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# **Beyond Assimilation: The Immigrant Family and Community in a Canadian Metropolis**

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*Dan A Chekki, University of Winnipeg, Department of Sociology, 515 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 2E9 Canada (email: sociology@uwinnipeg.ca), writes on the issue immigration and adaptations in the context of Canadian families. Family and community networks facilitate immigration as well as the process of adaptation in Canada. This paper draws on an empirical research focusing on immigrant families in Winnipeg, Canada, which is based on a sample of 440 south Asian, Filipino, Middle Eastern, and Eastern European respondents. When immigrants are under pressure to assimilate, the immigrant family and community can make a difference if they are able to mobilise resources and provide social capital. The author raises a few pertinent questions: In the process of immigrant adjustment, what roles do immigrant family and community play in the integration into Canadian urban milieu? Will immigrant families and ethnic communities persist in affecting the lives of children of immigrants? What is the role of the policy of multiculturalism in the process of immigrant family adaptation?*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The essential role of the family in building human and social capital, its contribution to the social environment of communities, and its integrative role in providing the glue that helps other parts of the social system to function together are well recognised. The family also contributes to the development of the sense of trust which forms the foundation of ethical behaviour on which social capital is built. Furthermore, the family in itself is not only a critical source of social capital but also serves as a catalyst, through interactions with community systems, for exchange of resources and in using and creating social capital. In other words, the notion of social capital refers to the norms and networks of relationships within families and communities. The strength of social networks as social capital has been identified with reference to immigrant families, ethnic communities

and ethnic economic enterprises (Light and Gold, 2000; Portes, 1998; Zhou, 1997).

The family is the critical arena for a better understanding of the dynamics of immigration and adaptation. An important aspect of Canadian immigration policy has been the reunification of family members. Family and community networks facilitate immigration as well as the process of adaptation in urban Canada. Assimilation theories based on the American experience of European immigrants and the "melting pot" ideal refer to a process whereby ethnic minorities experience the loss of their distinctive cultural traits.

Our empirical research focusing on immigrant families in Winnipeg, Canada, challenges Gordon's (1964) "straightline" notion of assimilation. When immigrants are under pressure to assimilate, the immigrant family and community can make a difference if they are able to mobilise resources and provide social capital (Coleman, 1988, 1990).

This paper is organised as follows: We delineate the theoretical framework followed by the research method and sample. Based on interview data (both qualitative and quantitative), a descriptive analysis of the family and community of immigrants from India and the Philippines will be presented. Our focus will be on the patterns and problems of adaptation and integration of immigrants and their children to the Canadian urban environment. The discussion revolves around the concept of social capital and the Canadian government policy of multiculturalism.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Adaptation to the Canadian society is a complex and prolonged process depending not only upon skills and motivations of immigrants but also upon specific contexts of reception. The integration of immigrants is considered to be a nested process whereby immigrants initially integrate into a family, then neighbourhood, ethnic subcommunity, ethnic community, and eventually into mainstream Canadian society. Some studies (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996; Zhou, 1992, 1997) have shown that preexisting ethnic communities and families represent the most immediate dimension of the context of reception, serving as the basis of a distinct form of social capital to facilitate immigrant adaptation.

Social capital is described as the relations between individuals and groups which are mutually recognised bonds, channels of information, and norms and sanctions. Furthermore, social capital is viewed as the shared knowledge, understandings, and patterns of interaction that a group of people bring to any productive activity. Social capital also refers to the organisations, structures and social relations that people build themselves independently of the state or large corporations. It contributes to a stronger community fabric, and, often as a by-product of other activities, builds

bonds of information, trust, and interpersonal solidarity (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988, 1990; Lin *et al.*, 2001; Palloni and Massey, 2001; Portes, 1998). Social capital relies on social bonds and generalised norms of reciprocity. Moreover, social capital does not wear out upon being used more and more. In fact, if unused, social capital deteriorates at a relatively rapid rate. Social capital, at its core, is about the value created by fostering connections between individuals (Lesser, 2000).

In families, the quality of social capital depends on the presence of (adults) parents and the attention they give to their children. When parents expect their children to go to college, the children are less likely to drop out of school than those with no such parental hopes. Parental expectation is thus a form of social capital that increases the child's chances for future success.

It is also relevant to take into account what Putnam (2000) prefers to call 'bridging' social capital, in which bonds of connectedness are formed across different ethnic groups. In his view, social capital includes familiarity, tolerance, solidarity, trust, habits of cooperation, and mutual respect. He believes that social capital is built through face-to-face contact. Furthermore, he argues that social capital acts as the ties that bind individuals, and provides an all-purpose social lubricant capable of fixing any social problem. He shows how America's stock of social capital, that is, 'features of social organisation such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit' has suffered a dramatic decline. We argue that the bonding social capital represented by family and community networks helps ensure that immigrant communities can voice their collective concerns and exert a measure of power. Families, social networks, and formally organised groups such as churches, temples, mosques, ethnic associations and communities serve as major sources of social capital facilitating the process of adaptation and integration of immigrants in Canada.

The concept of social capital appears to be closely linked to Durkheim's theory of social integration. Based on his classic study of suicide, Durkheim (1951) develops the thesis that individual behaviour should be considered to be the product of the degree of integration of individuals in their society. The greater the integration of individuals into a social group, the greater the influence of the group over the individual. In the context of immigrant adaptation, adults and youth who are more highly integrated into their ethnic group are more likely to follow the forms of behaviour prescribed by the group.

