt patterns of the dominant culture (Macionis & Gerber, 2005). Given the strong ties Canada has to Britain, the significant Black population that has migrated here from the

Caribbean, and the associated connection to Britain due to slavery and colonialism[3], one could argue that the process of assimilation has been going on for well over a hundred years! Even within a strictly Canadian context, one could put forth the argument that assimilation has been taking place since the arrival of Blacks within this country. However, within a more modern context, the process of assimilation has been taking place since the late 1960s and into the 1970s when there was a major influx of Blacks into Canada. Since this time Blacks have been actively navigating the Canadian landscape carving out their niche within society. This assimilative process, both social as well as physical has lead to spatial assimilation.

According to Myles and Feng's (2004) spatial assimilation model, which has its foundation in Massey & Denton's (1985)'s work, new migrants are young and have limited resources. As such, they cluster together in low-income neighbourhoods, usually with immigrants of similar background. Over time, as they acquire greater economic resources, they move out of their "starting point" neighbourhoods into higher quality housing and neighbourhoods with more and better amenities. The non-immigrant majority [read White] tend to be the dominant group in these neighbourhoods, and so the transition to these "better" neighbourhoods is characterized by the immigrant group becoming acculturated to the point where they have the requisite financial resources, as well as the cultural and social skills, to navigate this new locality. Within Toronto, the assimilative process would entail moving out of specific neighbourhoods within the

[3] Britain has had a strong connection to slavery since the days of Sir John Hawkins (1532-1595), whose efforts, starting in 1562, pioneered the British slave trade, through to slavery's official demise in 1833 with the passing of the Slavery Abolition Act. Given that Canada and many parts of the Caribbean were colonies of Britain, the legacy of this system is such that the social repercussions have spanned centuries and influenced millions.

downtown core and moving further away – further north, north-east and north-west. The work of Qadeer and Kumar (2005) highlights this trend and notes how different areas such as Woodbridge, Markham and Brampton have seen an increase in specific ethnic populations over time.

Over the past 100 years, this movement was made easier due to improvements in modes of transportation. As transportation and communication systems expanded, the need to be physically located near to one's place of work has diminished. Today, more and more people live and work in suburbs (Alba, Logan, Stults, Marzan, & Zhang, 1999). As well, whereas most immigrants of yester year would have sought work as manual labourers without the financial resources to determine where they lived, the same cannot be said of many immigrants today. The contemporary immigration stream is more diverse and includes many immigrants with high levels of human capital who find professional or other high-status positions in the United States and Canada (Logan, Zhang, & Alba, 2002), (Bauder, 2008). Consequently, some groups are now able to establish enclaves in desirable locations, often in suburbia, and group members may choose these locations even when spatial assimilation is feasible (Qadeer, 2003; Logan et al., 2002).

Spatial assimilation differs depending on the setting in which it is taking place. The low-income neighbourhoods, usually with immigrants of similar background, is referred to as the immigrant enclave and is often characterized as being a less desirable place to live. This type of neighbourhood often typifies the "starting out" point in spatial assimilation models. Within a specific Canadian context, Fong and Gulia (1999) point out that the spatial assimilation models are based largely on American ways of being,

trends and assumptions. These assumptions do not play out the same way in Canada as they do in the United States. Given the level of detail that Canadian census data is able to provide, a deeper understanding of the various ethnic and cultural variances within larger groups helps provide insight into the complexities of immigrant populations. A recent report by the CBC highlights this complexity. The report notes that as the ethnic population becomes more concentrated in a particular region, culturally specific services, such as specialty grocers or religious institutions, begin to grow. These familiar services, and neighbours, offer a level of comfort to newcomers, and as a result immigrants are more likely to gravitate towards those areas (CBC, 2009). Another key difference within Canada, noted by Dr. Agrawal in this report, is that enclaves are primarily the outcome of people's choices for homes and businesses, within the parameters of affordability and accessibility. He states that there is no evidence of any systematic steering of ethnics towards certain neighbourhoods by public policy, social processes or real estate agents. He goes on to say national origins, language and religion are "the binding elements" of enclaves with race being an ancillary factor. This is in stark contrast to the US where conspicuous barriers have been put in place directly related to race Yinger (1995), (Galster, 1990). The difference between Canadian and US circumstances is discussed in more detail in the upcoming paragraphs; however, suffice to say that this difference lies deeply rooted in America's history where slavery has played a greater role in shaping intergroup relations between Blacks and Whites than in Canada. The intricacies associated with this complicated past are vast and change as soon as they understood. The

legacy of racism is a living one that informs the consciousness of all groups, just as it in turn is informed by the experiences of each group member.

Méndez (2008) also notes the significant differences in Canadian immigration patterns, stating that the traditional assimilation patterns do not describe the current realities of many new immigrants as they do not tend to leave their new way stations in the same timeframe as immigrants have done in the past – they are staying longer or choosing not to leave at all.

> . . .[t]he "up and out" model continues to describe the experience of most immigrants in Canada, but for many of them, the predicted time frame of this trajectory unfavourably departs from the patterns observed in the past (p. 21).

The transience typically associated with the way-stations no longer seems to be there in the same fashion as it has been. The points of entry are now becoming areas that immigrants are looking to as favourable destinations in and of themselves.

In examining US models of spatial assimilation, Fong and Gulia (1999) found that Blacks do not necessarily fit traditional models that are based on traditional European immigration and localized migration patterns. If they did, "the differences in neighbourhood qualities among groups should be reduced for groups with higher levels of acculturation, controlling for socioeconomic status."(p. 578). However, this has proven not to be true. Both Massey and Denton (1993) and Alba and Logan (1991) found that within the United States, despite adequate socio-economic resources, Blacks are not able to move freely into neighbourhoods of their desired choice due to barriers put in place. Galster (1990) found that various housing market mechanisms create barriers to prevent Blacks from moving into certain neighbourhoods. More specifically, Yinger (1995) found

these mechanisms to include activities on the part of lending institutions whom are more likely to reject Blacks' applications for housing mortgages. Additionally, real estate agents steer Black home seekers away from certain neighborhoods (Galster, 1990). Massey and Denton (1993) in turn found that at the individual level, residents may form neighbourhood organizations to ensure that their neighbourhoods remain unchanged ethnically and racially speaking. Fong (1996) also found that within the US Blacks are discriminated against within the housing market, yet within Canada there is no evidence of this[4]. Fong concludes that this is in large part due to the comparatively small numbers of Blacks in Canada. The implication being that if the concentration of Blacks were higher, that one might see patterns of discrimination similar to those in the US.

Although the focus here is on Blacks, these findings are also applicable to other groups whereby variations of skin colour impact negatively on those who happen to be of a darker skin colour. Fong's (1996) work supports Massey and Denton's (1997) findings who believe that residential segregation in the United States is affected not by race in general but, more specifically, by the Black race in particular. That's not to say that race is not a factor in Canada. Rather, as Fong and Wilkes (1999) have found, spatial assimilation models and the implications therewith do not hold for Blacks or other groups such as Asians. Fong and Gulia (1999) reference a series of studies that consistently demonstrate that groups with darker skin colour experienced higher levels of residential segregation than other groups, even when their socioeconomic situation improved. They

[4] Fong (1996) feels that this may be due to the small number of Blacks in Canada in comparison to the US. This, however, does not mean that Blacks in Canada are not subject to similar, if not the same, racial pressures as their US counterparts. In fact, it could be argued that due to the relatively small population, acts of discrimination within the housing market may not have been given the necessary attention a situation of that nature deserves.

go on to conclude that the neighborhood qualities of Blacks are consistently seen as the least desirable[5]. More specifically, Blacks live in neighbourhoods with the least desirable social environments, even when living in areas with expensive housing. However, there are not the extreme spatially disadvantaged conditions for Blacks in Canada that there are in the United States. Fong and Gulia suspect this is in large part due to the socio-historical differences between Blacks in Canada and the US. Most Blacks in Canada immigrated after 1970, whereas Blacks in the United States have suffered from poverty, segregation, and the deliberate construction of ghettos from many years earlier (Fong & Gulia, 1999).

There is a recognized need to re-examine the long-standing, traditional model of spatial assimilation. However, as Fong and Wilkes (1999) have noted, the relationship is a much more complicated one, requiring the examination of a host of factors. Yet, one constant that consistently emerges is that the spatial assimilation of immigrants reflects their social mobility. With regards to social mobility, unlike the United States and Britain, social mobility in Canada is not only desirable but also more attainable according to Blanden (2005). In direct comparison to the US, this is in large part due to the role that race places within America. Blanden speaks to the lower mobility among Black families compared to White families. However, Myles and Feng (2004) point out that there is evidence of a "colour hierarchy" with respect to neighbourhood income in Toronto with the average Black family earning only 79 percent of the average White family. This

[5] Fong and Gulia (1999) refer to neighbourhood qualities as those that significantly affect the life chances of the area's residents i.e. childbearing behaviour, marriage prospects, labour force participation, educational achievement, health conditions and psychological distress.

would account for Blacks only now being able to capitalize on whatever economic investments that they made to enable them to move into more affluent neighbourhoods. Unlike other groups which appear to have been able to engage in spatial assimilation and upward social mobility faster (based on initial waves of immigration), Blacks have taken a longer time amassing the requisite resources to move.

Spatial Assimilation as Evidence of Social Mobility for Blacks

Myles and Feng (2004) question the validity of traditional spatial assimilation theory with respect to the Black immigrant experience in Toronto since previous patterns of assimilation were based on traditional "settler societies." Their work outlines the process of assimilation of various immigrant groups in Toronto. They examine the differences between White immigrants and Toronto's three largest racial minorities, Blacks, Chinese and South Asians. Combined, these ethno-racial groups account for about three-quarters of Toronto's visible minorities. The lived experience is not identical for these, or any group of immigrants residing in Toronto, however there is a common desire – to better oneself. From this common desire there are varying results. Myles and Feng reveal that Blacks are especially likely to be at a disadvantage in both the labour and housing markets (p. 39). As well, Black households are more likely to be run by younger single parents, who are less educated than their visible-minority immigrant counterparts (p.39). Additionally, the residential patterns of Toronto Blacks are those one would associate with the spatial assimilation model and the immigrant enclave (p. 41). This last point appears to contrast the point made earlier regarding spatial assimilation models not being applicable to Blacks (Fong & Gulia, 1999). However, a

plausible suggestion that explains this apparent contradiction exists. According to a recent report by the CBC, the existence of involuntary enclaves has come about due to poverty among immigrant families (CBC, 2009). The CBC report discusses the sharp increase in the number of communities that are poverty stricken and similar increases in the number of visible minorities living within those communities. These involuntary enclaves would then explain why Blacks would appear to fit one spatial assimilation model and not the other. In fact, Myles and Feng (2004) note that differences in socioeconomic resources are at the heart of spatial assimilation theory and go on to state that Blacks tend to live in neighbourhoods surrounded by the worst social environments. They also go on to state that, most "Black neighbourhoods" are quite poor but ironically, relatively few Blacks live in these neighbourhoods. Based on the 1996 census, Myles and Feng determined that only 38 census tracts have a Black population that exceeds 20 percent and these neighbourhoods account for only 17 percent of Toronto's Black population, with half of the Black population living in neighbourhoods with fewer than 10 percent Blacks (p. 41). Thus, it could be argued that the negative association that has been placed on particular communities within Toronto is in based on misinformation and stereotypes. However, the impact is no less real for the residents of these communities, as 'perception becomes reality' and the areas become stigmatized. Having now been "branded" as a resident of that particular community, the impetus for moving becomes stronger as residents aim to better their lot. They seek new opportunities in areas they can afford and for which there is no shame or disgrace. These new opportunities are

invariably to be found outside of the city of Toronto, as the economic conditions within Toronto have not afforded these opportunities thus far.

Census data from Statistics Canada shows that between 1996 and 2001 the Black population in the city of Brampton grew by over 10,000 people. Between 2001 and 2006, the rate of growth doubled compared to the previous 5 years, with over 20,000 Black people calling Brampton home (Statistics Canada, 2008). If an increasing number of Black people are calling Brampton home, and the key claim of Massey and Denton's (1985) spatial assimilation theory is that as social status rises, minorities attempt to convert their socioeconomic achievements into an improved spatial position, which usually implies assimilation with majority groups, then Blacks do fall in line with spatial assimilation theory and by extension experience upward social mobility.

Northwest Brampton becomes an ideal locale to highlight social mobility as it allows for homeownership in an area outside of the urban city, in an area that requires assimilation with the racial majority and requires a higher level of acculturation. However, the process of acculturation is a complex one, and as Myles and Feng (2004) note, Blacks within an urban setting such as Toronto invoke images of ghettoes characteristic of those found within major US cities and therefore not higher levels of acculturation. Yet, Toronto is not a major US city and there are no ghettoes or pockets of "Black" communities akin to those to which they refer. So what remains to be seen is

whether or not that same stigma is extended to the suburban landscape of Fletcher's Meadow where a significant percent of Blacks[6] now reside.

Early indicators of this migration would demonstrate that Fletcher's Meadow does in fact represent social mobility and a positive upward socioeconomic trend. As DeCoito and Mohanty (2008) note, compared to Ontario and Canada, Peel region had a much lower percentage of Blacks living below the poverty line in 2000. As Fletcher's Meadow was in the nascent stages of development at this time, and given the type of housing found within this community, one could easily surmise that those who moved into this area were more financially secure. Yet, in spite of this increased status and socioeconomic security, also known as upward social mobility, Black families in this new locale are still faced with the challenge of successfully addressing the issues that plague Black families across the region. These include but are not limited to, overcoming racism, negative stereotypes in the media, and educational challenges of Black youth. The Black Community Action Network of Peel identified these, along with other challenges, as being major issues to address to and for the Black community. This new chapter in the multi-storied Black experience is part of the ongoing challenge of not only carving out a niche within society, but also weaving the perspectives, experiences and stories of the Black community into the Canadian fabric.

[6] Based on Statistics Canada 2006 Census Tract Data:
- 16% of all Blacks living in Brampton live in Fletcher's Meadow
- Blacks make up 21% of the total population of Fletcher's Meadow residents.

Chapter 2: Blacks in Canada

Arriving on Canada's Doorstep

The history of Blacks in Canada is significant. It is a history that is invariably linked to the social, economic and political histories of the United States, Britain, the Caribbean, as well as Africa. The history of Blacks in Canada is complex precisely because of these linkages and further complexities are revealed as more information emerges regarding how the interplay of these factors have become manifested over time. However, when examining Black history in Canada, two distinct periods emerge – pre- and post-1962. The year 1962 is a watershed year because immigration policy within Canada finally changed to enable a large influx of Caribbean immigrants to enter the country and lay the foundation for subsequent generations of Black Canadians[7]. In exploring the lives of Caribbean immigrants[8] and their descendents, a historical examination of their marriage, relationships and family organization, employment, the educational experience of Black youth, religion, leisure and social life will be explored. Exploration of these specific areas should provide a comprehensive overview of Blacks and where they are situated within the larger Canadian framework. This will lay the foundation for further and more specific analysis of the northwest Brampton context and the educational opportunities this community provides for Black youth.

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[7] Although Black people from Africa are also very much a part of the Canadian mosaic, due to their comparatively low numbers, they will not be the focus of this chapter. However, unless specific reference is made, they are included by default when the term Black is used.

[8] The Caribbean is comprised of many different peoples, ethnicities and cultures. However, unless specific reference is made, any reference to people from the Caribbean or the West Indies is made in reference to the Black population from this region.

