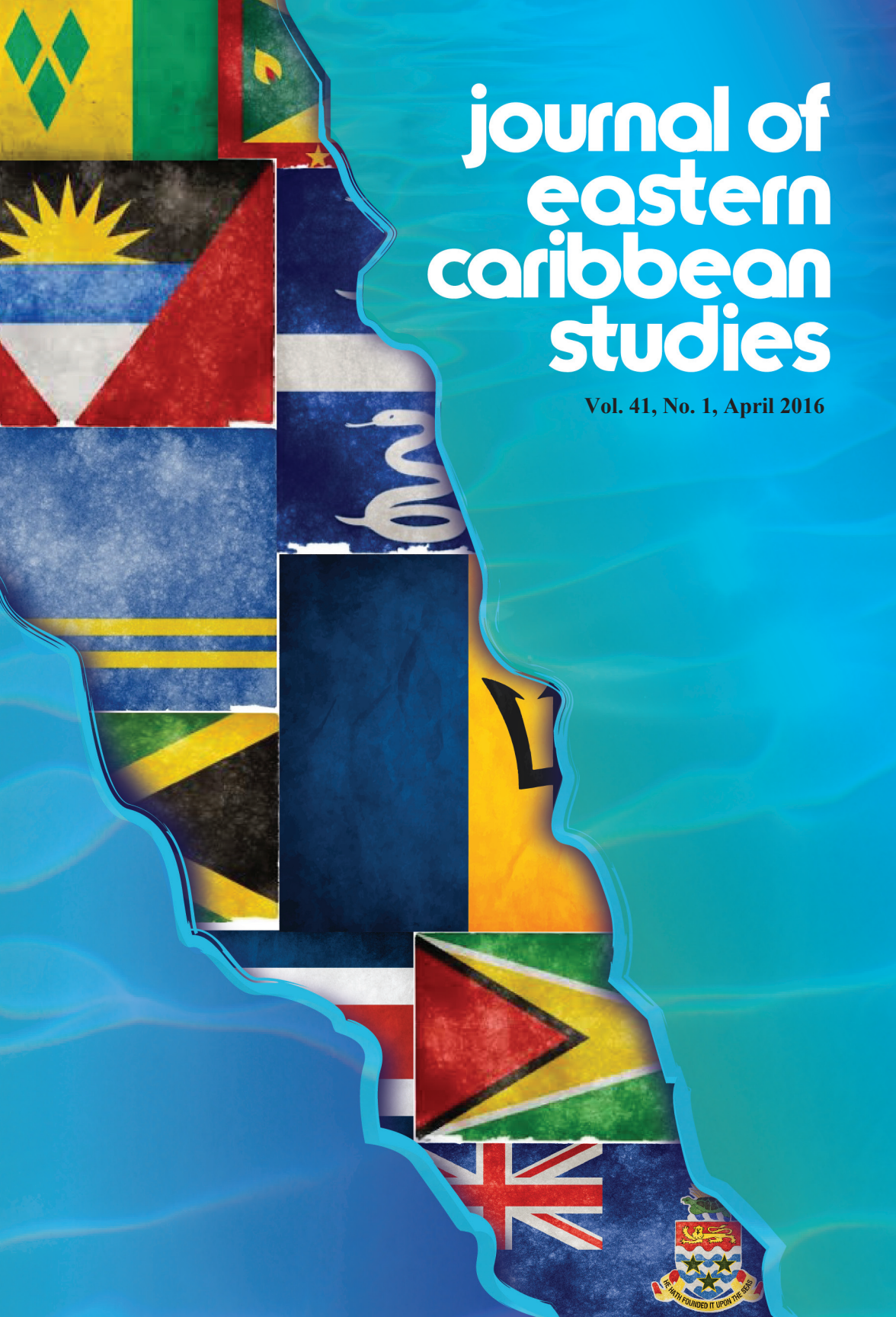

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Introduction: Negotiating Religions and Cultural Identities in Caribbean Societies

Latoya Lazarus
Guest Editor

This special issue entitled 'Negotiating Religions and Cultural Identities in Caribbean Societies' was initially imagined and presented in 2015 as a project examining 'Religions in Contemporary Caribbean Society.' This choice of theme was informed, firstly, by my preoccupation with the contentious nature of religions within societies and their complex power in shaping human experiences and relations, as expressed by John R. Hinnells (2005: 5):

> I incline to the view that religions are dangerous because more people have been tortured and killed for religious reasons than for any other motive. Persecution, the torture and killings of heretics and people of other religions have been major themes running through much of world history. At a personal level [however,] a religion can be helpful, supportive and even joyous for many people. But equally many are tortured by feelings of guilt or shame because they cannot live according to the ideals of their religion, or cannot in conscience accept doctrines they are expected to hold.

Secondly, and perhaps even more importantly, this thematic focus was influenced by a scholarly curiosity about what some identify as an intensifying and in some contexts a renewed visibility and re-politicisation of certain manifestations of religion in societies. This is, for example, discernible in the increasing presence and volubility of certain religious players and institutions engaging locally and globally in various forms of social, political and economic activisms. My own work on 'Sexual Citizenship and

Conservative Christian Mobilisation in Jamaica', which appeared in the April 2015 (Vol. 40, No. 1) issue of this journal and is a precursor to this special issue, critically examines the strategic organising of religious groups for the purpose of shaping local and regional developments relating to gender, sexuality and citizenship. In that article, I argue that conservative Christian groups, such as the Lawyers Christian Fellowship and Jamaica Coalition for a Healthy Society, not only seek to disclaim liberal notions of sexual citizenship, but actively aim to publicly strengthen an exclusionary notion of the concept that is ideologically grounded in hegemonic heterosexuality. In seeking to reinforce a status quo that privileges certain conservative views of culture and 'Judeo-Christian' respectability, values and morality such groups may be seen, by those holding opposing ideological viewpoints, as potentially troublesome to the realisation of meaningful socio-cultural progressive change. Similarly, the resurgent and at times disruptive influence of religion in the public sphere is noted, for example, by the 2016 Conference Organising Team for the British Sociological Association Sociology of Religion Study Group Annual Conference, who state in their Welcome remarks that,

> The last twenty years has seen a crisis of trust in major public institutions, from politics and media, to banking, to health, social care and education. Alongside this crisis has been a renewed visibility of religion in society, with religions often offering critical but contentious voices, as well as being key but contested contributors to political activism and welfare service delivery. (Winter, Stacey, Jeremiah and Mitchell, 2016: 1)

The varied forms of engagements by religious players are thus not simply confined to what are generally considered the more theocratic societies, but may also arise in places that are 'now becoming more secular, more religious and more plural all at once' (Winter, Stacey, Jeremiah and Mitchell 2016: 1). One may indeed argue that this latter description, indicative of complex shifts that resist reduction to a simplistic secular-religious binary axis, also best characterises the socio-religious landscape of some Anglophone Caribbean societies today. In this special issue, Anna Kasafi Perkins makes a similar observation when she speaks of the 'shifting religious landscape,' which is marked by, as in the case of Jamaica, an 'overall decline among the traditional Christian denominations and the rise of the Evangelicals'. Moreover, this shifting landscape is also noticeably more plural, on the one hand, and on the other, more secular. This, as Perkins asserts, is demonstrably

the case, as a recent Population Census in that country reports increases in affiliation with locally smaller non-Christian religious groups such as Islam, Hinduism and Judaism, as well as with the number of people identifying as having no religious or denominational affiliation. The recent amplification on social media of unmistakably secular and atheist locally based groups is also, as this author suggests, testimony to the volatility of Jamaica's religious landscape.

Initially the call for papers thus sought to garner articles that offered Caribbean-specific insight around some of the key issues in the study of religions. Topics included: new religious movements and the recent upsurge of religious fundamentalism; representation and the commoditisation of religions; migration and the transformation of religions, identities and cultures; religions and social justice.[1] The initial range in focus illustrates not only that '[r]eligions do not exist in a vacuum' (Hinnells 2005: 2), but also their pervasiveness and interconnectedness with other aspects and spheres of social life.

The emphasis now placed on 'Negotiating Religions and Cultural Identities in Caribbean Societies' reflects the overarching themes that eventually emerged from the various submissions. This expansion of the primary thematic focus created an opportunity to broaden the dialogue in order to incorporate articles that do not address religions, but nonetheless develop on and interrogate some of the themes and issues also invoked and examined by those authors who do position religion as a focal point, thus generating an interesting comparison of the ways in which the authors engage with the various themes and issues from their respective analytical viewpoints.

Specifically, matters relating to belongingness, cultural representations and otherness, as well as the negotiation of individual and collective identities, are in various ways centred and/or called into question by the contributors to this special issue. Such matters, though by no means new to Caribbean scholarship and interrogations, take on new significance within the current local and global socio-political context, in which we are witnessing renewed attention to what some regard as a widespread rise of public religion (see

[1] (see Hinnells (2005) for a summary of key issues and approaches to the study of religions).

Cassanova 2008), or at least the dominance of certain manifestations of religion in the public arena. This includes the increasing visibility of religious fundamentalism and the mobilisation of church folks into special interest groups. Additionally, issues of belongingness and citizenship, the movements, reconfiguration and in some cases displacement of peoples remain center stage. This is accompanied by palpable anxieties over whose bodies can be included, even if only temporarily, in the body of the nation. Alternatively – and perhaps more typically – whose bodies, to borrow from Jacqui M. Alexander, will be considered a threat within the established citizenship machinery?

Regionally, we see the significance of these issues in on-going debates about the inadequate, if not inhumane, reception and handling of some Caribbean nationals crossing national borders within the CARICOM Caribbean community.[2] Internationally, the noticeable rise of the political right looms large in many contexts. Matt O'Brien, in a recent article on 'The stunning truth that explains the rise of the far-right in Britain and elsewhere,' reminds us that,

> […]there's been a baseline of right-wing populism the past 25 years as immigration has reshaped countries' identities and deindustrialisation has reshaped their economies. And that it's spiked as economic growth has flatlined since 2008. The result is right-wing populist parties are, if not getting closer to power, at least setting the terms of the debate in the U.S., U.K., France, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Slovakia, and Croatia, not to mention actually winning it in Hungary and Poland. (*The Washington Post*, May 31, 2016).

In short, it appears that 'Right-wing populists are trying to make their country great again […]', and in so doing, they exploit and perhaps even legitimise preexisting racial and cultural tensions (O'Brien, *The Washington Post*, May 31, 2016), whilst reasserting the nation-state as the 'primary vehicle of political life' (Friedman, George, *Huffington Post*, June 03, 2016).

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[2](see: *Kaieteur News*, September 13, 2016; *Jamaica Gleaner*, April 8, 2011 and March 8, 2013; Kimberley Hibbert, *Jamaica Observer*, September 04, 2016).

The articles in this special issue all highlight how various forms of 'economic, political and cultural globalisation' have long impacted on developments within the Caribbean region. This impact is noticeable in the various patterns of migration and re-entry into the region, as Aude Lanthier demonstrates, as well as in the introduction of a range of religious communities, which, as advanced in the respective articles by Haajima Degia and Sinah Theres Kloß, has intimately informed some Caribbean people's nuanced construction and negotiation of individual and collective identities, and their interaction with others. Whilst these authors focus on the richness that may emerge out of the movements of peoples and ideas, Ana Kasafi Perkins speaks about the possibility of disruption that may arise from certain religious tendencies in the region.

Summary of Articles

In her article, entitled 'More than Words: Evangelicals, the Rhetoric of Battle and the Fight over Gay Rights in the Caribbean, Kasafi Perkins explicitly addresses, as Marla Fredrick describes it, 'the globalisation of religion', specifically focusing on the expansion, if not incursion, of a right-wing, US Evangelical form of Christianity in the Anglophone Caribbean, which seeks to shape public discourse on sexuality and sexual rights in the region. In particular, she highlights the 'North/South' relations and arrangements of power that shape the conservative Christian ideologies on sexuality and gender, through an analysis of media and other documents produced by key individuals and groups operating both within the Anglophone Caribbean and the US. Moreover, Kasafi Perkins highlights how these ideological viewpoints get transmitted and framed through the language of battle/warfare. Though most of the material for analysis is drawn from Jamaica and Belize, the article sheds light on the pertinent, yet relatively under-scrutinised matter of conservative religious mobilisation and deployment of scriptures in the region for the purpose of safeguarding the largely moralistic, heteropatriarchal status-quo.

Similar to Kasafi Perkins, the other five contributors to this special issue ground their analyses in complex situations marked by the movements of people and ideas, a negotiation of identities and a vying for cultural dominance and/or the power to shape and be equally represented in the public sphere. All, except Aude Lanthier, examine how these issues are mediated through and in connection to spirituality and other forms of religious expressions.

Haajima Degia in her article brings into focus the Gujarati-Muslim in Barbados, an ethno-religious minority group that has lacked any documented account or analysis of its history until now, despite their significant contribution to national development and influence on the physical and symbolic landscape of Barbados. Through the use of open-ended interviews and oral history narratives, Degia discusses the themes of cultural identities, migration and change and the negotiation of identities and processes of assimilation. In discussing these themes, she calls into question the 'the trope of groupism,' by that she means the 'perception that all groups who share some characteristics have a fixed cultural essence.' Moreover, this author eschews the traditional conceptualisation of diaspora, which privileges the nation-state as its unit of analysis, but also represents diasporic and transnational communities as entities that gain stability over time. At the core of this article, therefore, is a critical examination of 'cultural and historical technicalities of belonging,' resulting in a necessary unpacking of certain taken-for-granted markers of identity constructions. On the one hand, is a questioning of 'Indianness,' both in the ways the homeland is perceived as well as the performance and popular imaginary of 'Indianness'; and on the other hand, of 'Caribbeaness' and more specifically, the popular perception of being Bajan.

In analysing issues of belonging and identity negotiations and constructions, Degia, much like Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis (1989) amongst others in more recent times, emphasises the complex roles of women in the perpetuation and reification of the Gujarati-Muslim community in Barbados, particularly highlighting women's roles as literal as well as symbolic producers of both ethnic culture and markers of ethnic boundary. In addition, Degia also demonstrates how space, including religious spaces, get gendered or 'configured through the boundaries of gender constructions.' Comparable to gender, religion also plays an important function in the consolidation and reification of ethnic, racial and national identity and may also be a decisive marker of boundaries, for identifying both 'insiders' and 'outsiders' to the community as well as acting as a symbol for solidarity and shared identity.

In 'Manifesting Kali's Power: Processes of Sanskritisation in Guyanese Hinduism and the Revitalisation of "the Madras Tradition,"' Sinah Theres Kloß draws attention to the important connections between political developments, migration and the revitalisation of religious practices, which inform local notions and performances of ethnicity as well as processes of othering. Similar to Degia, Kloß, analyses the potency of religion as a

tool for both uniting and dividing people within and across communities, thus illustrating the complexities and contradictions around notions such as belonging. Moreover, she seeks to unpack the effects of the process of othering on identity constructions and renegotiations, noting, for instance, that othering both requires similarities and differences. Consequently, it may serve to mark the status of one's group against others or to unify '[…] a group by defining inner group similarities and by emphasising social, cultural, and historical commonalities. On the other hand, othering processes stress differences among people and construct one group as different, and "other", in relation to another.'

Of course, the emphasis on difference is rarely neutral or apolitical. It is therefore unsurprising that Kloß's ethnographic study reveals the ways in which social constructs such as ethnicity, socio-economic class and religion intimately intersect to stigmatise and mark some bodies and practices as socially and culturally inferior to others. For Kali worshippers in Guyana, the engagement in certain practices, which are largely frowned upon in the wider society, may result in them being constructed as abject 'outsiders within.' Even as they seek to further establish and legitimise their practices and beliefs amongst fellow Hindus and within the heterogenous religious landscape of Guyana, these believers (who in many other ways share commonalities with other members of their community) are, to borrow from Julia Kristeva ([1941] 1982), assigned an otherness that is loathed, and imagined as 'backward,' 'perverse' and possibly 'dangerous'.

However, Kloß argues that the Sanatan, which has gained cultural respectability and legitimacy, and the Madras, the Kali worshippers, 'serve as constitutive others within the Hindu group itself,' that is, they are constructed in relation and opposition to each other. Likewise, within the wider society, at present, 'Christian and Muslim groups form the constitutive others for Hindu groups.' Here lies the irony with abjection, that is, the processes of disavowal, rejection and, even, at times, ejection of the abject object is never fully completed; the abject remains, fuelling the binary of the 'I/Other.

In a similar vein to Degia and Kloß, Lana S. Evans' commentary addresses the issue of identity constructions and representations, interrogating a 'we' versus 'us' dichotomy that is informed by notions of the 'sacred' and 'secular'. As such, like Degia, Evans also questions the politics of space and identity within the cultural landscape of Barbados; however, she

examines these issues in relations to Christianity and specifically Christians' active participation in the national festival of Crop Over, particularly on Kadooment Day. Her exploratory study on the WalkHoly Kadooment Band highlights the nuanced ways in which national and cultural spaces get used as avenues to express, contest and renegotiate identity constructs. Specifically, Evans highlights how the tensions around WalkHoly's participation in the Kadooment Day celebrations speak to longstanding struggles over Barbadian and more broadly Caribbean identities especially as pertains to issues of respectability, morality and representations. Who can legitimately claim certain spaces and which spaces are worth claiming and for what purpose? Especially those spaces in which 'cultural identity' and 'pride' are being celebrated, performed and ultimately always re-imagined to varying degrees. This author therefore, calls our attention to the centrality of space, both literal and figuratively, in the process of being and becoming, noting that, 'The power to occupy a space is the power to create an identity, and this creation of identity is precisely what WalkHoly is engaged in'.

Whilst the respective contributions by Perkins, Degia, Kloß and Evans focus on the influence of religious beliefs, practices and institutions on various aspects of social life, the article by Mia Jules and Donna-Maria Maynard examines the positive effects of Black Caribbean youth's spirituality. Comparable to Perkins, these authors also emphasise both the far-reaching impact of Christianity, as well as the changing religious landscape within the region. However, they also argue that, 'Regardless of one's religious affiliation, Caribbean people also embrace the concept of spirituality […].' This they define as a pyschological construct that is interrelated with religion and may be used interchangeably with 'religiousness' and 'religiosity,' both complex concepts that are also difficult to define. Nevertheless, through an exploratory quantitative study consisting of two hundred and fifty (250) undergraduate students, Jules and Maynard concluded that spirituality had positive effects on the social lives of youth or emerging adults.

As is the case with any good exploratory study, this one provokes a number of pertinent questions. For example, do newly adopted notions of spirituality also have the potential to cause conflicts between youth and their family or peers, thus also having a negative influence on their social lives? Additionally, what are the factors informing these emerging adults' notions of spirituality? Indeed, the authors point out that some respondents may in

fact have interpreted the questions from a religious standpoint, and, arguably, one that was not in line with the view of marijuana as 'herb' versus 'drugs'.

The final article in this special issue shifts the gaze from religion and the Anglophone Caribbean to examine a group of Martinicans' experience of return migration from metropolitan France. In this piece, Aude Lanthier not only critically examines the reasons influencing return migration, or more specifically, circular migration between mainland France and the islands, but she also provides a nuanced analysis of the construction of self and the processes of othering, highlighting the intersection between space, time and lived experiences in determining these processes, or more specifically marking whose bodies are read as insiders, outsiders or outsiders within and represented as such. Lanthier argues that returnees from the mainland are often situated 'as a new type of "stranger" or, more exactly, as a cultural "other".' Furthermore, she astutely notes that this aspect of distinctiveness adds yet another component to the existing ways of examining issues of social inequalities within 'postcolonial' contexts, as well as the local tensions between a people and the difficulties of readjusting within these societies upon return. These are tensions and readjustment difficulties that are informed by the experiences of migration, but also the change in and recognition of new ideological viewpoints on such things as nationhood, culture, self-identification and development. Of course, Lanthier, as in George Simmel's earlier description of this phenomenon, paints a picture of persons who encapsulate contradictory qualities of both nearness and remoteness. However, unlike Simmel, Lanthier's 'stranger' is uniquely characterised by the experience of circular migration, he/she belonged at one point to the space, wandered, returned and may or may not still be around tomorrow.

The articles and one commentary in this special issue engage with topics that are, to date, under-researched within the region, but nevertheless address critical and at times contentious subject areas, including the power of religion as a force for both construction and disruption within the public sphere, as well as the tensions that arise around the contested understandings of religion and its impact on the renegotiation of identities and thinking about belongingness. Furthermore, these exploratory studies make a common appeal for further academic engagement, that will ideally be, as emphasised by Lanthier, multidisciplinary and cross-cultural in scope and content. Each article makes a worthy contribution to ongoing or new dialogue in the respective areas of analysis.

There is doubtless room for further critical and creative engagements in these areas. For example, much like my own work in this area that intersects the sociology of religion and Caribbean sexual citizenship (see Lazarus 2015), Kasafi Perkins traces and describes the rise and activisms of conservative Christian civil society groups in countries such as Jamaica and elsewhere in the region. Whilst the author cogently discusses the strategic framing of the groups' messages and the international support they receive, an exploration of the broader cultural resonances of these frames and ideologies within Caribbean societies would be a fruitful avenue of further enquiry. That is, why do these movements and messages garner such support within our public spheres? How do they speak to already existing deep-seated anxieties about sexuality and sexual relations as well as often taken-for-granted gender ideologies within our societies, which as Barriteau (2016) reminds us, derive from relations of power and are thus the most resistant to change?

Likewise, the respective articles by Degia and Kloß as well as the commentary by Evans shore up the importance of religion in individual as well as collective identity renegotiations and representations. Within this special issue, these authors best capture the intersection between religion and the politics of belonging and respectability in the region, as well as the tensions that exist within and between faiths and across the sacred and secular divide. This raises an array of intriguing further questions about the desirability and continuing roles, if any, of religion in shaping Caribbean identities, representations and future socio-cultural, including gender and sexual, developments. Similarly, Jules and Maynard's contribution sows the seed for repeat studies that will add a longitudinal perspective to the synchronic snapshot offered here, perhaps offering some diachronic and quantitative context for the further qualitative explorations suggested above. Finally, we might hope that Lanthier's study will spur similar close qualitative enquiries of returnee and circular migratory populations throughout the region, thus continuing to lay bare and place in comparative perspective the crucial role of ever-increasing dynamic movement in the processes of contemporary identity formation explored throughout this issue.

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More than Words: Evangelicals, the Rhetoric of Battle and the Fight over Gay Rights in the Caribbean

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Abstract

Little attention has been given to the way local and transnational religious and civil society groups are actively involved in shaping the socio-political space in the Anglophone Caribbean. This discussion attempts to contribute to that much needed exploration using the idea of a battle engaged, which is deployed by local and U.S. churches and church-related groups in describing the struggle with their opponents. It explores examples of the public engagement by these opposing factions on the issue of homosexuality and LGBT rights using the examples of predominantly Jamaica and Belize. It tentatively approaches the question of the impact of such a battle on the discourse in the public square. Public campaigns through media appearances, conferences, marches, public meetings, legal opinions and challenges, public lectures featuring US-based Evangelical speakers, advertorials, pamphlets, billboards, and letters to the paper are artefacts indicating the fight in the public domain. Therefore, these along with census data, newspaper reports and advertisements, as well as literature from the various groups will be analysed in the discussion. On reflection it is clear that real life damage can be done to the lives of those persons even with the best of intentions, as has been demonstrated in the examples drawn from Belize and Jamaica. This is referred to as the 'dark side of virtue' and should not be ignored by either side (Kennedy in Blake and Daley 2013, p. 468). Some of those affected may not even be directly the focus of the campaign, as in the case of lesbians in the Caribbean.

Key Words: Evangelical, Religious Right, LGBT, transnational religion, Jamaica, homosexuality.

In a 2013 article in The Atlantic, Corrales and Combs describe a battle afoot in the Caribbean. The battle is based on the continued contestation around homosexuality, evident in buggery laws, widespread stigma, discrimination, harassment and various acts of violence (including murder) directed at homosexuals. The authors highlighted an incident earlier that year where two gay students at a university in Jamaica were publicly beaten by security guards to the amusement of cheering spectators as an example of such contestation and the live presence of homophobia in the region. In addition, openly homophobic political leaders, performing artistes and tourism officials resistant to gay tourists are also part of the context. Such incidents have led to the rise of local human rights groups like Jamaicans for Justice (JFJ), Jamaica Forum for Lesbians, All-Sexuals and Gays (J-FLAG) and United Belize Advocacy Movement (UNIBAM), who loudly reject the mistreatment of sexual minorities, supporting the repeal of buggery laws, which are currently on the books in eleven Caribbean countries, and call for 'gay rights'. Individual gay activists like Jamaica's Maurice Tomlinson and Belize's Caleb Orozco have put their lives on the line in defense of their rights (Scott, *The New York Times*, May 22, 2015). These individuals and local human rights advocacy groups are supported by an international network of human rights advocacy organisations (Blake and Dayle, 2013). In Belize, for example, the Human Dignity Trust, as part of their international agenda, as well as the Commonwealth Lawyers Association and the International Commission of Jurists offer legal and other support to UNIBAM.

These individuals and the pro-LGBT groups that support them face direct opposition by local Christian groups, who, interestingly, often frame the interaction in the language of battle/warfare. Executive director of the Church of God in Jamaica Pastor Lenworth Anglin has declared, as reported in Nedburn Thaffe's article 'Church Won't Bow to Gays…' that, 'There are some of us like, Peter [Garth, vice president of the Jamaica Association of Evangelicals,] and John, who will confront them (gay rights activist), whomever they represent. There are some of us in the evangelistic thrust ... in this country who are prepared to die for the truth' (italics added, *Gleaner*, June 4, 2013). Anglin's statement met with loud cheers and applause at the crusade at which it was delivered.

In turn, this battle language echoes that of 'powerful, US-based Christian conservative groups' and individuals who offer support to local Christian groups. Scott Lively of Abiding Truth Ministries provides a telling example:

> There is a war that is going on in the world. There is a war that is waging across the entire face of the globe. It's been waging in the United States for decades and it's been waging in Europe for decades. It's a war between Christians and Homosexuals. (Human Rights Campaign ND, p. 4)

The 'whomever they represent' spoken of by Anglin and the 'Homosexuals' challenged by Lively include 'a network of pro-LGBT transnational actors' (Corrales and Combs, *The Atlantic*, June 27, 2013), who directly oppose the work of such conservative Christian groups. These pro-rights groups like Human Rights Campaign use their own brand of strong language, often describing the work of their opponents as 'the export of hate' and 'venomous rhetoric, outrageous theories and discredited science' (ND, p. 2). The Southern Poverty Law Center, a US-based non-profit organisation, which 'combats hate, intolerance and discrimination through education and litigation' labels several of these 'hard-line, religious right' groups as 'hate groups' that have found themselves on the losing side of a battle in their own country and so have taken the battle international with Belize being a new battle ground (Southern Poverty Law Centre 2013, p. 5). A battle of more than words is engaged as these exchanges have implications for life and living in the Caribbean today.

Little attention has been given to the way local and transnational religious and civil society groups are actively involved in shaping the socio-political space in the Anglophone Caribbean region (See Southern Poverty Law Center, 2013). This discussion attempts to contribute to that much needed exploration using the idea of a battle engaged, which is deployed by local and U.S. churches and church-related groups in describing the struggle with their opponents. It explores examples of the public engagement by these opposing factions on the issue of homosexuality and LGBT rights using the examples of Jamaica and Belize. It tentatively approaches the question of the impact of such a battle on the discourse in the public square.