If ethnic communities are viewed as sources of social capital, it would be useful to suggest a mechanism by which the adherence to ethnic family norms and community-based support systems and positive cultural value orientations can provide an adaptive leverage for immigrants and their

children in their effort to achieve their goals in Canadian society. The networks of family and kinship, friendship and community constitute a source of social capital (Waldinger, 2001) in creating conditions that facilitate the process of job search, acquisition of skills and the integration of immigrants; and reduce the costs and risks associated with migration and adjustment to a new urban setting in Canada.

The mechanism of social capital constantly tends to accommodate changes in the process of immigration, facilitates access to resources and benefits, and helps immigrants to integrate into a new society. It is hypothesised that the greater the human and social capital, the better equipped the immigrant is for adaptation to the Canadian urban milieu (Beiser, 1999). Social networks based on kinship and friendship provide help for new immigrants that lowers the risks and increases the net returns of emigrating (Wellman, 1999). These networks lubricate the process of immigration and integration (Waldinger, 2001).

Three basic types of social capital have been identified: bonding, bridging and linking (Woolcock, 1999). Bonding refers typically to relations among members of families and ethnic communities. Bridging social capital refers to relations between ethnic communities (Putnam, 2000). Linking refers to relations between different social strata in a hierarchy where different groups access power, social status and wealth. In multicultural societies such as Canada, the relation between bonding and bridging capital is essential in understanding the dynamic between social capital and immigrant integration.

Bonding social capital contributes to the concentration of immigrants in urban areas, development of ethnic social and religious organisations and businesses, provision of social safety net and ethnic ties facilitating communication of valuable information of the local labour market. Bridging social capital enables immigrants greater socioeconomic and political participation in their adopted country. Bridging capital helps immigrants to expand their networks beyond their own ethnic community, and aids greater access to socioeconomic opportunities. However, in order to accumulate bridging capital, immigrants should have the motivation to connect with the society at large, and the receiving society have the willingness to accept newcomers.

Canada is a multicultural society composed of a myriad of ethnic groups and racial minorities and it is perceived as a cultural mosaic. Furthermore, the Canadian government policy emphasises the ideology of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is not only about minority ethnic communities but also it is about the proper terms of relationship between different cultural communities (Parekh, 2000).

The Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988) recognises the diversity of Canadians as regards race, national/ethnic origin, colour and religion, as a

fundamental characteristic of Canadian society; and the Government of Canada is committed to a policy of multiculturalism designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians. The policy of multiculturalism enables the integration of minority immigrants while encouraging institutions to remove discriminatory barriers, and promotes programmes and practices that enhance the understanding of and respect for the diversity of the members of Canadian society (Fleras and Elliott, 1992). This study examines Gordon's (1964) theory of assimilation within the context of a conceptual framework of social capital and the Canadian model of multiculturalism.

### RESEARCH METHOD AND SAMPLE

Our empirical study is based on a "snowball" sample of 440 immigrants from South Asia (31%), the Philippines (28%), Eastern Europe (23%) and the Middle East (18%). The face-to-face interviews were conducted in the immigrant family during the 1999-2000 period. The interviews focused on the respondents' ethnic identity, family relations, participation in ethnic community, intergenerational interactions, and their experience of the initial phase of settlement in Canada and the process of adaptation to a new environment. The responses, no doubt, vary depending on how long they have lived in Canada and their country of origin. It is possible that their recall of initial experiences in Canada may have been affected by their current situation.

Of the total sample 75.7 per cent belonged to the first generation of immigrants and on average were 55 years of age or younger, and 26.3 per cent belonged to the second generation. A substantial majority of our respondents (63%) entered Canada during the 1985-98 period, while another 19.5 per cent entered Canada during the 1970-9 period. With reference to immigration category, a majority of our sample came to Canada as "family class" immigrants, based on the principle of family reunion. Our sample is evenly divided in terms of gender. The large majority of them (60.5%) were married, while 34 per cent were never married, four per cent separated or divorced, and two per cent were cohabiting, and 73 per cent of the households included couples with children, i.e. nuclear families. In terms of religious affiliation, 46 per cent respondents were Christians, 20 per cent Muslims, 15 per cent Hindus, seven per cent Sikhs and 11 per cent were either Buddhists or belonged to other religions. A large majority of respondents have achieved a relatively high level of education (64% with a professional/technical or at least some post-secondary education). The occupational background of our respondents varied from one ethnic/regional category to another. However, a significant proportion of immigrants (14% Filipino, 33% South Asian, 35% Eastern European and 21% Middle Eastern) were employed in occupations labelled as professional,

business, managerial, technical, and administrative, and 57 per cent respondents had family income in the range of \$30,000 to less than \$90,000 and 27 per cent had family income of less than \$30,000 per year.

Not only a large majority (73%) of households consist of nuclear families but also there is evidence indicating the importance of family loyalty among immigrants. Our research revealed that 72 per cent of the South Asians, 69 per cent of Filipinos, and 58 per cent of Eastern Europeans (and the Middle Eastern respondents were an exception with only 16%) agreed or strongly agreed with a statement: "One can never let oneself down without letting one's family down."

Immigrant groups varied considerably in the extent to which they identified with their own ethnic group. The largest percentage (48%) of respondents from the Philippines, said they identified most strongly as Filipinos. The extent of ethnic identity was less for the others; 25 per cent for Middle Eastern respondents, 18 per cent for respondents from Eastern Europe, and only six per cent for those from South Asia. In fact, the majority of immigrants tended to identify themselves as "hyphenated" Canadians. For instance 72 per cent of South Asians considered themselves to be "Indo-Canadian," "Pakistani-Canadian," or "Sri Lankan-Canadian." Likewise immigrants from the Philippines, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe identify themselves as "hyphenated" Canadians, suggesting a dual ethnic identity. For the first generation of immigrants, the longer the stay in Canada the greater the extent of dual ethnic identity. A significant proportion of children of immigrants born or raised in Canada tend to identify themselves as Canadian.