The history of Blacks in Canada is rich and deep, spanning centuries, involving many sacrifices, injustices and triumphs. Going back to the "beginning," however briefly, reminds us that Black people in Canada have been associated with slavery and subsequently a subordinate role in society. A lot has obviously changed since the arrival of the first known Black person on North American soil in1628, but the subordinate role in society is still present, if not as pervasive. A cursory, historical view of Blacks in Canada would find that many of the first Black immigrants were here as a result of their families escaping slavery in the US and laying roots in various parts of Canada. Ironically, any persons of colour, especially Black, were discouraged from settling in Canada, even after the abolition of slavery in both the British colonies and the US, and during the rapid expansion of western Canada under Clifford Sifton, when he was Minister of the Interior from 1896 to 1905 (Knowles, 2007). In fact, Sifton's aggressive American campaign did not seek out Black settlers. Unlike prospective White immigrants, Canadian immigration agents did not warmly receive Blacks. Agents claimed that Blacks' unsuitability to Canadian conditions, particularly the climate, was the reason for rejection. But this was a weak and thin veil for the true reason – colour (Knowles, 2007).

In the first half of the 20th century, racism continued to be an insidious and debilitating force throughout Canada for many Blacks. According to Knowles, in the post -war boom years of 1947 – 1957, Blacks were still considered inadmissible unless they came under the preferred-class designation or were the spouses or minor children of Canadian residents. As Siemiatycki, Rees, Ng, and Rahi (2003) point out, in 1960 not one

of Canada's twenty-seven immigration offices outside North America was located in the Caribbean or Africa. Consequently, when Ellen Fairclough, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, introduced the new immigration policy on January 19, 1962, she in effect eliminated racial discrimination as an institutionalized, unabashed and major feature of Canada's immigration policy. As a result, any unsponsored immigrants who could satisfy the Department of Citizenship and Immigration by proving that they had the requisite education, skill, or other qualifications were to be considered suitable for admission, irrespective of race, colour, or national original - provided they were able to support themselves until they found employment or were coming to take a specific job (Knowles, 2007).

In 1967 another major shift in federal policy that had a lasting impact on the lives of all Canadians occurred with the introduction of selection according to "units of assessment," or the "Point System." Through this new system, Canada would usher in a new era of immigration that has lasted till today. Many of the individuals who were previously separated from their families in order to journey to Canada to establish a better life, were now able to reunite with other family members from their countries of origin. The effect of the changes of 1962 and this 1967 policy were significant. People of colour from the Caribbean began to enter the country in unprecedented numbers.

> Their numbers increased from 1,000 to 2,000 a year before 1962 to between 2,200 and 3,700 from 1963 to 1966, and with the implementation of the points system. . . to almost 8,000 in 1967 and 1968, 14,250 in 1969, and 13,600 in 1970 (Palmer, 1990, p.190)

As well, this new system, which was heavily weighted towards educational achievement, meant that immigration from the Caribbean constituted a veritable "brain drain" for the

region (Palmer, 1990). "More than half the Caribbean males aged 15-65 and 45 percent of the women had some university or other postsecondary education in 1981" (p. 78). The significance of this becomes apparent when the theory of spatial assimilation is applied to Blacks in Toronto. Given their history, as discussed above, and taking into account the context many Black immigrants faced when arriving in Toronto, education and socio-economic status play a very important role in their migration to this country. Many came to Canada with a level of education that afforded them a certain status and lifestyle back home. However despite this social status, upon arrival many of these migrants were subordinated, which became very apparent in the new White dominant society. Still, the value placed on education would not wane. It would be the cornerstone on which many immigrants would build their dreams and aspirations, for not only themselves, but their children as they strived to forge a new identity and life in a relatively unknown, and highly racialised context.

From this point onward, the Caribbean was a steady source of immigration for Canada. Over the past 50 years Toronto has attracted almost half of all newcomers to Canada with 70,000 immigrants arriving in the city annually from approximately 170 countries (Anisef, Paul & Michael Lanphier, 2003). Blacks constitute the third largest visible minority population in Toronto, and the city of Toronto is home to the majority of Canada's Black population (Statistics Canada, 2009b). Most Blacks are of Caribbean origin, having immigrated here mainly during the early 1970s, and those of African origin arriving mostly in the 1980s (James, 2007). According to Myles and Feng (2004), until the 1970s few residents of Toronto had much direct experience with "race," based

on routine daily encounters with persons distinguished by their skin colour as visible minorities. But in the 1970s, with Canada's source countries of immigration shifting from Europe to Asia, Africa, the Caribbean as well as Central and South America, the visible minority population of Toronto rose from 14 to 32 percent (Myles and Feng, 2004). This increased level of inter-group association is significant, as it has often fostered better relationships in the spirit of multiculturalism, which is often lauded as one of Canada's most venerable characteristics. This is especially true in comparison to U.S. cities with much longer and deeper racially mixed histories.

> Unlike U.S. cities, where racial and especially black-white divisions have deep historical roots, the social origination of Toronto's visible minorities in urban space has been created virtually ex nihilo since the 1970s and is arguably still evolving (p.30).

Within Canada, Blacks are still living with, and operating within, a racialised system as the racial hierarchies that exist in the US are present in Canadian society today, albeit less conspicuous[9]. Consequently, Blacks within Canada still face the day-to-day challenges living in such a system can present. Challenges ranging from uncomfortable glances in a store to violent encounters with other non-racialized members in the same community (Head, 1975).

The current social condition of Blacks in the Greater Toronto Area, and any discussions of social mobility and assimilation, cannot occur outside of a subordinate

[9] In a recent article in the Toronto Star titled, "The darker your skin, the less you fit in." (Taylor, 2009). a Canadian study was conducted where 41,666 people were interviewed in nine different languages, and skin colour – not religion, not income – was found to be the biggest barrier to immigrants feeling they belonged here. It was also found that the darker the skin, the greater the alienation. However, the article noted that Canada was a preferred destination compared to the US due to greater levels of compassion and understanding of ones social/racial status.

perspective as it shapes the context of inter-group association for all Black people within Canada. Myles and Feng (2004) reinforce the notion of this subordinate role by stating,

> Periods of initial contact between groups are crucial in shaping subsequent patterns of development. When the initial contact is through conquest (North American aboriginals) or subjugation (American blacks), the resulting ethnic and racial hierarchies tend to be enduring and assimilation is difficult (Liberson, 1980). Later waves of voluntarily migrants who share attributes of previously subjugated minorities (e.g. recent black migrants to the United States) may find themselves willy-nilly incorporated into a pattern of "segmented assimilation" (Portes and Zhou, 1993), reproducing now well-institutionalized ethnic and racial hierarchies inherited from the past (p.30).

Moving forward with this historical legacy can clearly be challenging. The myriad of factors that can contribute to the integration of a people into any given society are vast. The specific context of northwest Brampton literally provides a new space with which Black families can, as much as it's possible, start "anew", or at least start with what appears to be an advantaged position. Yet, this too is determined by what each family brings with them in terms of financial and social capital.

Differences in Social Structures

Regardless of their country of origin, Black immigrants to Canada have faced a long line of hardships and have had to navigate through many challenging circumstances. According to a report by Statistics Canada titled 'Ethnic Diversity and Immigration,' over the past 30 years, most immigrants upon arrival, including those from the Caribbean, settled in Toronto (Statistics Canada, 2009a). In the cases of Toronto and Montreal, Black immigrants were able to find work chiefly in Canada's expanding manufacturing, construction, and service sectors. From the 1970s onward a progressively increasing number of Black immigrants from the Caribbean would arrive on Canada's doorstep. As

described by Siemiatycki, Rees, Ng, and Rahi (2003), many Black immigrants would come with a shared romanticized image of Canada that has been described as "a place of pristine snow and streams, a home of tolerance, a country in the forefront of racial harmony" (p.399). However, a much more apt depiction of life in Toronto for Blacks and those of Caribbean background can be summarized in the term 'differential incorporation' by Frances Henry (1994). Henry explains that this term "refers to their [people from the Caribbean] unequal treatment and differential access to the economic, social, political, and cultural rewards offered in a plural society" (p.17). She goes on to state that the unequal position of people from the Caribbean is due to the interaction between two specific issues:

> First, the cultural values and institutions that Caribbean people bring with them that do not work to their advantage in the new society and two, the forces of individual, everyday and institutional racism that they encounter in their interactions with mainstream society (p. 17).

These factors are not unique to the Black or Caribbean population, but their manifestation is. Consequently, the experiences of Blacks within this new locale is an unprecedented one, with no blueprint or map to follow as to how to successfully overcome these specific challenges and ensure the realization of the dreams and hopes that each person brought with them to Canada. According to Myles and Feng (2004), the South Asian and Chinese populations have been able to experience upward social mobility over a similar period of time. That is not to say that a specific blueprint does exist for any particular immigrant group; however Blacks do not have the same localized repository of knowledge and resources to build upon. When looking at spatial assimilation and social mobility in today's modern context, this is a deficit as Blacks are

now starting to develop the foundation other groups have already started to take advantage of. Thus, it is from this comparatively disadvantaged starting point that Black people in northwest Brampton find themselves situated. Also, it is this same position that Black people are using as the platform for success in the form of providing life opportunities for themselves and specifically, educational opportunities for their children.

Marriage, Relationships and Family Organization

Many would argue that the home is the cornerstone of society, and that the family is the most fundamental social group within the home. The idea of a nuclear family (a husband, wife and their children) has long been held to be the standard (Balderrama, 2009). This was especially true after World War II within Canada and the United States, when there was a renewed interest in 'the home' and building family units. However, within Black homes, the nuclear family that Black families are compared to is often found not to be the norm (CBC, 2007). Based on the 2001 Census, about 46 per cent of Black children were growing up in homes with only one parent versus 18 per cent of the general population (ibid). As such, the standard of the two-parent home, and the socio-economic benefits associated with this standard, have not been taken advantage of by a disproportionately high percentage of the Black population. This directly and inevitably impacts the life opportunities of Black children, as they do not have the same comparative base within the home from which to begin, as compared to other groups . Given the strong correlation between a stable home-life and future success, measured by the attainment of the markers provided through life opportunities, Blacks are clearly starting from a position of disadvantage. Accordingly, any discussions of life

opportunities for Black children must include a discussion on home life as this is the foundation and creates the context for the future outlook of Black children.

In regards to marriage, relationships and family organization many of the "norms" found within the Caribbean become problematic when migration to countries such as Canada occurs. As Henry (1994) notes, marriage, relationships, family organization, gender relations and systems of kinship are extremely varied and complex.

> In West Indian life, family organization is characterized by legal marriage, common-law 'marriages,' visiting unions, and 'illegitimate' births resulting from casual unions. All these forms of relationship are practised by Caribbean people of all class levels, although the exact frequencies of each type may vary by class and other variables. (p.57)

Central to each of these relationships is the role of women. As many analysts acknowledge women occupy a central place in the ordering of social and economic relations. This view is widely held despite the lack of resources on the part of many women to realize their position within politics. Additionally, and perhaps ironically, women's role within the family politic is one such that they are afforded more power than one would suspect based on conventional views of women and traditional sex-role divisions. These sex-role divisions have developed over time and were heavily influenced by British values. As Henry (1994) points out, and further reiterated by Clarke (1999) and Orlando Patterson in a CBC (2007) interview, Caribbean societies have a long history of slavery, colonialism, and neo-colonial economic patterns which have undermined the male's ability to be the major earner. As a result, women have had to assume social and economic responsibilities for their families. Given this reality, many

women throughout the Caribbean have not only had to play many roles but have also had to develop many alternative and complementary strategies to maintain themselves and their families.

In extending this examination to Canada, Henry's analysis states the importance of social class in shaping and defining familial and gender relationships in the Caribbean and points out that this same force plays a role among Caribbean migrants once they arrive in Canada. Upon arriving and establishing themselves in Canada certain family patterns stay the same while others change. Having children out of wedlock and raising children by a female single parent has continued despite migration. There is a continued pattern of single-mothers, absent fathers, and a lack of legal marriage or common-law status. "Such patterns interfere or inhibit integration into Canadian society" (Henry, 2004, p.98). However, it should be noted that the children of these immigrants who are from lower-middle class or middle class backgrounds tend to be able to show some signs of social mobility and eventual integration into the Canadian society. Yet, almost expectantly, class becomes the defining factor here as the majority of migrants, as Henry found in her study, were from working class families. Henry also found that there was evidence that these single mother's attempts at mobility were severely constrained. In some cases they were not able to complete high school never mind attend community colleges or universities. While pregnant and caring for their young children, such women were almost always living on mother's allowance and other forms of government assistance. Later, when their children were older and they attempted to enter the labour

force, their job possibilities were constrained by lack of education and training. The most important disadvantage is that children in such families were raised in relative poverty.

Through Henry's analysis we can ascertain that social class is a key determinant to success, integration into Canadian society and very influential in the limiting of differential incorporation. However, class alone does not account for the state of Blacks within this country nor their familial patterns and structures. Race plays a key role as well. As wave after wave of Black immigrants enter the country and look to establish themselves within the "new" Canadian context, they soon find that many of the inequalities they were trying to escape from were also present within Canada. Lawrence (1982) identified that certain groups such as Blacks within British society have unequal power relations. Consequently, they have been denied equal access to power, have limited choices and options available to them. The same can be said of Canada. The cultural patterns that have arisen out of the Caribbean and regulate family life – the same cultural patterns that have come out of a society built upon slavery and exploitation – are, in actuality, "reflections of the limited options available to them then and now" (Henry, 1994, p. 100). Within Canada the lack of options persist; not only the individual migrates but also his/her socio-economic and class structure migrates as well. In other words, their continued lack of access to power continues in Canada (Lawrence, 1982).

Both Henry (1994) and Patterson, in his CBC (2007) interview, point out that in understanding the interplay of all these various dynamics, it is important that a 'blame the victim' mentality is not adopted in regards to the maintenance of the patterns associated with single motherhood, absent fatherhood and dysfunctional youth. Henry, specifically,

argues that to do so would ignore the realities of the socio-political and economic power structure of societies in which peoples of colour are relegated to the bottom of the social hierarchy – a notion found in both the Canadian and Caribbean contexts.

Given these constraints that many Black families operate within, Fletcher's Meadow is a marked break from what has come to be understood as the "norm." By moving to this new suburban community, the travesties and woes of the social dynamics prevalent in the Black community have not disappeared. However, the impact these factors once had no longer appears to be the same. The spatial barrier has been broken and the upward social mobility afforded to this new space is now a reality.

Employment

Employment plays a significant economic and social role in one's life. As a means to sustain oneself, having a job is usually essential. Additionally, one's self-identity is often connected to or impacted by his/her type of employment. Historically, within the Caribbean, the opportunities for employment have not been as great as that of Canada (Thomas-Hope, 2002). Consequently, immigration is seen as a viable means to improve one's economic status, and is in fact, one of the main reasons why many people from the Caribbean chose to immigrate, according to Henry (1994) and Statistics Canada (2009a). Since immigration opened up in the 1960s, many of the immigrants that left the Caribbean and made Canada home were doing so due to the high rates of unemployment in most Caribbean countries (Palmer, 1990). Many of the working and lower middle class immigrants were expecting greater employment opportunities. However, that turned out to not always be the case - at least not in the occupational field or area of specialty that

they expected. Henry cites racism as the key obstacle for many immigrants. In Henry's research she found that many of the respondents "felt that racism pervaded the job market and was one of the most significant factors affecting their position in Canadian society" (Henry, 1994, p.102). More recently, an article in the Ottawa Citizen supports the claims made by the respondents in Henry's research by highlighting a Canada-wide survey by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation and the Association for Canadian Studies. This study showed that among people who identify with an ethnic or racial minority, one in five said that the discrimination they experienced came from an employer or potential employer (Blanchfield, 2007).

