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WHOSE NATURE?:
EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN WILDERNESS, BELONGING AND RESIDENTIAL SUMMER CAMP USE AMONG CANADIAN IMMIGRANTS

by

Kristen Bustamante, BA, University of Guelph, 2006

A Major Research Paper
Presented to Ryerson University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in the Program of
Immigration and Settlement Studies

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2008

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Master of Arts
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ABSTRACT

This study reviews the relationship between a national identity in Canada based on wilderness and the exclusionary experience of immigrants and racialized groups. In particular, this study focuses on the opinions and experiences of immigrant parents towards residential summer camps, as they have long been considered a typically 'Canadian' activity for youth. While summer camps are an activity dominated by youth, immigrant parents were chosen as a sample group because they play a large role in mitigating the summer recreational experiences of their children. Feelings of belonging and exclusion experienced by parents are important when evaluating issues of child socialization into Canadian norms. Included are the results of qualitative interviews with immigrant parents alongside several theoretical frameworks that assist in explaining the under-representation of immigrant groups in both residential summer camps and wilderness-based recreational pursuits more broadly.

Key words: Immigrants; wilderness; summer camps; identity; belonging.

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This paper is for my Father, Alberto Bustamante – the most inspiring immigrant I know.

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1. Introduction

In Canada, residential summer camps[1] have long been considered "the defining Canadian growing-up experience" (Murray, 2008, p. 6) as they provide the opportunity for youth to engage with natural settings and traditional methods of 'wilderness survival'. Activities associated with 'Canadianness' have often centered on iconic images of our engagement with nature as a culture descended from the frontier wilderness. As described by Nature Canada, "our identity as a people has been tied to a landscape of virgin forest, rugged mountain and endless prairie" (2008). Certain recreational pursuits have been so closely developed alongside national identity formation they have now achieved the status of 'truly Canadian'. For youth in particular, few activities exemplify this connection to Canadian wilderness better than residential summer camps.

However, as Canadians engage with an increasingly multicultural population, questions of identity and belonging have become increasingly relevant in the dialogue surrounding full social inclusion. This report will explore the ways in which the Canadian identity reflects a legacy of social and political realities, wherein white Canadians sought to assert racial and cultural supremacy. In many ways, aspects of 'Canadianness' continue to portray symbolic renderings of the wilderness as an exclusive and exclusionary space for white Canadians.

To address these larger theoretical concepts, this report will specifically engage with one aspect of wilderness use, namely residential summer camp participation. Residential summer camps were chosen as the focus due to emerging research that

[1] The term residential summer camps is often used synonymously with 'overnight' summer camps. In residential summer camp settings, youth are enrolled for at least several days, during which they do not return home. This type of summer camp is distinct from day camps, in which children return home at the end of each day. Residential summer camps can be further defined by their close association with wilderness environments and activities, as they are typically located in rural, non-developed locations.

suggests that participation among immigrants and racialized minorities is lower than the non-racialized, Canadian born population. To this end, primary research was conducted with immigrant parents in order to engage with notions of identity and belonging by discussing their experiences and opinions of summer camps in Canada. Interview findings, combined with literature in related fields, will be used to discuss factors that influence summer camp participation, including barriers related to symbolic discrimination as well as considerations related to the immigrant experience more broadly. Given that literature specifically on the topic of immigrant participation in summer camps in Canada is limited, literature in related fields and American studies is used to supplement the available information.

It is the aim of this research to prompt further research and dialogue on the topic of full social inclusion by looking specifically at exclusionary notions of Canadian identity and their impact on immigrant youth's participation in wilderness activities. Including immigrants and considering their needs in wilderness related activities will become increasingly relevant as Canada sets to redefine its relationship with the natural environment to include its diverse population.

2. Literature Review

To build a foundation of understanding on the topic of residential summer camp participation, the following literature will draw from the fields of Canadian studies, recreation and leisure, race theories and literature pertaining to summer camps specifically. In sequence, this section will first examine the relationship between Canadian national identity, whiteness and belonging before addressing the historical and contemporary aspects of exclusion within residential summer camps. Lastly, recreational participation models will be examined which describe a diversity of factors that can influence recreational participation.

While these academic fields contain useful information on related topics, none of the existing scholarship examines the exclusionary nature of residential summer camps in relation to the symbolic renderings of the Canadian wilderness. Further, none of the research considers how the immigrant experience mitigates participation in these activities. Therefore this research seeks to fill that gap while hopefully prompting further research on the topic.

2.1 Nationalism, Whiteness and Belonging

Canadian national identity has enjoyed a long and politically significant association with the natural environment and physical landscape of the country (Kaufman & Zimmer, 1998; Manning 2000; Osborne 2006, Clarke, 1997, Ashley, 2007). The once dualistic, and now pluralistic, nature of Canadian society has, over the years, required a uniting force that would solidify Canada's uniqueness against American culture while creating an image of national authenticity (Kaufmann & Zimmer, 1998; Clarke, 1997).

Given the nature of French and British colonialization that occurred in Canada, notions of white racial superiority were needed to legitimize dominance against aboriginal populations, Americans, and other 'southern' races (Mackey, 2000, p. 126). The nationalist sentiment in the early days of Canadian history, therefore, was tightly connected to notions of "Northernness" and white racial superiority, as can be evidenced in the "Canada First" Movement that emphasized connections to Britain and other 'northern' races (Mackey, 2000, p. 126). This movement also focused on Canada's topography such as its northern geography and cold climate to support claims that Canada was better suited to support 'northern' races (p. 126).

Eric Kaufmann and Oliver Zimmer (1998) describe a process of "Nationalization of Nature" that was well under way by the eighteenth century. That is, "popular historical myths, memories and supposed national virtues are projected onto a significant landscape in an attempt to lend more continuity and distinctiveness to it" (Kaufmann & Zimmer, 1998, p. 486). This is evidenced in much of the cultural works of this period and the early twentieth century, most notably the artwork of the Group of Seven. This uniquely 'Canadian' style of painting emphasized a strong connection to pristine landscapes and played upon the nationalist sentiment of the early twentieth century (Manning, 2003; Mackey, 2000). The Group became advocates for a new nationalism, based in naturalistic thinking, as evidenced by this statement from A.Y. Jackson in 1914: "The Canadian who does not love keen bracing air, sunlight making shadow that vie with the sky, the wooden hills and the frozen lakes. Well, he must be a poor patriot" (Nasgaard in Kaufmann & Zimmerman, 1998, p. 495). The legacy of this 'northern consciousness' can still be heard

in the words of the national anthem, which describes Canada as the "true north strong and free" (Tooby in Kaufmann & Zimmer, 1998, p. 494).

Yet there was also political motivation for uniting a country that has long suffered from internal tensions of rightful claim to this territory. Kaufmann and Zimmer (1997) describe a second phenomenon that helped consolidate the relationship between national identity and landscape, that of the 'naturalization of the nation'. Stemming from geographical determinism, this concept goes beyond the landscape as an expression of national values and rather determines the moral character of its citizens (p. 487). In the case of Canada, the landscape that developed to embody national characteristics was that of the North (Osborne, 2006; Clarke, 1997; Kaufmann & Zimmer). The Laurentian historian Harold Innis emphasizes the Canadian Shield, which traverses both English and French territory, as a central factor that united the histories and destinies of both groups. (in Kaufmann & Zimmer, 1998, p. 502-503). This link between the landscape and national cohesion was further emphasized when fur-traders of the North-West company, both French and English, were described as the "first authentic 'Canadians'" (Creighton in Kaufmann & Zimmer 1998, p. 502-503). Thus, the trope of "nordicity" united the French and English solitudes to form a common national identity, satisfying political objectives while reclaiming Canada as their own (Osborne, 2006).