US Culture Wars

The presence of these battling international groups in the region can be described as an incursion. This incursion is the latest in America's export of its culture and perhaps, most importantly, its culture wars, which speaks to the polarisation of America over key moral matters as abortion and homosexuality (Pew Research Centre, 2006). Unsurprisingly perhaps, the religio-cultural sphere is the incursion point for these culture wars in the Caribbean region. Indeed, in the Anglophone Caribbean, religion, especially Christianity, which is often dominant, provides important explanations for daily life and the life after (Lazarus, 2012). The Church also has much to say on matters of sex and sexuality, especially homosexuality against which it has 'the single clearest stance – regarding it as "unnatural", "ungodly", and "impure"' (Chadee Derek, Chezelle Joseph, Claire Peters, Vandana Siew Sankar, Nisha Nair and Jannell Philip, 2013, p. 2). The importance of Christianity can be seen in the continued religious affiliation of the general Caribbean population, but with increasing membership among the Evangelical/Fundamentalist/Pentecostal groups, as demonstrated, for example, in the most recent Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaican Censuses. These conservative Christian groups are particularly powerful and enjoy considerable attention in the public square (Lazarus, 2012).

Such Christian groups, though somewhat 'indigenised', have strong organisational, financial and human resources ties with similar churches in North America (Miller, 2014; Dawes, 2014; Southern Poverty Law Centre, 2013). The shift in Christian affiliation is perhaps reflective of the increased presence and influence of the North American church groups. At the same time, given that the expressed moral mandate of these Churches is directed at defending religious freedom from attack, especially the freedom to maintain laws purported to preserve traditional ways of family and family life, the public sphere is the site of a battle engaged (See also Campbell, 2016).

Methodology

The 'battle' is at play is the public domain and uses the tools of social communication on a wide scale. Public campaigns through media appearances, conferences, marches, public meetings, legal opinions and challenges, public lectures featuring US-based Evangelical speakers, advertorials, pamphlets, billboards, and letters to the paper are artefacts

indicating the fight in the public domain. Therefore, census data, newspaper reports and advertisements, as well as literature from the various groups will be analysed in the discussion. The terms 'Evangelical', 'fundamentalist', 'Pentecostal', and 'conservative' will be used cautiously but interchangeably to identify the religious phenomenon being examined. This grouping together of what are arguably distinct religious perspectives takes account of the similarity of doctrine and practice which binds them together, especially their belief in the global threat to the family and religious freedom which homosexuality represents. The similarity of values, attitudes, practices and beliefs among them is captured in the Trinidad and Tobago Census designation of 'Evangelical/Full Gospel/Pentecostal', as detailed below. Roper (1991) examines Evangelical and Pentecostalism together, highlighting their 'moralising theology'. In addition, the term 'Religious Right' will also be used for the groups coming from the USA.

Religious affiliation is measured purely by membership in a church community or allegiance as declared on the population census. Lazarus (2012) opines that the more conservative Christian groups are more visible in the public debates about sexuality and reproductive practices not because they are necessarily representative of the majority, but because their voices are the loudest and they are given more frequent media coverage. Unlike, Lazarus, however, this discussion finds significance in the increased numbers in such groups, which indicates increased numbers holding the conservative views expressed loudly in the public domain. Indeed, these groups, time and again, argue that they have the numbers to challenge any attempt to change the buggery laws, as discussed below.

The battle at play in the two countries Jamaica and Belize will be the focus of the discussion. Jamaica is perceived by some as an especially homophobic country. It is also said to be highly religious owing to the oft-repeated statistic of having the most churches per square mile than any other country. There are indications that the two may be linked (See Boxill, 2011). Jamaica is therefore the major focus of the discussion, especially the public campaign of the Jamaica Evangelistic Association (JAE) and Jamaica Coalition for a Healthy Society (JCHS). The actions of advocates like Maurice Tomlinson, who has brought cases against both the Jamaican and Belizean states to the Caribbean Court of Justice as well as against the Jamaican State in the Supreme Court, and others will be foregrounded. Of course, there is an

element of convenience in that focus as well since the author is Jamaican and more familiar with that context.

Some research has been done on the Belizean experience, especially the actions of the Belize Action and the support given to it by US based groups (Southern Poverty Law, 2013; Heartland Alliance, 2013). Belize is particularly interesting as it was the first Caribbean country to have a legal challenge made against the buggery laws (Orozco v Attorney General of Belize, 2010). A win by Orozco would set a precedent for the entire region (Scott, *The New York Times*, May 22, 2015); after six years, the judgment is still pending, however. Orozco is supported by a coalition including the Right's Advocacy Project of the Faculty of Law at the University of the West Indies (U-RAP) and three international non-governmental organisations – the International Commission of Jurists, the Commonwealth Lawyers Association and the Human Dignity Trust. Examples from the Bahamas are referenced from time to time to add texture to the discussion since the argument is made that the Bahamas was reasonably gay tolerant until the entrance of Christian Right groups from the US (Gaskins, 2013). In the Bahamas today, conservative, evangelical fundamentalist Christianity is the mainstream and the decriminalisation of same sex intimacy has not led to changes in popular opinion or the anti-gay stance of religious leaders.

Religion and other Transnational Actors in the Caribbean

This exploration is framed in terms of the transnational influence of religion and other civil society actors. The influence of transnational religion is evident where globalisation facilitates the growth of networks of religious actors who, 'feeding off each other's ideas and perhaps aiding each other with funds, form bodies whose main priority is the well-being and advance of their transnational religious community' (Haynes, 2001, p. 144). Fredrick (2013), in discussing the expansion of US religion in the Caribbean, describes this as 'the globalisation of religion', with fluid boundaries existing between religious communities globally. The development of transnational religious communities, with their peculiar global configuration, is greatly enhanced by ease of interpersonal and inter-group communications. This helped them spread their message and to link up with like-minded groups across state boundaries, as Diane Austin-Broos (1997) maintains in her discussions of Pentecostalism in Jamaica. Attention to such transnational religious players is important as they can be shown to impact discourse in the public square

and, ultimately, even actions of the State (Human Rights Committee ND). Of course, the situation of transnational civil society and human rights groups is similar (Haynes, 2001).

In examining the phenomenon of transnational religious and other actors and their interaction with local players, it is important to locate these in relation to knowledge of colonial history and the region's 'current, somewhat marginal position in a larger global ecumene celebrating liberal democracy and free-enterprise capitalism' (Murray 2009, p. 147). The Caribbean region has not overcome its marginal position within the international community and is subject to larger historical and globalised movements, an example of which is the current battle. Murray (2009) argues that the hegemonic discourses against homosexuality in the Caribbean region were also produced by colonialism, arguably, a form of first wave globalisation and continues to be 'reproduced *and challenged* through the turbulent, uneven processes of economic, political, and cultural globalisation over the past twenty years' (p. 148). The process of globalisation today is ambiguous and provides the basis for both reproducing and reinforcing as well as challenging such discourse within the public sphere, as this discussion indicates. Similarly, Caribbean theorist M. Jacqui Alexander (2005: p. 206) locates the current discourse on homosexuality within the context of a 'heterosexualisation of morality' having its roots in an ancient Christian mandate. Interestingly, Alexander argues that this heterosexualisation has traversed the Caribbean region through multiple interrelated routes: 'as a set of legal codes that reanchor the perimeters of heterosexuality, and interests that are organised through the globalisation of the Christian Right' (p. 206). In so arguing, she recognises the seminal role of religion in the current state of affairs. She charges that the Christian Right, in mobilising globally, does so to 'advance an antihuman agenda, mistakenly attributing its authority of God' (p. 280). For Alexander, the current version of the internationalisation of religious faith, which had its incarnation in a much earlier colonial time, continues to manifest in the contemporary Caribbean. In similar fashion, Austin-Broos (1997) maintains that Pentecostalism in Jamaica is not simply the legacy of slavery's immediate aftermath. Austin-Broos argues that, while being extensively informed by this legacy, 'its orientations and practices, including its politics of moral orders, have been reproduced and transformed by its American intersection' (p. 244).

The Shifting Religious Landscape

Duke, Johnson and Duke (1995) describe the face of religion as having changed dramatically in some areas of the world between 1900 and 1995; although they describe the change in the Caribbean to be moderate in comparison to other parts of the world. Overall, they make three generalisations about religious change in the world in the 20th century, which formed the backdrop for the changes in the Caribbean: a) atheism, agnosticism and nonreligious groups all experienced phenomenal growth; b) Christianity spread in many countries, especially Africa, while declining in others like those in Europe; c) a strong fundamentalist revival occurred, including strong Christian evangelical and Muslim fundamentalist movements. Groups such as Mormons, Christian Scientists, and Jehovah's Witnesses also showed strong growth. Reasons for the shift, which are both personal and spiritual, reflect personal experience and the dynamism of the religious groups which people enter and exit.

The current state of religious affiliation in Trinidad and Tobago, Belize, and Jamaica, based on the most recent population censuses is captured in Table 1 below. Although Trinidad and Tobago is not a primary focus of this paper, it is nonetheless being included as it provides a glimpse into the shifting religious landscape of another multi-religious English-speaking Caribbean nation-state and serves as an interesting comparison between Belize and Jamaica. While showing starkly similar religious proportions and trends in religious affiliation, each census demonstrates peculiar idiosyncrasies related to the local context. For example, Shouter Baptist is a key group in Trinidad and Tobago, while Revivalists – a similar Afro-Caribbean religion – is counted only in Jamaica. Belize has neither group, although for the first time, in 2010, Rastafarians, a group originating in Jamaica, were counted. Such Afro-Caribbean religions may well be captured in Belize's 'other' category. Trinidad and Tobago has the least number of categories (13), while Jamaica has the most (24). Jamaica for the first time, in 2011, counted Revivalists. Jamaica separates Pentecostals and Evangelicals while Trinidad and Tobago puts Pentecostal/Evangelical/Full Gospel together. The intuition concerning the affinity among these groups is recognised in this paper. The strong revival of fundamentalists, including Evangelicals, recognised by Duke, Johnson and Duke (1995) is apparent in the Caribbean (see Table 1 below).

Table showing Religious Affiliation in Jamaica (2011), Belize (2010) and Trinidad and Tobago (2011)

Affiliation	Belize	Jamaica	Trinidad and Tobago
Anglican	4.7	2.79	5.7
Baptist	3.5	6.73	1.2
Baptist – Spiritual Shouter			5.7
Brethren		0.88	
Church of God in Jamaica		4.83	
Church of God of Prophecy		4.52	
New Testament Church of God		7.16	
Other Church of God		9.20	
Jehovah's Witness	1.7	1.9	1.5
Mennonite	3.7		
Methodist	2.9	1.62	0.7
Moravian		0.68	0.3
Mormon	0.4		
Nazarene	2.8		
Orisha			0.9
Pentecostal/ Pentecostal/Evangelical/Full Gospel*	8.4	11	12.0*
Presbyterian/Congregationalist			2.5
Rastafarian	0.2	1.08	
Revivalist		1.35	
Roman Catholic	40.1	2.16	21.6
Salvation Army	0.1		
Seventh Day Adventist	5.4	12.1	4.1
United Church		2.06	
Baha'i	0.1	0.01	
Buddhism	0.3		
Hinduism	0.2	0.07	18.2
Islam	0.2	0.06	5
Judaism		0.02	
Other Religion/Denomination	9.0	6.30	7.5
No Religion/Denomination	15.5	21.32	2.2
Not Reported	0.6	2.25	11.1

Sources: 2001 Census of Population and Housing – Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago 2011 Population and Housing Census, Belize Population and Housing Census Country Report 2010

Jamaica

Jamaica is traditionally a Protestant country. The report of the Jamaica 2001 Census noted an overall decline among the traditional Christian denominations and the rise of the Evangelicals. The 2011 data show that this trend continued: the largest single group was the Seventh Day Adventists (12% of the population or 322,228 persons); this was followed by the Pentecostals with 295,195 persons (11 %), the Other Church of God (246,638 or 9 %), the New Testament Church of God (192,086 or 7 %). The Baptists were 180,640 strong or approximately 7 %. These were the top five denominations. Overall, the so-called Evangelical churches account for 20 % of the population. A similar number indicate that they belong to 'no religion/denomination'. The more than 160,000 persons reported 'other'.

These numbers, as seen in Table 1 above, represent decline for the traditional denominations; the declines are largest for Anglicans (20%), Roman Catholics and United Church (14%), Methodists and Moravians (13%). The Baptists, who have remained the largest traditional denomination, experienced a decline of 5%. Conversely, increases were seen for the small non-Christian religious groups: Islam was 1,513 compared with 1,024 in 2001; Hinduism and Judaism increased from 1,453 to 1,836 and 357 to 506 respectively.

Trinidad and Tobago

A similar trend of growth among evangelicals is seen in the twin island republic of Trinidad and Tobago – a more religiously plural nation with strong membership in Hinduism and Roman Catholicism. The Trinidad and Tobago 2011 Census showed that Roman Catholicism continued to be the largest religious denomination with 285,671 adherents representing a decline from 289,711 in 2000, a decrease of 1.4%. Other religious groups that experienced decreases in their membership in 2011 were Hinduism (4.3% decline), Anglican, Presbyterian/Congregational (decline of 10.2 per cent), and Methodist (decline of 16.8%).

The religious groups that grew were: Islam (1.6%), Baptist (13.8%), Jehovah's Witness (8.4%), and Seventh Day Adventists (22.7%). Pentecostal/ Evangelical/Full Gospel grew from 76,327 in 2000 to 159,033 in 2011 (an increase of 108.4%). Of those not religiously affiliated - 146,798 persons

did not state their religion and 28,842 persons declared no religion, a total of 175,640 unaffiliated persons (a 33.5% increase).

Belize

Belize also continues to be predominantly Roman Catholic, with that denomination accounting for 40.1% (129,456) of the population in 2010, compared to 49% in 2000. Owing to overall growth in the population, despite the decline in population share, this represents a 5.2 % growth in the number of Roman Catholics since Census 2000. Among Christian denominations, however, Roman Catholicism had the second smallest gain in number of members. Membership in the Salvation Army is on the decline (a reduction of 2.2 %), and the Methodist Church, while growing by 7.5 % from 8,801 in 2000 to 9,457 in 2010, also saw its share of the population declining. Jehovah's Witnesses grew by 48.9 %, from 3,618 members in 2000 to 5,386 at Census 2010, representing the largest growth in membership among Christian denominations. This is followed by the Pentecostal denomination which grew by 47.8 % since 2000, moving from 18,348 to 27,121 members.

Membership in some groups more than doubled: Islam grew 133.8 %, increasing from 266 to 622 in 2010. Similarly, persons not affiliated with any religion grew from 23,304 in 2000 to 49,975 in 2010. Among all categories, they accounted for the second largest share of the population, increasing from 9.4 % to 15.5 %

Accounting for the Shifts

This numerical shift in religious affiliation has been endlessly analysed, especially in the Jamaican media. Peter Espeut, a Roman Catholic deacon and sociologist, argues 'Statistics on religious affiliation in Jamaica [and, by implication, the rest of the Caribbean] are snapshots of the contemporary status in the battle for hearts and minds, but not just in terms of religious beliefs' (*The Gleaner*, October 26, 2012). The battle for the hearts and minds of the people Espeut is concerned about is not related to the particular doctrinal matters held dear. Rather, he is particularly concerned with the group of persons who are now not affiliated to any church as well as the decrease in the membership of the traditional churches. As seen in Table 1,

in the case of Jamaica, in particular, membership in traditional churches is now smaller than the so-called 'unchurched'.

For Espeut, both these shifts represent rejection – rejection of religion generally and rejection of traditional forms of Christianity, specifically. Indeed, Caribbean atheism is increasingly visible, for example, in the recent emergence of groups such as Caribbean Freethinkers, Yardie Skeptics, Caribbean Secular Alliance, and Spiceislandatheists – all with very strong online presence. There are indications that membership in such secular/atheist organisations may include many LGBT persons, who cannot find a comfortable place in the Church which 'embraces the person but rejects his/her sexual expression' (Cowell, 2001, p. 37). Indeed, some of the issues featured on these sites deal directly with LGBT matters. At the same time, the rejection of traditional Christianity represented by the demographic shifts to Evangelicalism says much and requires exploration, perhaps beginning with the nature of Evangelicalism. Evangelicals as reported by Nedburn Thaffe in 'We Have the Numbers…' interpret this numerical trend as indications of their power to influence social change, as Wayne West, convenor for Jamaica Coalition for a Healthy Society (JCHS), declared: '"[T]he Church has numbers" and could successfully argue against any repeal of the buggery law, so long as it pitches its argument correctly' (*The Gleaner*, June 6 2013). The way of 'pitching the argument' is both in content and form, especially the use of social communication to engage loudly in the public square. As recently as April 2016, West and others convened a public lecture entitled, 'Keep us free from evil powers: How international agencies are sexualising our children' at a church in St Andrew, Jamaica, which resulted, as reported by Nadine Wilson-Harris, in hostile responses to representatives of the leading sexual and reproductive health organisations he had accused of trying to covertly sexualise Jamaica's children in cahoots with their international allies (*Sunday Gleaner*, April 24, 2016.). In the end, West was forced to step in to protect the representative of the National Family Planning from the crowd's hostility to her challenge that the forum had no 'objective space' and that the 'perspective of comprehensive sexuality education that was presented . . . was based on misinformation … was highly flawed' (*Sunday Gleaner*, April 24, 2016).

Evangelicalism

Evangelicalism is not a denomination or religion, but rather a movement within Christianity, encompassing all major denominations, 'though the majority stand outside the Catholic enclave and the traditional Protestant denomination' (Palmer, 2013, p. 142). Evangelicals often belong to independent, unaffiliated churches like the Assemblies of God or other conservative denominations like the Churches of God. According to Pinsky (2006),

> [E]vangelicals are people who define themselves primarily by their faith and religious commitment. They are called evangelicals because the core of their identity is linked to two verses in the New Testament, Matthew 28.19-20: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age' (RSV). While they adhere to conservative theology, and most believe that the Bible is inerrant (literally without error), it is this 'Great Commission' that unites them and defines them as evangelicals. Actively spreading their faith is essential. (p. 2)

As such, Evangelicalism has an explicit mission agenda that fits well with the contemporary transnational activity of religion. Evangelicals are further characterised by the tendency to spend a good deal of their time at church (for example, church meetings, Bible study) and tithe faithfully (giving a tenth of income to the church or other religious causes). In tracing the history of the movement in the USA, Pinsky (2006) describes it as a twentieth century revival among 'the American movement known as fundamentalism', which rejected political activity and engagement with popular culture. This changed in the 1980s largely as a result of changes in American society beginning in the 1960s. Evangelicals that emerged were '[p]olitically engaged… prefer[ring] to rely on relationships and obligations based on family, church, and shared theological views, rather than determined by secular and societal choice. Their values tend to be absolute and not relative, traditional rather than modern or even postmodern, understood as given by God rather than developed by human beings' (Pinksy, 2006, pp. 2-3).

In Jamaica, they are often members of the Jamaica Association of Evangelicals (JAE), the Associated Gospel Assemblies (AGA), the Jamaica Pentecostal Union and the Church of God in Jamaica, though not all evangelicals fall under these umbrella groups. Roper (1991) discusses ways in which Evangelicalism and Pentecostal have 'expanded the witness of the church'; these include the use of both print and electronic media. 'It has been the section of the church to most effectively use the electronic media to both good and bad effect. It has spread versions of the message and distorted the image of the ministry at one and the same time' (Roper, 1991, p. 39).

Palmer (2013) further notes that a recent development in evangelicalism worldwide has been the formation of regional bodies such as the Evangelical Association of the Caribbean 'to consolidate and promote its concerns' (p. 143). It is possible in the Caribbean space to see the formation of local churches and church-related bodies with regional and international ties (or at least strong-if-often-invisible ties to overseas groups). The local and overseas nexus, as Thaffe writes, is laid bare with the admission by Lenworth Anglin, of the Church of God in Jamaica, that there is money set aside to fight the gay agenda (*The Gleaner*, June 4, 2013). Religious personnel from across the region travel both inside and outside the region, campaigns are shared and interconnected often by the engagement of the same international speakers. This is evident in the work of Jamaican pastor Michelle Smith, ordained and living in Trinidad as a missionary in Without Walls Evangelical Outreach, a US-based ex-gay ministry; Smith, as Nadine Hunter reports in 'From lesbianism to grace…' also ministers in local Soso House of Praise (*Sunday Gleaner*, August 28, 2011). She has renounced her former lesbian lifestyle and has extended her ex-gay ministry to other Caribbean countries, including Guyana (Kissoon ND). Without Walls Evangelical Outreach was formed by American Phillip Lee, who frequents the Caribbean. This 'formerly-gay' religious activist preaches that prayers can change same-sex attractions. He promotes his political endorsements, including the Mayor of Port of Spain, Trinidad. Such ex-gay ministries, which focus on conversion therapies, have been widely discredited within the US, but form part of the export of Evangelicalism to regions like the Caribbean (Canning, 2011).

A Changed Framework for Social Engagement

The change in the framework of engagement among Evangelicals in the Caribbean appears to mirror changes in the political framework in the USA. Evangelical Churches in the region were previously the subject of critique for their rejection of involvement in social justice and the political realm. In this regard, Lewin Williams (1994) maintained that Pentecostalism supported a brand of existentialism that does not go beyond concern with the salvation of the soul, therefore, does not help the plight of the suffering and the marginalised. It encourages a kind of providencialism – a theology that says, 'Leave it in the hands of God'. Such an approach does well for building up personal faith but minimises the importance of human effort in the struggle. Such an apolitical stance does not generate the praxis needed for social change (Williams, 1994). It can no longer be argued that that remains the case.

The case of The Bahamas demonstrates this change well. Gaskins (2013) looks at the role of religion in the decriminalisation of buggery in The Bahamas. He argues that in The Bahamas, prior to the 1980s, homosexuality was not talked about or even condemned. The claim is that The Bahamas was a far more tolerant society than the rest of the Caribbean. Indeed, it is the only Anglophone Caribbean territory to have decriminalised same-sex intimacy. However, with the drug problem in the 1980s, fundamentalist Christianity became seen by many as the answer. With the influx of US-based fundamentalist groups into the country there was significant change in the social space with issues like homosexuality taking centre stage. Christian fundamentalist discourses became the popular rationale for discrimination against homosexuals, even after the decriminalisation of same sex intimacy. For example, Bishop Simeon Hall responded to the rise in HIV/AIDS among men who have sex with men (MSM) by saying 'Homosexuality … is anti-family and it goes against what God has ordained' (Gaskins, 2013, p. 439).

Some explanation for this change can be found in the attitude of Evangelicals to sexuality: '[F]undamentalists around the world are far more interested in sex than most other Christian manifestations, so I don't think [the presence of Fundamentalists and anti-homosexual sentiments] are unrelated' (Gaskins, 2013, p. 438). Indeed, unlike in Jamaica, where political, religious and even 'cultural leaders' such as dancehall artistes express opposition to

homosexuality openly, in The Bahamas this opposition is centred among religious leaders. Such developments may well be linked to changes within the US and this requires further research.

Changes in the Religious Landscape in the US

Teitel (1993) argues that in the US, in recent years,

> [A] broad spectrum of religious communities, from politically conservative evangelical churches to the politically liberal branches of the Catholic church, have called for engagement in the public realm. Voices within this movement emphasise the impossibility of religious commitment being distinct from public life. One illustration is the emergence in the last decade of the new Christian Right. Primarily evangelical Protestant, its platform called for political involvement on a variety of social issues: abortion, feminism and school prayer. (p. 760)

In the US, the religious community justifies the re-engagement in the public sphere in order to redress what they perceive as a loss of power and legitimacy on their part. They further claim that withdrawal from public life has weakened religious mores in a way that has implications for both religious and public life (Teitel, 1993). The status of the church and the moral status of society are both seen to be intertwined and interdependent. This re-engagement in society is undergirded by Dominionist Theology or Seven Mountains Theology—the idea that Christians are called to take dominion over, literally, seven specific facets of modern society in bringing about God's kingdom on Earth: (1) Business; (2) Government; (3) Media; (4) Arts and Entertainment; (5) Education; (6) Family; and (7) Religion (Orozco, 2012; Pinsky, 2006).

This theology did not find success in the US where hard line Right Wing Religious groups spent decades 'demonising LGBT people' (Southern Poverty Law Center 2013, p. 5). Shifts in public attitudes towards LGBT; the removal of discriminatory policies like 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell'; state (and now federal) approval of same sex marriage; the striking down of the Defense of Marriage Act, et cetera, have made North America a less than hospitable space for hard line Right Wing Religious groups. Consequently, they have 'shifted their attention to other nations, where anti-gay attitudes

are much stronger and violence against LGBT community far too common' (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2013, p 5). Consider, for instance, the sad tale of Uganda, where with the explicit support of Religious Right Groups like Alliance Defending Freedom, 'aggravated homosexuality' (gay sex, oral sex) was signed into Law in 2014 making it punishable by life imprisonment. Previously the Bill was to punish gay sex with death – the so-called 'Kill the Gays' Bill. Since that time the Law was struck down by the Uganda Court on technical grounds, but not before the names and addresses of gay Ugandans were published and gay activist David Kato was murdered in his home.

At the same time, countries in the Caribbean represent 'not just fresh opportunity to influence the debate over homosexuality, but also a source of funding and followers' (Corrales and Combs, 2013). Indeed, the renowned poet and essayist Kei Miller (2014) alerts us to the economics of homophobia in which such local groups and their international collaborators are enmeshed:

> More work needs to be done on this – on the actual economics of homophobia, the monetised markets across the Caribbean and Africa that American evangelism needs to continue to build up its staggering wealth. But if there is irony, much of it seems lost on the members of the Jamaican church who heed evangelists from overseas who encourage them to hold on to white colonial laws, then turn around and exhort their congregations, to 'resist foreign influence!' (pp. 104-5)

Such American evangelicals espouse policies that are even more extreme than they would advance in the USA, the 'Kill the Gays' Bill is one such example. Their extreme positions would have resulted in them being dismissed as 'cranks and bigots' in the USA and as such many of them view that nation as now irredeemably 'morally lost' (*The Economist*, May 4, 2013). However, in the Caribbean space, they receive a respectful hearing, meet with parliamentarians and leaders like Jamaica's Governor General (himself a prominent Seventh Day Adventist) and appear on mainstream media.

> This sort of reception boosts morale, but can offer practical benefits, too. Influence, visibility and access, in countries where (as the faithful see it) righteousness remains unvanquished, all help with

> fund-raising. The activists often traverse the same circuit, in what could be seen as a kind of competition. (*The Economist*, May 4, 2013)

Battle lines drawn

The sense of the engagement in a battle is evident in the language and posture of the discourse, which is suggestive/indicative of battle lines drawn, gauntlets thrown down and salvos dispersed. Convinced of the war afoot against Christians in Jamaica, Betty Anne Blaine, Evangelical Christian and children's advocate, cites and agrees with one unnamed pastor as saying, 'War has been declared on Christians . . . All of us are now called to put on the full armour of God, and stand' (*The Gleaner*, May 18, 2014).

The nature of the battle that Christians are engaged in is summarised well by Blaine (2014). She charges that matters like the Jamaican Government's proposal to introduce the flexi-work week in spite of opposition from the Church indicate the state's role in bringing about change directed against the Church. 'Alarm bells' were also raised by the Brendan Bain case, which, at the time of her writing, related to, as she described it:

> [Professor Brendan Bain, a] devout Christian and academic with over 30 years' service to the University of the West Indies, [who] is purportedly faced with the possibility of dismissal …, allegedly due to his submission as an expert witness in the Supreme Court of Belize, in which he stated his private, professional viewpoint as it relates to HIV and its impact on men who have sex with men (MSM). (Blaine, 2014)

The Bain case is currently before the Jamaican courts as he was eventually relieved of his position by the University of the West Indies. That particular case led to Christians picketing the gates of the University Regional Headquarters, often in silence with mouths taped shut - symbolic of their belief that Christians like Bain were being silenced for speaking the truth about homosexuality. This idea of silencing returns in advertisements. Of course, the case to which Bain submitted his expert testimony was that of Caleb Orozco, who is challenging the buggery law in Belize. Bain's involvement in the case is another example of the networks established regionally leading to the sharing of ideas, resources, personnel.