Yet, despite the obvious and subtle challenges racism in the workforce presents, historically, Caribbean labour force participation is quite high, especially in the area of manufacturing (Henry, 1994; Preston, Lo, and Wang, 2003). Socially, this has presented an interesting paradox since the high level of employment contradicts the commonly accepted belief that Caribbean immigrants are lazy and unproductive (Bashi, 2004). On the other hand, the type of employment associated with Caribbean immigrants belies many of their true abilities, level of education and qualifications. "Caribbean people are rarely appointed to managerial positions and many, by virtue of seniority or skills, deserve such placements" (Henry, 1994). Without the economic benefit associated with these managerial positions, the socio-economic growth that other racialised groups in Canada have been able to experience has been elusive at best for many within the Black population. Arguably, the Black population within Canada faces the greatest hardship when it comes to overcoming the stigma and negative stereotypes attributed to race. In a

recent poll, Canadians felt that the West Indian population were the least likely to contribute positively to Canada (Curry and JimèNez, 2005), while a study reported in the *Toronto Star* proves that the darker your skin colour the more difficult it will be for you to fit in (Taylor, 2009).

Both the study and the poll are indicative of the challenges Black people face within society. As has been discussed, social mobility is directly related to one's economic position (Myles and Feng, 2004). As Myles and Feng point out, Blacks have been at a disadvantage in the labour market, and the opportunities to capitalize on prevailing market forces and translate that into tangible assets (i.e. real estate), have been impeded. Employment has been the gateway to economic viability, and although no one can deny that Blacks have been able to participate in the labour force, the degree of 'gainful' employment becomes questionable. Thus, the prospect of upward social mobility has been poor given the comparatively slow rate of individual, economic growth. In terms of life opportunities and affording these opportunities to children, employment not only represents the means to an end, it is arguably the end itself. More clearly, self-identity is often found through one's employment and so ideally, through school, one becomes that which he/she has strived to be. If it is known ahead of time that this goal cannot be attained, it will more than likely serve to discourage anyone from trying to pursue that goal (Dei, 1997). However, Fletcher's Meadow appears to represent a break from this pattern. Despite the aforementioned challenges of appropriate employment, Black families seem to have been able to capture a piece of the suburban pie. This

reflects a progressive, and hopefully sustainable, move towards a more economically viable future.

Education

Directly related to the employment experience of Black families within this country are the educational experiences of Black youth. As many parents struggle to make ends meet, they have knowingly placed a significant amount of trust into an educational system that has reportedly failed to meet the needs of their children (James & Brathwaite, 1996). During the first waves of immigration from the Caribbean, research has shown that educational levels of Caribbean immigrants were equal to or higher than the rest of the population (Richmond & Statistics Canada, 1989). Immigrants from this period would end up staying and making Canada their new home. They would give birth to a new generation. However, their children, and those that followed, have not met with the level of educational success one would assume would follow from parents who had been able to attain such levels themselves. The reasons for this are varied. Several generations of Black children, spanning almost four full decades, have made their way through Ontario's education system. However, the first Black children to enter the educational system en masse were met with differential treatment including, but not limited to, name-calling and racial graffiti (Henry, 1994). In fact, James (1996) examined much of the research of this period during the 1970s and 1980s and found that without exception, the studies showed that the difficulties the students faced resulted from not only their experiences of trying to adjust to a new society but also from their experiences with discrimination based on race and cultural differences. During this period James also

found that some of the school authorities did not acknowledge the role race played on the underachievement of Blacks. Rather, they felt that the level of performance on the part of Black students (particularly students from the Caribbean) was due to their adjustment problems. Another group of authorities were of the belief that the low achievement of Black students was pathological in nature. However, the research of the day contradicted this thinking noting that these perspectives did not, and could not, account for the fact that Black students who were born in Canada were also underperforming academically (Head, 1975; Calliste, 1980). Head and Calliste also pointed out that contrary to the notion held by authorities, Black students placed a high value on education because they see education as the vehicle for getting ahead in Canadian society. Yet, despite this apparent high level of motivation to succeed, Black students were not being successful. James and Brathwaite (1996) notes that one reason for the lack of success stems from the role society plays on influencing the academic outcomes for many Black students. The social construction of Black students as academically incompetent operated as a barrier to the realization of their educational goals (James & Brathwaite, 1996).

James also observed that in examining the educational situation for Black students in the seventies and eighties, the research showed that Black students were being streamed into lower level or vocational classes. As one can deduce, this streaming had serious short-term and long-term implications for success. Black students, their families and the community felt that the educational and occupational possibilities that were now afforded them as a result of streaming were of little benefit. This sentiment carried through into the nineties as well. However, what became more prevalent were the means

by which Black students resisted the marginalization they were facing. As Solomon (1992) points out, some Black students had begun challenging school authority and disengaging from school often resulting in dropping out, or as Dei et al (1997) argue, not 'dropping-out' but rather being 'pushed-out,'

> outside forces such as adverse economic conditions, realities of the social structure, and personal problems, all of which conspire to force individuals out of school (p. 47).

As Solomon (1992) goes on to demonstrate, the level and nature of disengagement on the part of Black youth manifested itself in a myriad of ways, including the refusal to follow certain school rules and routines and refusal to embrace the school ethos that they perceived as acts of subordination.

Given the racialised climate that Black students found themselves in, over time, issues surrounding alienation, underachievement and high drop-out rates amongst Black students had become a common theme. This is not to say that there was not a counterbalance of success among Black youth. Contrarily, research has shown that most Black students were determined to hold onto their level of educational goals despite the influence of streaming (James & Brathwaite, 1996). In addition, Solomon (1992) notes that West Indian students were represented in all levels of high school programs, despite disproportionate representation in the low-level vocational and occupational programs. However, taking all of this into account, what this does highlight, as Henry (1994) addresses, is that the factors that have been identified that have led to the high levels of disengagement and underachievement include,

> low self-esteem; the lack of Black teachers as role-models; the persistent 'invisibility' of Black studies and Black history within the curriculum; and

> parents' lack of understanding of the Canadian school system, which differs from Caribbean models (p.124).

Consequently, in response to the Black community and the research that has been presented over the years, the nineties saw many educators and school boards developing policies and teacher training programmes in the areas of anti-racism. The Royal Commission on Learning in Ontario whose report *For the Love of Learning* was published in 1994 was another "official" indicator of the challenges Black youth faced in the education system. This commission, through their report, addressed the 'education crises' facing Black students in Ontario (Royal Commission on Learning, 1994). However, (James & Brathwaite, 1996) aptly points out that the crises they referred to, is one that African Canadians have been facing for many generations. This in turn led the Black community to question "the capability of educational institutions in Canada to really educate Black students now, after failing to do so for more than a century (p.27). Yet, regardless of the skepticism that abounded, Black youth within, and entering, the educational system still had to deal with this "new" revitalized effort to correct previous educational woes and embrace antiracist and ethnocultural equity education. Based on the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training (1993), which outlined how an antiracist approach should be implemented, a new era began and a legacy was left that was felt for many years after.

In addition, a zero tolerance approach to discipline matters in schools began. According to a report conducted by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC), in late 1993, the Scarborough Board of Education adopted a Safe Schools Policy on Violence and Weapons. By the end of the decade the Progressive Conservative Party

promised a zero tolerance policy for bad behaviour in schools. The promise began to take shape in April 2000 when Education Minister Janet Ecker released a *Code of Conduct* for Ontario schools. One month later, the Minister introduced the *Safe Schools Act*, which proposed amending the *Education Act* to 'give teeth' to the *Code of Conduct* and provide principals and teachers with more authority to suspend and expel students (Bhattacharjee, 2003). The *Act* was passed by the legislature in June 2000 and came into effect in September 2001. However, soon after its implementation there were complaints from students, families and communities. Various complaints were submitted to the OHRC outlining a variety of situations where students and their families felt that the implementation of this policy was racist in nature. The OHRC investigated these claims and found that the *Act* and school board policies were disproportionately impacting racial minority students, particularly Black students, and students with disabilities (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2003). The government finally conceded after what amounted to the OHRC shaming the Ministry into action. In the government's own words:

> Data collected, verified and made public by the Ministry of Education shows that the "Safe Schools Act" is not being consistently applied across the province. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006)

Under the new governance of the Liberal Party, the Ministry of Education took a long hard look at the *Act* and through a much more publicly involved process, made corrective measures to bring about legislation that better reflected the diverse population it was serving.

> More than 700 parents, teachers, students and other community members from across Ontario provided input that has helped shape a comprehensive new

> approach to school safety outlined in the Safe Schools Action Team's report. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007)

The implications for Black students can be found in that under the original legislation schools were allowed to set mandatory suspensions or expulsions for certain infractions, and it shifted the power to expel students from the school boards to principals. In essence, it created an environment of zero tolerance and resulted in large numbers of suspensions and expulsions – especially of Black students. Under Bill 212 the new legislation, which came into affect as of February 1, 2008, there is a clear and deliberate movement away from 'zero tolerance' towards an emphasis on 'progressive discipline.' Among the various strategies that the Bill outlines, the overall emphasis is on taking a look at the student and their immediate context; employing strategies that can prevent students from being suspended or expelled; and where necessary suspending students while taking into account any mitigating factors applicable to the student and their situation.

As this Bill has only recently been enacted, it has yet to be seen as to whether or not this new approach will be truly effective. On the surface, given the hurdles that Black students have faced over the past three decades, it is a step in the right direction. However, this latest incarnation of 'progress' does not address the aforementioned underlying and fundamental issues that have been plaguing Black students. It merely provides a course of action for when things go wrong, which, given the current educational system, things inevitably will. However, all is not lost. As James and Brathwaite (1996) states, the evidence points to the continuing confidence that Black students hold the capacity of education to participate and succeed in Canadian society.

Despite the many obstacles that had to be overcome and have yet to be addressed, Black students have demonstrated that even within a system that has not addressed their needs, interests and expectations many can still prevail and be successful.

Religion

Religion is arguably the 'greatest' institution ever created. Its scope is so far reaching that there is no aspect of life that it has not influenced or touched upon. And although its influence may have thought to have been waning over the last few decades (at least until recently), within the Caribbean its importance and influence cannot be understated (Lee, 2002). In terms of a Canadian context, the level of attendance at church, or any other religious institution, makes it very clear that religion and religiosity play a strong role in the lives of Caribbean immigrants.

Given the pluralist nature of Canada, it is no surprise then that the Caribbean migrants maintained their various religious traditions. They sought out churches and other religious institutions that best matched the unique flavour they were accustom to 'back home'. According to Henry (1994), 'back home' meant going to church where the ministers, regardless of denomination, were mostly men, and the congregants tended to be mostly women. 'Back home' was where women tended to have lifelong allegiances to religion, turning to it in times of need for solace and support – especially considering the extraordinarily hard lives many of them led. Women were expected to attend church every Sunday and bring their children with them, regardless of age, and it was not uncommon for a woman to attend several churches, i.e. prayer meetings at one church on Wednesday, bible study at another on Friday and "regular" church on a Sunday. 'Back

home' was where the nature of the services in most Caribbean churches was one in which the congregants were expected to participate actively by singing and using overt displays of emotion, while the ministers were expected to give their sermons in very strong persuasive and emotional language with music and hymns always being used to accompany the service.

However, in their attempt to find similar places of worship in Canada, Henry states that many migrants felt and experienced racism that acted as a deterrent. As a result, like the Caribbean, if they could not find a church they liked, it was not too long thereafter that they would form or build their own. However, as time would pass, the desire among the next generation to attend church would wane. Henry notes that the importance of the church did not diminish, it still played a crucial role in the rearing of children and morale shaping of families; however, weekly attendance was no longer viewed as being as indispensable. One could still be considered a strong adherent of the faith without attending as regularly. This thinking is in line with the changes that have been noted across Canada in regards to church attendance (Jantz, 2008).

For first generation immigrants from the Caribbean, religion and religiosity play a strong and active role in shaping their lives and their continued integration into Canadian society. They paved the way for subsequent generations by laying the morale foundation, a foundation that was deeply rooted in their individual experiences in the Caribbean. However, the generations that followed appear to have been caught in an intergenerational struggle for identity. Not directly from the Caribbean and in many cases not having an allegiance to Canada, many younger Black Canadians are not as religious

as their parents. Consequently, given its socio-political stance, as well as the prominence of urban cultural figures such as Bob Marley, Rastafarianism appears to have become a much more popular alternative for many younger generations – at least on the surface (Gossai & Murrell, 2000). The sporting of dreadlocks (the typical hairstyle of Rastafarians) and the smoking of marijuana has been picked up by many, but without the religious convictions associated with the actions.

Despite the apparent 'pick-and-choose' nature of today's generation towards religion, the religious impulse of Black youth is still very evident (Wallace, 2003). Christianity is the dominant religious force, and its influence can be found in the many (ironic) references to Jesus found in Hip Hop music as well as in the gold and diamond covered crosses worn by many youth today. Less tangibly, and more importantly, the religiosity that was brought to Canada by their parents has created a level of fellowship amongst the various members of the various congregations across the GTA. Arguably, as Blacks move into Fletcher's Meadow, the role of the various churches will increase as they become the hub for a spatially more diverse congregation. In so doing, the church does not hinder the social mobility of its members; rather it allows them to celebrate the success their new locale represents - life opportunities realized.

Leisure and Social Life

Due to the pleasures of tourism, Canadians often view the Caribbean as a series of island 'playgrounds,' a place one can go for leisure. Interestingly, "What do people from the Caribbean do for fun?" is a rhetorical question that is often heard. Well, the nature of fun and leisure is characterised by specific factors that have strongly influenced what

people do and why they do it. Social and leisure activities in the Caribbean play a very important cultural role. Henry (1994) provides a very good overview of this aspect of Black/Caribbean life. According to her, the typical Caribbean working-class household is not a large structure but is densely populated by both the immediate and extended family. Many villages are comprised of these households, especially in rural areas, and do not lend themselves to any 'real' privacy. One's 'business' is readily heard and known by all within the family and the village. Even within the larger cities, due to the higher levels of density, there are limited options for privacy. Consequently, there is a high degree of familiarity amongst people of a certain region, and given the small size of most of the islands, even the 'big' ones, the foundation for a strong social network has been laid.

The strength of this network is also bolstered by the very informal manner by which people greet and socialize. Invitations to visit, verbal or otherwise, are rare. Neighbours often "drop by" unannounced to talk and spend time with each other. Street corners, parks or any other open spaces are often used (by men especially) as meeting places where one can talk and share a drink. As well, bars, pubs, taverns or 'rum shops' as people on some of the islands affectionately call them, are popular meeting venues. In addition to these informal gatherings, many people use special occasions such as birthdays to have parties. These parties typically take place in one's house, a hall, or a community centre and are attended by those who are closely associated with the host or one of the guests. In fact, Henry draws attention to the nature of these parties stating that through word of mouth, parties can become quite large in size, and that of the utmost importance at these parties are drink, food and music.