The symbolic meaning of the landscape for Canadians, therefore, became closely entangled with nationalism and belonging. Several authors have taken a critical examination at the way in which the symbolic representation of wilderness also served as a way of reinforcing white dominance in Canada (Clarke, 1997; Ashley, 2007; Osborne, 2006; Manning, 2000). George Elliott Clarke (1997) argues that an often-white

topography, complete with snow, polar bears and permafrost, “fired the imaginings of whiteness” (p. 107). He continues that in Canada, the theme of survival in this Northern climate influenced white authors, such as works by Margaret Atwood, who argues: “To bring the nation into existence, the white settlers must make common cause with an often white landscape. The primeval frontier and the white body become one” (in Clarke 1997, p. 107). Therefore, enforcing ideas of Northernness and Whiteness in the Canadian landscape had the effect of naturalizing a white, northern presence in that space. The link between whiteness and wilderness is only a reflection of larger systems of exclusion that maintained privileged spaces, or in a broader context, racial hierarchies. Clarke (1997) contends that both white English and French Canadians “never had a vision of Canada as anything but a white man’s country” (Clarke, 1997, p. 106).

Like any place, the Canadian wilderness is not neutral and devoid of meaning, but rather has meaning imbued within it (Taylor & Flint, 2000; Osborne, 2006). Brian S. Osborne (2006) discusses how people create spaces, and subsequently their identities, when they interact with any space. In the case of the Canadian wilderness, the creation of meaning in that space has been framed in the context of whiteness. Theories on whiteness identify the invisible nature of belonging to the Caucasian race, in the sense that activities associated with being white are not considered racialized activities. In summarizing Nelson M. Rodriguez (1998), Valerie Ann Moore states that white activities become neutral, “such that its power as a category of dominance remains unseen and unquestioned” (Moore, 2003, p. 505). Whiteness theory can be used to examine the role of wilderness in becoming a naturalized space for whites, given the reproduction of

symbols over time that led to a general understanding of wilderness space as intrinsically linked to whiteness.

Symbolic depictions of Canada as a frontier landscape, imbued with racial undertones, continue to emerge from popular culture. Renderings of white Canadian icons such as Pierre Trudeau canoeing through deep rivers purposefully reinvigorate the link between the Canadian experience and wilderness spaces (Foran, 2000). When discussing Pierre Trudeau's famous canoe excursions, James Raffan describes how the lone canoeist image "evokes essential Canadian values: ruggedness, independence, technical prowess, balance, freedom, possibility" (Foran, 2000, p. 66). Others are also capitalizing on the 'real' Canadian experience; the recent "I AM Canadian" advertising campaign by Molson perpetuates Canada as a white settler nation and further exemplifies the Canadian relationship to the natural landscape (Manning, 2000). Building on the longstanding practice of marrying identity and national territory, the I AM commercial "defines identity according to a familiar matrix of inclusion and exclusion" (Manning, 2000, par. 4). The effects of whiteness, therefore have resulted both in the symbolic exclusion of racialized people from the wilderness and by extension activities associated with wilderness spaces. Over time, the wilderness landscape of Canada has secured itself as a privileged place for 'real' Canadians to enjoy.

2.2 Residential Summer Camps as Sites of Privilege

Recently, several authors have taken a critical look at the role of summer camps in perpetuating racial and power structures while being a site of privilege for those classes able to access them (Van Slyck, 2006; Paris, 2008). Leslie Paris (2008) and

Abigail A. Van Slyck (2006) discuss the historical significance of the origins of summer camps. Usually owned and directed by private school teachers, summer camps began in the late 19th century America as places for white middle and upper class urban youth who began to have more leisure time in the summer due to their family's financial position (Van Slyck, 2006). Summer camps soon became rights of passage, with their campers highly represented in prestigious colleges (Paris, 2008, p. 6). Van Slyck (2006) further discusses the role of summer camps in reinforcing and naturalizing notions of racial superiority and whiteness in the first half of the twentieth century. Various cultural practices were used in summer camps to reinforce white privilege while emphasizing social structures of racial belonging and exclusion. One of the central arguments of Van Slyck's book (2006) is that summer camps were directly involved in "creating a more inclusive definition of whiteness that was exclusive in new ways" (p. xxxiv). Therefore, summer camps became cites of middle and upper-class privilege while working closely to normalize summer camp attendance as a 'white activity'. As an example of hierarchical race relations in North America, class and race worked closely alongside each other to create summer camps as cites of exclusion.

Over time, the nature of summer camps in North America did change and began to reflect the shifting values of society. However as Paris (2008) explains in relation to the American context

> even as mainstream organizational camps based in the northern states began to explore more inclusive policies of admission, they often did so grudgingly, suggesting the limits both of camp "family" and of national belonging (p. 192-193).

Given the history of the camping industry in North America, it is unsurprising that current studies would demonstrate lower summer camp participation among ethnic minorities and immigrants (Chin & Phillips, 2004; Ekwa-Ekoko & Bustamante, 2008).

Recent studies suggest that summer camps continue to be sites of racial negotiation, reflecting larger societal patterns of exclusion (Moore 2001, 2002, 2003). Moore (2001, 2002, 2003) studies the construction of race in day camps in the Northeastern United States because camp settings provide more time for social interaction, especially sustained and intense interaction, than school (2003, p. 507). In her study of a predominantly white summer camp, Moore (2003) concludes that youth organize their racial structures in the context of whiteness. She continues that whiteness theory often explains racial interactions in predominantly white settings, where whiteness is “an invisible category of identity” (2003, p. 509). The social structure that resulted in this camp setting had negative implications for racialized campers, as they found themselves marginalized, isolated, and effectively considered outsiders (p. 509). Moore (2002) discovers similar results in a seperate study, emphasizing the effects of racial isolation and negative treatment of racialized youth in the context of whiteness.

In another study, Tiffani Chin and Meredith Phillips (2004) examine the summer activities of various socio-demographic groups in southern California. With regard to summer camp attendance, their study established that some less-advantaged families who participated in their study could not send their children to camp due to the high cost, their own inflexible work schedules, or both (p.195-197). When less-advantaged families were able to send their children to day camp, they were more likely to spend time researching prices, using personal connections to obtain discounts and traveling long distances to find

affordable camps (p. 195). None of the parents from less-advantaged groups reported sending their children to residential summer camp. In their study, less advantaged families were more likely to be racialized or first and second generation immigrants (p. 188). Although this is an American study, the results inform the larger body of literature surrounding the participation of immigrants and ethnic minorities in summer camps in the North American context.

An exploratory study on a survey of residential camps across Canada found that recent immigrants comprise a very small percentage of the client-base for residential summer camps across Canada (Ekwa-Ekoko & Bustamante, 2008). In this study, several summer camps indicated that the issue of including new immigrants was not a topic they had considered, while others stated that they were lacking knowledge on immigrant issues and how to specifically attract that population (p. 15). The few camps with higher percentages of immigrant youth had initiated special measures to address the circumstances of immigrant families, such as having special information sessions for immigrant parents (p.13-14).

The participation rates of immigrants in summer camps is significant, not only as an indicator of social inclusion, but because residential summer camps have been established as providing significant developmental advantages for children who attend. The following section outlines some of those advantages as discussed in the literature.

Existing material from academic and non-academic sources emphasize the importance of residential summer camps in Canada because they epitomize many of the traditional national values such as social camaraderie, engaging with the natural environment, personal challenge, and adventure (Murray, 2008; Paris, 2008; Hodgins,

1996; Fine, 2005). A recent Ipsos Reid report (2001) confirms that Canadians place high value on the experience of going to camp, regardless of whether or not they have attended camp themselves. Almost fifty percent of adult Canadians attended summer camp as children[2], and almost thirty percent of parents with children under eighteen years use residential summer camps for their children (Ipsos Reid, 2001). The importance of summer camp to Canadians is not surprising given that outside of school, summer camps are one of the most widely used social institution in North America (Van Slyck, 2006, p. xix).