### THE URBAN SETTING

The city of Winnipeg, located at the heart of the North American continent, has served historically as the gateway to the Prairies. By 1916, more than half of the city's population was foreign born. Winnipeg, as the hub of transportation and the centre of the grain trade, became the fourth largest city in Canada, and was often referred to as the "Chicago of the North." Winnipeg, with close to 700,000 people, is now a cosmopolitan city with a rich multiethnic heritage. There is not only a significant French-speaking population, but it is also home to German, Ukrainian, Polish, Scandinavian, Eastern European, Asian, Middle Eastern, African, Latin American and many other immigrant groups. Winnipeg's cultural diversity is reflected and reinforced by annual ethnic festivals celebrating ethnic food, music and dance, and arts and crafts of different cultures around the world.

Winnipeg has one of the most diverse manufacturing and industrial sectors, composed of agrifood and beverage industries, fashion/garment industry, film, health and aerospace sectors. As well, it continues to be a major centre for wheat exports. Three universities graduate thousands of

students every year. In recent years, Winnipeg has also become a burgeoning centre for information technology attracting immigrants from different parts of the world. The distinctive characteristics of the urban context tend to shape the very structure of opportunity that immigrants encounter.

In the process of immigrant adjustment, to what extent do the immigrant family and community, as sources of social capital, facilitate the process of integration into the Canadian urban milieu? Will immigrant families and ethnic communities persist in affecting the lives of children of immigrants? What is the role of the policy of multiculturalism in the process of immigrant family adaptation? Our study attempts to examine these issues with reference to the classical theory of assimilation (Gordon 1964), social capital theoretical framework, and in light of a model of multiculturalism as a Canadian state policy.

### **FAMILY AND COMMUNITY**

Immigrants in Winnipeg, with their networks of family, ethnic community, and resulting social control mechanisms, provide a good example of the role of social capital in the process of immigrant adaptation. An overwhelming majority of immigrants in our sample have come to Winnipeg from countries and cultures embedded in strong extended family networks. The patriarchal system, gender inequality, traditional norms, values, and behaviour patterns are characteristics of many immigrant families despite differences in their religious, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Although many changes have been taking place, especially during the past three decades, in their country of origin and in Canada, dependence on the family and kinship among immigrants has not diminished. The following discussion, based on data gathered through interviews, focuses upon immigrants from South Asia in general and more specifically on immigrants from India, and immigrants from the Philippines.

The metropolitan community of Winnipeg, in the mid-1960s, contained less than 500 immigrants from South Asia. With the liberalisation of the Immigration Act in 1967, and during the subsequent three decades, the number of South Asian immigrants in the city grew to a total of 10,000 by 1996. A largemajority of these South Asians are from India, followed by a significant minority of immigrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The number of immigrants from Nepal represents only a small handful. We will examine the evolution of the East Indian immigrant community in Winnipeg and show how their family-community based social capital has facilitated their process of adaptation to a new environment.

Unlike ethnic enclaves (Driedger, 1996) such as "Chinatowns," immigrants from India are not residentially concentrated in one part of the city, but are scattered in different suburbs. It should be noted, however, that the immigrants from India residing in Winnipeg are not representative



of all immigrants from India to Canada. For instance, in the greater Vancouver area it is characteristic of immigrants from India to settle in large numbers in some suburbs and in certain parts of the city itself. Likewise, the greater Toronto area suburbs manifest residential clusters of immigrants from India.

In Winnipeg, it is possible to identify some residential clusters of South Asian immigrants in the Maples, Linden Wood, Fort Garry, and Fort Richmond areas of the city. It can be observed, however, that despite lack of geographic proximity, family, friendships, and community networks based on regional, religious, and linguistic affinity, social interaction and mutual support do appear to work to reinforce ethnic norms, values, and traditions.

As the immigrant community grows in size and complexity in Canada, religious affiliation, language, and regional culture lend themselves to the formation of ethnic organisations for the maintenance and transmission of subcultures originating from their home country. Family and ethnic community organisations play an important role in transmitting language, religious norms and values, ethnic foods, dance, music and theatre, literature and mythology.

The process of institutional completeness (Breton, 1964) has been quite evident. The India Association of Manitoba was established (in 1965) to promote harmony among various religious and linguistic groups of immigrants from India, and to preserve the cultural heritage of India for the benefit of future generations in Canada. In the initial stages of its formation, this organisation attempted to nurture an East Indian ethnic identity by celebrating the major festivals (both religious/cultural and secular) of India. As the immigrant community grew in size, the Hindu Society of Manitoba with its Temple, and the Sikh Society of Manitoba with its Gurudwars were established. These religious institutions promote a sense of the community and ethnic awareness while encouraging acculturation and integration of immigrants. The India School of Dance, Music and Theater, Manitoba Hindu Seniors, the SA Centre, and various regional and language-based ethnic associations have proliferated over the years. These community-based ethnic organisations (Chekki, 2003) provide services and counselling to recent immigrants. Ethnic restaurants and grocery stores not only cater to the needs of Indo-Canadians but also have become popular among a majority of citizens in Winnipeg for their cuisine and spices. There is no shortage of Indo-Canadian insurance, real estate, automobile dealerships, travel agencies, clothing and jewellery stores providing services to meet the needs of this ethnic community. Likewise, it is not unusual to find the professional services of accountants, physicians, dentists, lawyers and so forth within the Indo-Canadian community in Winnipeg. These networks of individuals, families, and community associations and organisations function as a vital source of social capital for this community, and in many