> The success of such social events is often evaluated by the quality of the music played. The major activity, of course, is dancing. Caribbean parties are not sit-down-and-talk events, nor like the stand-around North American cocktail party. Caribbean fêtes are characterized by spirited and loud music and active and continuous dancing. (p.168)

Once people migrated to Canada, they continued to socialize; yet 'how' Caribbean migrants did so changed over time. With the first wave of migrants, the house party was the main form of socialization among the members of the community. It bore many similarities to the house parties in the Caribbean, especially in the manner in which people would attend. There were never any formal invitations. People simply arrived at the party because they knew the host, or because they knew somebody who knew somebody, etc. Henry explains that this was socially acceptable at the time (1970s) as there was a sense of belonging amongst those in attendance. "House parties were especially useful because there were almost no clubs, fast-food outlets, community halls, or another venue that might have been used for social events" (p.170).

As time went on, high school dances became the partying mainstay. The schools that had the largest Black population and the popular students became the ones which were 'cool' to attend, according to Henry. During the early eighties, students from across Toronto would attend these dances. And at the time they were open to all students. Another crucial element to the success of these dances was the DJ. DJs, like the house parties in both Canada and the Caribbean, were the key determinants as to whether or not the party was successful. They too had their own following, and often hailed from one of the popular high schools. Another important factor that was crucial to the success of partying at this time was the fact that all of the attendants felt safe and comfortable. There

was little to no violence, which translated into big crowds and lots of money for the hosts.

However, in the evolution of parties, block parties or 'blockos' would draw even larger crowds as they took place outdoors. They were an opportunity for DJs to promote parties they would be throwing later on. They originally started in downtown Toronto, but by their height in the mid-eighties had spread to all over the city. The block party season would get underway during the month of July leading up to Caribana (the first weekend in August), with both old and young attending. People would dance to the music provided by the DJ and partake of traditional Caribbean food being sold by the few enterprising individuals who chose to do so.

Henry goes on to state that by the mid-eighties, there were a fairly large number of clubs throughout Toronto that catered to Black people and people of Caribbean descent. But a new type of venue also sprung up during this time, the warehouse. These venues were also typically used during Caribana season, as they were able to accommodate large crowds. The clubs themselves also began to play a new type of music called 'house' music. This new genre also had its own style of dancing and became quite popular along with the fashion associated with those who attended. It should be noted that a large segment of the population that attended the high school parties, were the same ones now attending the clubs and warehouse parties. But an important point of distinction comes in that at the clubs and warehouses, a noticeable segment of the attendees were no longer just Black.

> These venues attracted different kinds of people, primarily Black, but also included some Whites and Asians. People of diverse sexual persuasions were also drawn to these clubs, mostly because of the music and the freedom to dance in an uninhibited fashion. (p.174)

In spite of this happy revelry, a significant shift occurred within the party scene and among the participants, the incursion of drugs and violence. By the late eighties, it had become commonplace to hear about a shooting taking place in association with a club, as well as at house parties which also started to make a steep decline. Henry's research points to the fact that the large diverse numbers made these gathering places prime opportunities for the criminal element to take advantage of. This in turn led to a larger police presence at the various venues and created a culture of resentment.

> People who used to have a good time at house parties and clubs no longer attend because they are no comfortable with the way they have changed. They also fear the violence that sometimes accompanies these activities. As police-community relations have worsened in the city, a circular dynamic appears to be taking place. The police, on the other hand, expect violence, drug dealing, and other subcultural activities at these venues. Both groups expect the worst of each other. Policing Black community social functions therefore increases the tensions between police and segments within the community. (p.176)

Although these tense relations persist to this day, there was a large counterbalance to the negativity that became associated with partying – Caribana. Caribana had become the social event of the year for the Black and Caribbean community. Caribana was created in 1967 as a community heritage project for Canada's Centennial year. Based on Trinidad Carnival, the festival now also includes the music, dance, food and costumes of Jamaica, Guyana, the Bahamas, and other Caribbean cultures represented in Toronto. It is the largest Caribbean street festival in North America attracting over 1 million onlookers and thousands of participants. It serves many important functions for Black and Caribbean communities in Toronto. Despite being a wonderful opportunity to have fun, Caribana helps to maintain the cultural traditions of the Caribbean, of Trinidad in particular, but the

other participatory islands as well. As participants in Henry's research state, it helped Black and Caribbean people take pride in who they were and allowed for the joyful expression of cultural and racial identity. The continuance of the festival also allowed for second, third and fourth generations to remain aware of their rich, diverse cultural heritage. Additionally, Caribana is a major economic force although the benefits of this party juggernaut have been fraught with controversy involving the misappropriation of funds and the lack of retention of money within the Black and Caribbean community (Marlow, 2007). Yet, the party has gone on, with each passing year being a step closer towards integration into mainstream society. It's an aspect that plays too large a role to be ignored or dismissed. It is also an aspect to the larger issue of identity, that when properly examined, yields a great deal of information and insight into the makeup and character of a large community. Caribana has also been shaped in large part by the media, especially due to the unfortunate coverage stemming from the violence that occurred over a decade ago

> Violence at Caribana has been a big concern since 1996, when a man was killed and three others wounded in a shooting spree at the procession. Cops traced the senseless violence to a previous incident uptown that played out days later (CityNews, 2008).

Over the years, several other violent incidents have also been reported on in association with the festival, and have helped to taint the good that the festival represents (Barmak, 2008). These incidents have fed into the negative stereotypes already prevalent in the society, especially in relationship to Black males (Harrison & Esqueda, 2001). Yet, despite the negativity, the positive intentions of the organizers, and the revelers, is often mentioned in the various reports one comes across in relation to Caribana, albeit, at

times, in a seemingly patriarchal and condescending tone. It is the hope that these positive intentions will reflect the positive characteristics that are inherent in the festival and that overtime the cultural legacy of the festival will be a source of pride for future generations.

Socializing within a Caribbean context is considerably different than that of mainstream Canadian society. Over time, this difference has been marked by tension as the size of the Black and Caribbean population became perceptible to the outside eye. The nature of parties in the Caribbean and their eventual translation into a Canadian context has been met with some noticeable tension on the part of mainstream society. The point of contention that seems to almost inevitably start a negative series of events is noise. An important distinction that Henry points out is that loud music is not noise in the Caribbean.

> Party music is supposed to entertain the entire neighbourhood. (Radios and TVs are also played at high volume in he Caribbean. This may stem from earlier times when perhaps only one or two houses managed to own a radio. They played it loudly so their neighbour could also have the benefit of the programming.) (Henry, 1994, p.181)

Socializing in the Caribbean is in large part due to being what Henry calls an outdoor culture. She explains how large groups of people, loud music, conversing and joking in loud tones are all characteristic of this. In migrating to Toronto this way of being has conflicted with mainstream society. However, over time, and due in large part to the commercialization of Black culture through mass media, one should hope to see a lessening of the tensions associated with this style of activity as each subsequent generation of both Caribbean and non-Caribbean become more accustomed to each

other's way of being. In the context of Fletcher's Meadow, hopefully this will lead to an amicable balance, level of understanding and ultimately acceptance.

Chapter 3: Brampton – Then and Now

> Brampton's Vision – To be a vibrant, safe and attractive city of opportunity where efficient services make it possible for families, individuals and the business community to grow, prosper and enjoy a high quality of life. (City of Brampton, 2003)

The City of Brampton has a rapidly increasing and diverse population of over 400,000 people. The city is bordered by Highway 50 (Vaughan) to the east, Winston Churchill Boulevard (Halton Hills) to the west, Mayfield Road (Caledon) to the north (except for a small community, Snelgrove, which is part of Brampton despite extending somewhat north of Mayfield Road), and the Hydro Corridor (Mississauga) to the south. Despite Brampton's rapidly increasing population, diversity was not always one of its key features. Through City of Brampton sources, one is able to get a sense of the city's development over time. From its humble beginnings with a population of less than 50 people around the 1820s, to one of the largest municipalities in Canada, Brampton has come a long way. Brampton is now among the largest urban centres in Canada and is growing rapidly. As a result, the city has to cope with various issues related to development. To manage this expansion, Brampton officials have developed a strategic plan that has become the cornerstone for the unprecedented growth the city is now experiencing.

In 1990, the City of Brampton launched "We're Headed for the Future," a strategic plan that would act as the blueprint for all future development for the city. In 2003, this plan was revised and according to the mayor of Brampton, Susan Fennell,

> [o]ur updated Strategic Plan, a blueprint of the City's overall development and management, is the foundation upon which all future City plans and initiatives will be based. It is responsive to current issues and opportunities, while never losing sight of where it's heading. (City of Brampton, 2003)

This new blueprint was implemented to act as a guide for the next decade. Its goal is to focus the efforts of the government as they move forward in a climate with limited economic resources and increasing demand of those resources. According to the plan, there are "Six Pillars" that form the foundation for the city and shape its direction:

1. Modern Transportation Systems
2. Managing Growth
3. Protecting Our Environment, Enhancing Our Community
4. A Dynamic and Prosperous Economy
5. Community Lifestyle
6. Excellence in Local Government

(City of Brampton, 2003)

These pillars stem from the cumulative needs of Brampton's residents. Although they reflect current aspirations and future goals, they are connected directly to the city's history. Through exploration of Brampton's past, a deeper understanding of Brampton's current context can be had; a new context that creates the backdrop for the fledgling community of Fletcher's Meadow.

History

People have been living in the general area known as Brampton for centuries. Native peoples have been hunting and establishing small villages along the Credit and Humber river valleys from about 8000 B.C. However, a European presence was not felt until the early 1780s when settlers started to arrive, and it wasn't until 1818 that the lands in Chinguacousy and Gore Townships were surveyed, slowly cleared, cabins built, and fields ploughed for farming (City of Brampton, 2007). The Etobicoke, the Humber, and

the Credit Rivers all flow through the city, which proved to be a fundamental resource for the early traders. As well, by the mid-1800s the land around Brampton was known to be legendarily good, as these rivers helped to make the land very fertile (Matchett, 2003). The early development of Brampton was a slow process at first. As with most, if not all towns in Canada at this time, Brampton's early survival and source of eventual growth was due in large part to natural resources – specifically Etobicoke Creek. The creek played its part in Brampton's development, but because it was slow moving and meandering it could never sustain large scale milling operations. Consequently, the Brampton settlement grew more slowly than it would have otherwise.

In the early 1820s, John Elliott settled in what could now be described as a village. Along with William Lawson, another early settler, the two established a strong Methodist presence in the area, as they were both faithful members of the Primitive Methodist movement and they were both from Brampton, Cumberland in England. In 1834, in honour of their English home they had the village renamed Brampton (City of Brampton, 2007). By 1846 the population had reached 150 people. In 1853 Brampton was officially incorporated as a village with a population over 500 people. The local economy was growing and the village supported the surrounding farms and rural hamlets. By 1873 Brampton was incorporated as a town and by the early 20th century, the population had reached 4,000 (City of Brampton, 2007).

Like nearly everywhere around the world, Brampton felt the impact of two world wars and the Great Depression during the first half of the 20th century. These major world events did take their toll on the local economy, but after World War II, Brampton

started to reinvent itself. In the late 1940s and 1950s the automobile began to change the landscape, as did rapid urban growth around Toronto. New subdivisions began to develop. In the late 1950s Bramalea was created and touted as "Canada's first satellite city." Bramalea was a planned community built to accommodate 50,000 people by integrating houses, shopping centres, parks, commercial business and industry.
In 1974 the Region of Peel was created, Brampton became a city, and development really started to take off, such that in the 1980s and 1990s large subdivisions were created on lands formerly used for farming. The strong manufacturing sector in Brampton includes automotive and aviation technology. Transportation, storage and business services are also important industries. As is often the case, due to the multiplier effect, the establishment and growth of various industries in the city spurred this residential development. Given the abundance of these industries, the suburban lifestyle and its proximity to Toronto, Brampton experienced exponential growth that continues to the present day. The combination of these factors plus the access to amenities also made Brampton an immigration centre. This would have a dramatic effect on the city and shape the city into the culturally diverse and animated city of today.

Demographic Makeup

Brampton is a very diverse city that boasts a citizenry from all four corners of the globe. However, a distinct pattern has emerged over the past 10 years in relation to who lives where within the city's limits. Due to a steady increase in immigration the apparent displacement of the White population by visible minorities has occurred, especially in areas where older communities were established. Concurrently, a large segment of the

visible minority population have been moving into the newer residential developments, which are typically located in the northern part of the city. Based on the 2001 census, South Asians made up the largest visible minority group in Brampton at 19% of the total visible minority population, followed by Blacks at 10%, Filipino and Chinese at 2% (Statistics Canada, 2002). The most recent 2006 census results indicate the same trend, with very little to no variation (Statistics Canada, 2009) (See Appendix B).

In recognition of the diversity that characterizes Brampton, the city hosts Carabram, Brampton's annual festival celebrating the diverse cultures found throughout the city. The festival first came to light in 1982 as a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the preservation, development and promotion of the cultural heritages of the diverse ethnic communities of Brampton and is completely run by volunteers (Carabram.org, 2008). This festival is held on the second weekend of July and attracts upwards of 60,000 visitors. In 1982, the four original participants were Italy, Ukraine, Scotland and the West Indies. However, since then as many as 20 different ethnic groups, each hosting a pavilion representing their culture and heritage through song, dance, costumes, displays, food and drink have participated. Part of the stated goal and objective is to provide a forum for cross-cultural exchanges between varied ethnic groups, and Carabram is very fun and interactive way of meeting those objectives.

Events such as Carabram play an important role for the members of Brampton's various communities. It allows for an open exchange of culture and a level of interaction between groups that may not have been available otherwise. In turn, these events foster a

stronger sense of community and belonging amongst the city's residents. As highlighted by Qadeer (2003) and Logan et al. (2002), the establishment of enclaves[10] stem from this growing sense of community which in turn attract more members of a particular group to reside in that specific area. Pursuant to this, active participation in the cultural and civic life of the city on the part of the Black population is reflective of improved socioeconomic position. Also, by taking place in Brampton, this further implies Blacks assimilation with majority groups and by extension upward social mobility.

This trend should continue as the framework for continued immigration and migration into the city has been recognized, embraced and promoted by city officials and is embedded within the official city plan.

> This Plan also recognizes that Brampton's population consists of many cultures and that the City has become a point of destination for new immigrants. Brampton's diverse population has enriched the City with cultural amenities and new ways of thinking. It is essential that this Plan remains flexible and adaptive to the changing face of Brampton, by keeping communication channels open and actively engaging residents and businesses (City of Brampton, 2008).

Land supply is dwindling in other areas throughout the GTA, and since Brampton has a lot more undeveloped land within its municipality, there is a strong expectation of continued growth (City of Brampton, 2008). This means that the opportunity for Blacks to realize their suburban dreams can be sustained as the space needed for spatial assimilation will be there into the foreseeable future.

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[10] Qadeer and Kumar (2005) describe ethnic enclaves as the next stage in the formation of an ethnic neighbourhoods meaning that they have institutional completeness.

Housing

Brampton has a total land area of 265 square kilometres and is comprised of many smaller communities. Many of these communities date back to the 1950s and 60s and were developed in accordance with the prevailing thought of the day - suburbia. The development of the suburbs and the notion of suburbia was very active during this period. Other communities in the area that had been in existence for a much longer period of time were eventually incorporated as suburban development occurred. In the early 1980s there was a surge of new development, as the city released large tracts of land to residential developers. Precipitating this, there was a surge in economic development within the area, and as a result, Brampton became a destination of choice for many people looking to relocate from other parts of Canada and around the world because of its high quality of life and economic opportunities (City of Brampton, 2008). Over the past several decades, growth in the GTA, especially employment growth, has been increasingly concentrated in the western half of the region (ibid). Due to the multiplier effect[11], Brampton's housing market has really taken off. According to the Brampton's official plan, the city is well placed in this context, both to attract employment and residential growth within the western part of the GTA.