Summer camps have been shown to provide a range of valuable benefits for their participants (Fine, 2005, 2007, 2008; Burkhardt, Henderson, Marsh, Thurber, Scanlin, & Whitaker, 2005; Murray, 2008). Summer camps belong to provincial, state and national associations that provide arenas in which to discuss current camping trends and challenges while providing a way for camps to gain accreditation status. A recent study released by the American Camping Association[3] reports that children who attend summer camp demonstrate significant growth in self esteem, independence, leadership, friendship skills, social comfort, peer relationships, adventure and exploration, environmental awareness, values and decisions and spirituality (Burkhardt et al., 2005). Scholars have described additional benefits of attending summer camp, such as becoming more group-centered, improving problem solving skills (Murray, 2008), learning to live with people from diverse backgrounds (Fine, 2005), and building positive connections with the

[2] This included both residential and day camps. No statistics were available that isolate parental attendance at residential summer camps alone.

[3] These findings were the result of surveys designed and analyzed by an independent research firm specializing in youth development in conjunction with the American Camping Association. The findings were then evaluated by an outside advisory board of professional researchers (Burkhardt, Henderson, Marsh et al., 2005).

natural world (Fine, 2005; Watson, 2004). Stephen Fine (2005) stresses the facilitative role that camps can play for youth who are becoming increasingly disconnected from wilderness and withdrawn from community life. Therefore summer camps represent a particularly relevant experience for immigrant youth because of their associated developmental and social benefits, given that immigrant youth often experience more challenges associated with full integration (Stodolska in Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants [OCASI], 2005, p. 2).

2.3 Theoretical Frameworks describing Immigrant Under-Representation in Recreational Activities

In 2005, both the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Refugees (OCASI) and Research on Immigration and Integration in the Metropolis (RIIM) released reports outlining the benefits of recreational participation for immigrant populations (Aizlewood, Bevelander & Pendakur, 2005; OCASI 2005). Amanda Aizlewood, Pieter Bevelander and Ravi Pendakur describe recreational activities as a valuable avenue for fostering civic engagement, mutual obligation, increased interaction across groups and a sense of belonging (2005, p. 3). For immigrant youth, recreational participation is particularly beneficial because of its positive contributions to cognitive, social, physical and emotional and moral development (OCASI, 2005, p. iii). Yet both organizations identify that immigrants are underrepresented in recreational and leisure activities in Canada. These reports echo much of the literature emerging from the field of leisure studies, which consistently recognize that overall recreational participation rates are lower for ethnic minorities and immigrants (OCASI, 2005; Aizlewood, Bevelander & Pendakur,

2005; Hung, 2003; Sodolska, 1998, 2000). While there are many established theories to explain differential participation rates, the following section will provide a summary of the primary theories informing lower recreational participation patterns among immigrants.

There are at least twelve theories addressing the topic of differential participation rates among ethnic minorities and immigrants, with significant overlap occurring among them. Most authors emphasize using a combination of several theories due to the complexity of belonging to a racialized or immigrant population (Karlis & Dawson, 1995; Juniu, 2000; Carr & Williams, 1993; Stodolska, 1998). Given the scope of this essay, four of the major theories and their offshoots will be discussed as they pertain to the broader topic, including Ethnicity theory, Marginality theory, Assimilation/ Acculturation theory and Discrimination theory. It should be noted that much of the literature on this topic has been developed in the United States with a particular emphasis on ethnic and racial participation rates. Many authors use these theoretical perspectives due to significant overlap between immigration status and racial minority status (Bain, 2007; Juniu, 2000; Stodolska, 1998, 2000; Aizlewood, Bevelander & Pendakur, 2005; Hung, 2003).

Ethnicity theory emphasizes the role of particular cultural values, norms, and preferences in determining recreational participation (Aizlewood, Bevelander & Pendakur, 2005; Floyd, 1998; Stodolska, 1998; Carr & Williams 1993; Juniu, 2000; Karlis & Dawson, 1995). In contrast to some of the other theories, resources constraints are not acknowledged (Stodolska, 1998). However, there is still emphasis on the role of other constraints, such as peer and familial pressure, or group size, which could act as

constraints and may be linked to structural inequalities (Stodolska, 1998, p. 525). Karin Hung (2003) provides valuable examples of the way cultural preferences affect wilderness-based recreational participation in her analysis of the Chinese population in Vancouver. Hung argues that one factor in Chinese under-represented in wilderness activities is homeland interpretations of wilderness, which are generally negative and related with poverty and wild animals (p. 81-82). She also emphasizes how the Chinese desire to maintain "pale" skin decreases the amount of time the community chooses to spend outdoors (p. 79). In addition to cultural interpretations of wilderness, various cultures may place value on different tasks. For example, people from China are socialized to work hard and become self-sufficient, due to a long history of feeling "beleaguered and vulnerable to the vicissitudes of famine and political change, and to the whims of authority" (Bond in Hung, 2003, p. 27). In order to secure their future, the Chinese community often emphasizes work related to academics or career advancement (Hung, 2003, p. 79).

In contrast, marginality theory emphasizes barriers to participation stemming from socioeconomic barriers that ethnic minority populations often encounter due a long history of discrimination (Aizlewood, Bevelander & Pendakur, 2005; Floyd, 1998; Stodolska, 1998; Carr and Williams, 1993; Juniu, 2000; Karlis & Dawson, 1995). With regard to immigrants, Monika Stodolska (2000) identifies several barriers associated with a marginalized position in society, such time constraints, language barriers, and social isolation (in Aizlewood, Bevelander & Pendakur, 2005). New immigrants in particular may face additional barriers because they are often working several low paying and physically demanding jobs and have little extra money for such things are recreation

(Alexandris and Stodolska in Aizlewood, Bevelander & Pendakur, 2005; Stodolska, 1998). This is supported by a second study conducted by Stodolska (2000) who found financial considerations was a factor that mitigated outdoor recreational pursuits among Polish immigrants in Edmonton.

Two offshoots of Marginality theory have emerged that expand on the definition of marginalization provided in the original theory. Sociodemographic theory suggests that differential participation rates are affected by social class membership (Hung, 2003; Karlis & Dawson, 1995). Factors such as income, education, and occupational status are better predictors of recreational activity than a history of belonging to a marginalized group or experiencing discrimination (McDonald & Hutchinson in Hung, 2003). The second offshoot, Opportunity theory, emphasizes differential access to opportunities, such as cost and physical structures conducive to recreation (Aizlewood, Bevelander & Pendakur, 2005; Hung 2003; Karlis & Dawson, 1993). This theory is usually associated with marginalization in physical space, such as having to travel long distances to access recreational opportunities or reducing recreational spaces that marginalized groups frequently access (Aizlewood, Bevelander & Pendakur, 2005; Hung, 2003).

Assimilation theory, also known as Acculturation theory, emphasizes the dynamic nature of social interactions to explain changing recreational patterns over time (Stodolska 1998; Hung, 2003; Carr & Williams, 1993; Juniu, 2000). This theory assumes that as ethnic minorities increase their interactions with the dominant group, the minority group is likely to adopt traits associated with the majority culture, including recreational patterns (Stodolska, 1998). Stodolska (1998) emphasizes the role of language proficiency, distinct religious beliefs, specific dietary preferences, and adherence to

traditional holidays as factors affecting recreational participation. Her study demonstrated that as individuals become more acculturated into the host society, some of the constraints decline and are thus less likely to affect recreational decisions (1998, p. 528).

Discrimination theory examines the ways in which institutional, structural or interpersonal discrimination affects recreational patterns (Bain, 2007; Hung, 2003; Floyd 1998, 1999). This theory differs from Marginality theory in that it focuses on contemporary sources of discrimination, such as interactions between visitor groups and management personnel (Floyd, 1999). While this theory remains largely underdeveloped due to a lack of research addressing the issue of structural discrimination (Floyd, 1998), several studies suggest a link between contemporary discrimination and recreational patterns (Bain, 2007; Hung, 2003). In a study looking at attitudes of new Canadians towards National Parks, Bain (2007) found that participants discussed the lack of cultural diversity present in national parks. While the participants did not directly cite this as a barrier to visiting or working for a national park, lack of representation can have an effect on perceptions of inclusion (Bain, 2007). Hung (2003) comments on a commercial aired by Parks Canada in an effort to attract more Chinese visitors to the parks. In her study, several participants were shown this commercial and all raised concerns about its appropriateness in trying to connect with the Chinese market as all recreationists featured in the commercial were Caucasian. One participant commented that if the commercial had featured Chinese families attending the park, she would have been be more inclined to go (LMLC43 in Bain, 2003).