Blaine further alleges quiet but subtle acts of 'Christian Cleansing' taking place in key public institutions in Jamaica and the removal of the name Jesus from a prayer being drafted for the nation. All of this, she claims, makes sense in the context of a worldwide erosion of religious liberty of Christians in the face of homosexual rights. It is also intelligible against the backdrop of the assumed Christian foundations of the Jamaican nation that these parties fear is being eroded (Lazarus, 2012).

Such discourse strongly suggests that in the Caribbean the response of the Evangelical Churches has taken the form of mimicking socio-political narratives in the global north (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2013). The so-called 'culture wars' of the United States have become the lenses through which Caribbean evangelicals have framed issues such as homosexuality and abortion, as the examples below, drawn from the public campaign of Evangelicals across the Caribbean, demonstrate.

Belize - UNIBAM and Orozco

Similar themes are echoed in Belize, but with an even stronger anti-imperialist focus. Belize Action, a coalition of Churches coming together to fight the case brought by Caleb Orozco, a gay man of the United Belize Advocacy Movement (UNIBAM), against the constitutionality of the Buggery Laws is the key Christian group. It was founded by Scott Stirm, a Texan pastor, who has resided in Belize for many years. In 2011, the coalition held a demonstration in Battlefield Park to rally public opinion in the lead up to Orozco's presentation of his case against the Attorney General. The name of the Park may not have been lost on the organisers, who, according to Stacey Kelly in the article 'Decriminalising homosexuality will have dire effects: churches' called upon Belizeans to "Take a Stand" as the churches "rais[e] awareness, stand… up for what's right and tak[e] action" (*Amandala*, November 25, 2011). Belize Action is supported by the Alliance Defending Freedom, a Scottsdale, Arizona-based legal organisation founded in 1994 by 30 prominent Christian leaders in response to what they saw as 'growing attacks on religious freedom' (*The Economist*, May 4, 2013). Stirm has since denied any financial support from the ADF, but admits to human resources support. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Stirm is Belize's most prominent anti-gay pastor.

In that nation, local Evangelicals and their conservative allies have turned the debate about gay rights into a debate against neo-colonialism. In an advertisement published in May 2013, *Amandala*, Belize's largest newspaper, warned that overturning Section 53, which is the Belizean Statute outlawing same-sex intimacy, would result in moral decadence, same-sex marriage, and other ills. Clearly echoing arguments commonly heard among U.S. Evangelical groups, 'the ad claimed that protecting gay rights would lead to the loss of freedom of speech and religion' (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2013, p. 11). 'The ad was paid for by the Militia of the Holy Spirit, …[a] group run by Belizean Evangelical and anti-gay activist Louis Wade Jr.' The naming of the group as a Militia is very telling in the battle over the public sphere. Interestingly, 'the ad [also] depicted the court battle as a foreign attack on Belize: "Stand against this new cultural imperialism! Defend religious liberty! Defend Belize's independence against foreign laws and foreign values. Defend our Constitution!"'(ibid) This is indeed ironic, as discussed previously, the local evangelicals are allied to and supported by Right Wing Christian Churches and church-related groups from the US. It seems aid from religious sources is not subject to the same anti-colonialist critique. Of course, their opponents are no less mired in irony, as they too accept assistance from international groups to fight against the preservation of the colonial inherited buggery laws and these conservative Christian forces while attempting to protect themselves from charges of neo-colonialism.

As a part of their international agenda, the Human Dignity Trust, the Commonwealth Lawyers Association and the International Commission of Jurists joined with Orozco in submitting his case. All three are major transnational organisations with global standing, large budgets and access to the best human rights lawyers in the world. In Julia Scott, 'The Lonely Fight Against Belize Antigay Laws,' Orozco explains, 'I thought that using interested parties from the international community would have brought some kind of leverage,' (*The New York Times*, May 22, 2015). The support of these groups has been reframed by Orozco's opponents as an 'act of cultural aggression by the global north' (*The New York Times*, May 22, 2015). A lot of negative publicity was received about foreigners coming in to take over with their imperialist agenda. Even the Prime Minister waded in on the matter: 'One of the things that we have to be grateful for in this country is the culture wars we see in the United States have not been imported into Belize. Well, obviously, this is the start of exactly such a phenomenon" (*The New*

York Times, May 22, 2015). The Prime Minister was able only to perceive one side of the so-called culture wars, not recognising the Religious Right as very much a combatant in the fray.

UNIBAM receives its entire budget from foreign governments and foundations, including the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, the Swiss Embassy in Mexico City and the Open Society Foundations. This was cited as further evidence of their complicity in furthering the foreign gay agenda: 'Is Unibam being used for a foreign gay agenda?' one news station asked (*The New York Times*, May 22, 2015). Amandala published a one page editorial under the headline 'UNIBAM DIVIDES BELIZE' (*The New York Times*, May 22, 2015). The import of the Orozco case is presented by Amandala's editor-in-chief as of world changing proportions: 'Woe unto us, Belize, if homosexuals are successful in our court. Woe unto us! In fact, since ours is a "test case", woe unto the world!' (*The New York Times*, May 22, 2015).

Religious Freedom and the Family

Furthermore, the issues are framed in terms of 'religious freedom being under attack' by outside forces, especially freedom to maintain laws defending traditional ways of family and family life. There is a certain irony of speaking about a traditional nuclear family under attack, since this has never been the predominant family structure in the Caribbean region. Nonetheless, one billboard in the city depicts a smiling nuclear family – mother, father, son and daughter – arrayed against nothing less than an off-white picket fence. The Southern Poverty Law Center (2013), in including a photograph of this billboard in their report, charged that it was 'part of Belize Action's fear mongering anti-LGBT campaign, one that borrows heavily from the rhetoric of U.S. groups' (p. 10). The biblical basis for the traditional family is made clear in the verbiage overlaying the image of the family: 'God created them in His own image MALE AND FEMALE, and blessed them saying, "Be fruitful and increase in number". SAY NO! TO THE HOMOSEXUAL AGENDA'. Implied in this is the idea that LGBT people cannot reproduce naturally as 'normal' human beings have been commanded to by God. This, as Stacey Kelly notes, is stated directly in a pamphlet circulated by Belize Action: 'They're after the kids. The UK approved same-sex marriage years ago; now they're having court battles to lower the "age of consent". …This proves that they're after the kids. Homosexuals cannot reproduce; therefore,

they must recruit' (*Amandala*, November 25, 2011). These charges echo those made time and again by the US Right further evidence of the exported culture war.

A key implication for this campaign against LGBT Belizeans is 'resulting hate and violence [which] is very real – and terrifying – for LGBT people...[I]t doesn't take long to get a palpable sense of a community under siege…The atmosphere has grown even more frightening since the filing of the challenge to Section 53' (Southern Poverty Law Centre 2012, p. 11).

Jamaica – JA CAUSE and JCHS

The main opponents of the gay rights movement in Jamaica is the Jamaica Coalition for a Healthy Society (JCHS), a group started in 2012. They are joined by other groups like the Jamaica Christian Lawyers (See Lazarus, 2012) and Jamaica CAUSE (Church Action Uniting Society for Emancipation), the latter being responsible for various love marches. JA CAUSE organised a march in Half Way Tree, located in the nation's capital city, in June 2014, which was supported by many including prominent political leaders and entertainers. Supporters of the march were at pains to say that the march was not anti-gay but rather against the buggery law being repealed. As Marsha Thomas detailed in a Letter to the Editor of the *Jamaica Observer*:

> Some persons have stressed the role of evangelical Christians in organising and implementing the march. They fail to mention that the event attracted support, not only from evangelical Christians but from other religious groups as well. Many of the persons who came out to the rally had no religious affiliation and could be described as secularists. (*Jamaica Observer*, July 11, 2014)

Thomas, like others before, is quick to count the numbers and reiterate the broad-based massive support that the march garnered. She dismisses media coverage describing the organisers of the march as 'fundamentalists and evangelicals' in a bid to maintain the broad based support while perhaps failing to admit the evangelical core of the movement, which has significant focus on matters of sexuality and religious freedom, as does the JCHS.

JCHS describes its base as 'a group of Christian persons who envision a Jamaican society in which Judeo-Christian values nourish and enrich the social, spiritual, physical, emotional and mental health of the society' (jchs.

org). JCHS has also purported the existence of a gay agenda that needs to be fought against. It claims that it is prepared for a costly battle to prevent the erosion of family life and the ultimate destruction of the nation. The Jamaica Association of Evangelicals is closely aligned to this group and has pledged to put aside funds to fight the uphill battle. Interestingly, such groups appear to have the ear of the government.

In 2014, JCHS placed a full page colour advertisement in the Jamaica Daily Gleaner. This was a reprint of an advertisement that had been placed the previous year around World AIDS Day 'to counter the propaganda from the other side' (massresistance.org). The advertisement shows a man against a black background with his mouth taped shut accompanied by copy – 'Speaking truth is not homophobic…Its common sense. It's medical sense. It's economic sense. Speak the truth. Reject the homosexual lifestyle'. The medical information included draws selectively from the Lancet (2010) - HIV is out of control in France among MSM (men who have sex with men); Lancet (2012) - 98% of the difference in HIV rates between MSM and heterosexuals can be explained by anal receptive intercourse. The notion of speaking the truth and the real truth runs through several of their advertisements/messages.

Copies of these and other colourful, visually appealing advertisements are available on the JCSH website. For the most part they are decontextualised as 'Media Resources' so no information is provided as to when each was first deployed. One advertisement speaking directly to marriage endorses Tony Rebel, a Jamaican artiste, who made headlines in 2012 for speaking out during his performance at the Independence Grand Gala about his preference for marriage to be between a man and a woman. The advertisement with the silenced man and another featuring an unbalanced scale entitled, 'International Human Rights Scandal! It's not Justice for All', both feature prominently on the website of Mass Resistance, a US-based organisation focused on 'pro-family activism' (massresistance.org). The scale is unbalanced because Sexual Rights Agenda on one side is weighed against Freedom of Religion, Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Conscience, and Parental Rights on the other. The 'Real Truth' presented by the advertisement details loss of free speech in Canada, freedom of conscience lost in the UK, soaring rates of HIV among MSM in Australia and the USA. It concludes that 'The Sexual Rights Approach Lowers Fundamental Human Rights Not HIV/AIDS Rates'.

Mass Resistance has joined with JCHS to fight the homosexual agenda and maintain the traditional family. In displaying these advertisements, Mass Resistance describes the activities of JCHS and is effusive in their praise of the JCHS's activities in Jamaica, especially the media work of its founder Dr. Wayne West. Mass Resistance is effusive, 'How many American pro-family groups would have the nerve to publish this ad? We are grateful that Jamaica has a fearless group like JCHS led by such a bold, articulate man as Dr. Wayne West. They set an example for all the rest of us!' (massresistance.org). This advertisement was later reprinted in newspapers in Trinidad.

Of course, the sharing of campaign material is not in one direction only. Ex-gay ministries in Trinidad and Tobago published an advertisement funded by an anonymous donor, titled, 'What You Should Know About Homosexuality', in December 2011, in the Trinidad *Sunday Express*. This full-page black and white advertisement presents a numbered list of points with a visual of a silhouette of an obviously worried or confused male in the lower right hand corner. It claimed, among other things, that 'homosexuality is a manifestation of sexual brokenness' and argued this was caused by childhood trauma (Gray, 2011). It promoted Exodus International, a gay therapy organisation, as the solution, because 'gays can change'. 'NOTHING LESS WILL DO!' It deployed the same arguments in the JCHS full page advertisement: the medical argument (the gay lifestyle poses 'serious health risks'), that the prevalence of HIV 'remains high' even when homosexuality is legalised; and that legislation does not 'promote societal attitude change' (Gray, 2011). Two of the sources listed for the claims in the advertisement are publications sold through Exodus Books, a venture of Exodus International, including the memoir of Michelle Smith, the Jamaican pastor at ex-gay Your Way Out Ministries in Trinidad. A third source was Exodus International's website.

A similar advertisement was published in Jamaica on World AIDs Day 2011 promoting the Issachar Foundation. The similarity of the content suggests the coordinated nature of the campaign battling for the traditional family, religious liberty and life against the gay Agenda. What is troubling about this particular advertisement is that at the time at which it was being so heavily touted, Exodus International was in trouble, having been discredited and was in the process of being wound up in the US due to bankruptcy. Yet, the same material that had been rejected roundly at home was being served up to the unsuspecting Caribbean with the aim of garnering funds and winning hearts and minds.

The Battle Continues

Of course, the charges made against the LGBT community and their allies are roundly dismissed by them (Malcolm, 2013). Human rights advocate Rodje Malcolm (2013) countercharges that church factions have ceased their denominational bickering to unite in a holy war against a new enemy - the human rights movement (also Southern Poverty Law Center, 2012). Indeed, in Belize, for example, a coalition of churches, including the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Evangelical Churches, are working together in Belize Action. They make strange bedfellows, because in the eyes of many of these hard-line Christian groups, such traditional denominations 'barely count as Christian' (*The Economist*, May 4, 2013). A similar coalition is present in JCHS although the persons from traditional denominations are vastly outnumbered by their Evangelical partners and do not appear to be representing the official position of their church. Indeed, the Anglican Lord Bishop of Jamaica has come out in support of repealing the Buggery Law. Malcolm alleges that some of these Christian groups in Jamaica have seen the Jaghai court challenge against the buggery law and the former Minister of Youth's suggestion to review the abortion law 'as a form of spiritual warfare demand[ing] an active response' (Malcolm, 2013, Para.1). Javed Jaghai later dropped his case amid fears for his life and that of his family. Maurice Tomlinson, who was acting as his lawyer, has since stepped forward and brought his own case.

Support for the Jamaican gay community came from no less a source than the President of the United States. In a town hall meeting during his official visit in April 2015, Mr. Obama praised the work of local civil society activists including Angeline Jackson, a well-known lesbian activist, who founded an organisation after she and a friend were kidnapped and sexually assaulted. Prior to his visit the President received at least two letters, one from US-based LGBT-rights groups asking for his help as Jamaican LGBT men and women lived in a climate of fear and violence and discrimination. The Jamaica visit was presented to the President as an occasion for him to demonstrate the US commitment to human rights in bilateral and multilateral relationships such as with Jamaica and CARICOM.

JCHS also wrote denying that any reports of abuse by the Jamaican state had ever been made or that as an organisation it supports violence against gays. They reminded the President and Jamaican political leaders that gay rights

and lifestyles were not supported by the majority of Jamaicans. JCHS went further, and, during the President's visit, staged a protest mourning the death of free speech, which they believed died during the Obama Administration as did their religious freedom since they are not able to speak out against LGBT matters. Again, bring to the forefront the issue of silencing.

Maurice Tomlinson, lawyer and activist, asked the President as a birthday present to him (his birthday, April 9, was the same day as the presidential visit) to, among other things, 'apologise for the export of anti-gay religiosity by American evangelicals that has whipped up hate, intolerance, and homophobia across the western hemisphere' (Tomlinson 2015, NPag.). He also demanded the US take responsibility for its role in fomenting anti-gay hatred worldwide and offer to clean up its 'toxic export'. Tomlinson, of course, is trying to highlight the role of the US-based groups in making the lives of LGBT people less than comfortable. He had no expectation that the President would by fiat simply remove those players. The President did provide him with a present of sorts with his open praise for Ms. Jackson and placing of the issues on the agenda with political leaders.

Challenging the Church in the Bahamas

In the Bahamas, where similar arguments have been made, three prominent clergymen were taken to task in the *Nassau Guardian* for their opposition to their nation's support for a *UN Resolution 65/208 on Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions*, as presented by the then Deputy Prime Minister and minister of Foreign Affairs. The unnamed commentator was cutting:

> At the last election they imperially issued questions based on their narrow agenda, mostly focused on personal moral behaviour with scant regard for various issues of social justice or broader questions of public policy. (The Nassau Guardian, July 5, 2011)

The clergymen in question and the churches that they represent are themselves accused of having an agenda – a narrow one that prevents them from seeing the social justice issues at play in what they narrow to simply personal moral behaviour. The commentator turns the Christian admonition against self-righteous judgment (Matthew 7:5) against the clerics in a passage worth quoting in full:

> We are likely to have to endure more of the same at the next election for pastors whose theological and ethical depth and knowledge on how to apply such norms to issues in the public square and of the moral dimensions of public policy is shallow, wanting and amateurish . . . So blinded are they by prejudice and hatred that they have morally and intellectually twisted the resolution into another opportunity and platform from which to attack gay people. If they pause long enough to remove the big 2x4 plank obstructing their moral vision on the resolution and before pressing the send button on another rabid public missive, they may see that the militant agenda under suspicion is their own. (*The Nassau Guardian*, July 5, 2011).

Clearly, the opposing side is able to deploy the same tools as the religious community to some effect.

Saying No to Christendom

Concerns with the approach undertaken by local church groups and their allies have been voiced from seemingly unlikely sources. Garnett Roper (2013), Jamaican Evangelical theologian and President of the Jamaica Theological Seminary, rejects the perspective of Christendom, which is often at play in how Christians demand greater moral leadership on the part of the Church. The assumption is that the Church ought to be the leading voice in providing moral direction for the nation – a control of the state by the Christian apparatus, hence the reference to Christendom. He argues that greater numbers does not equate to being powerful. 'What is required of the church is not the exploitation of the power of its numbers in order to exert greater influence on society. What is required is greater truth-speaking to power in the society, at the risk of being marginalised in relation to the privileges the church now enjoys. The church must unmask the realities of Caribbean life so that people may understand their context better' (p. 15). The suggestion here may be that the Church is not doing an effective job in unmasking the Caribbean realities but may rather be attending to realities from outside that have been imposed on the region. Roper sees danger in Christian approaches that simply want to impose their perspective by virtue of their numbers and therefore calls for Church to problematise the very power which allows them to claim the power of numbers. He, in 'Analysing the Census,' speaks directly to what he calls 'the new line churches' (Evangelical, Pentecostal, Church of God, et cetera.), who place

great store on their numerical strength (*Sunday Gleaner*, October 28, 2012). This imposition of their position is evident in the battle over homosexuality and the attendant laws outlawing it.

In this regard, Roper presents a nuanced counter-conservative argument laced with pragmatism. While explicitly not a supporter of gays and their lifestyle, he argues for mainstreaming homosexuals so that they do not 'go underground'. He considers their practices akin to smoking, which is dangerous and unhealthy. Yet he is therefore critical of the practices of the church in Jamaica, which verbally, and arguably, psychologically attacks homosexuals and frames them as a threat to morality. He charges that this approach is shaped by American Evangelicals, who use the power of their financial support 'to dictate the behaviour of the churches in countries like Jamaica that depend on them for support' (Dawes 2014, p. 152). Importantly, he unmasks the theological approaches which underpin these anti-homosexual perspectives: 'It is not accidental that some of the most vocal anti-gay appeals come from churches that have built whole theologies around the doctrine of faith-giving and prosperity – a theology that more often than not equates words like "blessing" and "favour" with financial wealth'(Dawes, 2014, p. 152). There is a simple logic to the theology – America is a wealthy country because it has been blessed by God. Jamaica too can become wealthy by simply embracing the conservative values that made America wealthy from as far back as the time of the 'Christian' founding fathers. That is clearly not the entire story but a potent story, nonetheless.

Concluding Thoughts

A key question of the transnational actions of Church and Church-related groups – both religious and human rights based – concerns the impact of the advocacy on the lives of those who are subject to the advocacy. On reflection it is clear that real life damage can be done to the lives of those persons even with the best of intentions, as has been demonstrated in the examples drawn from Belize and Jamaica. This is referred to as the 'dark side of virtue' and should not be ignored by either side (Kennedy in Blake and Daley, 2013, p. 468). Some of those affected may not even be directly the focus of the campaign, as in the case of lesbians in the Caribbean.

The almost single minded focus on male homosexuality brings with it various concerns, not the least of which is the continued silencing or marginalisation of

lesbians or women who are sexually, physically and/or emotionally attracted to other women whether on an individual or group level (Crawford, ND). As Charmaine Crawford argues in an undated critical essay on the online forum Theorising Caribbean Homophobias, the identity 'homosexual' seems to privilege androcentrism, that is, the practice of placing the male centre of ways of viewing the world, history and culture; indeed, androcentrism tends to privilege masculinist perspectives on same-sex desire while ignoring misogyny against lesbians in particular, and women in general.

The agenda for the 'new line' churches in Jamaica and, by extension, the Caribbean appear to be set from outside and be under the control of those who provide financing. The concerns with such transnational engagements as transplanted culture wars cannot be ignored therefore. Both groups – US Evangelicals and pro-LGBT and their local allies – may well be mired in the western impositions that may be antithetical to very outcomes they espouse. There may well be a disquieting civilising mission underlying the discourse on both sides. Perhaps neo-imperialism in the guise of advocacy. Of course, this becomes trickier when the question of finances becomes entangled in the process.

The dismissal of the intervention by pro-LGBT groups as imperialist impositions threatening local culture and religious freedom may serve only to maintain the division between 'the West' and 'the Rest'. Maintaining this division may simply reinforce the notion of the West having a monopoly on goodness and civilisation. Indeed, such a desire to maintain traditional family values and freedoms may well impoverish socio-political discourse in the region through limiting the benefits that may be gained from the experience, expertise and resources from allies in the global world. Much more work needs to be done to move this battle beyond words.

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Identity Construction of an Ethno-Religious Group in Barbados: The Case of the Gujarati-Muslims

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Abstract

This article presents primary research on the emergent identities of members of an ethno-religious minority group in Barbados: the Gujarati-Muslims. Located within the broader Indian population of Barbados, Gujarati-Muslim migration commenced at the turn of the twentieth century. It is a group which has inserted itself into the Barbadian society as a well-defined religious group and a significant business class.

This article addresses the complex ways in which Gujarati-Muslims in Barbados perceive and interpret their identities. The data for this study reveals that the identities of the members of the Gujarati ethnic group are emergent, and in a state of flux. Drawing on theories of creolisation, the work argues that Gujarati- Muslims, especially those of the third and fourth generations, perceive themselves as having hybrid identities.

Key Words: Gujarati-Muslims, business class, hybrid identities, creolisation

Introduction

This study proffers an investigation of an under researched ethno-religious minority group. The group's trajectory within Barbados can be located in an in-between space of the history of the Caribbean; coming from outside of the text of Indian indentureship. This differential historical commencement, coupled with the group's economic activities as itinerant traders has had important implications regarding its members' social locations within Barbados.

This paper's discussions are premised on the argument that it is the origins of Gujarati-Muslims which should underscore the myriad identity formations demonstrated by its members. We therefore do not subscribe to the trope of 'groupism' (Brubaker and Cooper, 2001; Faist, 2010) which ordinarily underpins many accounts of Indians in the Caribbean. By 'groupism', we mean that there is the perception that all groups who share some characteristic have a fixed cultural essence. As Gisbert Oonk (2007, 12) has argued:

> This mosaic of Indian identities abroad is presented as the mirror of India itself. India is diverse, and so too are its migrants...these migrants differ in their cultural and religious backgrounds, in the causes and duration of their migrations, and the extent to which they adapt to local societies.

This paper's discussions of the Gujarati-Muslims of Barbados are undertaken through the deployment of the term 'diaspora'. The concept, located in academic fields in which notions of cross-border social and political configurations are privileged, has accordingly been used to reference individuals and groups from the Indian sub-continent who make their homes in other countries. This traditional usage has been eschewed in this paper's analysis, primarily because it not only considers the nation-state as the unit of analysis, but examines: 'diasporic and transnational communities as units that are stable over time' (Faist, 2010: 28). In being cast as a bounded 'community', 'diaspora' is subsequently: 'held to be of overriding importance for the individual identities and social practices of their members' (ibid).

This is the departure point in this paper, and I argue that any examination of the Gujarati-Muslim population has to acknowledge that both in India, and overseas: 'the nations of diaspora are heterogeneous, composed of many and

often contradictory fragments' (Shukla, 2003:13). Indians identify with the 'homeland', and not necessarily with India as a 'nation'. As Sandhya Shukla reiterates: 'there are other important ways to be national abroad...nationalism is not the primary consequence of complex forms of identification' (p.13). The 'homeland' becomes the specific region where the migrants or their descendants originate, and as Gisbert Oonk (2007:13) has stated: 'they often refer to themselves as Bengalis, Gujaratis, Telugus, or to their specific sub-castes, such as Patels, Lohanas, and Cutchis'.

I argue that the juxtaposition of the term 'diaspora' with that of 'Indian' seeks to expunge the specificities of context. The conflation assumes:

> universalising and essentialising constructions of "Indianness" signified in broadly defining markers such as saris and bindis, mendhi body art, and the very public celebration of festivals. (p.3)

These constructions disallow a consideration of the wider ideological fields that engender the production of variations of 'Indianness'. A related question which underpins my argument, and which guides discussions of the identity formations of the Gujarati-Muslim population of Barbados is: 'how and in what ways do specificities of historical experiences filter into the diasporic imagination of what constitutes 'Indianness'?"

Paul Gilroy's (1993) concept of 'cultural insiderism', articulated as a confutation of western ontological principles of modernity, is particularly functional to the debate. This neologism refers to a 'clutch of rhetorical strategies' which legitimises: 'an absolute sense of ethnic difference' (p.13). These differences, argues, Gilroy, in turn serve to encourage: 'an incontestable priority over all other dimensions of their social and historical experiences, cultures and identities' (ibid). An important caveat is however warranted at this point of the discussion. Gilroy did not locate his concept of 'cultural insiderism' within a wider criticism of the concept of 'diaspora'. He saw 'diaspora' as a: 'valuable idea because it points towards a more refined and more wieldy sense of culture than the characteristic notions of soil, landscape and routedness' (p. 328). For him, the concept engendered a negation of the 'metaphysics of race, nation and bounded culture'. His usage has aided an examination of the cultural and historical technicalities of 'belonging' that Gujarati-Muslims in Barbados are grappling with. It has simultaneously influenced the framework within which 'ethnic identity' is

discussed. Ethnic identity is defined in this study not as an entity *sui generis*. It is perceived as situational, contextual and fluid, and divergent trends can be observed in the way that individuals perceive and represent the construction of the behaviours, beliefs and values that typify their group (Jasinskaja-Lahti and Liebking, 1999; Ferdman and Horenkzyk, 2000).

Methodology

My epistemological stance is underpinned by constructivism,[1] and the research was therefore guided by a qualitative research design. This approach stresses that knowledge is transactional and subjectivist; findings are thus created in the process of interaction (Guba, Lynham and Lincoln, 2011:98). This qualitative design entailed that research questions, rather than a hypothesis, steered the data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2013:138). Conceptualising and extending research questions are vital constituents of a qualitative study (Agee, 2009: 445), and facilitate credible research findings.

This study examined identity construction among Gujarati-Muslims in Barbados while investigating how divergent generations negotiated the assimilation process. The research questions sought to facilitate an investigation of the lived experiences of Gujarati-Muslims in Barbados, and were constructed to address the complex ways in which Gujarati-Muslims in Barbados perceive, interpret and interpellate their identities. They are: 'What does it mean to be Indian in the Barbadian society?' 'What does it mean to be a Gujarati- Barbadian?' 'How do Gujaratis identify themselves?' 'Do they think of themselves as Indian, Gujarati, Muslim, Bajan or a combination of some of these labels?'

Data collection took place through open-ended, in-depth interviews. Participants were selected through Purposeful Sampling in order to take account of a range of diverse variables including ethnicity, gender, class and age (first, second, third and fourth generation members of the Gujarati-Muslim population). The sample consisted of sixty participants. Figure one presents the specifics of the sample. Interviewee portrayals are listed according to their immigrant generation statuses. 'Immigrant generation status' references the place of birth of individuals. Persons born in India and who migrated to Barbados in adulthood are designated to the category: 'first generation'. The 'first-generation' does not refer to the pioneering generation

(early twentieth century), but to those who would have immigrated during the second and third waves of migration (late 1940s–1970s). The researcher classified 'second', 'third', and 'fourth' generations as those individuals who have at least one parent who was born, and grew up in Barbados.