> This Official Plan recognizes that the City of Brampton will absorb much of the growth that is forecasted for the GTAH region over the next 25 years, especially for ground related housing development. . .the City of Brampton continues to represent a significant component of the greenfield land needed to accommodate future residential and employment growth. According to forecasts completed on behalf of the Province, the GTAH is forecasted to grow from 5.81 million people in 2001 to 8.62 million in 2031. In 2006, Brampton's population is at about

[11] In urban geography, the multiplier effect is the total effect on the economy caused by an expansion or contraction in one part of it

> 430,000 people. The number is forecasted to reach 725,000 people by 2031 (ibid, p. 2-1).

The plan goes on to state that the employment level for Brampton is forecasted to reach 310,000 jobs by 2031. Again, due to the multiplier effect, the impact on housing will be very significant.

Brampton consists of a range of housing types, and densities. The New Housing Mix and Density Policies determine the regulations all current and projected developments must adhere to, with the development of Fletcher's Meadow falling under these newer policies. The older communities in Brampton follow a different set of criteria. The difference between the two, taken from Brampton's official plan, is outlined below.

OLD HOUSING MIX AND DENSITY CATEGORIES

DENSITY CATEGORY	DENSITY RANGE	TYPICAL (BUT NOT RESTRICTIVE) HOUSING TYPES
• Single Detached Density or • Single Family Density	• 0-25 units/ net hectare • 0-10 units/ net acre	• Single detached homes
• Semi-Detached Density	• 26-35 units/ net hectare • 11-14 units/ net acre	• Semi-detached homes • Link townhouses • Small-lot single • detached homes
• Low Density	• 0-35 units/ net hectare • 0-14 units/ net acre	• Single detached homes • Semi-detached homes • Link townhouses • Small-lot single detached homes
• Townhouse or Medium Density	• 36-50 units/ net hectare • 15-20 units/ net acre	• Block townhouses • Street townhouses
• Cluster Housing Density or • Medium-High Density	• 51-75 units/ net hectare • 21-30 units/ net acre	• Maisonettes • Stacked townhouses • Garden court/ walk-up • apartments • Cluster housing types
• Apartment or High Density	• 76-198 units/ net hectare • 31-80 units/ net acre	• Elevator apartments

NEW HOUSING MIX AND DENSITY CATEGORIES

DENSITY CATEGORY	MAXIMUM DENSITY	PERMITTED HOUSING TYPES
Low Density	• 30 units/ net hectare • 12 units/ net acre	• Single detached homes
Medium Density	• 50 units/ net hectare • 20 units/ net acre	• Single Detached Homes • Semi-detached homes • Townhouses
High Density	• 200 units/ net hectare • 80 units/ net acre	• Townhouses • Duplexes • Maisonettes • Apartments

Brampton has a wide range of housing options with some homes valued at well over $3 million dollars. But it is on the other end of the spectrum that Brampton is not doing as well. An article by the *Toronto Star* highlighted that about 55,000 people live in poverty in Brampton and surrounding areas, while almost 100,000 live in poverty in Mississauga (Henry, 2007). The article, which addresses the lack of housing for low-income tenants, and the fact the Brampton Mayor, Susan Fennell, refuses to consider basement apartments as a means to address the concern, also draws attention to the fact that in the region, homeowners far outnumber renters. This is significant because it demonstrates the growth and economic vibrancy of the city as a whole and points to the socio-economic range that the city has to balance. Another interesting fact that highlights the need for increased low-income housing are the number of illegal basement apartments in Brampton.

Since it is commonly believed that home ownership is better than renting, and since homeowners outnumber renters in Brampton, one can argue that that by living in

Brampton the socio-economic lot for Black people can be seen as improved, in comparison to Toronto, where the higher cost of living would inevitably mean less people could afford to own and be forced to rent. Prior to this, a Black person may not have been thought to be able to afford to own a home, thus perpetuating the same stereotypical view of Black people, regardless of the individual's actual financial and social stature. Brampton has afforded Blacks geographically larger and socially higher opportunities for growth.

Transportation

Many of Brampton's streets are not equipped to handle the high level of traffic generated by its current residents. Over the past ten years there has been a notable increase in traffic congestion on Brampton streets, due to the increase in population. The city does have a local transit system that is provided by Brampton Transit. This system connects to other systems such as Mississauga Transit (MT), York Region Transit (YRT), and Toronto Transit Commission (TTC). However, it too has struggled to handle the rapidly increasing population and the demand for more buses in bourgeoning subdivisions. As one of the pillars of the city, issues surrounding transportation have been given specific attention as the local government recognized the need to improve one of the main lifelines in the city. The goal statement for Brampton in relation to transportation is:

> Brampton shall implement a master plan to develop a safe and efficient transportation system for moving people and goods within Brampton's central corridors, as well as provide improved and efficient linkages within the Greater-Toronto Area (City of Brampton, 2003, p.8).

The city's overall transportation plan is an ambitious one. A key area of focus is public transit, as the city recognizes the need to improve in this crucial area.

> Major issue pertaining to urban traffic is the role of public transit. Given the significant level of growth and intensification projected in this Plan, it is evident that transit must play a more important role in the future transportation system of the City (City of Brampton, 2008, p.4.4-19).

The short and long-term implications of this are extensive. For those members of the community who currently rely solely on public transportation in order to commute, they are restricted by the limited service being provided. In terms of future growth, any people wishing to make public transportation their chief mode of transport, which is the preferred mode of transport supported by the provincial government, must consider the inherent limitations of trying to coordinate transit systems between cities/regions. This last fact has come to the fore, as the major transportation overhaul by way of Metrolinx[12] becomes more of a reality.

To compensate for the significant growth and address the immediate needs of the city, a new rapid bus transit system has been implemented along the main arteries of Brampton. This new system is designed to meet the needs of the growing population while taking into account the constraints of the current arterial roadways. In relation to Fletcher's Meadow, buses run throughout the community; however, new routes and

[12] Metrolinx was created by the Government of Ontario to develop and implement an integrated multi-modal transportation plan for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) — the metropolitan region encompassing the City of Toronto, the City of Hamilton and the four surrounding regional municipalities (Durham, Halton, Peel and York). Its mandate includes providing seamless, coordinated transportation throughout this region, which is Canada's largest and among North America's most rapidly growing. Metrolinx operates within the legislative framework of the *Greater Toronto Transportation Authority Act, 2006*. (Metrolinx, 2009)

increased frequency along these routes have occurred as the community continues to grow and the current system tries to meet the demand. Yet, despite the improvement to the services the public still finds the Brampton Transit system woefully inadequate. A CBC news report, during the 2008 federal election campaign, focused on one of the ridings within Brampton. During the report, the reporters interviewed commuters who voiced their displeasure with the service stating that the buses were always late and never ran on their scheduled time (CBC, 2008).

Despite Brampton being a suburban city to Toronto, the increasing and diversified population means that a rising number of people are more dependent on public services than before. It is incumbent on the city to provide these services adequately, despite what may have been a lagging need to do so, given the demographics of the population that the city had historically been serving up to this point. Ironically, this is one of the very reasons why Brampton is viewed as representing spatial assimilation and social mobility, since to live here has meant that one could afford to not be as dependent on public services. This is by no means an excuse for the city not to provide the services required as its population changes; however, lack of dependence on public services can be identified as an ancillary marker of upward social mobility and socio-economic success.

The city is also serviced by the Government of Ontario's GO Transit system. This system has both a train line and a bus line. The buses make several stops along the major roadways leading in and out of the city, while the train has three stops within the city limits. The third and newest stop, Mount Pleasant, lies just outside the eastern edge of the Fletcher's Meadow boundary. This was a welcome addition to this community as it

allows for easy access to a major transportation artery in and out of Toronto and as the residents depending on GO Transit had to compete with the existing population for the already overcrowded service in downtown Brampton. However, like the improvements to Brampton Transit, the addition of the new station is not enough. The main challenge stems from the physical limitations of the rail line. As the CBC broadcast highlighted, there is only one commuter railway line into Brampton and out of Brampton. And given the city's proximity to the city of Toronto, the people who reside in Brampton and make the commute to Toronto are being underserviced. The aforementioned Metrolinx plan, according to Region of Peel Officials, would address this specific concern by improving the infrastructure that is currently in use and allow for improved service. However, the completion of the Metrolinx plan is still many years, and several legislative rounds of voting, away (Office of the Premier, 2007).

Given that Brampton still has room to grow and that Toronto still remains the economic hub of the region, it is expected that Brampton will continue to develop and provide a place to live for those who work outside its borders. The emphasis on the overall development of transportation infrastructure is very important since 86% of the working population of Brampton either drive or are driven to work (Statistics Canada, 2007). City of Brampton officials recognize the impact this has on the city as a whole, and through their official plan, are attempting to shift people and policy away from cars as the chief mode of transport.

> In order to provide for more sustainable transportation practices in the future, Brampton must find ways and design policies to assist in reducing the number and length of automobile trips, by accommodating and encouraging increased transit ridership, by encouraging cycling and walking, by increasing car occupancy (i.e.

> carrying passengers, car pooling, etc.). This Plan endeavours to shift trips to transit by ensuring that transit services, routes, operating speeds, and interregional transit connections are as convenient as possible.

The impact of this plan will be felt negatively if the shift is not done seamlessly. Unlike Toronto, where rich and poor alike access a relatively efficient means of transit via the TTC, Brampton's transit system is not equipped to handle this potential influx. More specifically, unless using pubic transit becomes a beneficial means of transportation (both in time and convenience) people will continue to use cars to commute to their desired locations. Once again, as an auxiliary indicator, only those that can afford to live in Brampton, and not necessarily rely on public transit can comfortably call the city home, thus making Brampton a desired destination reflective of upward social mobility. One's mobility will become an upwardly mobile indicator of success.

Schooling

Brampton is serviced primarily by the Peel District School Board (PDSB) and the Dufferin-Peel Catholic School Board (DPCSB). There are other private education institutions; however the vast majority of elementary and secondary students attend school in one of these two systems. Within the past 5 to 10 years, there has been a phenomenal amount of growth. According to 2006 Census data, Brampton's population increased by 33% between 2001 and 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2007). This population increase resulted in 14 schools being built in the area of north west Brampton alone (Peel District School Board, 2007). However, it has not been a smooth rate of growth. The PDSB has admittedly been playing a game of catch-up as they shuffle students from school-to-school in an effort to try and provide the stability that is so desperately needed

(Kalinowski, 2004). With the PDSB currently servicing 150,000 students and the DPCSB currently servicing 86,951 students many of the issues that were once thought to be "common" to Toronto, are now making there way into the region with more and more frequency (Peel District School Board, 2007; Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board, 2008). The local news covers more acts of crime and violence amongst children in and around schools than ever before, with a few stories reaching the front pages of national newspapers. The presence of police within the schools is also something that has become a reality for all students in the public school system in Peel. And although the increased police presence does not mean that a particular school has become more dangerous, it does speak to the reality that schools are no longer thought of as being "off-limits" for many of the ails of society at large. These changes, once again, speak to the new reality for young people in Brampton.

However, not all of the influences are negative. The rich diversity that can be found in Brampton is also reflected in the schools. The various communities that make up the city of Brampton each have their own particular nuances that set them apart. The schools, through their daily routines, reflect the various subtleties of each of the communities where they are situated. What is most evident within every school is the interplay of the various socialization agents that are characteristic of each community. As every school is a microcosm of the larger community in which it resides, what each child brings with them in their knapsack, literally and figuratively, contributes greatly to the socialization of the child within the school.

Due to the rapid increase in population Brampton has recently experienced, characteristics such as race, socio-economic status, gender and religion are evident in the makeup of schools. From poor to rich, Black to White, commonalities and differences, each contribute to the intersectionality[13] of any given student and the overall ethos of a school. This in turn impacts the type of student each school produces and the reputation that is developed. The school's reputation then becomes one of the factors that parents use to determine whether or not a school is "good." The quantification of this factor, one can argue, can be found in the standardized literacy test results administered through the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO). These tests have met widespread disapproval by many, with their validity as true markers of literacy being questioned (ETFO, 2009). Yet, the influence of these tests and the results of the tests being used as a tool to determine how "good" one school is compared to another, has not stopped in light of this criticism. The use of test information by real estate agents is far reaching as they actively, and passively, contribute to the social status of a particular community. It is fair to assume that every parent would send their child to the "best" school given the chance. By actively using EQAO results, and through the more passive, but no less influential, use of reputation, parents can determine where is the "better" place to live, or put another way, the more upwardly mobile place to live. In this way, the influence, interconnectedness and impact of outside factors on a school becomes more evident in relation to spatial assimilation and social mobility.

[13] An intersectional approach takes into account the historical, social and political context and recognizes the unique experience of the individual based on the intersection of all relevant grounds. Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2001).

In terms of post-secondary education, the only public institution with a campus inside Brampton is Sheridan College. The campus' focus is on business and trade education, and with the increase in population, the programs that are offered within this campus have also grown over time. However, only having one post-secondary institution within the city limits has not prevented youth from pursuing and accessing programs as the city's proximity to Toronto and Mississauga comes into play yet again, with three universities and well over half a dozen colleges and their respective campuses located adjacent to Brampton. Relatively easy access to these various institutions is a boon to parents who may not necessarily have the financial resources to allow their child to live away from home and attend school. Similarly, students may not want to venture far from home, and with nationally and internationally renowned post-secondary institutions within commutable distances from Brampton, the lure of staying at home and studying is quite strong. This is a advantageous feature that Brampton city officials are very much aware of and build on when they promote the city. Information highlighting these facts can be found in many of the city's promotional materials as well as in the city plan (City of Brampton, 2008). Features such as these make the city of Brampton a preferred location and reflect an upwardly mobile city as access to education is seen as key component to a successful life (Blanden, Gregg, & Machin, 2005).

Implications

As can be seen, the rapid growth found within Brampton, as well as the fast rate of development, is transforming the demographic and socio-economic landscape of the city. As Brampton continues to attract more people to its borders, the necessity for

balanced growth becomes all the more crucial. Brampton city officials must forever remain cognizant of all their residents and ensure that they feel safe and welcome and are able to lead productive lives by providing the infrastructure and the access to services to do so. Although issues pertaining to housing, transportation and schooling are applicable to all residents of Brampton, these areas are of particular concern for Blacks living within the city because these areas have been historically ones which Black people have experienced negative differential access (Jaynes, Williams, 1989; Menendian et al., 2008). Brampton today is vastly different from the Brampton of yesteryear. Unlike the past, racial and ethnic diversity play an integral role in shaping modern Brampton. This difference speaks to the progressive nature of the city and has boded well for the relatively recent Black residents who now call the city home. The city does reflect upward social mobility for Blacks because the financial resources needed to positively participate in the areas which Blacks en masse were not able to do so before, are now seemingly more accessible by a larger segment of the population.

In relation to Fletcher's Meadow, Brampton's current infrastructure serves the immediate needs of the population. Life opportunities can be realized, and based on Brampton's Strategic Plan the infrastructure should also meet the needs of the community in the future. Educational opportunities within Fletcher's Meadow are also promising since other factors such as housing are in place. Consequently, Black students have a greater likelihood of positively engaging in their educational process with a greater prospect of attaining their high school diploma. As a result of the services Brampton as a

whole has to offer, Black families in Fletcher's Meadow can expect to realize their life opportunities and lay a solid foundation for those who are to follow.