From the theoretical frameworks presented, it becomes evident that many factors have previously theorized as having an affect on immigrant participation in recreational

activities. To test the various frameworks in the context of summer camp participation, primary research was conducted with a sample of immigrant parents. The following section outlines the methodology used in the execution of the primary research.

3. Methodology

To begin the inquiry on immigrant participation and inclusion in summer camps, I conducted a literature review that examined pieces from leisure studies, Canadian studies, race and ethnicity studies, and a limited amount of literature examining summer camps themselves. While none of these fields make significant contributions to the study of immigrant participation in summer camps, they offer valuable insight into different aspects of the topic.

To supplement the existing literature, interviews were conducted with six immigrant parents to ascertain their opinions on summer camp attendance for their children. Parents were selected as the target group because of the widespread recognition that they "play a central role in mediating their children's experiences" (Aronowitz, 1992, p. 90). This has been demonstrated to hold true specifically for immigrant parents as well (Aronowitz, 1992). Therefore evaluating parental attitudes on summer camp offers valuable insight into the participation experiences and barriers of their children.

Parents were selected using two sample methods, random sampling and informal contacts. The random sampling method occurred in a community center in downtown Toronto. Parents who were watching their children in swimming lessons were approached at random to inquire if they would be interested in participating in an interview on this topic. Interested participants were interviewed in the pool gallery while waiting for their children. The second set, obtained through personal contacts, were first contacted by a mutual acquaintance to determine if they would be interested in the study. If so, contact was made and a convenient interview time was selected[4]. All participants

[4] All interviews were conducted in July 2008.

selected through personal contacts were residents of the Greater Toronto Area. Four interviews resulted from the random sampling method and two interviews resulted from personal contacts. Interviews were generally between thirty minutes to one hour in length. All participants were guaranteed confidentiality, and therefore all names and identifying features discussed in the interviews have been changed.[5]

The purpose of using these two recruitment methods was to obtain a sample set which included a broad range of socio-demographic backgrounds. However, there was also a risk of over-representation of certain groups. For example, the users of the community center may have been more likely to be of a certain ethnic or class background based on the neighborhood where it was located. Similarly, participants obtained through informal contacts also may have been of a similar socio-economic background, given that people of similar groups are more likely to interact with one another. Using community centers as a site for recruitment also presents another inherent bias. The participants approached are almost certainly parents that are already encouraging their children to participate in recreational activities. Therefore the results of my primary data may reflect a bias towards recreational participation, and by extension summer camps.

When creating the interview questions, I used following research objectives to guide my line of inquiry:

- Determine whether the existing theoretical frameworks on ethnic recreational participation apply to immigrant youth participation in residential summer camps.

[5] Before any interviews were conducted, approval of the Ryerson University Ethics Board was obtained to engage in research with human subjects. All participants signed a consent form prior to beginning the interview allowing me to use the information gathered in the interview for research purposes. All interviews were conducted in person. Interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed.

- Investigate the priorities, concerns and fears of immigrant parents when considering summer recreational options.
- Determine if there is a relationship between immigrant underrepresentation in wilderness activities and historical notions of Canadian identity and whiteness.
- Understand if perceptions of wilderness factor into parent's willingness to send their children to summer camp.

Based on whether or not their children had attended summer camp in the past, approximately ten to twelve questions were explored, with some new questions asked as different topics arose (See Appendix 1 for a list of questions used to guide the interviews). The format consisted of a combination of the standardized open-ended approach and the interview guide approach. The purpose of selecting the interview format was to allow for fluidity and spontaneity in responses, while allowing for some structure. Although a guide was used, the interviews often took unpredictable turns as respondents elaborated on topics I had not anticipated. Qualitative research was well suited to the nature of this project based on the scope and time frame of the endeavor.

Toronto and the surrounding area (Greater Toronto Area) was selected as the site for interviewing because of its high ratio of immigrant families. Toronto is home to 1/12 of the Canadian population yet is also the residing place of ¼ of all immigrants in Canada (Intergovernmental Committee for Labour force and Economic Development, 2003). According to the 2006 Canadian census, immigrants in Toronto comprise 45.4 percent of the total population of the city (Statistics Canada, 2006). The 2001 census revealed that 48 percent of youth aged 15-24 in Toronto are foreign born (Statistics Canada, 2001). For youth aged 15-29 in Toronto, 42 per cent belong to a visible minority group and 1 in 5

speak another language other than French or English at home (Statistics Canada in the Intergovernmental Committee for Labour and Economic Development, 2003). Suffice to say, Toronto is a multicultural city with the vast majority of its immigrants coming from regions outside Western Europe (Statistics Canada, 2006). Given that most children who attend summer camps are from urban areas (Fine, 2005), the Greater Toronto Area provides the ideal location to assess the attitudes of residential summer camps.

The following sections will present the findings of this research that resulted from the six interviews.

4. Interview Findings

Interviews with immigrant parents revealed several issues regarding the participation of immigrant youth in residential summer camps and wilderness settings more broadly. The following is a review of the major themes and trends discussed within the six interviews. While the findings are by no means a comprehensive review of all immigrant experiences, they offer a valuable 'snapshot' into the experiences of a diverse group of participants. Participants represented five countries of origin (Yemen, Ethiopia (2), El Salvador, Croatia, and India) and a diverse cross-section of economic classes and experiences with summer camp participation (including non-participation, day camp participation only, and combined day and residential camp participation). Participants included four mothers and two fathers.

4.1 Experiences with Canadian Wilderness

Past experiences with wilderness settings were explored to gather a sense of how much exposure each participant has had to non-urban, wilderness based environments. Five of the participants had been exposed to the natural environment in varying degrees, from visiting provincial parks for the day to camping for several days. Only one participant had not visited a wilderness area, but is planning a trip for the current summer (Participant 3, 2008). Levels of perceived inclusion and belonging while visiting wilderness areas were mixed. One participant, a father from India, reported nothing but positive experiences with others while visiting the "north"[6]:

> When you drive up north, you've driven 4 hours north of Toronto, and you come across this guy, who you're assuming he's never seen anything but

[6] I have kept the language used by the participants.

> white people, but he's out there, you're asking for directions, he's happy to give them to you, he's you know, smiling at you, curious about where you come from. They're nothing but friendly, I've never had a bad experience (Participant 6, 2008).

Another participant who is a mother from Croatia expressed feelings of belonging unrelated to interactions with others, but rather to an intrinsic connection with the land. When asked if she felt included in wilderness areas, this participant answered:

> Yeah, I did. I did feel. We heard that bears can be around at night. We came across a rattle snake, but I did feel part of that nature. Yeah, it felt like, yeah I did (Participant 5, 2008).

However not all participants felt welcome or a strong sense of belonging. Several participants discussed feelings of exclusion related to being a racialized person. When one participant, a mother from Ethiopia, went camping with her family and a group of friends, she encountered subtle actions from other campers that communicated discomfort with her presence:

> everybody has different culture, maybe it's [white Canadian] culture to ignore people. But when we go camping, there is a public washroom, and shower room, when you walk in people are leaving…Because we go as a group. When we walk into the shower room, imagine, five, six black women and black guys walk into the same shower room. Maybe they frightened (Participant 2, 2008).

This participant mentioned that when she goes camping with her group, they are the only black people there. She conveyed that a lack of racial representation is likely a major factor when considering why so few immigrants go camping (participant 2, 2008). In a similar vein, another participant, a father from El Salvador, discussed the effects of subtle actions from surrounding populations. He described his experiences when considering buying a trailer home in a wilderness area:

> when we're there, we were the only Latinos, people of colour. Wow!... And so, I said to my wife, you know what? It's too white. 100 percent, 99

> percent white, we didn't even see one person of colour…. I'm not sure about the other people there. So, we could see the eyes, the stray eyes around, you know I said I don't care, my wife we don't care. You know what, we pay the same dollar for the same spot, we pay what is the difference?… That was a consideration. And I think half of that was my decision to not buy it (Participant 4, 2008).