In the third and fourth generation category, few (only three) had both parents being born in Barbados. For the others, either their mother or father was from India. Of the fourteen participants from the second generation, seven were married to spouses who, like them, had been born and had grown up in Barbados. This is an interesting dynamic which filtered into participants' identity understandings and their experiences of being and feeling 'Bajan' (to be discussed later).

Interviewees from the second generation who were born in the late 1940s and the 1950s grew up in the 1960s. During this time period, immigration restrictions ensured that few immigrants from India arrived. Marriages were therefore arranged between families within the small and fledgling Gujarati-Muslim community. After the 1970s however, with freer immigration laws, parents arranged transnational marriages. Spouses were recruited *via* a transnational network encompassing kin members in villages of origin in Gujarat. This practice continues to date.

Figure 1 – Participant Profile Information

Participant Profiles

Immigrant Generation Status	Total Number	Age	Occupation Self-employed		Occupation Other	Stay at home
	Female					
1st Generation	2	65 and up	2	Pastry business seamstress	0	
2nd Generation	14	40-65	9	3 itinerant traders 3 joint ownership of store with husband 3 pastry business from home	0	5
3rd Generation	8	30-35	4	3-cake business 1 – sells jewellery from home	2- medical doctor and attorney	2
4th Generation	6	18-late 20s	3	Teaches from home Fashion designer	1 medical doctor	2
	Male					
1st Generation	2	60 and up	3	Itinerant traders	0	
2nd Generation	14	40-55	11	6 itinerant traders 3 –car parts business 2 own stores	3 2 medical doctors 1 attorney	
3rd Generation	8	30-35	5	1 car parts business 3 own minivans 1 itinerant trader	3 2 are religious teachers 1 is a medical doctor	
4th Generation	6	18-late 20s	3	1 itinerant trader 1 car parts business 1 car valet service	3 2 medical doctors 1 land surveyor	
Total Participants	**60**					

Gujarati-Muslims

The Indian population in Barbados constitutes less than one per cent of a total of 277,000, comprising a majority black and a minority white group (Barbados Population and Housing Census, 2010). It is not however a monolithic group, and exemplifies a significant degree of heterogeneity. Indian groups in Barbados differ with regard to regional origins in India, religion, occupations and relations with the host society. Following Peter Hanoomansingh (1996, 276), four main groups can be delineated from the larger Indian population in Barbados: Sindhis, Gujaratis, Indo-Caribbean migrants,[2] and Indian professionals in academic, medical and other specialised activities who are sojourning in Barbados.

Gujarati-Muslims in Barbados have origins as 'passenger Indians',[3] and constitute examples of "never-indentured-Indians" (Shepherd, 1994:18). Gujaratis derive their name from their location of origin: the state of Gujarat located on the West coast of India. The Gujarati population in India and abroad is diverse and comprises various ethnic, caste, and religious groupings. There is no monolithic Gujarati- Muslim 'society' or 'community,' since in India, and in transposed forms in the diaspora, there are various 'communities' or caste[4] groupings. The Gujarati-Muslim group in Barbados represents a *specific* ethno-religious community, and therefore, the range of diversity of caste, ethnicity and religions present within the state of Gujarat in India is *not* represented in Barbados. Gujarati-Muslims in Barbados are from the *Sunni-Vohra* caste or ethno-religious group. This ethno-religious category is sometimes conflated with the label *Surti-Muslim*, or *Surti- Vohra* to denote the group's place of origin: the city of Surat in Gujarat. The term 'community' is used here, following Michael Gomez (1998), to express the idea of:

> A collection of individuals and families who share a common and identifiable network of socio-cultural communications (for example kinship, dietary patterns, labour conventions, language, artistic expressions) that have their origin in either a particular geographic area and period of time or a unique system of beliefs and rationalisation. (p. 6)

Gujarati Migration to Barbados - The Contextual Background

Gujarati immigration to Barbados has to be understood within the context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century socio-economic background of rural Gujarat. This period saw great socio-economic instability occasioned by colonial administrative practices. The consolidation of British colonialism had changed patterns of land ownership, effecting a process whereby farmers became tenants on insecure leases. A general dislocation ensued, and village communities could not sustain traditional forms of subsistence (Jayawardena, 1968: 430).

Natural disasters led to an attendant flux in food production. The dawn of the twentieth century was marked in Gujarat by the long-lasting effects of the Great Famine of 1899-1900 which was then followed by a widespread plague. The rural economy could not recover from the effects of the deadly famine, and cattle mortality and low agricultural production precluded economic and social development (Chaudhuri, 2008:341). Emigration, for many in Gujarat, seemed to be the only viable solution to starvation, exploitation, and loss of family land.

Gujaratis started leaving their rural villages in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. By the early 1900s, Gujaratis had started going to Fiji in droves as unassisted immigrants, voluntarily migrating in search of opportunities (Mukadam and Mawani, 2007). The British Empire in the early twentieth century included the Cape Colony and the Colony of Natal in Southern Africa. Gujaratis had been migrating to these Southern African colonies in the late nineteenth century as part of a scheme which promised Indians rights of migration as free British subjects. In Southern Africa, Fiji, and in Mauritius, Gujaratis operated shops, thereby providing basic necessities for the indentured labourers, and fulfilling the role of middlemen between the colonialists and the Indian indentured working classes. However, in South Africa, the increasing economic prosperity of ‘passenger-immigrant’ groups such as Gujaratis were perceived as threats by the white colonists, and concerted legal efforts were made to stymie the migration flow (Klein, 1986:3; Bhana and Pachai, 1984). By the turn of the century therefore, immigration of ‘passenger Indians’ to South Africa was severely restricted.

This was an important development with regard to the immigration of Gujaratis to Barbados. With the outlet to South Africa closed, and with prospects for a better future becoming dim in the early twentieth century, Gujaratis looked to other destinations to migrate. Therefore, the 'closing of the doors to South Africa' (a literal translation of the Gujarati phrase) figures as a central migratory trope in the oral history and cultural imagination of Gujarati-Barbadians. The foundations of a Gujarati presence in Barbados are therefore perceived, in the popular imagination of Gujarati-Barbadians, and in oral history narratives, to begin when 'South Africa closed'.[5]

Oral history accounts (Personal interviews 2010-2011) of Gujarati arrival to Barbados provide disparate narratives listing divergent dates of entry and reasons for migration. There are some perceptible commonalities in the reports. One is the conviction that Gujarati-Muslim immigration to Barbados was an accident. This view is buttressed by the sentiment that people in the rural villages of Western Gujarat from whence the first immigrants hailed were totally unaware of Barbados, but might have heard about Trinidad (interviews by researcher, June 10th 2010). The second commonality is the prevailing understanding that the first Gujarati immigrants to Barbados hailed from a rural agricultural village called *Kaphleta* in the *Surat* district, and that this village was heavily represented in all the subsequent migration phases.

One rendering of the migration tale states that in 1928, three men departed from the village of *Kaphleta* to go to *'safar'*,[6] with the intention of reaching Brazil. They utilised the route that most Gujaratis took to go to Southern Africa; leaving from the port of Surat, traversing through the Cape of Good Hope, and to South America. They passed through French Guiana on their way to Brazil but never actually reached their destination, stumbling upon Barbados purely by accident, years after they had left their village homes. During their travails in French Guiana, the story goes; they were encouraged by many people, both Indians and African-descended people, to go to British Guiana. This British colony was perceived as being more appealing to the Gujaratis since, as they were told, there was a large Indian presence there (personal interview, March 2011). The story states that two of the three men left French Guiana and went to British Guiana.

These men lived and worked in British Guiana, their economic livelihood primarily dependent on trade in coconuts between British Guiana and other Caribbean territories. These individuals used to travel to the Bridgetown careenage trading coconuts and copra on the interisland schooners. Oral narratives (Interviews by researcher June 2010-2011) state that while at the Careenage in Bridgetown one day in 1929 (or according to other accounts, while in inner Bridgetown), these Gujarati-Muslims met some Bengali-Muslims who took them to their residence. The Bengalis, hailing from West Bengal in Eastern India, had been living in Barbados from as early as the late nineteenth century, and were involved in peddling. The migration tale continues with stories about the Bengalis' hospitality. Needing little persuasion, the Gujarati men made Barbados their home.

The immigrants viewed the socio-economic environment of early twentieth century Barbados as conducive to business development, and fellow village mates were encouraged to immigrate. The pioneers wrote to their friends and relatives in *Kaphleta*, informing them of the economic prospects on the island. During the 1930s therefore, there were trickles of migration from rural villages located between the city of Navsari and the district of Surat in Southern Gujarat. Migration up to the early 1940s was a purely male migration. In 1930, three more Gujaratis arrived, followed by a group of four in 1931, and three individuals in 1932. The year 1937, saw the first large group of immigrants; a total of twelve people. Since maritime transportation was disrupted during World War Two, any further migration was stemmed but resumed in 1947, continued into the 1950s, and accelerated in the 1970s. Oral history narratives assert that circa 1945; there were approximately twenty-five to thirty Bengalis, and about twenty-five Gujaratis (all males) living in Barbados. The village of *Kaphleta* was heavily represented in this population group.

The year 1947 is a defining moment in the ethnic imaginary[7] of the Gujarati-Barbadian population. This year saw an extremely large group of arrivants: a total of thirty individuals. This ship load, importantly enough, included the first Gujarati women (Interview by researcher, October 10th 2010).[8] There were only two women on this shipload. Other women arrived in trickles in the mid-1950s. These two phenomena: the advent of the first large group of arrivants, and the presence of women among the group, is a telling indicator of the Gujarati-Muslim decision to settle in a diasporic locale. It also demonstrates the group's desire to create a fledgling diasporic identity

based on notions of a conceptual homeland. Undoubtedly, this diasporic identity was to be created and contoured by the presence of Gujarati-Muslim women.

The arrival of women saw a turning point in the social formations of the community. Concerted efforts were made to consolidate community in the early 1950s with the birth of children in Barbados. Women's presence (and others arrived throughout the 1950s), was crucial for the perpetuation and conveyance of Gujarati-Muslim culture. The physical construction of community[9] thus occurred concomitantly through ethnic identification and was configured through the boundaries of gender construction.

The 1950s saw the emergence of an incipient subjective self-consciousness among Gujarati-Muslims. Religion (Islam) was used to consolidate ethnic community solidarity. John Bird (1999:116) argues that: 'maintaining a religious commitment is also a way to maintain other aspects of cultural identity such as language, art, patterns of marriage, cooking and so on'. In migratory situations where groups constitute a minority, religion can: 'act as a basis for community solidarity', serving as: 'a point of contact in a new country, a source of marriage partners, social welfare and so on' (p.118). Religious revitalisation, as Steve Bruce (2011) contends, can also be a consequence of 'cultural defence,' acting as an underwriter of ethnic group identity and culture. Islam thus enhanced the maintenance of an ethnic cultural identity.[10]

Intra-ethnic homogeneity has also strengthened the Gujarati community's economic status. Nigel Bolland (2006) notes, with respect to Syrian, Lebanese and Jewish immigrants to various Caribbean destinations during the early part of the twentieth century that they were able to take advantage of the inadvertent economic opportunities afforded them through exclusion from Creole national space. He notes that the benefits of exclusion accrued to the immigrants by allowing them to: 'ignore the principles of behaviour and association implicated in the colour/class hierarchies of Creole society'. This then allowed them to: 'establish themselves in petty trade by developing highly personalised relationships with customers lower down in the colour/class hierarchy'. Bolland's account of these early middle-eastern immigrants is applicable to the articulation of the social location of Gujarati-Muslims.

Albeit constituting less than one per cent of the total population, they have acquired wealth disproportionate to their numbers. Therefore, there is a common perception by Afro-Barbadians that 'Indians' and 'whites' control the economy of Barbados, and further, that these groups retain their wealth by circulating it among themselves.

Itinerant Trading

All of the early immigrants were small farmers in their villages of origin, but became involved in commercial trade, filling an economic niche engendered by the deeply racialised unequal socio-economic structure extant in the early twentieth century (Hanoomansingh, 1996:296). A discussion of this milieu will explicate how Gujarati-Muslim traders were able to place themselves in the society.

Absentee proprietorship was a rarity in Barbados (Dhanda, 2001) as two-thirds of planters lived on the island (Craton, 1991). This meant that they were better able to devise plans to procure an efficient labour system even after emancipation. Moreover, as Chamberlain (2010, 51) asserts:

> in many ways, the need for adequate, cheap and located labour had dominated the planter psyche and the politics of the region since the ending of the apprenticeship.

The plantocracy ensured that the post-emancipation socio-economic structure remained if not wholly intact, rooted in past hegemonic enterprises. The smooth continuity between pre-and post-emancipation laws stymied a bona fide liberation for ex-slaves, and has prompted Barbadian historian Hilary Beckles to describe the emancipation of blacks in Barbados as a: 'landless emancipation' (2004, 29). In the mid to late nineteenth century therefore, Barbadian planters did not modify their production system but reworked the labour relations between themselves and the ex-slave population to ensure a steady supply of labour. Planters in Barbados passed the Masters and Servants Act in 1840, effectively binding labourers to the plantation. The Act's philosophy, was underscored by the need to find a labour system which would continue to not just oil the wheels of the plantation economy, but maintain the socio-economic hegemonic status quo (Carter, 2012: 24). Under the terms of the Act, workers occupied a spot of land in exchange for their labour, but at wages specified by the plantocracy (Watson and Potter,

2001: 55). Most of the 'labour-binding aspects of the Master and Servant Act remained until 1937' (Carter, 2012: 208).

The peasantry in Barbados was not as well developed as in other territories (for example Jamaica). At the same time, Hilary Beckles and Verene Shepherd (2006, 41) point out that in the post-emancipation period, some generous landowners facilitated the development of free villages. Notwithstanding, planter policies ensured that workers in Barbados remained tied to the plantation through the tenantry system. On many plantations in the late nineteenth and in the early twentieth centuries, tenant farmers were obligated to plant cane for the plantation owner. According to Dhanda (2001, 249), it was the 'tenant-farmer- growing-cane' scheme which ensured not just a steady supply of labour, but the affluence of planters.

Economic power lay strictly in the hands of the white economic elite, and it was difficult for the black working class to meet their daily needs. Cecilia Karch (1979, 175) has demonstrated how, in the late nineteenth century, white people in Barbados secured and consolidated their economic power through the merger of sugar plantations with commercial retail businesses. By the early twentieth century therefore, the commercial elite represented a powerful economic bloc which controlled all commercial activity. In this regard, Karch contends that:

> every business, from wholesalers to rural shopkeepers, was at the mercy of the credit system manipulated by the Commission Merchants Associations. (p.175)

The itinerant trader's informal credit arrangements allowed people to purchase goods on favourable terms.

Gujaratis learnt the peddling trade from the Bengalis, who had in turn become skilled at it from observing Syrian/Lebanese itinerant traders who had moved to Barbados from Trinidad. Gujaratis had a similar background to the Syrian/Lebanese traders, who, according to Lou-Ann Barclay (1994, 205), were also farmers in their country of origin. Notwithstanding the novelty of the itinerant trade for them, the Gujaratis readily adapted to the new economic enterprise. No doubt, the ease with which they capitulated to peddling was linked to the reality that it was:

> an immigrant trade…the job required no fixed capital and stock could be obtained on credit, little skill was needed, and knowledge of a few words of English would serve. (Pollins, 1984: 79)

The early Gujarati immigrants, most of who were in their early to mid-twenties, peddled goods by foot throughout the Barbadian countryside, although some of them, depending on their financial circumstances, acquired a bicycle over time, and used that mode of transport to conduct business. The main item peddled was cloth (for making dresses for women, pants for men and boys, and for curtains), but customers would also order various other items which the salesman would deliver on his next visit. These pioneers sourced goods from white wholesalers in Bridgetown. Payment arrangements with customers were uncomplicated, and as Hanoomansingh (1996) has noted:

> It was simply a matter of taking a name and address after which the salesman would pass, on a weekly basis, to collect whatever the customer could afford – which would include times when the customer did not pay. It meant that some salesmen would collect final payment for an item after a period of a year or even more. (p. 297)

In a Barbados where sugar was king and where: "in the first four decades of the twentieth century, the plantation tenantry was still the home of thousands of Barbadians" (Carter, 2008:29), the itinerant traders' business activities became intricately tied to the vagaries of the plantation system, and the sugar industry. One elderly respondent who came to Barbados in 1947 at the age of fourteen, mused that in the 1950s, the socio-economic situation of the black masses had changed little from the 1930s when his uncle had come to Barbados. He recounts that the salesman's customers were mostly plantation workers, who 'trusted' (a Barbadian vernacular term for taking goods on credit) clothing and apparel. The aforementioned respondent noted that he would be paid one cent on his weekly rounds.

Itinerant trading as an economic enterprise has in myriad ways, shaped the particular configuration of ethnicity experienced by Gujarati-Muslims in Barbados. We can apply a Marxist analysis to the argument by stating that it was their economic activities which determined their locations within the Barbadian social structure. The group's long involvement in itinerant trading

has led to the production of the iconic 'coolie man'. Now entrenched in Barbadian folklore, the 'coolie-man' has, since the early twentieth century, existed in the popular imagination of black Barbadians as a mythological figure, and is reified as possessing supernatural powers.[11]

In its incipient usages, the term 'coolie' did not specifically refer to Indians. Its employment therefore has to be examined within the context of the nineteenth century global imperial capitalist expansion with its concomitant labour exploitation. The usage of the term 'coolie', according to British historian Hugh Tinker (1974), is: 'the direct consequence of Western, mainly British, economic exploitation of the raw materials of the tropics' (xii-xiii). Its pejorative deployment was connected to the 'coolie' trade, and is hence perceived as particularly referring to Chinese and East Indian labourers who made up the majority of the indentured labour force (Harris, 2010:149; Hu-Dehart, 1993:68; Northrup, 1995:78).

Indian indentured labourers who were recruited to work in the British overseas territories of Trinidad and British Guiana were thus referred to by this term by both the black and the European descended populations. In Barbados, two-way migration flows between Barbados and Trinidad and Barbados and British Guiana, promulgated by trading and economic links, had allowed black and white Barbadians to imbibe many of the stereotypes and labels associated with Indians in these colonies. Gujarati-Muslim itinerant traders were therefore called 'coolie men' by both the black and white population groups in Barbados.

Over time however, within the context of Barbados, the word 'coolie man' has come to designate a trade (that of itinerant trading) and does not have the pejorative connotations that the word 'coolie' has in other societies (especially the plural societies of Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Fiji and Mauritius). Today, both Gujaratis and blacks use the word 'coolie man' to describe an itinerant trader, demonstrating how words change meaning with context. In fact, Gujaratis utilise the phrase 'doing coolie-man work' as a descriptive occupational category.

The itinerant trading business allowed direct access into the household of the average Barbadian and allowed Gujaratis a firsthand observation of how Black Barbadians lived. It was in fact this proximity and intimateness with Black customers that facilitated Gujarati-Muslim constructions about Barbados and

Black Barbadians, and allowed close-knit business transactions, not unlike the *gesellschaftlich* relationships described by Ferdinand Tonniës[12]. Mary Chamberlain (2010), in her investigation of the socio-economic antecedents of the nationalist spirit in Barbados, integrates a discussion of women's roles and community organisation. She states that:

> Rural workers-predominantly women were vulnerable to the vagaries of the planter at the micro level, and the world market at a macro level. When they also rented a house spot, their vulnerability was compounded. On the face of it, they were resigned to the inequities of the situation. (p.76)

In this milieu, women deployed survival strategies. Meeting turns or 'sou-sou'[13] were, according to Chamberlain (p. 93), a method of accruing small amounts of capital. Given the reality of the economic ethos within which black working class women were compelled to survive, the 'coolie-man' served an important economic function for many rural communities. The flexibility of the payment scheme that he offered and the fact that he sold items that they would not normally be allowed to access, meant that he embodied, like the 'sou-sou': 'a small but significant opportunity for women to plan for the medium term in a context where basic decisions had to made hand to mouth, day by day' (p. 93).

In the imagination of the Gujarati-Muslim population therefore, its presence is more often than not associated with a 'saviour' trope. It interprets its social location within the framework of a sequence of events which privileges its place in the economic milieu of working-class Barbados. Henry Trotter (2009), in his discussions of coloured identities in Cape Town South Africa, states that: 'narratives create meaning out of chaotic memories through devices such as tropes, anecdotes' (p. 66). For the Gujarati-Muslim community, these allow them to: 'construct intelligible stories structured to convey specific messages' (p. 66). The tropes are drawn from a specific Gujarati-Muslim imaginary located in the social geographical space of Barbados. They have invested the iconic image of the 'coolie-man' with symbolic meaning whereby it resonates within the framework of their attempts to make sense of the trajectory of their community's evolution.

A less clear issue is that sometimes anecdotes serve divergent functions in narrative production, allowing users to: 'make highly specific identity

claims without doing so overtly' (Trotter, 2009: 65). Within the Gujarati-Muslim community, itinerant trading is a contentious occupation, being linked to social class status. In many ways imbibing mainstream perceptions of them, engaging in itinerant trading is not always favourably looked upon by younger Gujarati-descended individuals. Many times, social mobility is evaluated with one's ability to diverge away from 'doing coolie-man work'. One surmises therefore, that itinerant trading portends ambivalence for Gujarati-Muslims of the second and third generations. In situations of intra-ethnic interaction, it is a subject which occasions feelings of shame but which many Gujarati-Muslims rationalise and validate through their interpretations of the role that the 'coolie-man' has played in alleviating the poverty of black people.

Second-generation and third-generation Gujarati-Muslims who grew up and went to school in Barbados internalised many of the stereotypes and derision associated with 'coolie man work'. Some of them (and by no means all), endured feelings of shame as their classmates from the mainstream went on to access higher education in their quest for social mobility. They, however, were pressured (by community norms but also constraints linked to a racialised environment) to pursue an ethnically oriented occupation. *Doing* 'coolie man work' is thus a litigious occupation, imbibing many deep rooted evaluations of one's social class. The 'coolie-man' icon is entangled within narratives that allow speakers to not just construct identity claims, but to also employ these contrivances to engender: 'subtle cues of differentiation, tacit expressions of inner disposition and latent manifestations of subjectivity' (Trotter, 2009: 65).

The Gujarati-Muslim community's story, the one in which its members play the role of 'saviours', pervades its 'cultural imaginary' (Sandiford, 2011). In this 'imaginary', tales of how the 'coolie man' contributed to black people's social mobility and escape from poverty (especially in the pre-independence era) abound. The narratives of this 'cultural imaginary' facilitate its members' validation of their socio-economic role in Barbados. It stimulates understandings of their history of negotiation with a Creole black Christian mainstream which represented the 'coolie-man' in derisive terms.

The 'coolie-man'-mainstream relationship can be investigated through the lens of the 'middle man minority' paradigm. In Barbados, one of the important roles played by the Gujarati-Muslim 'coolie men' has been making

credit available to the black population, who especially at the incipient stage of Indian immigration, were considered as credit risks by white business owners. However, the word 'clannish', used to describe middle man minorities (Sowell, 1981; Sowell, 1994) in other parts of the world (Koreans in the USA, Chinese in South East Asia, and Lebanese in West Africa) has also been used by black and Caucasians to describe Indians in Barbados.

The social formations evinced by the Gujarati group reinforce this view. Present in the Barbadian milieu for over one hundred years, Gujarati-Muslims continue to demonstrate high levels of ethnic solidarity through strong familial and community ties, patterns of endogamous marriages, and separateness, living "relatively solidary within the group and socially separate from the surrounding society" (Bonacich and Modell, 1980: 15-17). George Devos' (2006) definition of an ethnic group as:

> a self-perceived inclusion of those who hold in common, a set of traditions not shared by others with whom they are in contact, and that such traditions typically include religion, language, and a sense of historical continuity and common ancestry or origin, (p. 4)

is an apt description of the Gujarati-Muslims.

The purpose of the study was to describe and analyse the intricacies of identity construction among Gujarati-Muslims in Barbados. The selected findings presented here are garnered from interviews conducted among sixty participants.

The analysis of the data demonstrated that there is a divergence of opinions among the different generations, with individuals from the third and fourth generations evincing identity assertions that reflect the globalised ethos within which they live. The findings underscored the fact that the respondents are making complex and multifaceted identity claims, with no unitary identifications.

Social Representations and Racialised Constructions of National Identity

In trying to understand the respondents' formulations of ethnic identity, one theme that consistently emerged across the conversations, was a clear

perception by the interviewees, that there was a disjuncture between how they defined their ethnic identity, and the ways in which they were defined by the mainstream Barbadian population. This in turn seems to have influenced their choice of ethnic identity.

Of the participants who included the term 'Bajan'[14] in various hyphenated formulations of their identity positions (for example Bajan-Indian), there was an immediate qualifier response. That is, participants noted that they saw themselves as 'Bajan', but members of the Barbadian mainstream were reluctant to acknowledge, accept, or validate that self-definition. Respondent F said in this regard:

> I think of myself in many ways as Bajan. I was born here, grew up here. I speak like a Bajan. But to most people, I am just an Indian. They see me, and my dress, and my colour and hair et cetera make them see me not as a Bajan.

A noted recurring point linked to the theme under discussion, and which was a pronounced element in most interviewees' conversations, were clear understandings of mainstream perceptions of how Bajans are supposed to 'look.' One 50 year old female interviewee stated thus:

> To me you have to look a certain way to be called a Bajan. Like to me if you black or brown skin or even white, it's ok, you will be seen as a Bajan. But to me people don't accept Indians as Bajans. Bajans to me can't accept, don't want to accept us.

This same interviewee, in response to the researcher's question as to whether the overt demonstration of Muslim religious symbols (for example Islamic head scarves by women and girls) might vitiate being perceived as a Bajan, agreed. She however noted that in her case, there were times when she didn't wear a headscarf but still had her 'Bajanness' contested. She stated that she was once at a supermarket and was buying some Mauby bark.[15] In her own words:

> This man was standing up next to me and tell me 'u is a Indian. Wa u know bout mauby bark?' well I had to let he know who is more Bajan than he. I tell he that I did drinking mauby bark from musse before he born and that some of the things I know bout being

> Bajan he aint even know. I wasn't wearing na scarf or nutten so so it couldn't be that I you know, was like dress different.

A thirty-six year old from the third generation related a similar tale. He argued that he went to a government-run institution that offers a public service. The department was just about to close for business, and he was told by the young male clerk (who was obviously playing on the widely-held stereotype that Indians are rich), that since he was an Indian, he could just pay some extra money and get the job done. The respondent stated that he told the young man that he was not rich and worked for the government. When the clerk made a quip about being Indian, he said he told the young man that his grandfather had come to Barbados in the early 1930s, long long before the young man's own father must have been born, and that he was more Bajan than was the young man. This information was apparently not met with good favour, and according to the respondent:

> The young clerk proceeded to tell me that I couldn't be Bajan since his (clerk's) grandfather and great-grandfather were in Barbados long before mine. This young boy was half my age but saw it fit to tell me that he didn't think I was a Bajan.

These respondents' views can be located in the Barthian (1969) school of thought which proposes that 'identity' is meaningfully constructed between social groups through the process of social interaction (Jenkins, 2008). We can also agree that identities are situational (Okamura, 1981), determined by the social and political contexts in which individuals are located. The interactivity necessary to the creation of identity is also highlighted in the aforementioned responses of the interviewees, and demonstrates the Symbolic Interaction dictum that identity evolves through interaction in society. The data reveal therefore, that identities are cast in the given context in which such identities are to be used (Jelly-Schapiro, 2005:44). Therefore, even if it is the case that people have private 'selves' which exist in contrast to personal identities and public identities, they are all the products of social processes (Jamieson, 2002: 1). As Richard Jenkins (1997) contends: 'all human identities are in some sense – usually a stronger than a weaker sense – *social* identities' (p. 4). (Emphasis in original).