Chapter 4: Towards Fletcher's Meadow

A sense of belonging is crucial if anyone is to call a particular community home. Due to financial and social instability, both the location and the sense of home has been in flux for many Blacks in Toronto.

> The settlement patterns of recent immigrants and refugees in Toronto are characterized by high residential mobility caused partly by the need to move frequently in search of more affordable and better housing conditions in Toronto's expensive private rental market (Teixeira, 2009, p.5).

Despite the fact that racial discrimination towards visible minorities has been found to hamper social mobility, and that for members of visible minority groups, Canada continues to be a vertical mosaic – of different ethnic, language, regional and religious groupings unequal in status and power – there are significant and arguably universal factors that would affect parents' decision to relocate (Tepperman, 2009). These factors determine one's life opportunities – the prospect of becoming a homeowner, living within a safe, crime free community, and having bright educational opportunities. One could argue that regardless of location, these are traits that families aspire to, and as was previously stated, the interplay of these factors contribute greatly towards one's social mobility.

For 10 years, people have been calling the area known as Fletcher's Meadow in northwest Brampton home, due in part to low interest rates, the boom in the housing market and the proximity to Toronto. In fact, the proximity to Toronto plays a major role in the lives of the families who live here since many, according to the 2006 Census, work outside of Brampton (see Appendix C). Since the late 1990s many Black families started

to move to Brampton in order to pursue the ever-popular suburban dream, which historians Rosalyn Baxandall and Elizabeth Ewen (in Hsu, 2006) observe is quite often synonymous with the notion of success[14]. This notion is not unique to the Black community, as it is one that transcends racial lines and pervades the social strata of all cultural and ethnic groups within Canada (Teixeira, 2009). However, when this notion of success, the suburban dream, is made in reference to the Black community within Toronto and the surrounding area, it has been a rather elusive goal (ibid). The driving force for many Black families to leave the urban core, which has typically been regarded as an undesirable place to live due to the dense population, poverty and other indicators of dependency, has been an elusive dream (Logan, Zhang, & Alba, 2002). Despite the accomplishment such a move represents for many who have been able to 'escape' the trappings of the inner city and make their way into the suburbs, their existence within the new suburban context has remained a tenuous one.

> Essentially, the residential patterns of immigrants in the suburbs (inner and outer) are related to both voluntary and involuntary factors. . .a complex interrelationship of choice, ambition, affordability, social, economic and cultural factors, as well as racist and classist structures which not only enable or limit the integration and participation of immigrants in society, but also their aspirations for themselves and their children (James & Saul, 2006, p.844).

It would be safe to assume that families would not deliberately move into situations that they feel would not better their overall situation. However, as James and Saul (2006) states, moving to the suburbs is influenced by a complex interrelationship of

[14] Scholars have concluded that the pendulum that started after World War II, moving the North American masses towards a suburban dream and out of the city, has started to swing back in the other direction. The city is now being sought after by Gen-Xers and Millennials who have a renewed allure for the city. This new demand is evidenced by rapidly increasing housing prices. However, the suburbs have not been abandoned and still reflect the long sought after dream it has for generations since the 1940s, but the tide is admittedly shifting (Farrar, 2008; Leinberger, 2008).

factors. There is an underlying belief on the part of parents that despite the potential obstacles, the benefits far outweigh the costs.

There is also a pervasive idea that moving from the city to the suburbs may prevent certain social ails from occurring (Anisef et al, 2000). However, specific issues such as family insecurity and instability may very well still plague those who have moved just as they did prior to relocating if the issues were directly attributed to the space/environment in which they occurred. Single parenthood, multiple jobs or late night shift work may still be contributing factors to many of the concerns that Black families face. What is to be determined is if the positive effects, and the apparent upward social mobility a change of location to Fletcher's Meadow may represent, is enough to negate the challenges the current lifestyle many Black families in Toronto face.

Choice

Up to at least 10 years ago, according to Bauder and Sharpe (2002) "Afro-Caribbean" immigrants to Toronto weighed their housing preferences against their available choices under racial discrimination. Black immigrants and citizens, like their visible minority counterparts, are racialised in everyday life. Consequently the option of choosing where to live is not always made directly by those who are doing the choosing. Economics plays into this as well. Generally speaking, as has already been mentioned, the Black population in the GTA has not achieved the same level of financial success as the White population, or many other immigrant populations (Fong & Gulia, 1999). Consequently, the opportunity to move to a desired location is dictated by their financial reality as well as their race. As has been proven in the United States and Canada, Blacks

have been effectively blocked from moving into various neighbourhoods, even when economics is not a mitigating factor, due to the negative racial stigma that is often associated with Black people (Fong & Gulia, 1999). There is an inextricable link between race and class. Drawing on the research of Mary Pattillo-McCoy from her book *Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among the Black Middle Class*, Bakari Kitwana (2000) notes the connection between those living in the inner city and those who do not, based on class lines.

> . . .the new Black middle class is inextricably bound to the Black poor. Not only are they connected by the obvious skin color and culture, but, contrary to popular opinion, they continue to have more in common with poor Blacks than with middle class whites. The new Black middle class is not just white middle class in Black face, no matter how many similarities they may share. "African American social workers and teachers, secretaries and nurses, entrepreneurs and government bureaucrats are in many ways the buffer between the black poor and the white middle class.... Middle-income black families fill the residential gap between the neighborhood that house middle-class whites and the neighborhoods where poor African Americans live." Due to this close proximity and interaction, many of the same perils that plague the Black poor -- higher crime rates, police brutality, drug dealing -- are the Black middle class' reality as well. (Kitwana, 2000)

Effectively, a geo-racial 'slide' has been created with all White neighbourhoods being the most desired and affluent locations, and immigrant neighbourhoods, especially those that are heavily populated by Blacks being the least desired. As a result, what is significant about northwest Brampton is that Fletcher's Meadow is a community that has a significant concentration of Black families living within a suburban context – a suburban context made by choice, and not faux-choice described by Bauder and Sharpe (2002). The fact that these families have chosen to live within Fletcher's Meadow is indicative not only of the choice they have, but also the opportunities that exist for

themselves and their children. These opportunities are linked directly to the community, as this new environment will afford possibilities that didn't exist before.

Affordability

Within the region of Peel, which is comprised of Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon, approximately 14% of Ontario's immigrant population have called this area home over the past ten years (Statistics Canada, 2007). Brampton specifically, has grown by 33.3% in the 5 years between the 2001 and 2006 census (ibid). According to Thomas (2005), the catalyst for this growth was low interest rates.

> . . .the trigger for the current housing boom was lower interest rates after the mid-1990s. The most precipitous drop occurred in 2001, when the Bank Rate plunged from around 6% to 2.5%. Mortgage rates followed suit, with the one-year rate falling from 7.7% in 2000 to 4.6% in 2001 and remaining below 5% since (p.18).

Given the low interest rates the banks were offering and the fact that one needed to place only 5% as a down payment to own a home, the economic conditions were finally perfect for many soon to be first-home buyers, provided that the buyer met the industry de facto standard in which, of a buyer's total income, a limit of 32 per cent could go toward mortgage payments and taxes and no more than 40 per cent could go to servicing all forms of debt (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2009). Many people scrambled to gather the necessary resources to take advantage of this new economic climate - a climate which was finally more favourable towards those who were looking for an opportunity to break out of their living conditions.

As an entity, the economic power of the Black community (both American and Canadian) has long been noted as substantial, especially in America where the sheer numbers of population play a defining role (Burns, 1990). Yet, even within a Canadian

context the re-direction of funds within the Black community was evident as large numbers of the community within Toronto actively started to participate in, capitalize and fuel the housing market as it began to take shape in its current form. The opportunities that were previously unavailable for large segments of the Black population of Toronto due to limited choices on the basis of race and economics, were now attainable due to a major shift in the social and economic climate of the country and the region.

By the end of the 1990s poised, ready and able to move, the Black community in Toronto had a plethora of choices that were not readily available before. First there was the community of Springdale in Brampton, which was launched on October 1st, 1991 (Brennan, 1992). At that time few members of the Black community were able to move into the area – compared to the larger number of Black residents that would go on to call the area home 8 – 10 years later. When Springdale came into being, it was forecasted to be a massive project, significantly altering the vast expanse of farming land it was going to occupy. The pricing of the homes was deliberate , as the city sought to attract homebuyers that would have had to previously look elsewhere for comparable housing options

> The Springdale project . . .has made a spectacular entrance to Ontario's housing scene since it was launched. . .There are 1,700 lots in the first phase, which are being released in segments. . . Springdale will eventually have 22,000 residences and be home for 75,000 people by the end of the projected 15-year build out. . . "Many of the homes sold in the first release were in the affordable price range of $143,000 to $154,000," [Brampton Mayor Peter Robertson] said. "Before Springdale, people had to go to Barrie to get new homes at those prices. Not only does Springdale now offer affordable homes in the Metro region, but they've also introduced some very innovative housing designs here (Brennan, 1992, p.E1).

Following Springdale was another large project – Fletcher's Meadow.

> In Fletcher's Meadow alone - a 2,000-acre (800-hectare) chunk of land in the northwest of the city – there are 16 builders working on neighbourhoods that will eventually contain more than 15,000 homes and 40,000 people. . . Fletcher's Meadow covers the parcel of land south of Wanless Dr., north of Highway 7, east of Creditview Rd. and west of McLaughlin Rd. Tributaries of Fletcher's Creek flow through it and many of the projects back on, or are cradled by, ravines (McCormack, 2001, p.N01).

Due to the timing of the launch of this project, an even more significant number of the Black community were able to capitalize on the housing being offered. The types of housing being offered included townhouses, semi-detached and detached homes ranging from approximately $180,000 to $300,000 circa 2000. In many, if not all the homes, the basements were able to accommodate additional living space for families, and in some cases the garage(s) could also be converted into a living space. This is important to note because many of the owners of these homes would go on to rent this extra space to subsidize their income or allow other family members to stay with them in a more affordable setting (Henry, 2007). Once the wave of the first Black families to move to the area was established, others then saw this as an inviting community and an opportunity to participate in the long sought-after suburban dream.

It is important to emphasize that the Black people who live in these neighbourhoods are not all people from impoverished or financially constrained circumstances (see Appendix D). Nor are these neighbourhoods exclusively Black. Many Black families sought these communities on the same grounds as others for whom the conditions do not apply. That being, the community of Fletcher's Meadow is relatively affordable and conforms perfectly to the suburban aspirations of anyone looking for those specific criteria. As such, this community is even more desirable beyond its affordability,

it represents an opportunity for a diverse group of people to associate and live together sharing the same dream. As Appendix B illustrates, the visible minority population of Fletcher's Meadow reflects the suburban aspirations of a wide segment of the visible minority spectrum, further illustrating the high level of participation of Blacks in the suburban dream.

Greener Pastures

Understandably, the exploration of the context in which many of these Black families were living, prior to their residence in Fletcher's Meadow, helps to better understand the impetus for change as it occurred. Since the 1970s and 80s, many Black families have called the west end of Toronto home. Assuming that the majority of Black residents would come from the west end of Toronto due to its proximity, it can also be assumed that many residents made their way via the infamous Jane-Finch and Rexdale communities. These communities are well known to those living in the GTA as they have received heavy media attention for the various ailments that plague them, specifically poverty, unemployment, criminalization, inadequate housing along with large tracts of subsidized government housing (CBC, 2007a). These problems have been present for years. Starting in the late 1960s,

> The Ontario Housing Corporation oversaw the construction of a large concentration of private high-rise apartment buildings and public housing along Jane Street, on what became known as 'the corridor.' The availability of social and affordable housing attracted tens of thousands of people. The neighbourhood's population exploded more than 2000% in a decade. But, as the newcomers flooded in, the social service infrastructure needed to support them did not keep up. Jane and Finch lacked the settlement, employment and language services vital to new immigrants. Schools were overcrowded, community centres didn't appear for years, and public transportation was never better than sporadic. Racial

> tensions grew as the face of the neighbourhood changed, from mostly European to a mosaic of people from Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America (ibid).

Due to the aforementioned problems of poor housing conditions, family instability, racist and classist structures the community is rife with social grief and discontentment. Consequently, through the help of the media, the stigma of living within these neighbourhoods provides a strong impetus for leaving. Opportunity to live in your own home, and to own your own land, is all part and parcel of the immigrant dream. Additionally, escaping the financial constraints of your immediate situation is very much tied to this dream as well. Parents want to provide a better future for their children, and want to be surrounded by those who embrace, exemplify and extol that future.

> That's what it's all about -- showing off our young people. The whole idea here is that the immigrant dream is real. These parents live vicariously though their kids. They're saying, the community's counting on you to succeed. It's up to you. It's not a black thing. It's pressure. And, you know, it's not a bad thing. (Brown, 2000)[15]

Parents want to live in communities where success is as close to inevitable as it can be. However, research has demonstrated that large concentrations of Blacks living amongst each other within an urban setting, are often accompanied by negative labour market outcomes (Walks & Bourne, 2006). Consequently, many wish to leave the impoverished housing conditions and communities to live in the more affluent neighbourhoods the suburbs provide. Ironically, in the case of Fletcher's Meadow, such a large concentration of members of the Black community is slowly laying the foundation for a Black ethnic

[15] This article was based on a finishing school in Toronto for Black children from adverse circumstances across the GTA. Twenty-eight girls and boys between the ages of 16 and 19 were taught about "the social graces" and given the opportunity to demonstrate their lessons to a room of family, friends, government and media officials.

community, one that is proving to be dissimilar to the very communities many residents left and contrary to scholarly expectations. The distinguishing factor seems to become that of economics, as class distinctions are made by neighbourhood location. The Black families that call Fletcher's Meadow home are able to do so because they have the means to live within this community. Additionally, as was already noted in Chapter 2, the Black population does not make up the majority racial group in any of the so-called "Black neighbourhoods," including Fletcher's Meadow. And by examining factors such as marriage, level of educational attainment and income, it becomes apparent that the Black families in Fletcher's Meadow have overcome many significant obstacles.

In looking back to what many left, there are stark contrasts between their new community and their old realities. In speaking with many residents of Fletcher's Meadow such as storeowners and neighbours and by reports in the media by the mayor, there are many who feel that a significant portion of the Black population of Fletcher's Meadow came from the infamous Jane and Finch area of Toronto (Douglas, 2007). The Jane-Finch 'experiment' is well documented and the effects of that social experimentation are still being felt today as the issues reverberate across the GTA.

> The intersection of Jane Street and Finch Avenue in northwest Toronto draws reporters all too often for stories of guns and violence, but less is told about ordinary life here. To the dismay of residents, "Jane-Finch" has become a catch-all phrase that suggests poverty, gangs and racial division. Those who live here say the stereotypes obscure a complex, resilient community struggling to emerge from years of neglect. (Friesen, 2006)

Similarly, Rexdale is an area that has smaller communities that are also fraught with poverty and gangs. The life some residents lead affects the greater populace of the

area. When you are surrounded by violence, you learn violence (Prothrow-Stith & Weissman, 1991; Fredland, 2008), not necessarily becoming violent, but definitely living in its wake. For example, a young girl, Dejahnai Harris, who, in less than a six months time frame, and through less than six degrees of separation, knew six of the young people whose untimely deaths made front page news. She knew Andrew Gayle who was killed by several bullets behind Driftwood Community Centre, Jordan Manners who was fatally shot in the chest inside C.W. Jefferys high school and Chevon Josephs who crashed a stolen car into two taxis, killing himself and two other friends, Monique McKnight and Aleisha Ashley who were in one of the taxis Josephs hit. Dejahnai was becoming desensitized to the violence surrounding her.