ways facilitate immigrant integration into the Canadian society. Immigrants from India to the United States of America have demonstrated similar patterns of ethnic organisations (Lessinger, 1995; Rangaswamy, 2000; Segal, 1998; Sheth, 1995). These families and ethnic organisations have provided many opportunities where immigrants can speak their own language, collectively engage in religious activities, eat their own food, exchange news from home and share common experiences; and pass on their cultural heritage to the next generation. The level of social interaction has been fairly high through various family and community networks.

Most immigrants from India in the 1960s and early 1970s were professionals. Today's Indo-Canadians in Winnipeg have become more diverse in their socioeconomic backgrounds than earlier arrivals. A small percentage of people (mostly women) have been engaged in the garment/fashion industry, and others in the taxi business. This occupational pattern tends to be similar to that found in British Columbia where immigrants largely from rural Punjab with limited education and language skills are engaged in agricultural and other blue-collar jobs. A majority of immigrants from India and their children in Winnipeg, however, have the highest proportion of college and university graduates, the highest proportion of workers in professional occupations, and a higher medium household income compared to other immigrant groups (Lamba, 2000).

Immigrants from India tend to have a strong desire to become integrated into the mainstream society, while simultaneously preserving their cultural heritage. Most have immigrated to make Canada their new home and adopted country of choice. This decision is made primarily to have access to better opportunities for themselves and for their children to realise their full potential. The immigrant ethnic family plays a key role in the process of adaptation and integration.

In general, their ethnic heritage and identity is important for almost all immigrants. Ethnicity is a big part of who they are but they do not feel restricted by their ethnic identity. More than 90 per cent of South Asian, Middle Eastern, and Filipino immigrants expressed the belief that their ethnic heritage was very important, and more than 50 per cent of Eastern European immigrants expressed a similar belief. These immigrants were strongly (more than 85%) in support of the federal government policy of multiculturalism (Kalbach and Kalbach, 1995).

Ethnic identity and community boundaries are reinforced when immigrants and their offspring maintain socioeconomic ties with their home society through frequent visits, financial transfer, sponsoring relatives for migration and aid, and via frequent communication. Several scholars (Basch *et al.*, 1994; Foner *et al.*, 2000, Ong, 1999) believe that transnationalism has given rise to transnational communities, that is, social networks that stretch around the world (Portes, 1996).

## FAMILY VALUES AND BEHAVIOUR

The changes introduced in the Immigration Act in 1967 gave importance to the educational achievements and occupational skills of immigrants, rather than their country of origin, and emphasised family reunification. This change in immigration law allowed a large number of well-educated immigrants from India whose occupational skills were more in demand enabling them to enter Canada (Israel and Wagle, 1993). It is usually the adult male who migrates to Canada, and within a period of one or two years sponsors his wife and children, and eventually brothers, sisters, and parents.

This pattern of family-chain migration and the extended family network suggests that immigrants are here to stay, and will continue to make Canada their new home country. A large majority of immigrants from India are family-sponsored immigrants, admitted as immediate family members or close relatives. Consequently, about 80 per cent of the East Indians in Winnipeg live in married couple households and only five per cent live in lone-parent households. The family has strengthened the community, and become its most crucial institution, providing an immediate source of social capital, and facilitating the adaptation of immigrants and their children to Canadian society in a unique way. The socioeconomic status of the Indo-Canadian family varies by length of stay in Canada. The longer the stay in Canada, the higher the level of household income. Most recent immigrants live in rental housing and have lower average earnings. The majority of immigrants own their home within a period of five years after their arrival in Winnipeg.

As noted earlier, the pattern of immigration is generally characterised by men leaving their wives and children behind in their country of origin; and wives and children arriving within a relatively short period of time. There is, therefore, typically a period of family separation. After family reunification has been brought about, the norm of the nuclear family tends to be adopted. Women tend to take a more egalitarian role than they did in the traditional family. Having women employed outside the home has become an economic necessity and expression of social conformity. This women's participation in the labour force gives them a degree of economic independence and decision-making power, and makes them less dependent upon their husbands.

The immigrant nuclear family is smaller in size than it was traditionally. The extended family and kinship networks and face-to-face interactions tend to decline. Immigrant families face a variety of stresses and strains and are often caught in the tension and conflict between maintenance of the traditional cultural identity in children, and the adoption of mainstream Canadian values and lifestyles (Baker, 1996; Ishwaran, 1980). The family

expectations and values of discipline, hard work, and success in school are instilled in the younger generation; and the immigrant ethnic community further reinforces the norms of achievement and success. Children's education is given priority, with social and material support from their family and ethnic community. Children are encouraged to achieve their full potential in their educational and occupational aspirations.

The parent-child relationship among immigrant families (South Asian, the Filipino, and the Middle Eastern), with the exception of Eastern European families, tends to be more formal and less emotionally expressive than the mainstream Canadian family. There seems to be less overt affection between parents and children, and between spouses. Children in immigrant families may feel deprived of open parental intimacy and affection compared to their Canadian born counterparts. When both parents work, they may hardly find time to play with children or to help them with their homework. However, parents have covert intense affection for their children and provide encouragement and support in the achievement of educational and occupational goals.