Some interviewees also acknowledged that religious and outward ethnic symbols do intervene to shape mainstream perceptions. If 'being Bajan'

is determined by participation in a Christian ethic, then as one young lady asserted:

> Indians can never be Bajan because even though globalisation is penetrating in the world, the cultures are religiously diverse.

This young woman's statement demonstrates that she is aware that 'being Bajan' is tied to the possession of a certain ethic; one that is black/white and Christian. This prescription ultimately leads to the dissonance between the mainstream's understandings and the identity perceptions of Gujarati-Muslims. This dissonance in turn shapes the ways that the interviewees see themselves.

A caveat is however warranted at this point. The findings revealed a dissonance between generations with regard to clear-cut identities. Younger generations did not clearly enunciate an 'Indian' identity while older generations did. A forty-five year old second generation male argued that he very strongly labels himself as 'Indian'.

> I call myself or describe myself as Indian. That is because that's the only way that I know that I am seen by Barbadians. No matter what, I am an Indian to them and so why not? Why not be proud of who I am?

A sixty-three year old interviewee, who came to Barbados as a young boy, reiterates the previous claim. During the interview, and in response to the question: *"how do you define yourself? What do you call yourself?* He emphatically stated:

> I am an Indian! How can I be anything else? That's what I have always been called. The teacher used to address me as 'you Indian'.

There was however, an acknowledgement by interviewees that their identities were shaped by their experiences growing up in Barbados.

There was the common view that the label 'Indian' through which they saw themselves, was directly connected to their experiences living in Barbados and through their interactions with Black, Christian Bajans from the mainstream.

It is the third and fourth generations that more readily identified with being Bajan. A twenty-three year old respondent emphatically contended:

> My ethnicity does not make me any less of a Barbadian. Yes, I may have other cultural habits and norms, but I was born a Bajan, my parents were born here. What does that make me? and I have lived here all my life, therefore, Barbados is all I know. My ethnicity is Indian but I AM a Bajan. (Emphasis in original).

This participant however tempered her response by reflecting on her views vis-a-vis her colleagues at university and the general Black Barbadian mainstream. She stated that sometimes her colleagues still alluded to certain aspects of her 'differences', and that made her think sometimes that they saw her as 'Indian' on the odd occasion.

We can deploy Social Representations theory (Moscovici, 1984) to extend the analysis of these findings. The results demonstrate that the production of social categories by Afro-Barbadians leads them to represent Gujarati-Muslims as 'Other', whereby their 'difference' is compared to 'Self'. The expression of alterity is thus clear. The respondents' narratives are subsumed under racialised and ethnicised discourses. These were evinced in their clear understandings of not just mainstream perceptions, but the mainstream's employment of a Self-Other framework to articulate 'Bajanness' and 'Indianness'. 'Indianness' becomes imbricated within an etymology of race, and has emerged from the racialised discourses particular to Barbadian historical formulation. Respondents' narratives were spawned by both the definitions of the Creole-Barbadian mainstream, and the Indian groups themselves.

'Regimes of representation' lead to a case where Gujarati-Muslims, despite their *own* identity claims, are: 'constructed as different and other within the categories of knowledge' (Hall, 1990: 225) produced by the mainstream. Stuart Hall utilises the notion of 'regime of representation' to reference Foucault's understanding that a 'regime of representation' is a system of power formed by a 'power/knowledge' system (ibid). Foucault (1998) postulated that 'power' is diffuse; it is 'everywhere' and 'comes from everywhere' (p. 63). The views of the respondents evince Hall's statement that: 'representation always implicates the positions from which we speak'. Therefore, though Gujarati-Muslims might, as Hall argues, articulate in their

'own name', there is a divergence between: 'who speaks, and the subject who is spoken of' (Hall, 1990:222).

The data reveals that there is a clear disjuncture between the interviewees' definitions of ethnic identity and the mainstream's definition. The representations of Gujarati-Muslims by the mainstream are thus implanted within wider social and ideological knowledge systems that inform racialised encounters. These representations are similar to a process described by Caroline Howarth (2006) in research conducted with Black youth in Britain. As Howarth (2006) noted with respect to her research participants: 'nothing may be explicitly said about "race" or racialised differences, but the ideological construction of "race" is apparent and is felt in the dynamics of the White gaze' (p.73). We argue that the process of identity construction among Gujarati-Muslims in Barbados is embedded within their experiences of the 'gaze' of the mainstream Christian non-Indian population. The process of identity construction and the meanings that Gujarati-Muslims hold about their 'place' in the Barbadian society are thus: 'relational, contextual and historical as they are co-constructed within social encounters' (Howarth, 2006: 73).

Creolisation and Representations

I applied creolisation theory (in its ideological formulation) to extend the analysis. If creolisation as ideology: 'interpellates individuals as subjects' (Larrain, 1996:49), then we can contend that Gujarati-Muslims are formulating their perceptions within locations already formulated by ideology (ibid). Creolisation is described as ideology since definite claims are made through specific cultural practices and/or ideas, and then represented as reality (Grossberg, 1996:159).

While the neologism 'Creole' is not used in everyday vernacular in Barbados, the term 'Bajan' is used with all the intended implications of 'Creole'. The term's deployment is entangled with notions of assimilation to a Euro-Afro cultural paradigm, and to this end, it has often-times been deployed in academic discussions to reference the binary cultural inheritance of Barbados (for example, Watson, 1979:136).

O. Nigel Bolland's (2002) views on the dialectical aspect of creolisation are pertinent to this analysis. It draws attention to relations between the

hegemonic and the subordinated social groups and aids an understanding of how creolisation has engendered the exclusion of some. In Barbados, creolisation's concomitant implied meaning 'Bajan', has functioned in strategic ways to inform differences. Representations of Indians in many Caribbean societies occur within paradigms that construct culture in dichotomous terms. These 'paired polarities' (Mintz, 1977) have worked well to present Indians as cultural bearers and retainers. This construction has operated in a discursive way, and has effected a *sui generis* view of a fixed 'Indian' culture that is unchanging [16](Khan, 2001: 288-289).

The findings demonstrate the ideological underpinnings of 'Bajan'. Just as 'Creole' and 'creolisation' have functioned as hegemonic concepts, so too, has the idiom 'Bajan'. The term itself is imbricated in hegemonic practices of definition. Creolisation therefore, as applied to the findings under review, has to be located in a 'discursive mode'. (Khan, 2007: 657) It is evoked as a symbol of mixedness and heterodoxy, but actually cultivates a homogeneity that is defined by the mainstream.

Certain characteristics (interculturation, ingenious cultural creation) are viewed as being indispensable to the process of creolisation. However, these features, because they are perceived as having only occurred within a black/white population binary, are the very ones that enable the exclusion of Indians in Caribbean societies. The discourses that *represent* Indians in the Caribbean are located in paradigms of exclusions (Munasinghe, 2006: 557; Hall, 2010: 27) that define Indians as existing outside of the confines of the Creole nation.

We can draw on studies done in Britain to clarify our point. Research has demonstrated that for the mainstream, 'Britishness' is perceived as being represented by a white identity (Tyler, 2006; Vadher and Barrett, 2009). The data findings attest that social representations of 'Bajanness' are linked to a black racial identity. The respondents' views, which were expressed as direct responses to their lived social interactions with the Afro-Barbadian mainstream, highlight the reality that embracing the signifier 'Bajan' is seen (by Afro-Barbadians) as being primarily an Afro-Barbadian privilege. It has to be noted that this point of Afro-Barbadians having the power to 'name' and to define who 'belongs', is being made within the context of the particular research findings under discussion. Since the participants of this study were speaking with reference to a Gujarati-Muslim- Afro-Barbadian

social milieu, we deduced that 'being Bajan' is defined as connoting an Afro-Barbadian space. This however does not vitiate the fact that white Barbadians also claim the right to 'Bajanness'.

In Barbados, the term Creole and its concomitant term 'Bajan'[17] are employed to reference the binary (European and African) cultural inheritance of Barbados. The term 'Bajan' is thus entangled within notions of assimilation to a Euro-Afro cultural paradigm that is subsumed under a notion of 'Anglophilia' (Hintzen, 2002a) which portends the acceptance of a 'unity in diversity' motif masked in a narrative of 'all ah we is Bajan.' We can argue therefore, based on the data findings under review that the representations of Gujarati-Muslims have occurred within the historically contested articulations of what constitutes Creole (and by implication Bajan). A caveat is warranted at this point. In discussing the exclusion of Gujarati-Muslims, one is not discrediting the role of ethnic exclusivism and social separateness in their being barred from the Bajan social space.

Hyphenation

The data revealed a tendency for participants to define and label themselves in hyphenated terms. Various formulations were utilised by participants. Therefore, they described themselves as Bajan-Muslims, Bajan-Muslims of Indian descent, and as Indo-Bajans. What is clear however is that the reference group still is the ethnic group. The data revealed that there is a preference for maintaining heritage and culture, but also a striving for status as 'Bajan'. Individuals do not wish to discard their ethno-religious group, nor do they desire to become totally absorbed into the mainstream society. The hyphenation tendency thus defines their attempts to preserve aspects of their ethno-religious culture while to some extent, integrating into certain aspects of the Bajan mainstream. One thirty-year old female stated thus:

> I do not think that people should see me as just one or the other. I am really many things. How can I just get rid of one part of me? My grandparents were from Gujarat. I am proud of that part of my heritage. I am a Muslim and sometimes I do not really understand or practise some of the ways of my grandparents like in dress and so on. I think I could be called Bajan too. I was born here, my mother was born here and I grew up here.

The participants' identities are negotiated from a range of available elements. They negotiate between aspects of their Gujarati-Muslim ethno-religious identity, perceptions of 'Indianness' (from the mainstream population), and aspects of mainstream Barbadian identity. They construct ways of being and becoming by choosing a range of patterns which to them, are not inconsistent. It is then, the construction of an eclectic identity. One twenty-four year old male respondent captured this eclecticism when he contended, in Bajan dialect that:

> I wud say I is a Bajan. You know, like it is my grandparents who come from India. I aint really got na connections to India. To me, you cant forget where you come from, ok. So in that sense, I guess that I wud say that I is a Bajan that got some Indian background. But then I is also a Muslim. I was born a Muslim, grow up a Muslim, but I grow up right hey so in Barbados. I feel as if I understand de Bajan culture. So wa da mek me? I is a Bajan-Muslim Indian? (laughs)

We can say therefore, that for the respondents of this study, identity is not a *fait accompli*, but is a continuously evolving process. Identity is thus, for the Gujarati-Muslim participants of this study, a 'production', never accomplished, but: 'always constituted within, not outside, representation' (Hall, 1990: 222).

While therefore lay persons within the Barbadian mainstream conceive of Gujarati-Muslims' *Islamic* symbols (such as Islamic head scarves for women) as evidence of their cultural retentions, the respondents' narratives reveal that they are actually manifesting what they perceive as hybrid identities. We can contend that their experiences are mediated by: 'cultural translation'. Homi Bhabha (1990, 211) states in this regard that:

> If…the act of translation (both as representation and as reproduction) denies the essentialism of a prior given ordinary culture, then we see that all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity.

Language Attenuation

The aforementioned participant's identity formulations and particularly his use of the Bajan dialect epitomises a clear creolisation process. Creolisation engenders, as Glissant (1990, 46) argues: 'the adventure of multilingualism',

and its 'genius rests on its being always open'. At this juncture of the analysis, the term creolisation facilitates a discussion of the dynamics of cultural creation, retention and assimilation of Gujarati-Muslims in Barbados.

For many second generation participants, Gujarati was not their first language, and though many understood it, most did not speak it fluently, and did not speak it to their children. The researcher surmised that the reason for this is that the second generation grew up in a milieu where the Gujarati-Muslim community was very small. Children played with Barbadians, and many times, had to mediate communication between their parents and members of the mainstream. In many homes, parents spoke Gujarati and children responded and communicated via Bajan dialect. One respondent reminded that many times, parents employed Barbadian women as domestics. Consequently, children were socialised into local cultural habits, practices and language.

It is also important to remember that the use of ethnic language among Gujarati-Muslims in Barbados is linked to many factors: the opportunities available for the language's use, (Isajiw, 1999), parents' insistence on use of the language, if one or both parents are from India, and the individual's circle of friends. Knowledge of the language involves being able to understand the spoken word, but not necessarily being able to speak it. 'Use of language' is however deployed to mean that the individual both understands, and is able to speak it.

There is a decline in the use of Gujarati with each succeeding generation. The data show that while forty-six per cent of the second-generation speaks Gujarati, only thirty-five per cent from the third and fourth generations do so. This almost ten per cent decline might be read as an axiomatic phenomenon (in light of the assimilation paradigm's ideas on cultural dilution). This trend is however an anomaly among most transnational Gujarati communities. Gujaratis have been present in South Africa since the late nineteenth century but the Gujarati language is still spoken in many homes (personal communication.). Similarly, Gujarati-Muslims in Barbados who maintain transnational ties with extended kin in England and in Canada have reported that speaking Gujarati in the home is the norm there. While children communicate amongst themselves in English, strict rules regarding the speaking of Gujarati to adults ensure that language use does not decline. Why this is not the case among Gujaratis in Barbados can be explained

through an analysis of the context of their genesis, their residential patterns and their economic activities.

The data narratives reveal a nuanced creolisation process where there is some internal reshuffling and ingenuity. The in-depth interviews of this study revealed the nuanced lived realities of Gujarati-Muslims. The fine distinctions unearthed by the interviews highlight an incipient creolisation process which is specifically demonstrated in the language of respondents.

Conclusion

This assessment of Gujarati-Muslims encourages a revisiting of indentureship as *the* single framework through which the Indian presence in Caribbean societies is described and analysed. This study reveals that it is crucial to examine the differing circumstances and contexts under which minority ethnic groups operate.

Creolisation theory engendered an analysis of the narratives of respondents. It was employed in this study to explain the trajectory of cultural change and contact, and also as an analytical heuristic device to investigate complex social representations (Khan, 2007: 653). Applied to the analysis of the emergent identities of Gujarati-Muslims in Barbados, creolisation delineated a dialectical process that occurs in permeable systems (Crichlow and Northover, 2009: 3).

The data reveal that while Gujarati-Muslims *appear* to inhabit a 'pure' diasporic culture, it is clear, in the words of Kathleen Hall (2002, 412), that: 'new lifestyles, cultural practices, and identities' are coming into being. If creolisation enunciates a process of assimilation, then we argue it engendered an understanding of how Gujarati-Muslims sometimes: 'interrogated and valorised a diasporic past' while at other times: 'rejecting elements of a dominant culture' (Cohen and Toninato, 2010: 13).

End Notes

1 The researcher adhered to Michael Patton's (1990, 39) rule that a 'paradigm of choices' facilitates 'methodological appropriateness'. Patton's 'paradigm of choices' permits the researcher to consider the contextuality of different situations, an approach that diverges from conventional positivistic ones (Miyata, 2009: 66)

2 Indo-Caribbean migrants in Barbados originate mainly from Guyana (and to a lesser extent Trinidad), and can be placed in the category of 'twice migrants', or 'second or third-time migrants'. The category 'twice migrants' refer to the descendants of indentured workers in various parts of the world who settle in third countries (Oonk, 2007). They can include those: 'Indian indentured labourers in Suriname who eventually settled in the Netherlands or those who were expelled from East Africa and ended up settling in the UK and Canada'. (p. 12)

3 The label 'passenger Indian' originated in the context of Indian merchant and trader migration to South Africa in the late nineteenth century. Used interchangeably with the term 'free passenger,' the tag indicated that the migrants had paid their own passages to South Africa as free persons, and not as indentured labourers (Klein, 1986: 10).

4 Although the formal religious values of Islam are opposed to ethnic and social stratification, alternative ideologies justify Muslim social hierarchy in India. Therefore, caste-like divisions do exist among Muslim Indians, albeit in a weaker form than that of the Hindus. Imtiaz Ahmad (1973, xxviii) argues that among Muslims, 'castes observe social distance on the basis of deference, privileges and descent...allowing for a greater interplay of wealth and other secular factors in status determination'.

5 This data was also gathered through the medium of oral history. This is defined as: 'the collecting of any individual's spoken memories of his life, of people he has known, and events he has witnessed or participated in' (Hoopes, 1979: 7). According to Mary Chamberlain (1995, 94), oral testimonies are used as auxiliary sources in constructing histories of: social groups who by reason of gender, class, education, race, culture, have left few other, if any conventional sources. (p. 94) Extrapolating from Chamberlain's statements, the need to rely on oral testimonies in this study arose from the attempt to construct an *academic* historiography of the Gujarati-Muslim population of Barbados, an enterprise not yet undertaken.

6 The word 'safar' is an Arabic word meaning 'travel'. The word is also used in the Urdu language, which has a similar lexicon to Arabic. In India, Urdu is spoken, (and utilised as a teaching medium in madrasas: Islamic theological and religious schools). Urdu is widely spoken in the areas of India which were historically bastions of Muslim Empires, and in cities with large Muslim minorities. Some Urdu words have therefore become standard in the Gujarati language. The word 'safar' as used by non-indentured migrants, later came to connote 'adventure.' Gujarati-Muslims have a history of travel for adventure. Michael Pearson (1976) and Claude (Markovits, 2000: 11), have demonstrated how Indian merchants, consisting predominantly of Gujaratis, were a powerful force in the maritime Indian Ocean trade stretching all the way to Muscat and East Africa. They state that the dominance of the Gujaratis was mainly due to their possession of a distinct geographical advantage. The Gujarat region, located in the Western part of India, and with a long and expansive sea coast, facilitated merchants' overseas trading trips from very early (Mehta, 1991: 21).

7 The neologism 'imaginary' is deployed here in a similar fashion to Eduardo Glissant (1997). For him, 'the imaginary' epitomises the representations which a group relies on to understand its reality. The imaginary is: 'all the ways a culture has of perceiving and conceiving of the world' Keith Sandiford (2011), in using the term to analyse the myths and beliefs of obeah and sugar in the colonial works of Richard Ligon's *History of Barbados* (1657) and Matthew 'Monk' Lewis' *Journal of a West India Proprietor* (1834), states that the 'imaginary' is that storehouse or collective weight of a people's belief.

8 This data was garnered through the medium of oral history. According to Mary Chamberlain (1995, 94), oral testimonies are used as auxiliary sources in constructing histories of: social groups who by reason of gender, class, education, race, culture, have left few other, if any

conventional sources. (p. 94) The need to rely on oral testimonies in this study arose from the fact that there is no written evidence of the history of this group. This information was gathered by the author based on respondents' narratives. The sons of these two women provided this information.

9 The building of mosques, for example.

10 The Islam that was practiced among the first generation migrants, however, was what they remembered from their village homes, thus reflecting a particular type of ethnic practice.

11 The 'coolie-man' is associated with such folkloric entities as the *'baku'* and the *'Steel Donkey.'* The *'Steel Donkey'* exists mostly in people's imagination. It is said to be a mythical creature; half-donkey, which creates a noise when it walks on galvanised rooftops. It was thought to haunt certain parts of the island, and was believed to be deployed by the 'coolie-man' in his efforts to punish customers for not paying him. By the same token, a *baku* is perceived by mainstream Barbadians to be contrived by Indians (but specifically the 'coolie-man'). This *baku* is thought to possess supernatural powers, and is believed to be used as a medium in the execution of particular objectives, but more often than not, it is employed to harm people. It is not clear how the 'coolie-man' became associated with these folkloric mythological figures, especially since the *baku* and the *steel donkey* are not elements of the Gujarati-Muslim cultural ethos or folklore. The *'baku'* or *'bakoo'* is an entrenched part of Caribbean societies' understandings of the paranormal. In Mark McWatt's (2005) anthology of stories, *Suspended* Sentences, the story is told of an angry *'bakoo'* (Madramootoo, 2005) relates how the spinster Fordyce is: 'literally driven out of her home and her mind, and her adventures with the Bakoo are left to the imagination of the reader' (Hanna, 2006).

12 In *Gemeinschaft* and Gesellschaft, published in 1887. The English language translation *Community and Society*, translated by Charles Loomis, was first published in 1957 by Michigan State University Press.

13 A Meeting-Turn or Sou-Sou is a community-based informal type savings arrangement. Members contribute (weekly, biweekly or monthly) to a savings pool, and based on their consensus about a schedule, each group member is allocated a lump sum of the funds.

14 The colliqual term for 'Barbadian'.

15 Mauby is the bark of the buckthorn tree. It is boiled and made into a drink.

16 An attempt to present a nuanced analysis of the Gujarati-Muslim group guided the focus on the different expressions of 'Indianness' in the Caribbean. This consideration did not however vitiate the deployment of academic theoretical ideas which articulate how Indians are perceived in the region.

17. The justification for pairing the two concepts is discussed on pages 142-149.

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Manifesting Kali's Power: Guyanese Hinduism and the Revitalisation of the 'Madras Tradition'

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Abstract

Hinduism in Guyana consists of various traditions and subgroups such as the Sanatan, Madras, and Arya Samaj traditions. Influenced by var-ious historical conditions and the dominant Christian influence, mem-bers of the so-called Sanatan tradition have sought to establish their practices as the 'Great' or Sankritic Hindu tradition, for example through sanskritisation processes. In this context, specific practices such as possession rites and animal sacrifices were defined as inap-propriate and excluded from mainstream Hinduism in Guyana, creat-ing orthodoxy. These 'inappropriate' practices were consolidated in what is today known as the Madras tradition or Kali-Mai Puja, a shak-tistic tradition which continues to be marginalised and stigmatised in contemporary society.

Highlighting how members of the various Hindu traditions seek to establish and legitimise their traditions, this article demonstrates that these traditions are constructed in relation to each other and that they are based on socio-cultural othering processes within the heterogeneous 'Indian' ethnic group in Guyana. Based on participant observation and ethnographic interviews, this anthropological contribution discusses that the Madras tradition is an 'invented' yet 'authentic' tradition and elaborates how various socio-political conditions have led to phases of its revitalisation. It raises questions such as: what has caused the resurgence of the Madras tradition in the 1980s besides the economic crisis and authoritarian rule? What role do Madrassi healing rites have for

the popularity of the tradition? How is the growing significance of Pentecostalism and charismatic Christianity influencing Hindu traditions in contemporary Guyana?

Key Words: Hinduism, Sanskritisation, Madras Tradition, otherness

Indumattie sits in the hammock outside her house, the hooks screeching loudly with every movement.[1] She has tucked in the ends of her long skirt and watches me while I eat the bread and drink the tea she has handed to me on this Tuesday morning visit. Indumattie is a 65-year-old widow from rural Berbice, Guyana, who earns extra money to supplement her pension by occasionally stitching and fixing clothes or by selling bottled sweet drinks to her neighbors. Most of her life she has worked in weeding gangs on various sugar estates in the region. She refers to herself as a Guyanese Indian and a Hindu woman, frequently describing herself as poor and *'prapa punish'* (properly punished; having experienced a lot of misfortune). In our conversations she elaborates the relevance of Kali Puja in contemporary Guyanese society and her personal history. These conversations were part of my anthropological fieldwork conducted in Guyana between 2011 and 2013 with the objective of analysing the material culture of clothing in Hindu ritual and the (re)construction of Indian ethnic identity through dress and sartorial practices in transnational Guyanese networks (Kloß, 2016). The first time I met Indumattie was during a Sunday service at one of the most popular Kali churches in the region, which she attends as a member whenever she is able to afford the cost of travelling.[2]

Kali Puja or Kali-Mai Puja is a shaktistic Hindu tradition, in which the superior deity is the Goddess Kali. She is also referred to as Mariyamman, but usually devotees address her as *'Mudda'* (Mother). The term *puja* denotes individual and communal ritual worship of Hindu deities, in Guyana also referred to as

[1]All names have been changed to ensure my informants' anonymity.

[2]My informants refer to all public buildings or places of worship as 'churches', regardless of their religious affiliation. Generally, Madras temples are called 'churches' by the vast majority of Guyanese Madrassis, hence it is used in this study instead of the also appropriate terms *koiloo* or 'temple.' If a Hindu temple is termed *mandir*, this refers to a temple of the Sanatan or Arya Samaj Hindu traditions.

'wuk' (work, service). The influential priest Jamsie Naidoo promoted the term *Kali Puja* during the 1970s, replacing the formerly used appellation 'Madras tradition' (McNeal, 2011: 214). Today some practitioners reclaim this term to emphasise the respectability of the practices that form a distinct tradition in which the veneration of Kali is a key aspect amongst other practices. In the churches where I conducted research, services are usually held on a weekly basis and include animal sacrifice and manifestations of deities. Healing rituals take place at the end of each service and represent one of the main purposes of *pujas* and Sunday services. Devotees consult Mudda or other powerful deities, who 'manifest' in the bodies of practitioners and cure, for example, physical ailments, mental illnesses, or infertility. They also provide psychological support and counsel in case of domestic problems. When I ask Indumattie when she started to attend the ¬Kali church, she replies that she never used to 'go to churches' as a young girl, and that the reason why she decided to go lately was the illness of her daughter. In the past, her daughter had started to suffer from severe headaches, which were diagnosed as being caused by brain cancer. As Indumattie describes it:

> … About fifteen years abee go church. De same church dey. An before duh me does go udda-udda churches, an so on, dem nuh help she. Dem ah tell her, "Let she bathe an let she do she wuk with she own hand", an that wasn't the ting (...). Well, when abee go Blairmont [Kali church] there, Pujari Deonarine been deh dey. An he really wuk hard see me daughta. Wuk *hard*, you know. Over mark hard. You see, when me daughta start to play, throw dong sheself a grong an she roll. An she wuk hard.[3]

She continues to explain that as a younger woman, she used to have problems concerning childbirth and that Mudda helped her to overcome this:

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[3]Indumattie, November 15, 2011, Berbice, Guyana. "…For about fifteen years we have been going to [this] church. The same church [where you and I met]. And before I used to go to a number of other churches, and so on, [but] those did not help her. They told her, 'Let her bathe and let her do her wuk (work) with her own hands', but that wasn't the problem (...). Well, when we went to Blairmont [Kali church] there, Pujari Deonarine was there. And he really worked hard with my daughter. Worked *hard*, you know. Extremely hard. You see, when my daughter started to play [vibrate, catch energy], she threw herself down onto the ground and she rolled [there]. And she worked hard." (personal translation)

> When me bout fuh get dem, dem picknee ah born dead. Ah born dead. Tomorrow dem picknee go born, tonight dem dead in me belly. Some ah born an dem ah live wan couple hour an den dead. Well den me been join Ramroop clinic [but ee nuh help]. An whiles me go church, two a dem dead. An me beg Mudda, fuh get wan, an den ee get me dis wan. Get me dis wan. (…) An den ee dead lass year, pass away, brain tumor.[4]

She elaborates that she started to 'play' or 'marlo' (vibrate, manifest deities), also referred to as 'catching energy', during puja, and that for this reason she has become a member of the church. Her description of how and when she started to attend Kali churches is exemplary of a wide range of Kali's devotees in contemporary Guyana. High costs of medical treatment, failed treatments of illnesses by 'Western' medicine, or conceptualisations of afflictions as based on for example spirit possession induce a high number of 'Madrassis'—followers of the Madras tradition—to attend Kali churches.

In the same conversation, and although conveying her appreciation for Kali Puja, Indumattie further explains that in the wider context of society, the veneration of Mother Kali is a stigmatised practice, which is regularly frowned upon. Indeed, non-Madrassis frequently reproduce stereotypes of Madrassis in conversations and denote them as 'backward' and their practices as *'evil wuk'* or 'black magic'. Non-Madrassis commonly assume that the purpose of these practices is to cast bad spirits on other people or to generally harm them. Sometimes they not only insist that Madrassis sacrifice animals, but also narrate tales of human sacrifices to emphasise the alleged malevolence of Kali Puja. As a result, Kali Puja remains stigmatised and marginalised in contemporary Guyana, not only among Christians and Muslims, but similarly within the Hindu community itself, as discussed later.