Only one participant, a mother from Yemen, discussed fears related to safety while camping. When asked if she was afraid of the animals, she responded:

> Yeah and sometimes people. I don't know. Because how do you close the door with you. Someone they catch you (Participant 1, 2008).

To address this fear, the participant only engaged with wilderness areas on day trips so as to avoid any type of camping.

Regardless of levels of inclusion or fears related to wilderness, most participants reported that they enjoyed being in nature or at the very least planned on doing more wilderness activities in the future should they have the opportunity. The participant that did not buy the trailer home, as previously mentioned, remained enthusiastic about living close to nature in the future:

> You know, I know the thing, my dream is to live close to an environment, next to a semi-countryside…Oh I would love it! (Participant 4, 2008)

Two other participants described positive experiences related to exploring and experiencing a new natural setting:

> We went to one of the provincial parks just before [Algonquin Provincial Park]. Yeah but it was beautiful, it was very lovely. Spent three days there, it was very nice. To us, camping is a totally alien concept, we've never done this stuff. Perfectly good house, why would we go and stay in the woods? Right? But, it was something when we first came, we have a couple of friends …and they insisted that we go with them. So, we got in the back of the car and went with them. Had a great time. My son thoroughly enjoyed himself. So, we've been doing it every year ever since (Participant 6, 2008).

> It was almost like adventures to see new things, porcupines, lots of squirrels, raccoons, all that was so different to me (Participant 5, 2008).

The discussion of broader wilderness participation provided a base from which to understand the participant's experiences with related natural settings. The following section will explore the discussions that occurred surrounding summer camps specifically.

4.2 Summer Camp Preferences Among Immigrant Parents

Among the participants there was a strong preference for day camp experiences over residential ones. While only two participants had sent their children to residential camps, all but one had sent their children to day camp. In general, perceptions of residential summer camps were mixed. Some participants remained very hesitant about the experience, while others could see the benefits but were not comfortable sending their children into that environment. Two participants mentioned the fear they had associated with residential camping:

> I scared, I don't know…I think because my kids are always with me, I don't like for them to stay outside, maybe um, the bugs, maybe I don't know (Participant 1, 2008).

> I wouldn't let [my daughter] go for overnight camps. Not at all for a whole week, not at her age. Or probably maybe when she's 20, when I know she can think with her head straight, I tell her I'll think about it (laugh). Then

> yes if she decides she wants to go to some kind of a camp, go. Not before then I can't give her that permission. I don't feel that safe about it. (Participant 5, 2008).

Some of the parents found it difficult to articulate why they felt uncomfortable with the idea of residential summer camp. However most parents clearly stated that they believed day camps offered many benefits and had very positive experiences with them. The only participant to never have used day camps was open to having her children attend in the future when she was not as busy, however she was not comfortable with the idea of residential summer camps (Participant 1, 2008).

Interestingly, many parents, including ones that were hesitant about the residential summer camp experiences, expressed favourable opinions surrounding the potential benefits of immersing children in this environment. One parent, who previously mentioned that she feels unsafe about summer camps, describes the connections that can emerge between the natural environment and belonging in Canada when discussing her daughter's experience sleeping in a cabin while in Sparks:

> They were in a cabin. She loved it…I personally do want them to totally feel at home here [in Canada], and to know, because this is their country and I want them to, not to love it, but to find it for themselves all that they like and feel connected (Participant 5, 2008).

Another participant who did not want to send his child to residential camp said this about the potential benefits of attending:

> I don't think it's a bad idea to send them off for 5 or 10 days and let them be by themselves, manage for themselves. Because what it does is also is make them very independent….But I think a little bit of separation might have helped me as well, when I was young. Send me off for 10 days, learn to fend for myself, do my own laundry, manage for myself. And I think that's a good thing. [My son] would definitely like to do it (Participant 6, 2008).

The two participants that had sent their children to residential summer camp had mixed feelings towards their children's experiences. They both articulated the benefits that could be gained from this experience. One participant stated that residential summer camps help build independence and expose children to new ways of thinking of living (Participant 2, 2008). The other participant described the potential of residential summer camps to be an "investment in the future" of his children as they were given the opportunity to pursue skills that they loved (Participant 4, 2008).

At certain points during the interviews however, the participants discussed factors that limit the participation of their children immigrant children in general. The following section will outline the main factors discussed, namely issues of racial inclusion, financial restrictions, cultural preferences, and uncertainty surrounding those supervising their children

4.3 Issues of Racial Inclusion

The two participants that mentioned race as an important consideration in residential summer camp attendance were the parents who had sent their children to these camps in the past. When asked about the diversity of her child's residential camp, one participant described how she had specifically chosen a camp that was very diverse:

> When I send him, whenever camp I send him I have to know the ratio of how many kids to how many ratio teachers, what kind of people are there, is there any black, I ask straightforward as question, I don't hide it. Are there any black kids, is there any white, Chinese. I ask every camp when I send him (Participant 2, 2008).

In a similar vein, this participant remarked how camps attempt to make participants "more Westernized" and are not necessarily inclusive of the diverse cultural practices of

their campers (Participant 2, 2008). The other participant discussed the issue of racial exclusion in summer camps at length. He described both day and residential camps as a "too white dominated environment" (Participant 4, 2008). He elaborated on his statement:

> The one who manage it, the one who run it doesn't reflect the one who attend it. That is a big gap there. Huge (Participant 4, 2008).

The participant explained that while day camps, such as the ones commonly found in community centers, are more likely to be diverse environments, both types of summer camps contain exclusive structures embedded with them. He later describes his daughter's experience at a horseback riding camp located in a wilderness setting. After volunteering there, she chose not to return because she was not comfortable in that environment and "she didn't feel welcome" (Participant 4, 2008). The participant suspected that ill treatment towards his daughter was the result of racist sentiments towards his family in general (Participant 4, 2008). This participant continued by discussing the subtlety to which racialized people are kept on the margins of full participation in Canadian life:

> Racism is so structural, so, so ingrooved in the mind and the heart of the people in Canada that even the people who suffer it accept it, profoundly. That's the worst part. That's the greatest danger (Participant 4, 2008).

Despite prejudices that might exist in residential summer camp settings, it was evident in their interviews that both participants maintained a commitment to challenging stereotypes by simply participating in such activities. One participant stated the importance of having racialized people enter the summer camp environment which has traditionally been white dominated:

> you have to go to this environment. It's not about fitting in, you have to be yourself. I can come, I can be part of them. Not to isolate themselves, but I think to integrate, In a way being ourselves we can integrate. You don't have to lose your identity. But you can be yourself and be a part of the mainstream. Why not? Even thought the mainstream don't like that. They don't accept that idea… I teach my kids to do that. Whatever, if its too white, its ok. They will learn from us. They will learn to accept us (Participant 4, 2008).

4.4 Financial Considerations

When considering the topic of summer camps, financial considerations, or issues of class, were mentioned by three of the six participants. In speaking generally about access, one participant notes the intersection of race and class when discussing how summer camp can be prohibitive due to cost:

> in the makeup of who can come. It's expensive. It becomes a class issue, it becomes a racial issue. So, most immigrants are relegated to community centers. And community center's programs are weak….weak or very limited…So it's a lot of kids, huge number of kids are left out of these programs in the summer…And so they are, like with nothing (Participant 4, 2008).

The other participant discusses the high cost of day camps, let alone residential camps. She describes other ways in which she would prefer to spend the fees:

> Camps are expensive. They are. That one week [of day camp] that was almost $150, so I do find that it is expensive….I'd rather save that money if we can for higher education. Then, now, I can maybe do other things with her now. So I think price is a big one, for us anyway.