Although the immigrant family provides specific goals, behavioural guidelines and social basis of support to facilitate the adaptation of children to school and the society, it is not always well equipped to deal adequately with the problems facing the younger generation. However, immigrant families and the community do provide a unique social context in which the younger generation is raised. Children of immigrants, especially those not born in Canada, face discrimination and encounter adjustment problems in school such as language difficulties, teasing or harassment by other students because of their different colour, accent, dress, or misunderstanding by the peers or teachers. They feel excluded, become discouraged, and lose interest in school work. But parental encouragement makes them work hard and achieve good grades, whereas children born or raised in Canada generally, do not face problems of adjustments compared to their parents.

The ethnic and mainstream community-based voluntary organisations have begun to address the new challenges by initiating programmes providing services to immigrant families, including counselling, crisis intervention, parental skills, and family-oriented recreational activities (Chekki, 2003). The family and the community establish a social context in which the immigrants, both the first generation and their offspring can better adapt to a new environment.

South Asian Canadian homes display their ethnic identity through arts and crafts, pictures, metal and wooden gods and goddesses, lamps, dolls, paintings, and furniture. Ethnic identity is also built through local and national associations, and through print and electronic media, including the Internet. Immigrants, after a few years of stay in Canada, seem professionally to be well-integrated into the Canadian labour force. However, their close friends,

except colleagues at work, tend to be mostly from within their ethnic community. The second generation youth will have a wider circle of friends, thus allowing them to transcend their ethnic community somewhat.

As a consequence of the nature of selection of immigrants based on their education and occupational skills that are in demand in Canada, a large majority of immigrants, especially from India to Winnipeg, unlike East Indian immigrants in British Columbia, happen to be highly educated professionals. The 'model minority' image appears to apply to those immigrants from South Asia and their children. The first generation immigrants follow the lifestyle that they were accustomed to. Their religious beliefs and customs, their preferences in food, language, clothing friendship and social interaction reflect the culture of their country of origin.

Immigrant families tend to have a lower rate of divorce and a lower percentage of single parent families because of traditional values, placing a strong emphasis on the stable marriage and family life. Immigrant families in Canada, by and large, happen to be nuclear households despite extended kinship networks. Most dual-career families have undergone change regarding division of labour, authority, decision-making, and gender roles. Although the extended family is the ideal, they prefer the lifestyle of the nuclear family.

Immigrants from the Philippines provide another example of an ethnic group actively engaged in the process of adaptation and integration while preserving their ethnic identity (Chen, 1998). Filipino values emphasise the importance of family and kinship. Immigrants from the Philippines sponsor their relatives to Canada by sending money for transportation and landing fees. The Filipino Canadians provide housing for recent immigrants and help in their job search process. Changes in the traditional Filipino values have led to increased individualism, competition, and materialistic aspirations. Tension and conflicts emerge when the traditional values of immigrant parents clash with their Canadian born or raised children, when they begin to express these kinds of values.

For most Filipino Canadians, who are predominantly Catholic, family events, and religious and cultural celebrations, bring community members together. The Filipino Canadian homes exhibit their ethnic identity by their paintings, arts and crafts, religious artefacts and furniture. Ethnic identity is further reinforced by development of local and national associations and communication networks through print and electronic media, including the Internet. Despite regional and linguistic diversity, Filipino Canadians seem to have developed a common ethnic identity associated with the Filipino cultural heritage. The ethnic newspapers, magazines, radio, and TV programmes, videos, the email and the Internet have tended to shape the Filipino Canadian ethnic identity. Furthermore, community-based efforts have strengthened ethnic identity and pride through Filipino dance, music,

theatre and art. Annual cultural and religious festivals help preserve and promote the Filipino community identity and solidarity in Canada.

A large majority of Filipino women are working as nurses, domestics (Fillmore, 1997) and in the garment industry. Men are involved in a variety of middle income occupations. A few leaders of the community have become part of the political process at the provincial and federal levels as MLAs, and MPs. One Filipino-Canadian has even become the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, a cabinet level position in the Federal government.

Filipino Youth, growing up in Canada, face challenges with regard to education, generational tension, social issues, and cultural conflict. Similar intergenerational tensions are evident among Arab-Canadian adolescents (Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban, 1999). Following a model of segmental assimilation presented by Portes and Zhou (1995), we can anticipate either upward or downward mobility coupled with weakening or loss of ethnic identity of immigrants and their offspring. Another possibility may be the straight line or zig-zag theory (Gans, 1997) of integration with deliberate preservation of the immigrant community's core values and culture.

The notion of Asian Americans as a 'model minority' especially with reference to Japanese, Chinese, and Asian Indians should be considered in the context of most immigrants from India and the Philippines to Canada. Educational and occupational achievements are considered by Asian immigrants to be vital to upward mobility and economic success in Canada. Parents provide social capital, through encouragement and support, to their children in reaching their education goals (Bacon, 1996). However, youth encounter a variety of issues stemming from cultural conflict and generational tension regarding adjustments in school work, dating, premarital sex, teen pregnancy, the choice of a spouse, career choices and so forth.

As their children become more Canadian than Filipino or East Indian, parents tend to worry about their lack of respect for parents, their coming home late, and behaviours contradicting parental values related to dating and mate selection. Children and youth have to struggle hard to adjust, or at least to strike a balance between their parental culture and the Canadian culture.