> When 19-year-old Jose Hierro-Saez, a friend Harris knew through her boyfriend, was killed June 9 during a drive-by shooting near his Jamestown [Rexdale] housing complex, it was less of a shock "because it felt like I was used to seeing people die," Harris says. (Cherry, 2007)

It is hard raising a family under these conditions. The parents want out and for the children who know better, they too want out. But these very families often face challenges from within, in addition to the outside social pressures, becoming dysfunctional - and the children are the ones who suffer. This double-edged sword of internal and external strain is the only context for many Black youth, and under these conditions, overcoming the plethora of obstacles can be overwhelming. Hardest hit seem to be young Black men.

> These high-risk boys are poor, often from dysfunctional homes or ones where one parent has left, usually a father. Many fail in school, where teachers cannot cope with unruly, unfocused students. At home, there are no rules. Some of their mothers work 14-hour days and when their sons say they are at the Boys and Girls

> Club playing basketball, they believe them. The neighbourhoods they come from are populated by blacks and other minorities, as are the schools, in pockets of inner city St. Jamestown, Rexdale, North York and Scarborough. . .(Welsh, 2006)

These young, Black and misguided youth are often the ones who turn to the street, and all too often violence, in search of what they can't find at home. To stop the haemorrhaging of young blood and parental tears, it would appear that families leapt at the opportunity to leave. And with a faith rooted in the adage 'a child is a product of his/her environment' families appear to have relocated to catch a piece of the suburban dream and make real the immigrant dream. Families were 'moving on up' to the north west side of Brampton. No longer were they simply being mobile, Fletcher's Meadow allowed them to be upwardly mobile. They finally had a piece of the pie.

Family Dynamics and Fiscal Responsibilities

Escaping poverty, unemployment, criminalization, and inadequate housing is tantamount to success, and for many families, Fletcher's Meadow seemingly offers that opportunity. Despite the benefits living in an upwardly mobile community such as Fletcher's Meadow represents, the reality is that changing postal codes does not change family relations – at least not permanently. Moving to northwest Brampton could be compared to treating the symptoms without addressing the underlying problems such as race, family structure, unemployment, and masculinity. More specifically, it would be natural to assume that many of the Black families that reside in Fletcher's Meadow are the same families that do not conform to the well-accepted norm of the two-parent, dual-income home and the socio-economic benefits associated with this standard. Again, this standard is derived in comparison to the rest of the population where about 46 per cent of

Black children were growing up in homes with only one parent versus 18 per cent of the general population in Toronto[16] (CBC, 2007b). Additionally, it would be natural to assume that many of the families that now call Fletcher's Meadow home, still carry the same burden of multiple jobs. With the further assumption being made that due to existing social constructs, many Blacks are not being offered higher paid jobs due to discriminatory and racist practices in the work place (Henry, 1994). These assumptions would in fact be false. Based on 2006 Census data, Fletcher's Meadow has a higher percentage of married couples (80.62%) than that of Toronto and the province of Ontario (see Appendix A). Additionally, in regards to female single parent homes Fletcher's Meadow has the lowest percentage at 11.16% (see Appendix A). Once again, the significance of these social differences lies in economics. The families in Fletcher's Meadow have the economic resources to live in a higher socio-economic bracket. Consequently, the children of these families are more likely to be successful due to the lack of constraints and a better environment.

Family dynamics also contribute greatly to the success, and failure, of the attainment of life opportunities. And with such a large proportion of Black families in Toronto being made up of single parent homes, the impact that this has on a family, and a community comprised of these types of families, cannot be understated. In a feature by the CBC entitled "Growing Up Without Men" the issue of absent fathers within the Black community was explored (CBC, 2007). Within the feature, a series of interviews, a town hall forum, and an online-moderated discussion provided more insight into what has long

[16] Among Toronto's Jamaican-Canadians, the numbers are even more dramatic: two out of three children grow up without a father (Milan & Tran, 2004).

been noted as a severe problem within the Black community. Various prominent figures noted the devastating effects that the Black community faced because of the absence of fathers. Dr. Orlando Patterson noted that the disproportionate number of single mothers within the Black community was in large part due to the effects of hyper-masculinity that strongly emphasizes masculinity and all that goes along with it. According to Patterson, being a man involves sexual prowess, it involves being a father — at least having children. He also noted that it is very honourific. That is, it strongly emphasizes respect to an extreme degree, whereby the open or closed demonstration of disrespect can be, and is often times, met with violence.

With this as the backdrop, the Black families that moved to northwest Brampton were unfortunately not able to leave that notion of manhood behind. However, since most families consisted of two-parent households, the impact is lessened.[17] Yet, it would be naïve to think that the prevalence of "street culture" permeating many of the homes in Toronto, with the aim of taking the negative and embracing it and viewing it as positive, has not reached the doorstep of Black families in Fletcher's Meadow. Patterson, in a separate article entitled *A Poverty of the Mind* wrote about the many ways the negativity invades the consciousness of the young Black male mind.

> For these young men, it was almost like a drug, hanging out on the street after school, shopping and dressing sharply, sexual conquests, party drugs, hip-hop music and culture, the fact that almost all the superstar athletes and a great many of the nation's best entertainers were black. (Patterson, 2006)

[17] Within the United States it was noted that "[m]arried couples with children have not been a majority of U.S. families since 1967" (Price, 1998). And within Canada, as of the 2006 census, only 38.8% of all families within Canada are married with children (Statistics Canada, 2006).

He also goes on to explain that within the larger context of mainstream society, Black youth find living up to the media stereotypes and society's limited expectations immensely fulfilling, as they were able to garner respect from White youth which in turn fuelled their high level of self esteem. Patterson states that social psychologists found this to be puzzling since, unlike other immigrant groups, Black youth's self esteem is independent of how well they do in school.

In effect, a culture of low expectation is fostered and despite the upward mobility the move to north Brampton represents, it is countered by the pervasiveness of the outside negativity that surrounds many families within the community. It is fair to assume that the children in these families did not make the decision to move to Fletcher's Meadow. However, arguably, they most readily feel the impact of moving to this new locale since they experience the greatest amount of change. As a child, he/she not only have a new home and neighbourhood to become accustomed to, they also have a new school and peers to become acclimatized to. Parents, more than likely, have retained their jobs and at least have that level of stability to fall back on. The impact of the move is even greater if parents had to take on, or already had to work, more than one job. As a parent, his/her time to spend with their child during this trying time becomes very limited. The family dynamics become even more complex in the case of single parent households since they are not present to actively guide their children on a daily basis and address emerging issues such as drugs, sex and alcohol use. As a result, their children's friends often become the surrogate parents, with actual parent(s) having comparatively little sway (Majumdar, 2003).

Additionally, the burden of multiple jobs can have an even greater toll on the family. According to a Human Resources and Social Development Canada report, the employment rate is lower and unemployment rate is higher for visible minorities than for non-visible minorities. The demands for labour market flexibility in the urban "globalized" economy have disproportionately exposed racialized groups to contract, temporary, part-time, and shift work with poor job security and low wages and benefits (Human Resources and Social Development Canada, 2005). It is within this context that the Black community looks for jobs that will enable them to sustain themselves at a level beyond mere survival.

Although not the norm in Fletcher's Meadow, single parent women must fend for themselves and their children, with the most viable alternative being to hold down more than one job at a time. This is also necessary since Black women are economically disadvantaged in comparison to the rest of the population. According to the Canadian Association of Social Workers (2005),

> Black women are in double jeopardy in terms of income. Being Black, they belong to a minority whose income is among the lowest in Canada. Being women, they have less income than Black men. . . The average income of Black women in 2000 was $20,029. The average income of Canadians was $29,769 (p.1).

These disparities speak to many of the other challenges facing Black families. According to Reverend Bruce Smith, a panellist on the CBC Townhall Discussion: Growing Up Without Men, since many mothers, who tend to be the primary caregivers, are often not home at the same the same time as their children because they are working, it would stand to reason that these children then become the most vulnerable and end up being raised by the street (CBC, 2007). If this is in fact the case, it could be said that families

moving to Fletcher's Meadow have the hope and expectation that the community would be such that the children would not have the same exposure to, opportunity for nor the propensity to do things that would be a detriment to themselves. However, as James and Saul points out, things are not always as they seem.

> . . .[as] these are not, at least aesthetically speaking, "inner-cities" in the sense that one will not see abandoned or decaying properties or vehicles, and boarded-up homes or factories, the orderly appearance of these neighbourhoods. . .conceals the poverty, hunger, unemployment and underemployment, alienation, inequitable schooling conditions and concern with street crime and violence that mark them as "inner" suburbs.. . .On the other hand, in the "outer-suburbs", one gets a sense of middle-class affluence in terms of streets with what appear to be single-family homes with double-car garages occupied by people who are comfortably living life. However, research suggests that these outer-appearances are somewhat deceptive (James & Saul, 2006, p.3)

The deception that James and Saul speak of can come in many forms. Fletcher's Meadow is in very close proximity to several industrial sites and so it is to be expected that these industries would employ a fair share of the working class members of the Black families in the community. For the families in which a father, or father figure, is present as another bread-winner, factory jobs, shift work and the like, would be viable forms of employment. Yet, due to the nature of these jobs, the same problem of parent absenteeism still exists, as these jobs often require late night shift work, still resulting in time spent away from children and familial disorder (Demerouti, Geurts, Bakker, & Euwema, 2004). The tragic irony is that for the majority of households two incomes are required to maintain the new standard of living, and the parents give up time, which their children so desperately need, in favour of a new environment, which is also important. The suburban dream comes with a price - one that is financial as it is social.

Aurora Jackson (2003) noted in her American longitudinal study of 178 single-mother, Black families that the children were affected adversely due to the economic pressures that they were faced with from an early age. Her research found that early childhood is the stage during which income matters most for children's development. Perceptibly, Jackson points out that parents' economic stress and hardship are environmental factors that are associated with increased depressive symptoms, less nurturant parenting and, thereby, less optimal child outcomes. Additionally, low-income families frequently live in neighborhoods characterized by social disorganization, such as high rates of crime, joblessness, social isolation, and few resources for child development (Jackson, 2003). It was also noted in a recent study that the reason why many Black families had difficulty in moving into better housing options, such as Fletcher's Meadow, stems from down payment constraints (Gyimah, Walters, & Phythian, 2005). In the study Gyimah, Walters, & Phythian noted that families with high income and education were more likely to live in suburbs, in areas with high proportions of non-Black residents, and in neighbourhoods that are safe and affluent. The implications of this are that the Black middle class is able to better utilize the housing market to their advantage compared to their poorer counterparts. Hence, until the market shifted, many in the Black community in Toronto were in distress due to the economic pressure they were feeling. However, what they thought they could get away from has followed them to their current residency, not in the same form, but felt just as deeply.

Yet, despite all of the obstacles stated above, Fletcher's Meadow still represents hope and the chance to realize the life opportunities that were previously unattainable,

because statistically the community is bucking the aforementioned trends. In regards to employment, according to Statistics Canada (2006), over 50% of all residents have a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree and 24.10% are employed in the field of business in either finance or administration. This, in turn, is followed by 18.28% and 17.71% of residents being employed in the areas of trade and sales and services respectively (see Appendix E and F). This new reality represents a sense of upward social mobility and a break from the past and what had become the all too familiar norm. Much like the generation before, the "immigrant drive" that Anisef et al (2000) refers to, is very much alive and can be found amongst the Black families that have come to call Fletcher's Meadow home. The life opportunities can also be realized through their children. And while navigating this new landscape comes with a new set of challenges, the opportunities that were only dreamed of before, have a greater likelihood of becoming a reality. The move has afforded many new opportunities for Black families to re-invent themselves in a new setting and with new hope. However, the family dynamics and fiscal management associated with creating these opportunities will need to change, because in order to sustain this new lifestyle, this new context demands it. And more importantly, the children deserve it.

Chapter 5: Current & Future Implications

When looking at the development of northwest Brampton and the motivation behind many Black families that have chosen to call this area home over the past 8 – 10 years, the interplay of the choices available, the affordability of the area, the social climate of where they lived, the cultural traits that they carried with them and the economic circumstances of those involved must be examined within the proper context both then and now. What has been demonstrated is that for the families that have moved from Toronto to northwest Brampton, the benefits of leaving the beleaguered neighbourhoods of Toronto were buoyed by the realities of living in Fletcher's Meadow, and not the dreams that lead many of the families to the area. Due to the inability to address the underlying issues connected to race and socio-economic position that cause many of the problems addressed in Toronto, Black families in the community of Fletcher's Meadow still face a disproportionate amount of hardship. However, Blacks have been able to gain some ground in terms of establishing a firmer economic and cultural base, albeit still shaky. Scholars have noted the similarities between the plight many Blacks face in both the US and Canada; however, they have also noted and emphasized the significant differences. These differences have given rise to a unique Black experience within Canada and specifically that of the GTA, whereby the focus is no longer on the urban core, but that of the suburban landscape; and the preceding chapters have highlighted the fact that these differences have also accompanied the new residents of Fletcher's Meadow. For those residents who arrived from Toronto, social conditions that were present before the north westward migration to Fletcher's Meadow

are still present in the new community, although the Black people within this community are engaging both themselves and the larger system in which they operate more positively.

Yet, the true measure of the success of any generation resides in the success of the generation that follows it. If the next generation cannot build significantly on the success of the current one, then no lasting gains have been made; there has been no progress. With this in mind, the move to Fletcher's Meadow has not only come to represent a geographic shift, it also means that life opportunities, as they have come to be defined: the prospects of becoming a homeowner, living within a safe, crime free community, and having bright, educational opportunities, can be realized to a limited degree. By examining past generation's marriages, relationships and family organization, employment, religion, leisure and social life and the educational experiences of Black youth, a sense of what the future holds for the next generation has been determined.

The historical exploration of Caribbean immigrants' marriages, relationships and family organization revealed that the stable household that has been established as the norm, is more elusive within the home of Blacks. There is a continued pattern of single-mothers, absent fathers, and a lack of legal marriage or common-law status. The pattern was evident within the Caribbean and was maintained upon arrival in Canada; however within the community of Fletcher's Meadow the above average percentage of married couples and the lower than average number of single mother households reflects the possibility of social mobility and familial stability. The educational implications for children of Fletcher's can then be looked upon as being positive since they are coming

from a more advantaged position than their peers both currently in Toronto, and historically within the region. The benefits, both social and financial, that are to be had from a two-parent home, have established a level of normalcy that is now on par with the rest of the population.

In the area of employment, the average income of members of the Fletcher's Meadow community was higher than that of Toronto and the province of Ontario. From this we can ascertain that Fletcher's Meadow is not an inner city with a suburban façade. The families within the community are, on average, financially better off than their counterparts in other segments of the GTA. In comparison to other families in Toronto and the province as a whole, a greater number of Fletcher's Meadow residents tend to work outside of the City of Brampton, with the nature of employment being mostly in business in the areas of finance and administration. Occupations in the areas of trade followed closely by sales and service make up the other key areas in terms of jobs. From this, one can assume that Fletcher's Meadow is indeed representative of upward social mobility as these families clearly demonstrate the economic means to realize life opportunities.

The examination of education has proven to be a painful one for many Blacks within the GTA. The various hardships that have been endured and the challenges that have been overcome are unmatched by any other group in Canada. Within the context of Fletcher's Meadow the educational success is apparent. As has been demonstrated, over half of all residents have attained a post-secondary level of education at a rate higher than the provincial average. This bodes well for Black youth within this community since it

sets a standard that they are able to look up to. And although it is not a surety to cross-generational success, it does increase the likelihood since the youth will not only have their family supporting them, but other peers in similar circumstances will also surround them. The very context parents were hoping for appears to be emerging, along with the prospects of realizing more life opportunities.