Hinduism in Guyana consists of various traditions and subgroups such as the Sanatan, Madras, and Arya Samaj traditions, hence Guyanese Hindus cannot

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[4]Indumattie, November 15, 2011, Berbice, Guyana. "When I was about to get them, the children were born dead. Were born dead. Tomorrow the children were supposed to be born, tonight they died in my belly. Some were born and lived for a couple of hours and then died. Well then I joined Ramroop's clinic, but it did not help. And while I went to church, two of them died. And so I begged Mudda, to have one, and then she gave me this one. Got me this one. (…) And then she died last year, passed away, brain tumor." (personal translation)

be considered as a homogeneous group. Influenced by various historical conditions, socio-cultural contexts, and a dominant Christian influence, this article discusses how members of the mainstream Sanatan tradition have sought to establish their practices as a 'Great' or Sanskritic Hindu tradition in Guyana over the course of the twentieth century. Highlighting how members of the various Hindu traditions seek to establish and legitimise their practices, this article demonstrates that the traditions are constructed in relation to each other and that they are based on socio-cultural othering processes within the heterogeneous ethnic population of Guyana. It highlights that they are further influenced by the post-independence context as well as ethnic conflicts. Based on participant observation and ethnographic interviews, I discuss how the Madras tradition is an 'invented' yet 'authentic' tradition, and elaborate how various socio-political conditions have led to phases of revitalisation.

The Creation of Guyanese Hindu Orthodoxy

Hinduism has always been a minority religion in Guyana. According to the latest published national census 28.4 per cent of the Guyanese population is Hindu, while 57.7 per cent is Christian and 7.2 per cent Muslim (Benjamin, 2002). In such a diverse religious context, struggles for authority and community leadership take place, and result in contestations as well as the hierarchisation of religious beliefs and practices. Underlying these dynamics is the fact that Hinduism and Islam are identified with the 'Indian' ethnic group and that both religions are ethnic religions in Guyana (Vertovec, 1994; Khan, 2004). The Indian ethnic group developed largely in opposition to the so-called 'African' group (Premdas, 1992).[5] These groups base their ethnic identity mostly on shared common descent. For example, 'Indians' usually define themselves as descendants of Indian indentured laborers, while 'Africans' describe enslaved Africans as their ancestors. These ethnic groups, as well as concepts of 'Indianness' and 'Africanness', certainly must be considered as socially constructed, as they are defined and continuously reconstructed by social actors, cultural practices, and discourse. They are based on 'othering' processes, as discussed later.

[5]Both 'African' and 'Indian' are generic terms used among my informants in Berbice.

Hindu religious and other cultural practices performatively recreate Indian ethnic identity in Guyana. When Indian indentured laborers arrived between 1838 and 1917, they carried their religious traditions along with them. Although these are usually considered to have been maintained and 'preserved' up until today, they necessarily underwent transformation as a result of migration and transfer to the predominantly Christian society of then British Guiana. Syncretistic processes that resulted from this condition have been analysed in a variety of studies, and thus shall not be expanded upon in this article (Vertovec, 1992; Younger, 2004; 2009). In summary, processes of Christian-Hindu syncretism are particularly noticeable in the outline and organisation of *mandirs* (temples), which are usually one-room buildings with an 'altar,' a book stand on which important Hindu scriptures are arranged, and a general seating area. Services are conducted on Sunday mornings and Friday evenings. Various terms have been adopted from Christianity and are defined as 'translations,' such as the term 'church'.

Non-Hindus, among the colonisers as well as among the colonised groups, usually criticised Hinduism as 'heathen' and Hindus as 'idol worshipers,' denoting Hindu practices, scriptures, and philosophy as inferior to Christian ones. In this context, Hindus had to adopt and adapt specific (Christian) practices, for instance dress customs, to acquire higher social status (Jayawardena, 1966). These practices should not be considered passive acts and mere reactions to the conditions of plantation society with its inherent structures of Christian-British domination, but must also be considered as strategic adaptations and imitations (Bhabha, 2004). On the one hand Hindus were forced to transform some of their practices in order to gain upward social mobility, but on the other hand they also actively transformed certain practices to consolidate and maintain their community and traditions, claiming for instance moral superiority in relation to Christianity (Kloß, 2016).

The transformation of the present mainstream Hindu tradition¬—the Sanatan tradition—however, was as much impacted by internal transitions and hierarchisation processes as by Christan inferiorisation. Important to note in this context is, for example, the influence of the Arya Samaj, which is a reform movement that developed in British India at the end of the nineteenth century and was transferred by Arya Samaj missionaries to British Guiana in the 1920s (Seecharan, 1993). The movement developed in Indian intellectual circles, where an 'ethical reform Hinduism' was urged and Hindu practices

and beliefs were evaluated 'on the basis of Christian influence' (Michaels, 2004, 45). A common trait of these reform movements was the adoption of Christian criticism concerning Hindu practices (Singer, 1972; Bayly, 2004). The presence and popularity of this reform movement urged Guyanese *pandits* (Sanatan priests) to create institutional frameworks and formulate unitary propositions to counter the growing contestation of their authority in society.[6] This directly led to the growth of 'official' or 'mainstream' Hinduism, resulting in the development of a Brahmin monopoly over ritual and the formation of Guyanese Hindu organisations. Indeed, Steven Vertovec denotes the Arya Samaj as the 'chief catalyst for the institutionalisation of a unitary, standardised Brahmanic Hinduism'¬ (1994, 136f) in the Caribbean. Due to reformism it became relevant to 'quell the air of doubt which the reformists had breathed through the Hindu population' (ibid.).

The process of creating an 'official' or 'Brahmanic' Hinduism has to be considered as the (re)establishment of Sanskritic Hinduism or the 'Great Tradition' of Hinduism in Guyana. On the Indian subcontinent there generally exists a 'higher-level' Sanskritic Hinduism, which is opposed to a 'lower-level' popular Hinduism (Singer, 1972, 46). Sanskritic Hinduism here is defined as based on a 'generalised pattern of Brahmin practices and beliefs that have an all-India spread', while 'popular' Hinduism refers to 'those forms of Hinduism with a local, regional, or peninsular spread' (ibid., 68). Accordingly, as regards the Caribbean context, Vertovec reflects that the various practices and beliefs of Caribbean Hindus have to be explained in terms of 'official' and 'popular' forms of Hinduism. He defines 'official Hinduism' as referring to 'a set of tenets, rites, proscriptions and prescriptions which are promulgated through some institutionalised framework' (Vertovec, 1994b, 125). 'Popular Hinduism' on the other hand denotes 'beliefs and practices undertaken outside "official" auspices (…), so-called superstitious or magico-religious or charismatic phenomena (…), and "cult" phenomena' (ibid.). These categories are not discrete, but have to be regarded as ends of a continuum.

Drawing on my own fieldwork observations and interviews, I accordingly argue that the consolidation of the Sanatan tradition aimed to implement a

[6] A priest in the Sanatan and Arya traditions is referred to as *pandit*, while a priest or ritual practitioner in the Madras tradition is referred to as *pujari*.

Great Tradition and Hindu orthodoxy in Guyana by excluding particular rites associated with 'popular Hinduism' (Younger, 2009, Harms, 2010, McNeal, 2011). This Great Tradition counteracted proselytisation and consolidated the Hindu community as it could also be 'legitimised' as a respectable book religion, referring to Sanskrit scriptures and emphasising their great antiquity. The rituals that were excluded from the developing orthodoxy did not disappear, however, but were conducted in secret, as my informants describe with regard to 'life sacrifice' (animal sacrifice). Non-Madrassis consider particularly the practices of life sacrifice and manifestation as 'backward' and demonic (McNeal, 2005; 2011). In conversation with one of the most respected *pandits* in the Canje and Corentyne areas, Pandit Ramnarine—a 39-year-old Sanatan priest with a large fellowship and great authority due to his knowledge, travels, and popular singing voice—tells me that indeed 'animal sacrifice' was conducted in Hindu traditions a 'long time' ago, but that these practices were eliminated when 'men evolved' and people became more 'civilised'. He states:

> There was a time that animal sacrifice—it's in our scriptures—that it was practiced, and over the years, coming to learn that it is a cruel act, man has evolved and so should our worship, so should our spirituality... we evolve also. So eventually many temples have eliminated it. It's still practiced in some temples, but the act of killing has eased a lot.[7]

Followers of the Sanatan tradition focus on a pantheon of Sanskritic deities, such as Hanuman, Krishna, Shiva, Lakshmi, or Ganesha. Particularly popular and referenced scriptures are the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata (Singh, 2012). 'Services' are usually conducted in *mandirs* on Sunday mornings. They are congregational modes of worship. Combined with *parbs* (public religious functions) and household-oriented, semi-public functions, such as Hanuman Jhandi, Durga Paath, and Shiva Puran, these form the core of the Sanatan tradition at present.

Both the Sanatan and Madras traditions are constructed in relation and opposition to each other, hence are based on othering processes. Othering

[7]Pandit Ramnarine, November 8, 2011, Berbice, Guyana.

on the one hand unifies a group by defining inner-group similarities and by emphasising social, cultural, and historical commonalities. On the other hand, othering processes stress differences among people and construct one group as different and 'other' in relation to another. Othering hence emphasises and requires notions of both similarity and difference. It creates group identity on the basis of defining others and by drawing boundaries (Hall, 1996; 2000). Boundaries and differences do not exist per se, but are created to consolidate groups and create categories of people and practices that are perceived as culturally discrete (Eriksen, 1993). Thus, the processes of ascribing and producing difference and sameness both have to be regarded as fundamental aspects in the creation of ethnic and religious groups. Additionally, the dominant influence of Christianity on the development of the traditions must not be underestimated. Christian efforts at proselytisation in the colonial society and the Hindu reform movement Arya Samaj have had significant influence on the development and consolidation of the Sanatan tradition (Younger, 2009). At present and at the wider level of society, Christian and Muslim groups form the constitutive others for Hindu groups. On the local level in Berbice, the Sanatan and Madras traditions serve as constitutive others within the Hindu group itself. For example, Pandit Ramnarine frequently emphasises that he is involved in discussions with followers of the Madras tradition, denotes their practices as uncultured and the people as undisciplined, and defines Madrassis as inferior others. He states:

> Because, realise—a lot of those men who are there [at the Kali church], they're heavy drinkers. 'Cause remember, they go there because they get that freedom there. They feel they're not restricted, then. The way you are restricted in a Hindu, in a normal Hindu temple. Right? You're not restricted. Like, if you're a Catholic, then you have a lot of restrictions. Similarly, in these church... temples... or churches whatever you wanna call them, that restriction is not there.[8]

He not only names Sanatan practices as the 'normal' type of Hindu devotion, but also compares 'normal' Sanatan practices to Christian traditions, emphasising Sanatan respectability in opposition to Madrassi worship.

[8]Pandit Ramnarine, November 8, 2011, Berbice, Guyana.

He further refers to the relevance of scripture in perspectives on Hindu authenticity and respectability, elaborating how he would usually question Madrassis about the scriptural basis of their specific *murtis* (representations and manifestations of deities; statues): 'You know, some of the *murtis* they worship, I used to tell them: 'Can you direct me as to where I can read about them? "Cause I, in all my readings and in all my travels, I've never come across something like this. But you have it. So please, educate [me].'" He unhesitatingly proposes Sanatan superiority and his statements are no exception among Sanatanists. Most Guyanese openly devalue Madrassi practices as 'uneducated' and suggest that their beliefs are the result of a lack of knowledge, drawing on the common link between respectability and education.

Sanatanists often explain that another indicator of their lack of education is the Madrassis' belief in 'spirit possession' as the cause of specific illnesses. Madrassi healing practices are frequently denoted as superstitious and 'black magic,' hence are positioned outside the framework of (respectable) religions.[9] Respectability refers to the social stratification of society based on morality and is reflected and reinstated through for example religious practices, education, and dress. Its emphasis in the Caribbean is often denoted as a colonial legacy (Wilson, 1969; Stoler, 1989). In British Guiana and from the perspective of the coloniser, respectability was based on Christian morals and values, and therefore Hindus were restricted to lower-status positions. Hindus have challenged this definition of Christian respectability by claiming for instance higher morality and (alternative) respectable standards (Kloß, 2016). Accordingly, McNeal describes how

> West Indian Hinduism has (…) incorporated values and biases that take the colonial matrix of respectability as their frame of reference. In order to authenticate their religion, orthodox leaders and their constituencies have sought to 'modernise' and purify Hinduism of the more 'primitive' aspects of the Indian past, such as animal sacrifice, fire pass, and trance performance. (McNeal 2011, 306)

[9]The label 'black magic' has further implications for Guyanese Indian identity, as some Guyanese Indians perceive the label 'black' to be offensive and as implying a lack of authenticity (Kloß, 2016). This is the result of and indicates the tense atmosphere between the 'African' and 'Indian' ethnic groups in Guyana, as discussed later.

In addition, Sanatanist devaluation of the Madras tradition is influenced by a dichotomous approach to thought and action, spirituality and practice. Some Sanatanists such as Pandit Ramnarine reproduce the common differentiation of mind and body by prioritising spirituality as the utmost and most respectable path of religious activity for salvation. He, as others, indicates that Madrassis are rather 'mechanical' or 'physical', while Sanatanists instead are 'spiritual' people who are able to understand and 'grasp' concepts on a 'higher' philosophical level; something that, according to him, Madrassis cannot do. Madrassis do not reject this differentiation of mind and body, spirituality and action. They emphasise that their physical performance of *puja* must be considered as a proof of their devoted service, effort, and endurance. Sanatan *pujas*, they claim, are for 'lazy' people who 'like to sit' and rather passively receive merit.

The differentiation between spiritual and physical veneration is also evident in the outline and design of the different temples. While the devotion of the various deities in the Sanatan way is conducted usually on and around a single altar, Kali churches consist of various temple buildings that house one to four deities. The performance of *puja* thus requires bodily movement between the various temples, facilitating different embodied experiences. The inferiorisation of action in relation to thought may be contested and criticised, I argue, as action and thought are inter-related processes that mutually influence each other (Scheper-Hughes and Lock, 1987). All *pujas* must indeed be considered as performative and embodied practices, in which actions, thought, relations, and bodies are involved. They are cultural performances that represent and reproduce culturally specific structures and patterns of both thought and action (Tambiah, 1979).

Although usually the differences between the two traditions are emphasised, Sanatanists and Madrassis seldom acknowledge similarities among the practices, overlooking them or blending them out. When comparing the basic outline of worship in both traditions, one may notice similarities in terms of structure and purpose, rather than difference. The objective of *puja* in both traditions is to honor all deities in a prescribed sequence, to welcome them as guests, and to offer gifts to them. As rather differences are stressed and analysed, the relevance of othering processes in the construction of the traditions is again emphasised.

Bottom-house Wuk

Current and past stigmatisation of the Madras tradition has influenced the development of 'bottom-house *wuk*.' Not only Indumattie, but numerous other informants explain that some people try to 'make profit' from Madras practices by conducting healing rituals during privately-run *pujas* inside their bottom houses. The bottom house is the open or enclosed space under traditional-style Guyanese houses, built on stilts. Pujari Ramnauth, a 51-year-old widower from rural Berbice, who is involved in contestations of and claims for Madrassi leadership, also frequently criticises bottom-house *wuk*—not only in private conversations, but also during public Sunday services. In our first conversation in October 2011, he, like many others, explains that some people conduct healing rituals at home for those people who are 'ashamed' to go to a Kali Puja. He elaborates that these people are, for example, Christians and Muslims, who do not want to publicly acknowledge their belief in Mudda and Madrassi practices. He further describes that for the same reason numerous people attend Kali churches in neighboring villages, so as to not be seen by fellow villagers. The following is an extract from this conversation:

Pujari Ramnauth: …All the nastiness. A lot of people practice the same thing right here. Right here [in their houses, not the temple]. And they endanger other people lives. They practice evil wuk and they endanger other people lives. And in order to stop this, then, if every temple be under an organisation, then we can able to intervene in the bottom-house things and so on.

Sinah: The bottom-house things; is this what is hidden? The hidden practices, or where they take a lot of money?

Pujari Ramnauth: Yes. They do they own practices, and they're the one who does the charging and fees…

Sinah: For the healing, right? They pay money and then they do it, right? I'm not sure.

Pujari Ramnauth: Yeah, they pay money. Sometime they doesn't does the right thing because they don't know. If you walk throughout Guyana and aks [ask] somebody to say a proper mantra, the bottom-house people, they don't know.

Sinah: Why do they feel they can do it?

Pujari Ramnauth: Because they have a little manifestation and through that now, people are, because of the sickness, they will believe that: 'Okay, I will be healed here.' And they go. They pay they money, sometimes they don't heal; it [the money] gone.

Sinah: Why are the people going to those people and not to the *mandirs* [where the rituals are free]?

Pujari Ramnauth: Because some people believe that they don't want to be seen in a Kali temple. (...) People from other denominations, like Muslims, Christians. They doh want.

Sinah: They all go, but they don't want to be seen.

Pujari Ramnauth: Hm-hm. So it's a different situation. Likewise you go find people from Blairmont will gone to another village temple. And other village people will come to Blairmont temple. So this is a whole thing which this one don't want to be seen here, that one don't want to be seen there.

Sinah: They are not proud of their...

Pujari Ramnauth: Right, right. They're not proud of what they are doing. Because they don't *know* what they are doing, what they are up to. Well if they knew, they would know who is the divine mother—that

> is why I stress all the time upon teaching people. [10]

To counter stigmatisation and feelings of shame among the many people who attend bottom-house wuk, he explains that he is now producing little booklets about the tradition and practices, so that people would gain pride in their traditions through knowledge about them. The link between respectability and education is again revealed. Ramnauth's actions additionally indicate strategies for legitimising the Madras tradition through scripture, hence as book religion. This is particularly relevant in a society in which oral religious traditions are usually inferiorised.

The general criticism of bottom-house *wuk* serves several purposes: primarily, *pujaris* express their concern as to what may happen to the health of a person who is treated in a wrong way. *Pujaris* and devotees often recount various incidents of 'bad treatment' that have led to worsening conditions or death. Secondly, the reputation of the tradition is at stake, as *pujaris* seek to establish and institutionalise it, setting it distinctively apart from *Obeah,* or 'black magic', and as a reputed Hindu tradition in the wider context of society. Thirdly, they counteract what they perceive of as a commoditisation of their practices and their loss of spiritual or religious authority. Bottom-house practitioners on the other hand justify themselves by claiming that Mudda chose them during and through past manifestations, and that they have 'caught' her energy or power then. They comment that the transfer of money for the ritual is not a 'payment' but a donation. This aspect is also commonly pointed out with regard to Sanatan *pujas*, in which the pandit receives *dakshna*—depending on perspective this is defined as either a donation or payment; in official Hindu discourse it is considered a voluntary donation.

The Revitalisation of a 'South Indian' Tradition

Over the course of the twentieth century, the practices excluded from the Sanatan tradition developed into the Madras tradition, as discussed earlier. Madrassi practices have undergone various phases of revitalisation, particularly during the 1920s, 1960s, and since the late 1970s. These phases

[10]Pujari Ramnauth, October 18, 2011, Berbice, Guyana.

were the result of various socio-historic conditions, in which for example healing rites and group solidarity were particularly relevant and sought. In 1918/19 an influenza epidemic influenced the growing need for healing rituals and community-building (Dunn, 1971). This was accelerated when in the 1920s the agricultural sector suffered due to low export prices for sugar and rice, a condition that affected everyone, but especially the rural Indian population. This situation was aggravated by the Great Depression of the 1930s. The 1960s in Guyana were marked by the struggle for and achievement of independence from Great Britain in 1966. Prior to this, from 1961 to 1964, the country experienced the period of most severe inter-ethnic tension and violence between Guyanese 'Africans' and 'Indians', stimulated by political struggles for power, as well as food scarcity (Garner, 2008). Ethnic tension, economic depression, and food scarcity were repeated during the late 1970s and 1980s Guyana, particularly during Forbes Burnham's authoritarian rule and the colloquially called 'food ban'—the governmental restriction of specific imports to make Guyana an autarkic nation. This context created a need for ethnic group consolidation.

Guyanese ethnic groups developed in the course of colonial rule, but have been maintained and reproduced since then. They were particularly emphasised from the early 1950s due to the process of ethnopoliticisation and general resource competition (Garner, 2008). Ethnic and racial othering is one of the most fundamental and dividing aspects that influences and structures Guyanese public and private life. Negative sentiments and stereotypes towards 'other' ethnic groups are common. These othering processes are further fueled by 'ethnic entrepreneurs' (Allahar, 2004, 121), who draw on prevailing essentialist and/or primordial notions to achieve political goals, resulting in the ethnicisation of the political system and practices of 'ethnic voting'. Politicians of both groups foster and institutionalise anti-African or anti-Indian sentiments in order 'to prevent the other side from coming to power at all costs' (Garner, 2008, 120f). In the 1970s political movements such as the Black Power Movement have led to the consolidation of the 'African' ethnic group and respectively also the 'Indian' ethnic group. As religion and ethnicity are entwined, these movements have also influenced the local religious environment. For the Trinidadian context, McNeal describes how religious traditions such as Orisha were consolidated and institutionalised as a result of for example the Black Power Movement (2011, 269). Ethnicity, politics, and religion are deeply intertwined in Guyana, and for example

voting practices are influenced by religion alongside aspects of race, class, and gender. As religious communities and traditions facilitate the creation and maintenance of ethnic group identities, Hinduism became 'the privileged vehicle of diasporic identification for a revivifying *glocal* Indian ethnicity' (ibid., 267). Despite its history of inferiorisation it provided a means to challenge the Christian-dominated notion of respectability by highlighting the ancient and 'civilised' past of Indian culture and by excluding elements that could potentially be labelled as 'uncivilised'. The 'uncivilised' Madras practices were therefore doubly marginalised, first within general society, and then further within the Hindu community itself.

The development and revitalisation of the Madras tradition must be contextualised within these ethno-political movements of the 1970s, but further within the context of the general transformation of the Guyanese religious environment that commenced in the 1970s and accelerated during the 1980s. This transformation was specifically linked to political and economic changes that occurred in 1980s Guyana. After Burnham's successor Desmond Hoyte initiated the Economic Recovery Program in 1989, structural adjustment programs were implemented that induced the liberalisation of the economy and the privatisation of government-owned businesses. Worldwide neoliberal restructuring led to the growth of charismatic and ecstatic religious traditions, as has been discussed for example with regard to the growth of Pentecostalism in various African nations (Comaroff, 2012; Freeman, 2012; Hasu, 2012). Pentecostalism has similarly increased in Guyana, especially since the 1980s. According to the national census of 2002, the percentage of Pentecostals rose from 7.5 in 1991 to 16.9 in 2002, while membership for instance in the Anglican Church dropped from 13.8 to 6.9 per cent in the respective years (Benjamin, 2002). The growing popularity of Pentecostalism may be linked to its particular adaptability to the neoliberal market economy. For instance, when preaching the 'prosperity gospel',' wealth and material success are 'taken as a sign of God's blessing' (Freeman, 2012, 15) and are not opposed to it, as is often proposed by the more orthodox traditions that emphasise humility and modesty. The revitalisation of the Madras tradition, however, cannot be linked to this concept of prosperity gospel, but rather the tradition's capacity to transform the self through ecstatic and charismatic practices. Self-transformation is an important aspect in Pentecostal churches, particularly in those that focus on demons and deliverance instead of preaching the prosperity gospel (Hasu, 2012). Through these practices feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness, prevalent among the majority

of Guyanese during this period due to the socio-political conditions and growing economic inequalities, may be dissolved to create a regained sense of agency. Analysing the extraordinary growth rate of Pentecostalism, Dena Freeman elaborates that often people with low self-esteem or feelings of powerlessness start to attend Pentecostal churches, seeking to …change their situation. Through their engagement with pastors and other church members, in study, prayer and healing, these people begin to see themselves as valued individuals, part of God's people, a 'somebody' rather than a 'nobody'. Most important of all, they begin to move beyond a passive fatalism and come to realise that they have agency in their lives... (2012, 13)

This also applies to the Madras tradition, in which all members are acknowledged by personal communication and also medical treatment with and through divine manifestations. With this interpretation I do not negate the possibility and capacity of Kali Puja to heal, support, and help devotees, as indeed I have witnessed positive effects among several people, but I argue that besides healing practices, socio-economic conditions have also influenced the numbers of people attending Kali Puja. In this context, a parallel to the development and growth of Pentecostalism may be drawn.

As a subaltern religious tradition the Madras tradition provided its followers with a particular agency and capacity to challenge existing power structures. Madrassi practitioners from Guyana further influenced the development of Kali-Mai Puja in other parts of the Caribbean. Exchange processes and the mobility of *pujaris* between for example Guyana and Trinidad led to the revitalisation of the tradition in both places. This exchange took place especially from the 1970s, when the influential Guyanese *pujari* Jamsie Naidoo visited and was visited by Trinidadian practitioners. According to McNeal, in Trinidad the 'concept of a Kali temple dedicated solely to ecstatic weekly services with an especially strong healing orientation therefore stems from this Guyanese connection' (2011, 173). The effect such an exchange may have had on the practice in Guyana must not be underestimated. My informants frequently emphasise that they perceive Guyana to be 'below' Trinidad and Tobago in terms of socio-economic development, even though they may proclaim and criticise this at times as Trinidadian 'arrogance'. They reflect Trinidad and Tobago's economic development, which was influenced by the oil boom and industrialisation during the 1970s. The possibility to teach Trinidadians about Kali-Mai Puja and to implement specific structures

must have raised the self-esteem of Guyanese practitioners, as it subverted power relations.

The 1970s revitalisation has been particularly relevant in the consolidation of the Madras tradition and its recent mode of worship. Engaging in othering discourse, my informants consider the Sanatan tradition to have derived from North Indian practices and to have been 'imported' by Indian indentured laborers who left British India through the port of Kolkata. They categorise the Madras tradition as South Indian in origin and as 'imported' by South Indian laborers, who left through the port of Chennai, then Madras. However, it must be considered that Kali Puja and Madrassi practices such as life sacrifice and manifestation are not specific to a region in India, but that they indeed are and have been part of popular Hindu traditions or specific caste groups, conducted mostly outside the framework of Sanskritic Hinduism.[11] The classification as solely South Indian is a social construction, a process that supports group formation and serves as a basis for othering. It creates a specific group identity, and by partaking in Kali Puja, the (alleged) Madrassi descent of the practitioners is performatively reinstated or even discovered in this process (Harms, 2010).

The example of the Madras tradition in particular highlights how socio-religious traditions are actively created or 'invented'. According to Eric Hobsbawm, an invented tradition is

> …a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past. (Hobsbawm, 1992, c1983, 1)

Invented traditions appear to be old, but have often developed recently. They serve the purpose of creating a sense of stability and balance in society, thus specific standardised practices are established and are constantly transformed

[11] In certain South Asian regions such as West Bengal animal sacrifice is conducted within the framework of Sanskritic Hinduism, for example directed towards the Goddess Kali.

to suggest 'continuity with the past' (ibid.). By labelling the tradition as 'invented,' I do not claim that there exist traditions which are 'genuine,' and hence are more authentic. This would reproduce a discourse on the alleged opposition of 'creole' or mixed and 'pure' or authentic cultures. All cultures and traditions are always in exchange and hence are constantly reinvented (Pinney, 2002). By proposing one's religious tradition as ancient, authentic, and originary, the social actor constitutes and reinstates his or her status as well as (high) position in socio-religious hierarchy. As I consider authenticity to be socially constructed, I emphasise that it is not my intention to label the Madras tradition as 'inauthentic' by denoting it as 'invented'.

Strategies of Authentication and the Creation of Respectable Traditions

When particular rites are excluded or adapted to conform to a specific standard of respectability and raise the practitioner's status, in the context of South Asian Hinduism this process has been discussed as Sanskritisation. The concept of Sanskritisation refers to a process by 'which a "low" Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology, and way of life in the direction of a high, and frequently, "twice-born" caste' (Srinivas, 1966, 6). The objective of this transformation is to acquire a higher position in the caste hierarchy than that traditionally claimed by the specific group. As caste and religion are intricately related in South Asian Hinduism the concept of Sanskritisation is linked to caste.