Recent immigrants tend to rely on friends and relatives in their search for jobs. They compete in the labour market for jobs appropriate to their occupational skills and qualifications. A substantial number of immigrants end up with jobs for which they are over-qualified. Finding a job commensurate with their training and skills has been problematic (Basran and LiZong, 1998). Immigrants' education, degrees, experience, and credentials are not normally recognised by the different levels of government and professional regulatory bodies in Canada. Many employers insist on, or at least prefer Canadian training and experience as prerequisites. It is not unusual to find immigrants (Ley and Smith, 1997) who are physicians

(Frank, 2001) or hold other professional degrees, who are compelled to take jobs as medical aids, waiters, dishwashers, clerks, telemarketers, garment workers, or taxi drivers.

The following cases illustrate how immigrants professionally trained in developing countries face discrimination and lack of recognition of their credentials in Canada.

Daljit Singh spent five years working as a doctor in Punjab, India before he emigrated to Winnipeg in 1990. Now he is one of about 100 foreign-trained doctors in Manitoba who cannot get into the profession, even though there's a crying shortage of rural physicians. Instead, Singh juggles two part-time jobs as a home-care attendant and a telemarketer hawking credit-card applications. "I am just wasting my skills," Singh says. "My life has been shattered."

Singh's skills are impressive even by the high standards Canada uses to judge them. He passed the Medical Council of Canada Evaluating Exam, English proficiency tests and a medical qualifying exam that all graduates of Canadian medical schools must take. He also passed the US equivalent of the test. Even so, Manitoba regulators do not view the training he got in India as equal to the training provided doctors in Canada, or in the US, Britain and South Africa. Singh calls that discrimination and has taken his case to the Manitoba Human Rights Commission (Frank, 2001).

Rosauro worked as an orthopaedic surgeon in the Philippines and immigrated to Canada in 1998 and now works on a part-time basis as a health-care aide at a Winnipeg hospital. His wife Annalyn (not the real name), who graduated as a nurse in the Philippines, now works as a nursing assistant in Winnipeg.

Our research sample provides several examples of immigrants from Eastern Europe, the Middle East, South Asia, and the Philippines who are trained as architects, engineers, accountants, and so forth with similar experiences of non-recognition of their credentials and holding low-paying jobs in Winnipeg. For instance, a Ph.D. in Physics from Ukraine now works part-time as a computer lab assistant while enrolled as a student in the Education faculty at the University of Manitoba. A mechanical engineer from the former Yugoslavia who came to Canada in 1995 has now completed a course in computer programming and is now looking for work in that area. These case studies illustrate that foreign-qualified professional immigrants are at a great disadvantage in the Canadian labour market.

Although immigrants experience discrimination and challenges in finding jobs, it is relevant to emphasise that the traditional values of immigrant families tend to reduce the incidence of marital conflict, divorce, wife or child abuse, alcoholism, and intergenerational tension to a lower level compared to the Canadian mainstream society. Immigrant families usually try to keep their difficulties and problems private and do not normally report

to law enforcement agencies or seek outside help or counselling from professionals. Domestic discord involving spouse, children, or aged parents could be unsettling creating stresses and strains within the immigrant household.

The immigrant couple and their children encounter a new set of values and norms. Facing challenges in a new environment in school, at work, and in family life in an urban setting could be at times traumatic for immigrants. The presence of aging parents and other kin in the household can also increase stress. Although separation and divorce are not as common as among Canadians, immigrant couples are not free from marital dysfunctions. Furthermore, growing old in Canada can be difficult for immigrants due to isolation, financial dependence, and lack of care by children.

### **THE YOUNGER GENERATION: THE PROCESS OF ADAPTATION AND INTEGRATION**

It is considered (Zhou, 2000) that immigrants' most lasting legacy is likely to be their children who acquire better educational levels and tend to move up the economic ladder than their parents did. Although children of immigrants are generally considered by their teachers to be motivated, disciplined, hard working, and relatively well-adjusted, they also face a number of adjustment problems, including issues of identity, conflicting values and behavioural norms (Davis, 1960), as well as the problem of scholastic achievement. The immigrant children face the question of self-identity. It is difficult to avoid racial marginality despite efforts to convey alternative identities (Rajgopal, 2000). They sometimes feel confused and uncertain about the relationship between their ethnic identity and their new national identity. Maira (2002) shows how second generation Asian Indian American youth in New York struggle to be both "authentically Indian" and socially "cool." The authenticity is further confused by the fact that the Indian/American dichotomy is not absolute and has many blurred boundaries. Those children born in Canada tend to develop a dual identity, despite their official Canadian national identity (Kunz and Harvey, 2000).

Apparently, growing up in Canada is not always a smooth process for children of immigrants, as they are frequently caught between conflicting cultural norms, and demands in the home and in the larger society. The display of love and affection, the authority structure, the values and behaviour patterns in mainstream Canadian families differ from those of immigrant families from South Asia (Israel and Wagle, 1993), the Philippines (Chen, 1998), the Middle East (Abu-Laban 1980; Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban, 1999) and Eastern Europe (Brym *et al.*, 1993). Immigrant parents tend to discourage material possession and conspicuous consumption and waste on non-essentials on the part of children. Immigrant children, influenced by the mass media and peers, quickly adopt the Canadian values



which in many cases happen to be at odds with the immigrant ethnic culture. Parents clash with their children when the latter prefer to spend money on fashionable hairstyles, clothes, entertainment and fast food.