Because this participant stays at home with her children, it makes better financial sense for her to supervise them. She describes that "it is natural that I keep them in the summer time home" (Participant 5, 2008).

One participant who lives in a dual-income family describes how summer camps can be economical options for parents who must work during the summer time.

> I think to a lot of immigrants, summer camps are expensive, because they are not used to spending that sort of money on it. But when they look at the options, you're going to figure out that that's what it is. You either pay for summer camp or you pay for daycare, and daycare is as expensive if not more (Participant 6, 2008).

This participant notes the influence of cultural barriers that can exist for some immigrants who may not be accustomed to having to pay for summer care. He notes the cultural practice of having extended networks, such as family or neighbors, watch your children while you are at work. Citing the lack of a support network in Canada, he believes that summer camp is a very viable option for immigrants, and was the factor that led him to send his child to day camp (Participant 6, 2008).

4.5 Cultural Preferences

Many participants cited cultural preferences relating to summer activities as a reason why immigrants may choose not to send their children to residential summer camps. Several participants described wanting to stay close to their children because they come from a culture where parents and their children spend more time together. As one participant described:

> Immigrant families also have this concept of why do I need to send him off for overnight. When I work during the day, but I'm here in the evening, why would I need to? Let him stay with me, let me enjoy his company, let him enjoy my company (Participant 6, 2008).

Another participant described how immigrant parents would likely prefer to spend more time with their children than residential summer camps allow. When asked how these camps could better serve immigrant communities, one participant discussed having more parental and family involvement in the camp setting, such as inviting parents to stay at the camp on a rotational basis (Participant 2, 2008).

As previously described, some immigrant parents may carry with them fears of sending their children into wilderness settings. In the interviews, some parents described being over-protective or not approving of the idea of sending their children into this type of setting. When asked why immigrants may not send their children to residential camps, one participant described the experience of being in a foreign land:

> immigrant parents are a little more protective of their children. You're in a new [country], especially for people like us, I came here when I was 32. So, as far as I'm concerned, I grew up in another country. And I'm coming to a strange country and this is my son. Now, am I sending him off to this place? You know, I'm being a little protective than I need to be (Participant 6, 2008).

A second participant discussed the effects of being from a different country on her perceptions of the summer camp experience:

> I couldn't let go of my children because I haven't gotten accustomed to any kind of camps. It wasn't there for us, and was is totally something new, and definitely where, like in Croatia where I grew up….So for me, it was a very, very strange feeling to, the children after school, some children going a lot to camps. And I think all these children need a break. Where's the break ever for children to be children? So it was a little bit hard for me to accept to be truthful (Participant 5, 2008).

4.6 Uncertainty Surrounding those Supervising Their Children

Another theme that was present among three of the six interviews was the concern regarding supervision. Specifically, in a summer camp setting those supervising their children would be relatively unknown. One participant who had sent her children both to daycare and day camp expressed preference at having her children in the daycare setting. When asked why she preferred the daycare, she responded "Better activities. For a long time I know them, you know?" (Participant 3, 2008). The only reason this participant uses day camps is because her regular day care closes for two weeks during summer and

she requires additional supervision for her children (Participant 3, 2008). Therefore knowing and trusting those supervising her children was very important.

Similarly, another participant expresses her concerns surrounding the supervisors in both day and residential camp settings:

> I worried because he is going to have different instructors or supervisors that I never met before. Those people are just for summer, so I don't know them. I have some concerns sometimes, but I let it go. But I do worry (Participant 2, 2008).

In this case, the participant looks past her concerns in favour of the other benefits she sees for her child. The third participant addresses the topic of supervision as a consideration when considering residential summer camps:

> I wouldn't know exactly the people who are the guides. They can tell the bestest things, but I don't really know them whatsoever. So they're strangers taking care of my children, and I wouldn't feel comfortable with that (Participant 5, 2008).

While discussing this topic, the participant stated that she feels very comfortable to have her children in wilderness settings if either her or her husband is present. She also feels comfortable sending her children on overnight school trips to wilderness areas or to overnight trips with Sparks[7] because in both cases she knows and trusts the supervisors or teachers who accompany them (Participant 5, 2008).

The interviews suggest that a variety of factors influence residential summer camp participation. The following section will address the implications of the answers and their relationship to barriers to full participation and cultural preferences.

[7] Sparks is a sub-group of the Girl Guides of Canada specifically designated for girls aged 5-6.

5. Analysis

The interviews raised several interesting issues pertaining to feelings of inclusion and notions of belonging as they pertain to wilderness and summer camp activities. The comments reflect a diversity of experiences and levels of participation influenced by many combinations of factors. The influencing factors could generally be divided into two main categories: personal choice and structural barriers. For immigrants in particular, it can be a fine line that separates those influential factors and informs the decision making process. Without diminishing the role of personal agency and choice in mitigating the recreational experiences of immigrant populations, I will first examine how larger systems of structural barriers limit full participation in residential summer camps.

Literature emerging on immigration studies highlights the intersection of oppressive experiences related to race, income, gender, and class, among others (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003; Teelucksingh & Galabuzi, 2005). Ratna Omidvar and Ted Richmond (2003) discuss social exclusion among racialized and minorities, which occurs as a result of multiple layers of oppression in Canadian society. While the authors acknowledge that the concept of social inclusion remains somewhat ambiguous, it generally embodies the following basic notions and significance:

> belonging, acceptance and recognition. For immigrant and refugees, social inclusion would be represented by the full and equal participation in the economic, social, cultural and political dimensions of life in their new country. In a simple but useful sense, therefore, social inclusion for immigrants and refugees can be seen as the dismantling of barriers that lead to exclusion in all these domains (2003, 1).

Immigrants and refugees are becoming increasingly disheartened by the hardships encountered as their skills and talents are often underutilized in both economic and social

life (2003, 1). While Canada strives to implement official policies that embody multiculturalism and antiracism, in practice there remains a large disconnect between many racialized immigrants and full social inclusion in Canadian life (2003, 12).

As the literature would predict, several comments within the interviews reflected a lack of social inclusion in Canada. Participant 2 (2008) discussed feelings of being ostracized while camping. She felt that other campers were potentially afraid of her, or at the very least startled because they were unaccustomed to seeing black people in camping areas. She felt that an under-representation of racialized groups in those settings was likely a factor that prevented their full participation in camping activities. While she did not expand on the exact reasoning behind this, it is easy to imaging how visible cues, reinforced by symbolic representations of whiteness in wilderness areas, could lead some people of racialized groups to feel as though they were less welcome. In her case, whiteness is evident because the white body is normalized and associated with a certain space, whereas non-whites are left feeling outside the boundaries of a seemingly neutral activity. As previously discussed, spaces are imbued with meaning and, in the case of the Canadian wilderness, reflect larger patterns of discrimination. Similarly, Participant 4 felt uncomfortable with the 'gaze' of other campers while in the process of buying a trailer home, a feeling that he attributed to being a non-white Latino. He also noticed that he was the only person of colour in that area. These comments reflect feelings of exclusion, or 'otherness' in that space. Given that he did not buy a trailer home, in large part to feelings of exclusion, is evidence that whiteness and social exclusion is reproduced in wilderness areas.

Experiences related to wilderness areas can have a significant impact on perceptions of residential summer camps given the similarity of the activities. Two parents reiterated concerns related to their child's race and their participation in residential summer camps. The fact that Participant 2 (2008) always inquires about the racial composition of summer camps before sending her child suggests the importance of visible representations of race to support feelings of inclusion. In other words, she would not feel as comfortable sending her son to a camp where he would be the only black person. This could be related to the experiences she encountered while camping herself, given that she was the only black person camping and her associated feelings of exclusion. It was clear that finding a diverse summer camp environment was a priority for her, presumably because it would be a more inclusive environment.