No caste system similar to the Indian one has been transferred to and maintained in the Caribbean however. Today, only caste identities exist (van der Veer and Vertovec, 1991), expressed through the term 'nation'. In Indo-Guyanese terminology 'nation' refers to ethnic groups such as Indian, African, or Chinese (Singer, 1967; Allsopp and Allsopp, 2003). Within the 'Indian nation', high and low nations are furthermore defined to indicate status (Roopnarine, 2006, 3). Caste identities have few implications for social actors compared to the notion of caste in India at present. They are mostly pronounced by *pandits* claiming Brahmin identity as a source of prestige and as a means of social differentiation. They do not directly impact work, marriage, or places of residence. Terms indicating caste identities such as '*chatree*' (Kshatriya) have been applied in popular discourse to claim or mock for instance Kshatriya—'thoroughbred' and high-class—caste identity.

At times my informants also refer to 'Madras' in terms of caste identity.[12] In this context, Madrassis or South Indians are usually described as 'darker' in terms of skin color and in comparison to North Indians, and their hair as 'curly.' These proposed characteristics indicate a link that is created between Madrassis and Guyanese Africans, which—from the perspective of some 'North Indian' Guyanese—reinstates lower Madrassi status. Accordingly, Madrassi rituals are often denoted as 'low-nation' practices.

With the demise of caste, is Sanskritisation, with its inherent conceptual reference to caste hierarchy, still a relevant process in Guyana? Practices that are part of Sanskritisation processes include, for instance, the adoption of 'vegetarianism, teetotal rules, and the deities, rites, and myths of "Sanskritic Hinduism" as defined in Sanskrit literature and philosophy and as practiced by Brahmans' (Singer, 1972, 260f). These adoptions have been at the forefront of processes that were directed at making Hinduism 'respectable' and at creating Hindu orthodoxy in Guyana. In this sense, Sanskritisation in the Guyanese context may refer to a process of claiming and acquiring respectability by ridding oneself of 'uncivilised' practices and elements. It is furthermore a process that highlights the old age and (greater) sophistication of Hindu-Indian culture in comparison to Christian culture. Although no Sanskrit is spoken in Guyana, its continued use in Hindu *pujas* highlights its capacity to authenticate Hindu practices. Sanskritisation in Guyana thus refers to the creation of respectable orthodoxy that invokes notions of a 'civilised' and 'cultured' Indian past and creates an alternative framework of respectability. It serves and has served as a means to consolidate and maintain Indian ethnic identity.

Specific rituals, as described earlier, were defined as incompatible with a 'respectable' religious tradition and were hence excluded. These practices were continued to be practiced, however, although often in secret and referred to as *gao pujas* (village pujas). When (re)gaining popularity in the 1970s and 1980s, these practices became increasingly standardised and consolidated as Madrassi. Deodatt, a 58-year-old cane worker from rural Berbice and a ritual practitioner in the Madras tradition, explains that the tradition has evolved from annual communal *pujas* to weekly Sunday services. He emphasises the role of Jamsie 'Papplu' Naidoo in this development, who was a popular *pujari* during this period and had a leading role in the tradition. Deodatt states:

> Yes, they start it there. They start it recently. But since Papplu been in the Kali worshipping, (…) some of the churches, unto now, some of the Kali churches dem, they just open and do like a little regular just thing, they burn them *sambrany* and then open dem church and then put wan-wan flower and thing on Sunday, and they done! They nuh manifest! But most of the churches dem now, *do* have manifestation on every Sunday, most of the church. If you got wan hundred church in Guyana, like about, ninety. And like about ten that no manifestation in Sunday.[13]

He explains that most Kali churches today host services every Sunday, a development linked to the ongoing consolidation and institutionalisation of the tradition.

Devotees of Mother Kali actively engage in raising the status of their practices and challenge the persistent stigmatisation and inferiorisation through standardisation, the creation of a Madrassi orthodoxy, and an emphasis on its South Indian origin. They standardise it for example with regard to infrastructure. In Paul Younger's analysis, 'some of the ritual core of it was a careful reproduction of Māriyamma□ ritual the worshippers had known in India, but the layout of the temple and the organisational framework in which the ritual is carried out is new to Guyana' (2009, 73). At present practitioners build permanent concrete temples, while in the past only temporary places of worship had been constructed. This development is influenced by the understanding that a religious tradition should own permanent churches and buildings in order to be considered respectable. The link between 'proper' church buildings and respectability is not exclusive to the Madras tradition; Christian missionaries in Guyana had already reflected that buildings lent 'respectability to the congregation' (Dunn, 1971, 85). In all Hindu communities in which I conducted research,

[13]Deodatt, February 15, 2012, Berbice, Guyana. 'Yes, they started it there. They started it recently. But since Papplu has been in the Kali worshipping, (…) some of the churches, until today, some of the Kali churches just open and do a small, regular thing, they burn their *sambrany* [incense] and then open the churches and then put flowers etc. on Sunday, and then they are done! They don't manifest! But most of the churches now, *do* have manifestation on every Sunday, most of the churches. If you have one hundred churches in Guyana, like about, ninety. And like about ten do not have manifestation on Sundays." (personal translation)

the continuing improvement and beautification of buildings and *murtis* is of great importance, raising the community's status.

Religious scripture serves as a source of legitimacy and basis for standardisation as well. Its relevance is revealed by Sanatan Hindus' criticism that Madrassi rituals and deities cannot be found in any existing or legitimate Hindu scripture. 'Legitimate' in this context usually refers to Sanskrit writings including the Vedas. Oral traditions are consequently devalued and inferiorised, and emphasis is given to scripture—a view as prevalent in the Caribbean as elsewhere (Sheller, 2003). Initially an oral tradition, Madrassis frequently mention the foundational scriptures of their tradition now. Deodatt, for instance, highlights that Kali Puja 'essentially' is a *gao puja* which is 'prescribed' in the Mariyamman Thalattu. The Mariyamman Thalattu—a Tamil song usually sung during puja to praise and soothe Kali/Mariyamman—was initially orally transmitted, but is now published in small booklets by *pujaris*. These publications, besides providing a 'scriptural' basis for and hence enhancing the status of the practices, are also a means of raising individual social status. The Devi Mahatmya is further referenced as one of the foundational scriptures, which is a Sanskrit text referring to the Goddess Durga, usually associated with Kali and considered her sister or one of her forms. Referential scriptures are sometimes 'discovered' and the various religious leaders use such discoveries to maintain or challenge communal leadership. Pujari Ramnauth, for instance, excitedly explained on one occasion that he had just received a call from an acquaintance who had discovered a document on Mariyamman that had been 'imported' from Suriname recently. This document or scripture did not have any impact on the tradition while I was conducting fieldwork, yet Ramnauth applied it in conversation to claim greater knowledge and authenticity of his Madrassi worship in comparison to other *pujaris*.

Besides building temple infrastructure, emphasising scripture, and adapting to a weekly schedule, Madrassis apply other processes to standardise their tradition and create Madrassi orthodoxy. For example, they include Sanskritic Hindu deities such as Ganga. The definition and promotion of Madrassi *gurus* (teachers, spiritual guides) have become prominent features and during weekly services these *gurus*—usually elder or deceased head *pujaris*—are often referenced as sources of authority. Interestingly, these

processes of standardisation are similar to the processes that characterise a Hindu tradition as Sanskritic.[14]

Within the Madras tradition internal contestations of authority, leadership, and social status take place and have influenced the development of specific Madrassi 'ways'. These variations, namely the English, Tamil, and Vegetarian ways, have evolved over the past decades, the English way having been promulgated particularly by Jamsie Naidoo in the 1970s (McNeal, 2011). The classification of 'English' and 'Tamil' refers to the languages used during worship and spoken by the deities during manifestation. Tamil and English are the 'ways' my informants commonly list. The third way of Madrassi worship, the 'Vegetarian' way, is mentioned less often, and only some consider it a distinctive way. Deodatt however indicates that 'sweet' practices are conducted in the Vegetarian way, meaning that the practitioners reject animal sacrifice and instead use limes and nutmeg as substitutes for goats and fowls. Some informants refer to it as the 'Durga' way, as Durga is considered the 'quiet form' of Kali, who in contrast is described as 'fierce'. The Vegetarian or Durga way may be regarded as a novel process of Sanskritisation within the Madras tradition, in which 'vegetarianism' is applied to emphasise a more Sanskritic, orthodox, or 'respectable' mode of worship. This way remains marginal however – a development that stands in contrast to Trinidad, where 'antisacrifice sentiment has in fact become more prevalent' (McNeal, 2011, 160).

From the perspective of Tamil-way practitioners it would be contradictory to refer to Sanskritised modes of worship as sources of legitimation for Madrassi practices. Instead, members of the English and particularly Tamil ways highlight the Tamil origin as the basis for authenticity. Authenticity in the Tamil way revolves around an emphasis on 'originary' Tamil cultural elements; hence its members often draw on retentionist discourse. For example Pujari Uttamkumar, who distinguishes the English from the Tamil way and claims membership of the latter, considers it the more 'authentic' tradition,

[14]In his analysis of 'Great' and popular Hindu traditions in India, Milton B. Singer discusses that Sanskritic or 'Great Traditions' are usually characterised by '1. A body of sacred scriptures and texts in which the Great Tradition is embodied and expressed, 2. A class of literati who have authority to read and interpret the sacred scriptures, 3. Leading personalities, such as Nehru and Gandhi, who convex their vision of the Great Tradition to the masses of the people, 4. A 'sacred geography' of holy places (...), 5. A 'sacred calendar' of rites and ceremonies' (1972, 56).

pointing out that in South India Tamil is spoken instead of English.[15] Tamil practitioners claim authenticity on the basis that Mudda speaks Tamil during manifestation—her words are then translated into English.[16] Adherents of the 'English way' counter these claims to authenticity by emphasising that as a deity and creator of all languages, Mudda speaks English and wants her devotees to understand her. They see *'nutten wrang'* (nothing wrong) with her English parlance, a characteristic that has significantly influenced the popularity of the tradition and influenced its revitalisation since the 1970s.

Knowledge of Tamil—similar to the knowlegde of scripture and philosophy—is used to create status and to contest leadership in all Madrassi ways. In the same conversation with Pujari Uttamkumar of the Tamil way, he accuses Pujari Ramnauth of the English way to be 'lying' about his personal ability to understand and speak Tamil. Stating that Ramnauth may be able to 'read a little', but not more than that, he calls the Tamil of other practitioners 'broken'—labelling them as 'other' and actively constructing different Madrassi groups. The term 'broken' is frequently applied in the context of Guyanese Creole, which most Guyanese usually degrade as 'broken' English and as inferior to Standard English, considering its use as indicative of a person's low social status. Pujari Uttamkumar himself claims appropriate Tamil language skills and proudly displays a certificate issued to him by the High Commission of India in Guyana on the wall of his office, which confirms that he has finished a course in 'Elementary Tamil' offered by the Indian Cultural Center in Georgetown in the early 1990s. The relevance of Tamil indicates the tradition's emphasis on South Indian heritage, which its members apply to create Madrassi group identity and authenticity. Sanskritisation and the emphasis on Tamil language and origin in the Hindu-Guyanese context thus may be interpreted as authentication strategies and processes. They (re)create and are based on different measures of respectability that are influenced to various extents by Hindu practices and theologies, labelled as Sanskritic or Tamil.

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[15]Uttamkumar explains that there exist eight 'Tamil-speaking Mariyamman churches' as opposed to approximately twenty 'English-speaking' churches at the time of interview in November 2011. He lists Letterkenny, Whim, Port Mourant, Rose Hall, Hampshire, Albion, Canefield, Good Faith (East Coast), and Triumph (East Coast) as Tamil.

[16]Other characteristics of the Tamil way are its limited 'Tamil' pantheon and, for instance, different styles of ritual vestment (Kloß, 2016).

Conclusion

Particularly since the 1970s and 1980s, in the context of independence, nation-building, and ethnopoliticisation, the Madras tradition has been revitalised and standardised, consolidating what may be labelled an invented tradition. However, this invention, as has been illustrated in this article, should not be regarded as marking the tradition as inauthentic, for indeed there exist no 'genuine' cultures. Authenticity, in this regard, has to be understood as a social construction, and in this way the Madras tradition is both invented and authentic. It was created predominantly in opposition to the mainstream Sanatan tradition as well as dominant Christian traditions. Othering processes form the basis of the tradition's construction, as is also the case for the various ethnic groups in Guyana. On the local level, the Madras and Sanatan religious groups have to be understood as constitutive others.

In the tense socio-political and economic environment of the 1970s and 1980s, feelings of hopelessness were common, especially among the rural population, and fostered the revitalisation of the tradition. This development must not be understood as a passive reaction however, but was also influenced by the growing popularity of individual healing rituals and a belief system that includes spirits as causes of illnesses. Of great significance in this process have also been specific *pujaris*, whom Madrassis often label as *gurus* or spiritual leaders. Particularly prominent in the English way, the most popular way at present, is the deceased *pujari* Jamsie Naidoo. Although his status is challenged by 'Tamil way' practitioners such as Pujari Uttamkumar, Naidoo is often referred to as *guru*, a great Madrassi leader, and foundational figure among members of the English way. The figure of Naidoo holds a significant role not only in processes of standardisation, but further in the (re)invention of the Madras tradition. Many times informants such as Indumattie referred to the Indian state of Tamil Nadu—the proposed ancestral South Indian lands of Madrassi worship—as '*Tamil Naidoo*.' They (unconsciously) draw an analogy between Naidoo and the 'home' of the Madras tradition, conflating the now historic figure with ancestral lands and inventing the tradition by creating a suitable historic past. The act of denoting him as *guru* furthermore becomes a means to claim the respectability of the tradition, which remains stigmatised and marginalised until the present day, leading to secretive practices such as bottom-house *wuk*.

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Contextualising the Psychology of Spiritual Development among Caribbean Emerging Adults: Correlates with Healthy Family Relationships, Peer Associations and Drug Use

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Abstract

Although a sizable body of research has examined the socio-demographic correlates of religious involvement within the African Diaspora, few have been conducted about spirituality among Black Caribbean youth. This study: (a) interrogates the construct of 'spirituality'; (b) discusses the positive role of interfaith youth groups within the Caribbean; (c) posits a psychological explanation of the period of emerging adulthood and the associated psychosocial characteristics which facilitate spiritual development among this demographic; and, (d) quantitatively explores the relationships among spirituality, drug use, peer associations and family relations in Black Caribbean emerging adults. It was found that with an increase in the level of spirituality, the greater the likelihood that an emerging adult would experience healthy family functioning, positive peer associations and be less likely to engage in alcohol and marijuana use.

Key Words: spirituality, emerging adults, peer associations, drug use

Introduction

Religion and spirituality are important elements of Caribbean culture (Best-Cummings, 2008; Hernandez-Ramdwar, 2014; Segal, 1995) and are believed to have a protective role in maintaining the moral fabric of Caribbean society. For some within the Caribbean, a spiritual awareness is developed through participation in religious practices. Recently there has been some outcry that the moral decline in society can be attributed to the decline in the number of Caribbean youth embracing religion. However, we argue that although engagement in formal religions may be declining among this demographic it does not mean that they consider themselves any less spiritual. Therefore, both religion and spirituality can be viewed as necessary agents of socialisation (intricately intertwined or as separate entities) that can play a critical role, instilling positive values in youth in the English-speaking Caribbean (Lerner, Alberts, Anderson and Dowling, 2005). Hence the purpose of this research is to investigate the extent to which the spirituality of youth is related to healthy familial relationships, positive peer associations and a reduction in the use of alcohol and marijuana.

Many religious denominations in the Caribbean were born out of the interfacing of Africans, Europeans, East Indians, Chinese, Middle Easterners and Native peoples in the region (Murrell, 2010). However, due to a shared European Imperial past and the exportation of Christianity to the Caribbean (Gerloff, 2006; Husband, 2011), Christianity was and continues to be the most dominant religion in the region (Segal, 1995; Taylor, 2013). Given this historical landscape there is an estimated 23 million people of African descent in the Caribbean (Thésée and Carr, 2012) affiliated with a number of Christian-based religions (Taylor and Chatters, 2010). For example, religious beliefs and practices in the region include (but are not limited to) Anglican, Catholic, Protestant, Shango, Spiritual Baptist, Pentecostal, Vodun, Rastafari and Seventh Day Adventist (Clarke, 2013) which are, in some cases, characteristic of the hybridisation of European and African traditions in the 16th through 19th centuries. Despite the presence of a multiplicity of faith traditions, it is important to note that in the Caribbean there are great variations in the prestige that is afforded to different religious groups. Hence, they are not treated equally, in terms of issues of legitimisation, public recognition or respectability. For example, as noted by Austin-Broos (2002) in studying Pentecostalism in Jamaica, its relationship with the Bible

as being the origin of all human history, raises its profile as a mainstream religion; while religions such as Vodun and Rastafarianism have seen legal persecutions and cultural marginalisation in the mainstream (Maranise, 2012; Miller, 1993).

Not only are Caribbean nationals raised with an understanding and appreciation of religious practices within the home, churches, temples and mosques, but most Caribbean schools begin each day with prayer or devotion sessions and many Caribbean secondary schools teach students religious studies from form one to five thereby exposing children to religious education. Additionally, the Caribbean Examination Council, the regional examining body for secondary and post-secondary candidates, offers formal certification in religious education. The syllabus is designed to provide students with opportunities to engage with material exploring humanity's search for meaning and purpose. The religious education syllabus also facilitates an appreciation and affirmation of one's own sense of self and unique identity and provides opportunities to interrogate the concept of 'God' in various religions. Moreover, the syllabus is intended to expose students to various religious ideas and values (for example, Christianity, Hindusim, Islam and Judaism) so that they can interact with people of different religious and cultural persuasions beyond the Caribbean context in meaningful ways (Caribbean Examinations Council, 2015). Despite the efforts being made by the educational system to impart religious knowledge among youth, there is still a call being made by regional leaders for young people to incorporate religious principles into their lives as a way to restore the moral and social fabric of Caribbean society.

Within the Caribbean, adherence to the sacred teachings and practices of religion and the church in particular (such as prayer, worship and community outreach), are viewed as having an important role to play in 'righting the wrongs' of the society. For example, in 2010, given increasing levels of youth violence and crime in Jamaica, the then Prime Minister, the honourable Bruce Golding endorsed a call by churches for a national day of repentance, renewal and healing for the country. During that same year, several religious leaders from six umbrella church groups gathered across the island to conduct an all-day prayer session as part of a larger 'Re-birthing Jamaica' programme ('Call for a Day of Healing', 2010). In 2014, the late Bishop Moss (former Lord Bishop of Guyana) called for the continued renewal of the Church (Patrick, 2014) and more recently in St. Lucia, 'nearly 1,000

young people were challenged to continue being a powerful generation in serving the church and their communities…' (Church holds first territory-wide youth congress in the English Caribbean in 42 years 2015, 1). Later that same year in Barbados, the then Dean of the St Michael's Cathedral, the Very Reverend Dr. Frank Marshall stated that there is a general movement of people away from God, denial of 'divine authority' and a reduction in morality, all of which have resulted in a decline of Barbadian society ('Get Back to God', 2015).

Regional Trends in Christian Membership and the Religiously Unaffiliated

According to a Pew Research Centre 2015 global survey on religion and public life, approximately three quarters of all Caribbean church members in 2010 were Roman Catholic, and Catholicism membership is projected to increase well into 2020 (Hackett, Connor, Stonawski, Skirbekk, Potancoková and Abel, 2015). However, in the English-speaking Caribbean Protestants are the largest Christian tradition (Hackett *et al*., 2015). It should also be noted that within the protestant sect there are traditional (for example, Anglican) and non-traditional churches (for example, Pentecostals, The New Testament Church of God and The Seventh-Day Adventist Church) and that while most of the English-speaking Caribbean maintains a significant Anglican presence (above 10%), the Anglican Church's share of the population has declined throughout the twentieth century. Moreover, more recent trends among protestant congregants in some Caribbean countries show that non-traditional denominations are reporting massive growth in membership regionally (Boyne, 2012a). For example, in Jamaica The Seventh-Day Adventist church has become the largest Protestant Christian denomination (Reid, 2012).

Despite these regional trends in Christian congregants, it is projected that the Latin American and Caribbean region will (in comparison to previous years) account for a lower percentage of the world's population affiliated with a religion. It is forecasted that through 2010 to 2050, individuals associated with a specific religion will decline from 9% to 8% and the region's population unaffiliated with a religion will have the largest percentage increase (44%) in comparison to all other religious-based classifications, growing from 45 million in 2010 to 65 million in 2050 (Hackett *et al*., 2015). Other research findings have shown that those classified as agnostics and atheists in the

Caribbean have demonstrated strong growth rates between 1910 and 2010 (Johnson, Bellofatto, Wickman, Coon, Crossing, Krause and Yen, 2013) and in 2015, the median age of the 'unaffiliated' was 26 years suggesting that such trends are occurring (in part) among younger members of Caribbean society.

In Trinidad and Tobago, between 1990 and 2000, membership in traditional Christian denominations such as Roman Catholic and Anglican declined, those affiliated with Muslim and Hinduism remained relatively constant and the category of 'other' (which included people having no religious affiliation) showed a significant increase from 25.7 % to 33.2 % over the same time period (Taylor, 2015). Similar declines in Christian congregant membership were demonstrated in Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia, and Grenada where findings from a 2008 socio-demographic analysis of youth revealed that while membership of a church or religious group was common, there was some indication that, in comparison to adults, young people aged 18 to 30 years were no longer identifying themselves with a religious belief (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean 2008). Moreover, more recently in 2012 reports of falling attendance, particularly among young people in Barbados were conveyed by the Anglican Bishop and Archbishop of the West Indies, Dr. John Holder, who was reported as saying that:

> …while Barbadians in general continue to go to church on Good Friday and Easter, engage in foot-washing and partake of the sacraments associated with the Christian celebration, falling attendance, particularly among the young population, is raising concern among the men and women of the cloth (Walker, 2012: 1).

It is possible therefore that some Caribbean youth, by 'divorcing' themselves from religious denominations (and associated practices), are more likely to adopt eclectic and individualistic spiritual identities. These sentiments are supported by Boyne (2012b) who in an article in the Gleaner entitled: 'Is Christianity Dying?' stated that the latest Jamaican national census showed that enrolment in mainstream churches is declining. Boyne (2012b) further stated that such trends in Jamaica are likely to be characteristic of an individualistic age, whereby people are recoiling from 'one-size-fits-all' religious groups and choosing to identify as being spiritual. Therefore, adherence to prescribed religious doctrines by some young people is no longer accepted as the only avenue by which one is able to develop a

spiritually meaningful relationship with God or a higher power.

Hence, with a greater societal focus on the degree to which Caribbean youth engage in religious practices and the societal pressures experienced by young people to attend church in order to 'right the wrongs' plaguing many Caribbean countries, the potential advantages and positive influence of newer, more modern inter-faith and spiritual activities and beliefs may be overlooked. Therefore, before we investigate the potentially positive contribution of youth spirituality on Caribbean society, the following is first warranted: (a) an interrogation of the construct of 'spirituality' as well as a brief discussion regarding the extent to which it differs from other related constructs such as religiosity and religiousness; (b) the role of inter-faith youth groups to the positive development of Caribbean society; and, (c) a theoretical explanation (using psychological theories) to explain the period of emerging adulthood and the associated psychosocial and environmental characteristics that facilitate spiritual development among this demographic.

Conceptions of Spirituality

Regardless of one's religious affiliation, Caribbean people also embrace the concept of spirituality (Sadler, Biggs and Glaser, 2013; Taylor, Chatters and Jackson, 2007) and that one's conceptualisation of spirituality is deeply personal and can only be understood within the context of one's unique psyche. For some Black Caribbean people, spirituality has been defined as one's relationship and belief in a transcendent God (Sadler, Biggs and Glaser, 2013). Therefore, in addition to religion, it can be argued that the spiritual development of Caribbean society should also be of utmost importance. In the words of noted Caribbean philosopher and poet, Dr. Earl McKenzie the true, 'wealth of the Third World is in the realm of the spiritual' (2008, 91).

Spirituality is a psychological construct and is defined in myriad ways in the literature, (Ivtzan, Chan, Gardner and Prashar, 2013; Johnstone, Yoon, Cohen, Schopp, McCormack, Campbell and Smith, 2012; Nandram, 2009) and often the term has been used interchangeably with 'religiousness' and 'religiosity', (Cotton, McGrady and Rosenthal, 2010; Johnstone, Yoon, Franklin, Schopp and Hinkebein, 2009; Löckenhoff, Ironson, O'Cleirigh and Costa 2009; Longshore, Anglin and Conner, 2009). Religiosity may be defined as, 'the state of one's belief in God, characterised by his piety and religious zeal', (Salleh, 2012: 266) or a relationship with an institutionally-

based doctrine about a higher power which develops by one's participation in prescribed religious rituals (Reich, Oser, Scarlett, Socha, Nye, Smoliak, Josephs and Valsiner, 1999). However, religiousness can be conceptualised as a 'state of being' associated with, 'system of beliefs in a divine or superhuman power, and practices of worship or other rituals directed towards such a power', (Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi, 1975: 1). Not only has the concept of spirituality been used to reflect a way of being closely intertwined with religious practices, it has also been defined as the adoption of a way of life that is enhanced by religion (Allen and Lo, 2010; Giordan, 2009; Wood and Hilton, 2012; Zinnbauer, Pargament, and Scott, 1999).

Some researchers have also suggested that spirituality can indeed exist independently from religious beliefs and practices (McIntosh, Poulin, Silver and Holman, 2011; Williams and Lindsey, 2010). For example, according to Jules *et al*. (2015) spirituality can be 'conceptualised as the experience of a direct relationship with a higher power' (118) encompassing one's feelings of purpose based on self-exploration and awareness of the divine (Bryant, 2007). This existential awareness can come into being based on mutual relationships with people from different religious and cultural backgrounds, the environment and a higher force, which most call 'God' (Canda and Furman, 2009). Conversely, for some individuals, spiritual beliefs and practices may also be entirely secular (Mason, Singleton and Webber, 2007) with the focus being placed on the self instead of God (Allen and Lo, 2010). Therefore, unlike conceptualisations of religiosity, to be spiritual can be indicative of non-denominational and non-traditional practices and rituals (Angell, Dennis and Dumain, 1998).

It is possible therefore, that in addition to those who identify with a religion, Caribbean people who are categorised as 'religiously unaffiliated' or as 'other' (such as atheists and agnostics) may also hold spiritual beliefs. This is supported by extra-regional evidence where it was found that belief in God or a higher power is shared by 7% of unaffiliated Chinese adults, 30% of unaffiliated French adults and 68% of unaffiliated U.S. adults (Hackett *et al*., 2015). Moreover, given the multi-dimensional nature of the Caribbean religious landscape, it also likely that even among those who no longer identify with or adhere to every religious doctrine of a specific denomination or faith, the foundational elements of prior religious teachings may still be used as a 'springboard' from which new forms of thinking and spiritual understandings are derived. This is also the view of Hervieu-Leger (1993)

who argued that people can use prior religious knowledge (from one or multiple faiths) as a, 'symbolic toolbox' from which they select or develop new spiritual beliefs and practices.

Spiritual Development and Inter-faith Cooperation among Caribbean Youth

Spirituality could develop through an individual's interactions with others in the world. It is a reflection of, 'who we are and where we come from, our beliefs about why we are here [and] the meaning and purpose that we see in our work and our life' (Astin, Astin and Lindholm, 2011: 4). Although one's spirituality is deeply personal, inter-faith collaborations bring together people from different religious and non-religious backgrounds (Hicks and Tran-Parsons, 2013) and is one avenue through which religiously affiliated and unaffiliated Caribbean youth can share ideas to tackle societal challenges together. Hence, given current trends in the religious landscape of the Caribbean, and the numerous religious convictions that Caribbean youth can have, the cultivation of a spiritual awareness (though inter-faith cooperation) can act to unify many, strengthen interpersonal bonds and create one voice among some members of this demographic thereby producing new youth movements to address regional societal ills. Through these partnerships each group makes its own vital contribution to human well-being and together their effectiveness and value grows exponentially (Vendley, 2005).