The North American cultural values of individualism and personal freedom are not valued to the same degree in immigrant families. The ethnic culture gives priority to the family interests rather than individual self-gratification. Parents expect their children to respect authority, to be polite, hardworking and disciplined in order to maintain family honour and prestige. Again, unlike the situation in British Columbia, a large majority of immigrants from South Asia and the Philippines in Winnipeg have higher levels of education and hold professional jobs. Both parents' and their children's achievements have contributed to a positive stereotype of a model minority. Yet, only a significant minority of immigrant women, however, are in professional and managerial jobs. A large majority of immigrant women still work in secretarial, sales and service, health care, garment industry, or other ethnic economies.

Parental pressure, along with ethnic community resources, pushes children to move ahead in school. Children are motivated to learn and do well in school because they believe that education is the main channel for upward mobility. The children of immigrants born and/or raised in Canada are now coming of age and questioning the traditional cultural values related to gender inequality, arranged marriage, women's autonomy and independence regarding education, choice of career or mates. Dual-earner families are quite common among the immigrant groups. The patriarchal system and a gender-based division of labour are under attack, as the second generation reaches adolescence and adulthood. These children and youth have been growing up amidst two cultures – their parents' ethnic culture at home and in their ethnic community, and the mainstream Canadian culture, as experienced through TV, schools, and peers. The self-concept of ethnic identity could be conceptualised in terms of layers of group identities. Ethnic identity should be viewed as a dynamic rather than a static phenomenon. The coexistence of dual or even multiple ethnic identity could be observed in cases of those immigrants born in one country, raised in another, and immigrating in young adulthood to a third country.

Teenagers are faced with complex problems in establishing their self-identity (Bibby, 2001). They are often confused as to who they are and where they belong. Depending upon the degree to which the first generation of immigrants is willing or able to acculturate to Canadian values, the second generation youth face value and role conflicts. Parents tend to safeguard their children from inter-racial marriage fearing that their offspring will lose their cultural heritage. Parents expect their children to be achievement-oriented towards higher education and higher income jobs and cherish the aspiration that their children should study for professions in the medical,

engineering, business management, law, and information technology fields. Children often strive to satisfy parental expectations.

These modern materialistic goals and aspirations for their children seem to be at odds with the traditional desire to see their children marry within their religious community. Parents tend to be permissive about their sons' dating but impose restrictions on their daughters' dating and heterosexual relationships. More often youth date without their parents' knowledge. Parents are concerned about the likely incidence of premarital sex and pregnancy, and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. The existence of modernist views in the secular field and traditional views in relation to marriage and family suggests a process of segmental integration. In other words, immigrant families have been able to strike a balance between achieving success in the Canadian society and still able to preserve their core culture and a sense of ethnic community.

The immigrant family and community continue as strong cohesive units providing social, emotional, and financial support to their young members. The immigrant ethnic community is able to mobilise its resources including social capital in providing opportunities for the transmission of their culture to the second generation. However, children are inevitably exposed to the Canadian mainstream culture. As a consequence, children of immigrants are socialised in the Canadian way of life through the school, mass media, and peer groups.

Youth from immigrant families identify themselves with their family and ethnic community and simultaneously develop an increased sense of belonging to the Canadian culture and lifestyles. This dual sense of identity requires synthesising their parental culture at home and the Canadian culture in society at large. The federal government policy of multiculturalism in Canada, in contrast to the American 'melting pot' ideal of assimilation has, in recent decades, encouraged cultural diversity and fostered immigrant ethnic cultures.

To what extent does ethnic identity help or hinder social mobility? Some scholars (Clement, 1974; Porter, 1965, 1979) have argued that one's immigrant ethnic culture (other than Anglo/Francophone) is a barrier to upward mobility in Canada. Others (Isajiw *et al.*, 1993; Tepperman, 1975) have contended that maintenance of ethnic identity need not be a drawback for social mobility; indeed it may be an asset. To what extent does discarding one's ethnic culture and adopting Canadian culture help in upward mobility? This question demands further research in the context of the recent influx of non-European immigrants to Canada. Immigrants, especially visible minorities or people of colour, encounter several barriers to upward mobility in Canada. Historical, ethnographic, and survey research data (Driedger, 1996; Li, 1988) provide some evidence to support the fact that immigrants with post-secondary education and professional skills have

often experienced prejudice and discrimination in getting jobs. A significant number of recent immigrants remain underemployed or unemployed compared to their Canadian-born counterparts. Immigrants face much discrimination at the work place and strong barriers still exist against immigrants in managerial and other positions of authority, a typical case of the "glass ceiling" because of foreign accent, colour or cultural differences.

How will immigrants establish their ethnic identity and find their place in Canadian life? Despite substantial cultural diversity among immigrants from South Asia, the Philippines, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East, the foreign-born tend to stress the culture of the country of origin, and identify with their religion, language, and region. They continue to maintain contacts with their family and friends back home through letters, telephone, remittance of money, visits, ethnic press, TV, videos, and the Internet. These transnational networks persist even after the acquisition of Canadian citizenship.

As stated earlier, the self perception of ethnic identity is not a static but a dynamic concept: The first generation immigrants in the initial period of settlement in Canada, manifest a strong sense of ethnic identity linked to their country of birth. Gradually, over the years, they tend to develop a dual or hyphenated identity. Children born in Canada, however, develop a strong Canadian identity. Nevertheless, Canadian-born children of immigrants, influenced by their parents' culture, also develop dual or even multiple identities resulting from a complex of forces. The second generation youth may not speak or understand the language, or follow food habits, or custom and traditions of their parents. Yet they may be conscious of their religious/cultural roots. Herbert Gans concept of 'symbolic ethnicity' would be relevant in understanding the process of integration of the second or third generation in Canadian society.