The examination of religion and social life helped to reveal the importance of interpersonal relations among the Black community. Specific locales such as the church or a club, in which Caribbean immigrants can engage each other in a manner that does not necessitate translation, interpretation or explanation, has been demonstrated as being crucial to the overall well being of the community over the past 30 - 40 years in Canada. However, within Fletcher's Meadow there is an absence of both churches and clubs. Other venues such as a bar and a West Indian food store do exist, and allow people to gather and engage each other in a communal setting. It is expected that these types of businesses will grow to meet the demand and will continue to provide opportunities for socialization and the like. It is also expected that this will foster a greater sense of community among the Black population as they will be able to participate and be active in the community at large as well as hold on to varying aspects of their integrated Caribbean culture, much like other ethnic groups within the Canadian mosaic. By doing this, the children within these families will grow up being able to not only engage the larger Canadian non-Black society, but also navigate the various intricacies and social norms associated with their Caribbean roots.

Prospects of Educational Success for Black Youth in Fletcher's Meadow

All of the aforementioned areas bring us to the prospects of educational success and all that it entails for Black youth in Fletcher's Meadow. This is the most important criterion of success, as it not only clearly reflects the present, but it speaks to the success of the future. In examining this criterion, one can get a true sense of whether or not, and the degree to which, upward social mobility has been attained. The educational success of Black students is inextricably linked to the interplay of the factors highlighted previously - poor housing conditions, family instability, racist and classist structures. However, within Fletcher's Meadow, as with many communities, the most pervasive notions of success are directly connected to school and one's level of educational attainment. Despite the broadening of the definition of success over time, the need for education is a constant that has remained. As such, the understanding of the variables that impact the educational outcomes of Black students is crucial in determining whether or not the efforts of parents, educators, government officials and other vested bodies are worthwhile. Each of these bodies has, and may reach, its individual objective; however it is only when each objective is measured alongside each other concurrently, that an unambiguous and proper answer can be arrived at. More specifically, this paper explored various social theories and investigated how these theories applied to Black families in northwest Brampton. The spatial assimilation model demonstrated that as new immigrants acquired greater economic resources they moved out of their "starting point" neighbourhoods into higher quality housing and neighbourhoods with more and better amenities, as is represented by Fletcher's Meadow. The move to a "better"

neighbourhood was characterized by Black families becoming acculturated to the point where they had the requisite financial resources, as well as the cultural and social skills to navigate this new locality. Based on the overall improvement of the socio-economic position of Black people within Fletcher's Meadow that was demonstrated within this paper, this move does in fact represent a narrowing of the social mobility margin. Black families in this community have 'moved up.' They are not living in suburban ghettoes, despite the hardships many Black families face in establishing themselves in this new community. In fact, Fletcher's Meadow is demonstrative of an upwardly mobile community, and is a landmark, both literally and figuratively, for Black families that call this area home. In examining the history of Blacks in Toronto over the past 50 years, and taking into account the context many Black immigrants faced when arriving in Toronto, education and socio-economic status played a very important role. This would form the foundation on which many immigrants would shape and create their dreams and those of their children as well. What is important to note is that the shaping and creating of children's lives was being done in a highly racialised context. There was a clear understanding that by being Black in Toronto, there were certain cultural practices and norms that were expected. And these norms were a continuation of the values found primarily in the Caribbean. Yet, despite the hanging on to what was, there was also a clear understanding by the next generation that a melding of the old and the new must take place – a new set of values must be created. These new values were created in a context that did not have a template to draw from. They were all new, with the exception that school was an integral part of becoming established within Canadian society. That

value remained, despite the challenges many Black students and families faced within, outside and because of the educational system. The challenges that were faced, and still are being faced, were a uniquely Toronto dilemma. However, in recent years that context has shifted from Toronto to include Brampton, but the dreams and the aspirations have remained the same. In exploring the history of Brampton, a deeper understanding of that context and the complexities mixed with opportunities the city offers was crucial in understanding the backdrop that the community of Fletcher's Meadow was born from.

The realization of the suburban dream by a significant portion of the Black population within Fletcher's Meadow was greatly enhanced by the socio-economic and the socio-political transformations that took place over the past thirty years, in particular the past decade. However, despite the gains that have been made, if Black youth do not embrace the opportunities now afforded them, then they will continue on the same path that has brought about the myriad of documented failures and shortcomings, in relation to education and the Black youth. Given the supports that are in place within the educational system, that historically have not been, a larger number of Black youth can indeed aspire to greater educational heights within the context of Fletcher's Meadow. This in turn *may* lead to Blacks being viewed as equal in the social, political and economic realms of society, in a meaningful way beyond paper and at times the superficial application of the law. It is important to face up to the shortcomings of an inequitable system and acknowledge that the rhetoric of "one size fits all" education is hypocritical of the differentiated instruction that is practiced and embraced by the current curriculum. There is some good that has come from the current system and its various

incarnations over the years, but the teachings we must take forward with us are that the *teachings* have not taught all of us, at least the lessons that were intended. The side-curriculum of race, economics and politics have allowed only some to graduate where it should be the expected right and norm for all. Fletcher's Meadow as a community embodies the possibilities of hope when all of the components work together. Let us move forward with that as our lesson for those who come after us - onward and upward. Black people have progressed but this is tempered by the pervasive, negative and racist view of Blacks held by society at large. As the recent article in the Toronto Star highlighted, The Darker Your Skin, The Harder To Fit In (Taylor, 2009). Black people in Fletcher's Meadow may have improved their overall lot and found a community to fit in, but they still have a far way to go to be recognized as being on par with other racialized and non-racialized groups. The progress that has been experienced is relative. As Blacks give chase and even catch up, White flight will continue as the inherent, aforementioned inequities that exist within the system are perpetuated by the system.

Appendix A: Marriage

Selected family characteristics	Fletcher's Meadow (Combined CT)	Toronto (CMA)	Ontario (PR)
Total number of census families	10,890	1,405,845	3,422,315
Number of married-couple families	8,780	1,059,125	2,530,560
Number of common-law-couple families	710	109,290	351,045
Number of lone-parent families	1,410	237,430	540,715
Number of female lone-parent families	1,215	197,595	441,105
Number of male lone-parent families	190	39,835	99,605

Percentage of married couples	80.62%	75.34%	73.94%
Percentage of female lone-parent	11.16%	14.06%	12.89%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006

Appendix B: Visible Minority

Visible minority population characteristics	Fletcher's Meadow (Combined CT)	Brampton (City)	Toronto (CMA)	Ontario (PR)
Total population	39,445	431,575	5,072,075	12,028,895
Total visible minority population	26,505	246,150	2,174,070	2,745,200
Chinese	605	7,805	486,330	576,975
South Asian	11,165	136,750	684,070	794,170
Black	8,385	53,340	352,220	473,765
Filipino	2,170	11,980	171,980	203,215
Latin American	920	8,545	99,295	147,140
Southeast Asian	755	6,130	70,215	110,045
Arab	265	2,600	53,430	111,405
West Asian	290	2,875	75,475	96,620
Korean	15	580	55,265	69,540
Japanese	65	545	19,010	28,080
Visible minority, n.i.e.	1,065	8,900	46,705	56,845
Multiple visible minority	805	6,095	60,075	77,400
Not a visible minority	12,940	185,430	2,898,005	9,283,695

Percentage of Blacks	21.26%	12.36%	6.94%	3.94%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population.

Appendix C: Place of Work

Place of Work				
Characteristics	Fletcher's Meadow	Brampton (City)	Toronto (CMA)	Ontario (PR)
Total employed labour force 15 years and over	20225	225,080	2627350	6164245
Worked at home	775	9,305	179390	436380
Worked outside Canada	50	1,055	14900	36905
No fixed workplace address	2180	25,585	270460	596305
Worked at usual place	17210	189,135	2162595	5094650
Worked in census subdivision (municipality) of residence	5345	71,355	1246340	3056365
Worked in a different census subdivision (municipality) within the census division (county) of residence	6060	57,590	197120	795195
Worked in a different census division (county)	5785	59,910	715635	1211410
Worked in a different province	30	275	3505	31680
Total employed labour force 15 years and over with a usual place of work or no fixed workplace address	19395	214,720	2433060	5690960
Car; truck; van; as driver	15610	164,675	1547540	4038035
Car; truck; van; as passenger	1455	21,255	182440	470410
Public transit	1995	21,960	540495	736060
Walked or bicycled	195	4,985	140320	389105
All other modes	130	1,845	22265	57350
Percentages in Respective Areas:	Fletcher's Meadow	Brampton (City)	Toronto (CMA)	Ontario (PR)
Percentage Worked in census subdivision (municipality) of residence	26.43%	31.70%	47.44%	49.58%
Percentage Worked in a different census subdivision (municipality) within the census division (county) of residence	29.96%	25.59%	7.50%	12.90%
Percentage Worked in a different census division (county)	28.60%	26.62%	27.24%	19.65%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population.

Appendix D: Income and Earnings

Earnings in 2005	Fletcher's Meadow	Toronto	Ontario
	(Combined CT)	(CMA)	(PR)
Persons 15 years and over with earnings (counts)	22,180	2,936,690	6,991,670
Median earnings - Persons 15 years and over ($)	34,391	30,350	29,335
Persons 15 years and over with earnings who worked full year, full time (counts)	13,285	1,557,820	3,690,665
Median earnings - Persons 15 years and over who worked full year, full time ($)	44,302	45,350	44,748
Income in 2005	Fletcher's Meadow	Toronto	Ontario
	(Combined CT)	(CMA)	(PR)
Persons 15 years and over with income (counts)	26,055	3,891,645	9,340,020
Median income - Persons 15 years and over ($)	31,811	26,754	27,258
Median income after tax - Persons 15 years and over ($)	28,617	24,314	24,604
Composition of total income (100%)	100	100	100
Earnings - As a % of total income	91	80.5	77.4
Government transfers - As a % of total income	7	8.1	9.8
Other money - As a % of total income	3	11.4	12.9
Income status of all persons in private households (counts)	39,440	5,054,610	11,926,140
% in low income before tax - All persons	11	18.4	14.7
% in low income after tax - All persons	8	14.4	11.1
% in low income before tax - Persons less than 18 years of age	15	22.6	18
% in low income after tax - Persons less than 18 years of age	10	17.7	13.7

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population.

Appendix E: Education

Characteristics	Fletcher's Meadow	Brampton (City)	Toronto (CMA)	Ontario (PR)
Total population 15 years and over	27915	332,235	4122820	9819420
No certificate; diploma or degree	5215	74,935	813595	2183625
High school certificate or equivalent	7670	98,470	1052330	2628575
Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	2160	25,505	263715	785115
College; CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	5750	57,730	658155	1804775
University certificate or diploma below the bachelor level	1730	18,515	233765	405270
University certificate; diploma or degree	5400	57,075	1101270	2012060
Total population aged 15 to 24	4525	60,380	682185	1624835
No certificate; diploma or degree	1930	22,870	246755	648300
High school certificate or equivalent	1570	23,925	273930	627010
Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	145	1,685	15420	37475
College; CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	555	6,350	61645	160140
University certificate or diploma below the bachelor level	130	1,995	22460	33875
University certificate; diploma or degree	200	3,550	61980	118030
Total population aged 25 to 34	7960	66,310	717490	1529590
No certificate; diploma or degree	610	6,220	50280	132715
High school certificate or equivalent	2110	19,125	151610	364260
Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	525	4,060	34445	91525
College; CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	2015	14,040	143750	372355
University certificate or diploma below the bachelor level	540	4,725	45135	68800
University certificate; diploma or degree	2170	18,130	292265	499935
Total population aged 35 to 64	13925	173,615	2144290	5108740
No certificate; diploma or degree	2000	31,465	285155	766810
High school certificate or equivalent	3575	47,975	495750	1296405
Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	1400	16,625	163145	489605
College; CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	3085	33,905	390275	1089270
University certificate or diploma below the bachelor level	975	10,480	140055	241150
University certificate; diploma or degree	2895	33,165	669910	1225490
Total population 15 years and over	27920	332,235	4122820	9819420
No postsecondary certificate; diploma or degree	12875	173,415	1865925	4812200
Education	850	8,525	133845	335715
Visual and performing arts; and communications technologies	390	4,860	109390	193790
Humanities	695	10,845	152955	292845
Social and behavioural sciences and law	1550	15,635	288180	576100
Business; management and public administration	3955	38,460	532435	1061210
Physical and life sciences and technologies	495	6,375	94435	181250
Mathematics; computer and information sciences	940	10,000	143420	254440

Architecture; engineering; and related technologies	3510	37,575	447100	1089310
Agriculture; natural resources and conservation	185	2,055	26785	91965
Health; parks; recreation and fitness	1750	16,975	242805	665490
Personal; protective and transportation services	700	7,505	85355	264620
Other	0	10	185	480
Total population 15 years and over	27920	332,235	4122820	9819420
No postsecondary certificate; diploma or degree	12875	173,415	1865925	4812200
Postsecondary certificate; diploma or degree	15030	158,825	2256900	5007220
Inside Canada	9775	101,245	1519075	3928555
Outside Canada	5255	57,580	737825	1078670
Percentages in Respective Areas				
No postsecondary certificate; diploma or degree	46.11%	52.20%	45.26%	49.01%
Postsecondary certificate; diploma or degree	53.83%	47.81%	54.74%	50.99%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population.

Appendix F: Labour

Characteristics	Fletcher's Meadow	Brampton (City)	Toronto (CMA)	Ontario (PR)
Total population 15 years and over	27915	332,235	4122820	9819420
In the labour force	21535	240,985	2815845	6587580
Employed	20230	225,080	2627350	6164245
Unemployed	1305	15,905	188495	423335
Not in the labour force	6380	91,250	1306975	3231840
Participation rate	231.9	72.5	68.3	67.1
Employment rate	217.7	67.7	63.7	62.8
Unemployment rate	18.1	6.6	6.7	6.4
Total experienced labour force 15 years and over	21145	236,265	2758700	6473735
A Management occupations	1935	19,670	320600	666485
B Business; finance and administration occupations	5095	53,675	590605	1204490
C Natural and applied sciences and related occupations	1545	14,845	224410	451930
D Health occupations	915	8,150	124080	340690
E Occupations in social science; education; government service and religion	1365	12,175	230610	546385
F Occupations in art; culture; recreation and sport	320	3,930	107530	200980
G Sales and service occupations	3745	45,775	611410	1522820
H Trades; transport and equipment operators and related occupations	3865	45,895	327850	911250
I Occupations unique to primary industry	90	2,075	26265	165085
J Occupations unique to processing; manufacturing and utilities	2255	30,070	195330	463610
Total experienced labour force 15 years and over	21145	236,265	2758700	6473730
Agriculture and other resource-based industries	130	1,940	30410	190000
Construction	1150	12,415	148895	384775
Manufacturing	4135	50,375	371275	899670
Wholesale trade	1625	18,490	166325	307465
Retail trade	2070	25,740	293465	720235
Finance and real estate	1740	14,880	259875	442610
Health care and social services	1545	14,565	222135	611740
Educational services	940	9,915	172990	433485
Business services	5320	58,685	658510	1274345
Other services	2475	29,265	434805	1209390
Population 15 years and over reporting hours of unpaid work	26045	303,875	3730565	8991010
Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population.				

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