Participant 4 (2008) also had to consider his daughter's race in summer camp settings, as he describes how his daughter reported feeling unwelcome in that environment. He felt that his family's status as non-white had a direct impact on the level of inclusion felt by his children. In both of these instances, parents considered the impact of race for their second-generation children in recreational endeavors. In their experiences, residential summer camps continued to be a site of white privilege which they had to navigate carefully in order to fully participate. As stated by Omidvar and Richmond (2003), a feeling of belonging can be influenced by all aspects of social life, and the promotion of social inclusion is very important for many racialized immigrants in particular to foster feelings of belonging in Canada.

Some participants were less able to articulate the exact reasoning behind their fears of discomforts with the notion of residential summer camping. In those situations, it

is possible that the line between personal choice and structural barriers has become convoluted to the point where individuals may no longer know why they do not participate. Similarly, many of the participants flip-flopped between negative and positive comments about summer camps, or suggested that the experience would be positive while remaining uncomfortable with the idea. It is possible that this ambiguity or uncertainty surrounding these themes is related to subtle, yet powerful messages about belonging in the Canadian wilderness or Canadian activities such as residential summer camping. To reiterate the sentiments of one respondent, the experiences of racial exclusion can be so deeply and subtly entrenched into the social fabric of Canada that some may not even realize that they are subject to it (Participant 4, 2008).

Recreational participation that is influenced by institutional, structural or interpersonal discrimination is described within the framework of discrimination theory in the leisure literature. While it remains one of the most under-developed of the theoretical frameworks on ethno/racial participation factors, it nonetheless supports the feelings and actions described by some of the participants. The white dominance that was encountered by some participants is the product of institutional and structural racism in Canada, which has long linked the wilderness to white privilege. While the wilderness remains, in theory, a ‘common good’ available to everyone, it has been strategically and symbolically developed into a space that epitomizes Western European values and ownership. As hypothesized within discrimination theory, interpersonal interactions in which one group feels excluded because of their race can have an impact on recreational participation experiences. This theory is useful when evaluating the full spectrum of

factors that contribute to recreational summer camp use among immigrants and should be further developed accordingly.

Alongside race, many factors come together to create a scenario of social exclusion as described by Omidvar and Richomnd (2003). Cheryl Teelucksingh and Grace-Edward Galabuzi (2005) have written about the economic barriers faced by racialized groups and immigrants in Canada. The authors discuss specific trends that continue to marginalize racialized groups, such as assuming the worth of employees based on race, failing to recognizing the skills of racialized groups, and offering less compensation for skills (Teelucksingh & Galabuzi, 2005, p. 1). The income gap between immigrants and the Canadian born populations has grown to double-digit percentages and immigrants continue to have higher levels of unemployment, even when factoring for levels of education (Teelucksingh & Galabuzi, 2005, p.1). Given that over 75 percent of new immigrants to Canada belong to racialized groups, this has serious implications for the quality of life for newcomers to Canada (Teelucksingh & Galabuzi, 2005, p. 2).

Given the role of economics in restricting the recreational opportunities of immigrants, it is not surprising that the cost of camp was mentioned as a prohibitive factor. Yet all of the participants that mentioned cost had also sent their children to either day or residential camps in the past. This suggests that while cost is a consideration for some parents, it is not the only, or even the main factor that influenced summer camp attendance among the participants. The recent study by Isabelle Ekwa-Ekoko and Kristen Bustamante (2008) concluded that most residential summer camps across Canada have subsidy programs or bursaries that pay full or partial program fees. This suggests that costs associated with summer camp may not be a prohibitive factor for some families.

Rather, the issue of financing recreational activities brings forth notions of personal choice and cultural preference. Participant 6 (2008) commented that immigrants are not used to spending money on summer camp type activities given that these programs do not exist in most parts of the world. He notes that many cultures rely on an informal network of family and neighbours to look after children while they are not in school. Similarly, Participant 5 is uncomfortable with the practice of sending children to structured activities in the summer time, because she is not yet accustomed to the concept (2008). This is not to suggest that summer camps are completely accessible, but rather that financial considerations may be only one factor that contribute to a parent's decision to send their child to camp.

Another factor that may relate to cultural preferences is the supervision of children. In the interviews, several participants discussed discomfort associated with having 'strangers' care for their children (Participants 1,2,5, 2008). This may be related to cultural preferences, such as a preference to spend as much time with children as possible, or to have close family members watch children. Using cultural preferences to explain recreational patterns among various ethno-racial communities has been extensively documented within the ethnicity hypothesis. However, preferences related to financial decisions or the supervision of children may be influenced by factors outside of cultural preferences. These considerations may be influenced by experiences of marginalization related to a long history of socio-economic barriers faced by many immigrant groups. The marginality theory has done extensive research into the role of socio-economic barriers in restricting the full participation of immigrants in recreational activities. When distinguishing as to the cause of under-representation, the challenge

arises in identifying the root issue that is influencing decision-making. Given the complexity of participation in residential summer camp, it is likely that many different factors come together to influence participation rates among each individual family, and therefore must take into consideration a wide breadth of theoretical frameworks when engaging in analysis on the topic.

6. Recommendations

From the interviews, it becomes evident that both structural barriers and personal preferences play a role in mitigating the wilderness and residential summer camp experiences of immigrants. A holistic approach must be taken when considering how to make summer camps a site of full participation and inclusion given that each parent has their own set of personal experiences and preferences. A number of recommendations arise from the interviews and literature surrounding this topic and are presented in this section for the consideration for those sectors that may impact the participation of immigrants in residential summer camp experiences.

It is recommended that practitioners in the field of arts and heritage consider the powerful influence of exclusionary symbols that have sought to link wilderness and the Canadian landscape to white privilege. Some authors even recommend a complete reconstruction of Canadian identity based on themes that are less antiquated and reflect the current and multicultural reality of Canada. Osborne (2006) argues that symbolic renderings affiliated with nature, such as that of the lone pine tree, are antiquated because they emphasize "rootedness in place and an essentially fixed metanarrative of a heroic survival in the face of adversity" (par. 10). Rather, he suggests that Canadians adopt a more relevant image, such as that of 'geese' because the birds' mobile nature is similar to many diasporic populations that have fluid and transnational identities (par 2, 2006). Both Osborne (2006) and Erin Manning (2000) stress the leading role of the arts and heritage industries to reform renderings of Canadian identity, as they have been a major source of influence in the past. In fact, some artists are already beginning to challenge the Canadian national imaginary. West Coast Artist Jin-me Yoon has created an exhibit,

entitled ‘A Group of Sixty-Seven’ in which she superimposes the faces of the Korean community into the iconic paintings of the Group of Seven (Manning, 2006). According to Manning, her works achieve “a deterritorialization of the Canadian imaginary that undermines the stable notion of the landscape as the harbinger of Canadian identity” (par 60, 2000). While artists such as Yoon provide an alternative to traditional notions of the relationship between national identity and landscape, they alone cannot bring about total transformation to an inclusive Canadian identity. There is a shared role for practical programs that promote wilderness use to consider the cultural experiences and challenges of immigrant communities.

Therefore, it is recommended that policy makers and non-profit organizations in related fields consider the unique experiences of immigrants when developing programs that impact recreational and residential summer camp programs. A recent report by OCASI (2005) emphasizes the role of community involvement when planning programs for immigrant youth. A community-based approach that seeks partnerships, shares resources among organizations and utilizes effective outreach strategies will be more successful in engaging immigrant parents and their children (2005, p.21). OCASI also notes the importance of being cognizant of issues related to inclusion, among them working to develop culturally sensitive programs that take into consideration the financial realities of immigrant families (2005, p. 21).

Finally, it is recommended that residential summer camps themselves address issues of exclusion that may be present within their camp structure. This may include considering the unique experiences, concerns and preferences of immigrant families and making the appropriate changes to become a more inclusive environment. Residential

summer camps have been shown to be places where racial hierarchies can be challenged in cases where specialized programs and structures reinforce egalitarian values (Palmer, 2000). Phyllis Palmer (2000) conducted a study whereby she interviewed adults that had attended an American residential camp in the 1960s and 1970s. This camp sought specifically to break down racial barriers by promoting self-reflection and critical analysis of racial hierarchies that existed at the time. She found that attendance at this camp had long term affects on its participants in the areas of racial understanding and reducing prejudice towards racialized minorities (2000). Therefore residential summer cams can play a role in promoting larger structures of racial inclusion. By promoting the participation of racialized staff members and campers, residential summer camps can challenge longstanding, but subtle practices that may link wilderness activities to a white normative experience. Within the camp experience itself, specialized programs can be developed that promote inclusion and self-awareness while challenging exclusionary social structures.