### **MULTICULTURALISM AND IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION**

The model of multiculturalism refers to a process of integration, as opposed to assimilation, whereby the immigrant maintains his/her cultural identity and participates in the mainstream Canadian society simultaneously. Furthermore, the federal government policy of multiculturalism aims to foster national unity through cultural diversity. One of the central theoretical and policy-oriented questions linked to multi-culturalism is related to the degree to which the various immigrant ethnic communities that constitute the Canadian cultural mosaic should be encouraged to maintain their own cultural heritage. Some believe that this should be kept to a minimum, arguing that too much ethnic diversity is inimical to the development of national unity and national ethos. Others have contended that Canadian uniqueness and national unity are predicated on the very concepts of diversity, pluralism, and multiculturalism.

According to behavioural science theory, people who adopt a bicultural mode in the face of change, that is, one in which they retain their own cultural identity while incorporating elements of the new are more likely to be successful than people who choose to assimilate completely to the new, or who retreat to the familiar while rejecting the new, or who reject both the old and the new (Berry, 1984). Integration demands a balancing of the competing tendencies to retain the values, practices, and skills an immigrant has when he or she comes to Canada versus the tendency to acculturate and adopt the norms and behaviour of the new society. Successful adaptation of immigrants is characterised by blending old and new together.

Immigrant parents, in our research sample, tend to adopt the bicultural model of integration and encourage the children to accept the values of higher educational achievements and occupational upward mobility; and behave, dress, eat and speak like other children of the mainstream Canadian society, while simultaneously conforming to their religious beliefs, family values, and the culture of their country of origin.

However, raising children in Canada involves some compromise between ethnic and mainstream Canadian culture. A process of acculturation and accommodation takes place via mass media, social interaction and intermarriage. In the absence of extended family network and support, the immigrant family, in times of crisis, in Canada has to rely more on friends and neighbours, and relatives, if any, in North America. Although parents wish to see their children married within their religious or ethnic community, the second generation youth have been marrying Euro-Canadians in increasing numbers. Although some travel to their country of origin to find a mate, limited choice of partners within their ethnic community in Canada leads to intermarriage.

Aging parents, often widows or widowers, have joined immigrant families in Canada. They are dependent on their children for care and support, and transportation. Aged mothers and mothers-in-law help in cooking, cleaning, child care and so forth. They are least adapted to Canadian society because of language and cultural differences. They often feel alienated, isolated and depressed. Although the first generation immigrants consider supporting their aged parents as a moral obligation, first generation immigrants seldom expect their own children will support them as they age. Many tend to plan retirements without dependence on their children who may be geographically scattered.

### CONCLUSION

The socioeconomic status and cultural identity of the immigrant family play a key role in the process of adaptation and integration in Canada. The theoretical framework of segmental assimilation (Gans, 1997; Portes and Zhou, 1993) characteristic of some immigrant groups in the United

States seems to be consistent with the pattern of experience of South Asian, Filipino, and the Middle Eastern immigrant groups in Canada. These immigrant groups, instead of total assimilation (Gordon, 1964; Park, 1930), have made deliberate efforts to retain their core cultural values, and family and community cohesiveness while adapting to a new urban environment. This trend has a major implication, not only for the integration of immigrants in Canada but also for the socialisation of the second generation, and the blending of non-Western and Western values and lifestyles.

This study shows how the processes of adaptation and integration of immigrants is affected by social relations between the immigrant family and community. This research tends to demonstrate that the community and family serve as the basis of social capital that facilitates, rather than inhibits the integration of immigrant adults and children. Although immigrants overwhelmingly desire to integrate into the mainstream Canadian society, the majority of them have only limited resources and face structural barriers, making integration a difficult and lengthy process.

Immigrant ethnic communities have established community-based organisations to provide religious service, job referral service, language learning facilities, child care, after-school programmes and family counselling (Chekki, 2003). Many parents and children are involved in various ethnic community networks. In this sense, the community, as an important source of social capital, makes resources available to immigrant parents and children. This social capital provided by the family and community helps many immigrants to overcome unfavourable conditions, and bicultural conflicts, and aids immigrants in their integration into the Canadian urban milieu. Furthermore, the immigrant family and community, and the federal government policy of multiculturalism also foster ethnic identity and community cohesion.

One of the policy implications of this study is that the various levels of government can help create and develop social capital to facilitate successful immigrant integration through schools, job training, and through community and public policy. Governments should also consider the importance of social capital in policies to encourage inclusion of various immigrant ethnic communities, while preserving cultural identities, in educational, employment, and housing programmes.

This research provides useful insights into the role of family and community-based organisations in promoting adjustment and integration, and offers a point of departure for studying the process of adaptation for the later generations of immigrants. The generalisations of our findings are specific to Winnipeg and may not be applicable to all East Indian and Filipino immigrants in other Canadian cities. These generalisations may be further

limited since we have focused only on the four fast-growing immigrant groups in Winnipeg during the past three decades.

Because different immigrant ethnic groups and their social contexts, involving different dynamics in different Canadian cities, may affect different sets of immigrants and their offspring in a variety of ways, the theoretical issues of social capital and social integration will require more elaboration and refinement than we have been able to present in this study of a specific social setting in Winnipeg. Additional research is needed to examine in greater detail the ways in which adults, youth, and children and their families are interlinked to one another by ethnically concentrated communities, and how these linkages between families and community-based organisations facilitate the adaptation of immigrants to the Canadian urban milieu.

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