These recommendations are not to suggest that Canadian identity and experiences should not continue to be linked with wilderness activities and engaging in the natural landscape. Rather, traditional conceptions of whiteness that have been normalized in these settings need to be critically discussed and analyzed in the context of today's multicultural reality. Omidvar and Richmond (2003) discuss the role of Canadian democratic institutions in creating a model for shared citizenship by promoting new forms of public dialogue. The authors suggest that multicultural values can extend beyond their current state that preserves "cultures of origin". As Canadians we should strive to achieve overlap between unity and diversity (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003).

Residential summer camps and their affiliated benefits may then extend as opportunities for all members of society and contribute to full social inclusion.

7. Avenues for Future Research

This research on the participation of immigrants in residential summer camps suggests several avenues for research among the various related fields. More research with immigrants directly on the topic of wilderness inclusion and national identity formation would offer further insight into feelings of belonging in Canada. Further research is also needed on various recreational theoretical frameworks, discrimination theory in particular. In general, more research is needed to substantiate Canadian research on the topic of immigrant participation in recreational activities. As environmental issues become increasingly prominent in North American society, examining the use of natural areas among immigrants would offer valuable insight into how those geographical areas can be best managed in a diverse society. Furthermore, it would be useful to examine the cultural meanings and wilderness experiences with specific immigrant and ethno-cultural communities in order to avoid generalizing immigrants into one homogenous group. It would also be recommended to do further research with immigrant youth themselves and their experiences with summer camps. This would be relevant in evaluating whether residential summer camp is an activity that appeals to youth and the reasoning for this.

8. Conclusion

This report has sought to explore the relationship between notions of Canadian identity, the natural environment, and belonging using residential summer camps as a case study. Residential summer camps represent an activity where all of the aforementioned themes collide, and are thus a valuable avenue from which to study broader themes of immigrant inclusion and exclusion. Using 'whiteness' theory together with theoretical frameworks explaining ethno-specific recreational participation, this paper sought to examine why immigrants have lower participation rates in residential summer camps, and wilderness participation more broadly. Adding to established theory was data collected from interviews involving six immigrant parents. Each parent provided valuable insight into reasons for choosing, or not choosing, to send their children to residential summer camp. Using this data, several insights were made as to the relationship between immigrant circumstances, racial inclusion and summer camp attendance.

While this study is exploratory in nature, the findings suggest that many factors affect residential summer camp participation, among them racial inclusion, financial considerations, cultural preferences and fears associated with wilderness and childcare. It is clear, however, that for some members of racialized immigrant groups, inclusion in wilderness spaces is mitigated by feelings of belonging. In order to explore this relationship more fully, further research on the topic is recommended, along with other recommendations that may assist those working in related fields consider how wilderness areas, and residential summer camps specifically, may be exclusionary spaces for some immigrant families.

Appendix 1: Proposed Interview Questions

Interview #: _____
Date:____/____/08
Location:_____
Gender: Mother / Father
Name and email address (only if they would like to receive a copy of the completed research paper)._____

_____

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. As noted in the consent form, the purpose of this interview is to get a sense of your opinions and thoughts surrounding the participation of your children in summer camps. I am very open to hearing your thoughts or experiences, and at any time you can skip a question if you do not feel comfortable answering.

Please remember that all information you provide will remain anonymous. Although I will be sharing the final results of the collected data in my final paper, I will be not be recording the names of any of my participants and will not be using any information that would directly tie you to this survey (for example, the neighborhood in which you live, or any person's name that you may mention). Please note however that I may be using direct quotes from the information you provide as anecdotal evidence on a topic.

At any time during the interview if you don't understand a question, please tell me, and I will try to clarify it for you. The survey will take approximately 20-30 minutes. Do you have any questions before we begin? Are you ready to begin?

1) How many kids do you have?

2) Have they ever been to summer camp before?

3) What are the gender of your kids.

4) How old are is/are your kids?

(Depending on whether or not their children attend summer camp, proceed to the corresponding section)

Yes, at least one of the children has been to summer camp before:

1) Are you familiar with summer camps? What have you heard about them?

(Prompt: What do you think of when someone says the word "summer camp"? Anything else?)

2) How did you feel about your children's experience at summer camp?

(Prompt: how did your kids feel about it?)

3) What factors influenced your decision to send your kids to summer camp?

(Prompt: Was it a difficult decision? Do you think you made the right decision?)

4) Do you think that summer camp reflects the interests and priorities of immigrant communities?

(How do you think that summer camps could better cater to immigrant populations?)

5) What were your perceptions of Canadian wilderness before coming to Canada?

(Prompt: Did these change after you arrived)

6) What do you think are the benefits or drawbacks of overnight summer camps?

7) Do you feel that immigrants are encouraged to visit Canada's wilderness areas?

(Prompt: How so? What types of ideas do you normally associate with wilderness?)

8) Have you visited wilderness areas before?

(Prompt: What was your experience there? Do you feel included or like you belong in those areas?)

9) Do you think that your gender (whether or not you are a boy or girl) affects your experience in summer camp?

(Prompt: How so? Would you be more inclined to send your son/daughter to overnight summer camp?)

10) Is there anything else you want to share on this topic?

No, none of the children have attended summer camp before:

1) Are you familiar with summer camps? What have you heard about them?

(Prompt: What do you think of when someone says the word "summer camp"? Anything else?)

2) What are the reasons that you have not sent your kids to summer camp in the past?

(Prompt: Have you considered summer camp before? Did you discover that there were barriers for you to send your kids? What activities do you think would be more worthwhile? What would you prefer to have your children doing?)

3) Have your kids ever mentioned that they wanted to go to summer camp?

(Prompt: What did they say? What were the reasons? Have they ever said anything at all about summer camp? Do they participate in other activities during the summer?)

4) Do you think that summer camp reflects the interests and priorities of immigrant communities?

(How do you think that summer camps could better cater to immigrant populations?)

5) Would you have any concerns with sending your child(ren) to an overnight camp?

(Prompt: What concerns? Would there be any ways to address these concerns?)

6) Do you think your kids would benefit from increased exposure to the wilderness?

(Prompt: Can it be good for their development? How so?)

7) What do you think are the benefits or drawbacks of overnight summer camps?

(Prompt: Would you prefer to send your kids to day camps in the city? Why?)

8) What are your perceptions of Canadian wilderness before coming to Canada?

(Prompt: Did these change after you arrived?)

9) Do you feel that immigrants are encouraged to visit Canada's wilderness areas?

(Prompt: How so? What types of ideas do you normally associate with wilderness)

10) Have you visited wilderness areas before?

(Prompt: What was your experience there? Do you feel included or like you belong in those areas?)

11) Do you think that your gender (whether or not you are a boy or girl) affects your experience in summer camp?

(Prompt: How so? Would you be more inclined to send your son/daughter to overnight summer camp?)

12) Is there anything else you want to share on this topic?

4) Basic demographic information

a) What is your country of origin?

b) How many people live in your household?

c) How long have you been living in Canada?

d) What is your approximate annual household income (income from all people that work in your house):

5) Do you know anyone else that would be interested in completing thus interview? If so, would you be willing to pass on my contact information to them as I will not contact them myself. Please keep in mind that you should not ask about their involvement in this survey or disclose your own participation.

Thank you very much for your input. If you would be interested in receiving a copy of the completed research please leave me your email address or contact information. Please note that following the delivery of this research info to you, your contact information will be destroyed, and it will never be given to anyone for any purpose. It will also not be affiliated in any way with the survey you just completed. Would you like me to send you a copy? Thanks again.

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