Recognising the critical role that youth spiritualties can play within the Caribbean context, the Latin America and Caribbean Youth Network was created in 2005 during the regional youth pre-world assembly meeting in Villa Carlos Paz, Argentina and included participants from Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, Jewish, Muslim, Baha'i and indigenous religious organisations (Regional Inter-faith Youth Networks Religions for Peace International n.d.). That same year the Latin American and Caribbean Youth Leadership Summit (in association with the United Nations New York Office of Sports for Development and Peace) brought together young people between the ages of 18 and 30 from 21 countries across Latin America and Caribbean to participate in a plenary on 'Spiritual Reflections: Building a culture of non-violence and respect' (Latin American and Caribbean Youth Leadership Summit n.d.). Moreover, the Religions for Peace Latin American and the Caribbean Women of Faith Network emphasises the importance of enriching local communities on the basis of their spiritual strengths and traditions,

thereby promoting solidarity, equity and reciprocity (Regional Women of Faith Networks Religions for Peace International n. d.). Common to these movements is an understanding of the importance of spirituality and it can be argued that the focus on spirituality through inter-faith collaboration acts to unify young people in the region. Moreover, collaborative efforts require a commitment to the wider community (Eck, 2006) a virtue, critical to the spiritual development of youth.

Youth represents the stage during which a person moves out of dependence (childhood) and into interdependence (adulthood) (Cunningham and McGinnis, 2008). The United Nations General Assembly, Commission for Social Development Resolutions and The World Health Organisation define 'youth' as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 years, and young people between 10 and 24 years (Economic and Social Council, 2007; Ross, Dick and Ferguson, 2006; United Nations General Assembly Resolution, 2007) and the majority of youth policies in the Caribbean generally cater to individuals between the ages of 15 and 30 years (Alexis, 2005). The population of interest of the current study was youth between the ages of 18 and 24 years; a developmental period known as emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2014; Aquilino, 2006; Nelson, Badger and Wu, 2004).

Spirituality, Emerging Adulthood and the Caribbean Context

Emerging adulthood is a distinct developmental stage that has resulted from a number of factors including: (1) the rise of post-industrialised countries with information-based economies requiring a workforce with post-secondary level education, (2) significant increases in the educational and occupational opportunities available to women and, (3) a greater tolerance of premarital sex, thereby allowing an active sexual life long before contemplating marriage (Tanner and Arnett, 2009). Therefore, the pursuit and subsequent attainment of tertiary level education often results in the emerging adult transitioning into careers, marriages and parenthood much later than in previous years (Jules, 2015) thus prolonging the process of self-exploration and identity development. Although the main push for emerging adulthood as a separate psychosocial stage occurred as a result of the expanding need for education and training before entry into the world of work (Newman and Newman, 2015), it should be noted that there will always be a section of this population that will opt to enter the world of work and pursue other life pursuits without enrolling in university or college (Jules, 2015).

Although Arnett (2012) argues that emerging adulthood is mainly a phenomenon of industrialised countries similar trends can be found in many developing countries, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean. For example, due to the increasing numbers of students graduating from secondary school in the region, there has been an associated increase in the demand for post-secondary education (Jules, 2015) and the gross enrolment for higher education in Latin American and the Caribbean increased from 13.7% in 1980 to 26.6% in 2004 (Kapur and Crowley, 2008). Moreover, more females in the Caribbean are attending higher level institutions in comparison to men (Bailey and Charles, 2012) and for women with higher levels of education, sexual activity, marriage and motherhood is being delayed to a much later age, in comparison to those with less education (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2011).

Moreover, emerging adulthood characterises a time of life when the autonomous exploration of many personal life directions is of utmost importance to the individual (Arnett, 2000). As a result, this developmental period is characterised by a greater sensitivity to the processes involved in identity development (Newman and Newman, 2015) such as experimentation with peers and personal enlightenment, rather than commitment or conformity. It was further argued by Jules, Maynard and Coulson (2015) that Caribbean emerging adults are influenced by peers as there is a multiplicity of avenues for frequent exchanges between peers from many inter-island and extra-regional cultural contexts. This was corroborated qualitatively in another study conducted in Barbados where it was found that emerging adults within the university environment had a need for interconnectedness with the wider peer group (Jules, 2015). In addition, the university environment for Caribbean emerging adults was seen as an environment for students to engage in greater forms of social experimentation primarily due to greater freedom from parental control (Jules, 2015). These developmental and environmental factors when taken together can act to encourage the exploration of one's spiritual identity.

Spiritual Development and the University Environment

There is research to suggest that many emerging adults in North American contexts are becoming less involved in organised religion (Chickering, 1974; Chickering, McDowell and Campagna, 1969; Yamamato, 1968) and

that many are adopting eclectic spiritual practices (Bachman, O'Malley, Schulenberg, Johnston, Bryant and Merline, 2014; Kosmin and Keysar, 2009). For example, within the United States many students enter college with some faith tradition and overtime strive to answer questions regarding their own purpose (Brown and Parrish, 2011). This is in keeping with prior research exploring the role of spirituality during emerging adulthood where it has been concluded that these individuals tend to:(a) question the beliefs in which they were raised, (b) place greater emphasis on individual spirituality than affiliation with any particular religious institution, and, (c) pick and choose aspects of religions that suit them best (Barry and Nelson, 2005). However, other international research has found that for many emerging adults, spiritual development is considered just as important as maintaining one's religious faith. For example, in a study conducted in the United States involving 112,232 first-year undergraduates (from 19 different religious denominations, including 12 major Christian denominations, Unitarian, Jewish, Hindu, Islamic, Buddhist) it was found that 80% of students were interested in exploring themselves spiritually while still displaying high levels of religious commitment and involvement (Astin, Astin, Lindholm, Bryant, Szelényi and Calderone, 2005).

The university environment can therefore provide a space for the exchange of competing ideas and alternative world views among students and hence these dialogs can serve to solidify or modify one's religious affiliation and spiritual identity. This is likely to be the same within the Caribbean context as regional universities matriculate students from across the Caribbean as well as internationally thereby acting as a hub for cross-national exchanges of knowledge and various religious perspectives. Given that international research has found that campus life provides numerous opportunities to explore one's spiritual values (Wood and Hilton, 2012) and with more than 50% of all incoming students in the U.S. reporting that colleges should provide opportunities for the personal expression of one's spirituality (Astin *et al*., 2005) many international universities, in association with the office of student services, provide support to religious and inter-faith student clubs and associations (Patel and Meyer, 2009). Support for spiritual exploration and growth is also provided at universities in the Caribbean. For example, the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus' office of student services, working in collaboration with spiritual leaders representing various faiths, caters to the spiritual needs of the wider student body. With

the growing awareness that spirituality is integral to the development of the emerging adult, the University of the West Indies is currently building an Inter-faith Centre. Such a centre will afford many people of various cultural backgrounds to practice their faith as well as support the spiritual well-being of students and the wider university community.

Therefore, in order to understand how the psychosocial characteristics of emerging adults contribute to their spiritual development (and by extension contribute to positive social and health-related behaviours) core psychological principles advanced by Erik Erikson (1959), Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, (1994), Lawrence Kohlberg, (1971), James Fowler (1981) and Abraham Maslow, (1970) are applied. Selected tenets from each theory, together, are used to articulate a theoretical framework through which the findings of the current study will be explained. Each theorist offers a unique psychological insight into the developmental characteristics typical of emerging adulthood. It should also be noted that although it is recognised that there is a significant paucity of research conducted to test the applicability of each theory (in its entirety) among emerging adults within the Caribbean context, much Caribbean scholarship (and that of the wider Diaspora) has been produced in part through the application and use of theoretical principles of the aforementioned psychological theories.[1]

Moreover, the current research is one of the few studies conducted in the Caribbean to investigate spirituality correlates with agents of socialisation and health risk behaviour among emerging adults (Brathwaite, 2009; Gough, Longman-Mills, De La Haye, Mann, Brands, Hamilton, Wright, Cumsille and Khenti, 2015; Morera, Parada, Ogowewo, Gough, Alava, Zeferino, Jules, Mitchell, Sarmiento, Branco and Khenti, 2015). Thus, due to the paucity of literature on this topic in the Caribbean, research from extra-regional sources will also be reviewed in the sections to follow to support

[1]Many scholars have used psychological principles from: (a) Erickson's (1959) Psycho-social theory of human development (Arneaud and Albada, 2013; Barrow and Reddock, 2001; Garraway and Pistrang, 2010; Sanchez, 2013), (b) Kohlberg's (1971) theory of moral development (Correia and Cunningham, 2003; Gorsuch and Barnes, 1973; Mangrulkar, Whitman, and Posner, 2001; White, Bushnell and Regnemer, 1978), (c) Fowler's (1981) faith development theory (Enkhtor, 2012; Triplett, 2012), (d) Arnett's (1994) theory of emerging adulthood (Arneaud and Albada, 2013; Jules, Maynard and Coulson, 2015; Jules and Maynard in press) and (e) Maslow's (1970) theory of human motivation (Barriteau, 2003; Bourne, 2009; Bourne, Mcgrowder, and Jones, 2010) to develop conceptual frameworks, create new models, critique, analyse and discuss the underlying reasons for a variety of socio-emotional and psychological issues affecting Caribbean populations.

the theoretically based psychosocial mechanisms presented to explain the relationships between an emerging adult's level of spirituality, personal alcohol and marijuana use and the degree to which they experience positive peer interactions and healthy family relationships.

Spirituality in Emerging Adulthood: A Psychological Theoretical Framework

Erikson's psychosocial theory of human development (1959) aptly explains the identity crisis which faces many emerging adults. The identity crisis is a state of psychological conflict and role confusion; a state which the emerging adult struggles to cognitively resolve in order to 'enhance [ones'] ego capacities ... and master difficulties and obstacles presented by the social environment' (Schwartz, James and Arnett, 2005: 204). The successful resolution of the psychosocial stage of 'identity versus role confusion' results in the development of a core identity (Arnett, 1994), in this case a spiritual identity.

This developmental stage is a time of questioning one's sense of self and purpose (Erikson, 1959). Thus within the context of spiritual development, interpersonal conflict between the emerging adult and family members may also take place as the individual's family unit may be unwilling to engage in discourse where the emerging adult offers alternative perspectives to traditional religious family practices and values. Conversely, within some family units family members may be willing to accept the emerging adult's new spiritual orientation. As previously mentioned, there is also an increased vulnerability to the influence of the peer group, an agent of socialisation, arguably more influential than the family at this time. Peer interactions are invaluable as peer group relationships provide opportunities for experimentation and contribute to frequent changes in personal goals and self-concept; thereby allowing the individual more time to solidify one's self as an adult (Arnett, 2000). Peers can provide feedback and support, can interrogate and motivate the emerging adult to question those doctrines and value systems in which they were raised. These peer interactions overtime can either contribute to the solidification of one's previously held spiritually-based faith tradition and reinforce one's ideological commitment, or result in the development of a unique sense of personal spirituality within the emerging adult. Both outcomes result in the emerging adult's understanding of her or his place in the world (Hoare, 2001).

Research has also found that emerging adults combine concepts and practices from different religious and non-religious traditions in unique, highly individualised ways (Astin, Astin and Lindholm, 2011; Bachman *et al*., 2014; Barry and Nelson, 2005; Kosmin and Keysar, 2009). Such behaviours are characteristic of post-conventional thought, a concept derived from Lawrence Kohlberg's (1971) theory of moral development. At the post-conventional stage it is assumed that emerging adults have the psychological capacity to progress to higher, more advanced stages of reasoning and thus being capable of assessing situations 'through the eyes' of others. As a result of this, the emerging adult is likely to demonstrate greater respect for other faiths and religions and incorporate elements of different doctrines in a personal and unique way. Such capabilities are arguably honed within tertiary level institutions where critical thinking and independent thought are encouraged. As explained by Dewey (1964), the primary objective of education is to ensure the personal development of students and to guide them towards more complex ways of reasoning; thereby building a free and powerful individual and mind.

Echoing the work of Kohlberg (1971), Fowler's (1981) faith development theory purports that emerging adults are capable of higher order thinking which allows them to adopt new value systems through exposure to different ways of life. These experiences then result in the questioning of previously held faith conceptions. This type of questioning often occurs for people throughout their twenties as individuals during this time are capable of exploring other religions and belief systems in such a way that their own views can be either reinforced or revised. They are able to merge conceptions that previously seemed to be in opposition to one another without feeling that their own belief systems are being compromised.

Emerging adults also have a need for interconnectedness, intimacy and belonging. According to Abraham Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of human needs theory, 'belonging' is an essential human need which must be met in order for an individual to become fulfilled. The attainment of this need is usually found within families, close friendship ties and building relationships with others in the community. However, as it relates to the current context, emerging adults may also obtain a sense of belonging through connecting and building a relationship with a 'higher power'. As Fowler (1981) noted, individuals can comprehend God as a powerful force that is, 'located externally to the self' (Fowler, 1981: 154). Thus, the construct of God or 'the

divine' can also be conceptualised as an authority figure, a source of feedback, support and a 'being' which can act to inculcate values and behaviours endorsed by society, within those who desire such a relationship. Based on an individual's personal and unique conceptualisation of 'the divine' these relationships can either be inter – or intra – personal in nature, both of which can fulfil the need for interconnectedness and belongingness. Therefore, in addition to contributing to an integrated sense of self, self-awareness and belonging, spiritual development can also foster positive social relationships with family and peers as well as encourage healthy behavioural practices among emerging adults.

Spirituality and Healthy Family Relationships

Research on familial relationships reveals that spiritual beliefs and practices are, 'key ingredients in healthy family functioning' (Walsh, 1999: 9). Healthy functioning families are characterised by safe, secure, loving relationships which serve to build loyalty, affection and durability among members (Goldenberg and Goldenberg, 2012). For example, in a study conducted among 110 African American men (18 years and older) a statistically significant relationship was found between one's level of spirituality and family cohesion (DeSouza, 2014). In another study conducted to qualitatively explore risky behaviour among Caribbean youth it was found that family connectedness, cohesiveness and strong family bonds were characteristic of families whose members had a highly developed sense of spirituality (Brathwaite, 2009). In the study, interviews and focus group discussions were conducted among 250 young adults aged 15 to 29 from Haiti, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica, and findings revealed that youth with strong spiritual values were more likely to 'listen to their parents . . . really appreciate their lives [and had less of a desire to] embarrass their families' (Brathwaite, 2009: 6). Therefore, spiritual beliefs arguably provide the basis for an individual's every action, thought, and goal (Bailey, 2002) and can motivate the emerging adult to go beyond the individualistic experience to that of a collective consciousness (Bateson, 1980); thereby allowing for the consideration of others within the family unit.

Although there is literature to support the integral role that spirituality plays in positive familial interactions, it is also important to highlight some key spiritually-based behavioural attributes which contribute to adaptive family functioning. In a qualitative study investigating the role of spirituality in

families of children with disabilities, engaging in prayer and having faith were two themes which emerged to explain spirituality's role in maintaining positive family dynamics (Poston and Turnbull, 2004). It was found that prayer, and believing in something greater than oneself gave family members strength, patience, and inner peace which helped them to remove barriers and overcome challenges together. In addition, findings from a case study analysis of a highly spiritual family, revealed that respect, trust, commitment to family and avoidance of blame and criticism of family members, were also essential to ensuring the integrity and unity of the family (Bailey, 2002).

It should be noted that Black families in the Caribbean are predominantly descendants of Africans who were brought as slaves to the region (Barrow, 1996) and so many of the familial patterns and dynamics of Black families in the Caribbean have their genesis in the slave trade. For example, family structures and relationships in Black Caribbean families include absentee fathers; matrifocal households (Seegobin, 2003); short-lived common-law unions that translate into a variety of child-rearing arrangements; single-parent households; extramarital relationships (Chevannes, 1995); poor emotional relationships with children (Sharpe, 1996); and, child-shifting. These dynamics can result in children being sent to live with relatives because their parents have begun a union with another partner or have migrated to a different country (Pottinger and Brown, 2006). However, religion (upon which spirituality can develop) has functioned to preserve Caribbean family stability and unions, helped families cope and provide hope in desperate times (Seegobin, 2003). Religion and spirituality have therefore served Caribbean youth well in providing the structure and guidance that they may not gain from the home environment. Hence, within this setting it is possible that the emerging adult in the search for an identity and understanding of oneself may seek divine assistance through spiritual means.

Spirituality, Personal Alcohol and Marijuana Use

Among young adults in the Caribbean, alcohol and marijuana are the most commonly used licit and illicit drugs respectively. Despite being used by some religious sects, alcohol and marijuana use are considered to be health risk behaviours, especially for university students (Yearwood, 2005; 2007). Given the history of the Caribbean as a major producer of sugar cane and rum, alcohol was and continues to be the most prevalent licit drug of choice in the region (Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, 2010). In

a 2010 study of 12 Caribbean countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname) it was found that the overall average lifetime prevalence among students was 68.9% and ranged from a low of 47.7% in Haiti to 86.2% in St Lucia. Marijuana by law is an illegal substance in the Caribbean and as it relates to the regional use of this drug, the World Drug Report (2010) on the prevalence of drug use worldwide indicated that most of the countries in the Caribbean have higher than world average prevalence of marijuana use (United Nations Office on Drugs, and Crime, 2010). For example, it was found that almost 30% of students in Dominica have tried marijuana at least once in their lives and in St. Lucia and Grenada more than 25% of students experimented with marijuana at some point in their lives (Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, 2010).

Alcohol consumption for some religious sects in the Caribbean is central to their religious rituals. For example, those of the Catholic and Anglican religion consume alcohol as a symbol of reaffirmation of their Christian faith (Aquinas, 2010). Like alcohol, the use of marijuana (also known as cannabis, 'ganja' or 'weed') is embedded in aspects of the culture of some countries in the region, even though it is illegal. For example, the use of cannabis for therapeutic and religious purposes is nothing new to some social groups of Jamaican society (Benard, 2007; Dreher, 2002); as the Rastafarian community of Jamaica (and the wider Caribbean), 'has adopted ganja as its sacrament–substance... [one that is] in harmony with the environment, natural (or 'ital') and indigenous', (Dreher, 2002: 121). Many religions specifically teach that a healthy body, mind and spirit are important (Casey, 2009) and therefore in the cases where alcohol and marijuana are used within the context of religious and spiritual sacrament only small quantities are ingested. It is the harmful use and abuse of drugs (such as alcohol and marijuana) that make them problematic (World Health Organisation, 2014; U.S. Department of Justice Drug Enforcement, 2014) and research has found that with an increase in an individual's level of spiritual awareness there is a corresponding reduction in the likelihood of greater drug use over time (Kulis, Hodge, Ayers, Brown, and Marsiglia, 2012; Stewart, 2001).

Alcohol and other drug use by emerging adults tends to occur during the university years; a time when students are more open to negative peer influence to experiment with health risk substances (Singh and Mustapha,

1994). However, the protective effects of spirituality against the potentially harmful use of alcohol and other drugs have been revealed in numerous studies (Leigh, Bowen and Marlatt, 2005; Sussman, Skara, Rodríguez and Pokhrel, 2006; Underwood and Teresi, 2002) with similar findings also being demonstrated among emerging adults within the university environment. For example, in a study of 337 college students in the United States, using the CORE Alcohol and Drug Survey it was found that a student's spiritual beliefs had a moderate buffering effect on their decision to use chemical substances, including alcohol and marijuana (Stewart, 2001). In addition, Wood and Hebert (2005) in a survey of 606 undergraduate students using an adapted version of the National College Health Risk Behavior Survey and Pargament Spiritual Meaning Scale, found negative correlations between spiritual meaning and purpose scores and the use of alcohol and drugs. Similarly, in 2007, VonDras and colleagues, in their study of 151 female college students (18 to 25 years), found that spiritual wellbeing was inversely associated with indices of alcohol use and the likelihood of attending a social event where alcohol was present.

The protective influence of spirituality on health damaging behaviours among emerging adults may relate to the fact that most religions (upon which spiritual development can occur) include proscriptions against the abuse of illegal drugs and alcohol abuse (Bridges and Moore, 2002). Therefore a spiritually based lifestyle can serve as both an alternative diversion from the harmful use of substances on campus and a means of personal health promotion. This is because spirituality can reduce the effects of perceived social stressors thereby promoting health and wellbeing (Anstadt and Coccoma, 2010). In addition, a disposition of spiritual peace may reduce feelings of anxiety and depression, and elevate mood by promoting optimism, self-esteem (Underwood and Teresi, 2002) and perceived control over one's life (Fidler, 1982). Moreover, personal spirituality emphasises the growth of the self (Ellingson, 2001; Nasel and Haynes, 2005) and hence spirituality may counteract self-degradation and engagement in health risk behaviours (Cunningham *et al*., 2008; O'Brien, Denny, Fleming, Clark, Teevale and Robinson, 2013) by fostering positive self-image and providing personal norms that inhibit the use of substances.

Spiritual Development and Positive Peer Associations

For emerging adults, the peer group is the most salient social group within the university environment as these individuals are becoming more independent from their families (Brown, 2004; Ryan, 2001). Peers assist individuals at this developmental stage to overcome the crisis of 'identity versus role confusion' (Arnett, 2000) which upon the successful resolution of this crisis emerges the psychological virtue of fidelity. According to Erikson (1959) fidelity entails the resolute commitment to abstract ideals (for example, religious and spiritual ideologies) beyond the self; principles which then guide the emerging adult to adopt socially prescribed positive roles and behaviours. These qualities are also indicative of a well-developed spiritual identity which by definition involves transcendence (thinking beyond the self), fidelity, and generative actions (King, Carr and Boitor, 2011). Generative action is best exemplified within the context of a larger community (Boyatzis, Dollahite and Marks, 2006) or peer group (Schwartz, Dean, Bukowski, and Aoki, 2006) as it is only through interpersonal interactions that the emerging adult is able to demonstrate selflessness and care for others.

Hence, upon the finalisation of one's spiritual identity (coupled with the virtue of fidelity and the need for interconnectedness), the emerging adult is not likely to only care for themselves, but through positive peer associations, will be motivated to contribute to the greater good of the society (Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, Geldhof, 2015). The spiritual emerging adult therefore, is more inclined to interact with like-minded peers and engage in pro-social (Saroglou, 2013) and non-self-harming behaviours (such as tobacco and alcohol misuse) (Regnerus, Smith and Fritsch, 2003). These positive peer relationships and behaviours are likely to occur due to selection effects (TerBogt, Van Dorsselaer, Monshouwer, Verdurmen Engels and Vollebergh, 2006; Urberg, Degirmencioglu, and Tolson, 1998). Selection occurs, 'when an individual develops or retains friends based on their similarity or beliefs, attitudes and behavior', (Simons-Morton, 2001: 7). In addition, highly spiritual peers would provide support which can help an individual deal with life's challenges, (Newman and Newman, 2015) and would provide a social environment for self-disclosure (Buhrmester and Prager, 1995) and feedback (Leary, Cottrell and Phillips, 2001). Within this context, the peer group can therefore be conceptualised as an external pillar of strength for the emerging adult; an entity that houses spiritual and moral values; which

through feedback and guidance, can contribute to the development of healthy guilt and shame responses to wrongdoing or failures to act in moral and pro-social ways.

Being spiritual therefore, is likely to protect youth against health damaging behaviours such as drug use, dysfunctional familial relationships, and negative peer associations. However, despite the dominance that spiritual and religious traditions have within the Caribbean, research about the societal benefits of youth spirituality on societal social agents are scarce to non-existent (Jules *et al*., 2015). The vast majority of research investigating the social and behavioural consequences of spiritual engagement have been conducted in North American contexts (Bryant, 2007; Brown and Parrish, 2011; Kub and Solari-Twadell, 2013; McIntosh, Poulin, Silver and Holman, 2011; Taylor, Chatters and Jackson, 2009), with significantly fewer studies conducted in the Caribbean (Brown, 2006; Mustapha, 2013).

Moreover, despite there being evidence to suggest that Caribbean adolescents and young adults have a keen interest in spirituality, Caribbean leaders and policy makers continue to attribute high levels of deviant and delinquent behaviour to the lack of moral and religious values among youth ('Get Back to God', 2015; Mustapha, 2013). Such sentiments have been shared by others throughout history and across cultures as young people have been criticised and admonished for the decline in morals in society (Damon and Colby, 1996) which can lead to a breakdown in family dynamics (Hillier and Thyer, 2015) and associations with peers engaging in risky behaviours such as substance use and abuse, among other undesirable behaviours (Bowers, Segrin and Joyce, 2015). Hence, in Caribbean societies (like many other extra-regional countries) the negative perceptions held about emerging adults are relatively similar.

Therefore, given the dearth of literature on the role of spirituality in contemporary Caribbean society, the purpose of this quantitative survey was to investigate the relationship between spirituality and the psychosocial factors of positive peer associations, family relations and personal alcohol and marijuana use, among Black Caribbean emerging adults. In this study spirituality was defined as individual beliefs and practices related to a God or a higher power in the universe (Allen and Lo, 2010). Quality of family relations was defined as the extent of the severity or magnitude of problems that family members have in their relationships with one another

(Hudson, 1992). Positive peer associations were defined as the extent to which one's friends refrain from using licit and illicit drugs and stay out of trouble. Alcohol and marijuana use were defined as the extent to which an individual used either drug over the past three months. Hence, the following research questions were proposed: Is there a significant relationship between spirituality and: 1) alcohol use; 2) marijuana use; 3) quality of family relations; and, 4) positive peer associations, among university students?

Methodology

This study was cross-sectional in design and the survey method was used to collect data. The research was part of a larger multi-centric study involving eight countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The sample for this research consisted of undergraduate students between the ages of 18 and 24 years, attending a university in Barbados. Two hundred and fifty students were recruited via convenience sampling from the Faculty of Social Sciences. The majority of the sample was female (58.8%). To protect the identities of the participants and to help with tracking the surveys, identification numbers (ID numbers) were assigned to each questionnaire. Each questionnaire ID number was not linked to the participant's name and other personal information and this information was only accessible to the principal investigator. The researchers involved in the study were firmly committed to ensuring that the best interests of the research participants were maintained. In addition, informed consent was obtained prior to the distribution of the questionnaires. Ethical approval to conduct this research was granted on October 18th 2011 from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Research Ethics Board and on the 7th of November 2011 from the University of the West Indies-Cave Hill/Barbados Ministry of Health Research Ethics Committee/Institutional Review Board.

The Spiritual Involvement and Beliefs Scale (SIBS)

The Spiritual Involvement and Beliefs Scale (SIBS; Hatch, Burg, Naberhaus and Hellmich, 1998) was used to assess the level of spirituality possessed by each student. The instrument contained 26 items measured along a 5-point Likert scale. Past reports of instrument reliability and validity are very good, with high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha=.92); strong test-retest reliability (r=.92); a clear four-factor structure; and a high correlation

(r=.80) with the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Paloutzian and Ellison, 1982); an established measure of spirituality. In the current study high internal reliability for the scale was also obtained (Cronbach's alpha = .85).

The Index of Family Relations (IFR)

The Index of Family Relations- IFR (Hudson, 1992) is a 25 item scale designed to measure the extent, severity, or magnitude of problems that family members have in their relationships with one another; with higher scores indicative of a greater magnitude or severity of problems. The 25 items were responded on a 5-point scale ranging from 'rarely or none of the time', to 'most or all of the time'. The total score was computed by summing item scores and subtracting 25. If items have been omitted, the IFR score was calculated as S=(Y–N) (100)/[(N)(4)], where N was the number of items properly completed by the respondent, and Y was the sum of scores. In the current study high internal reliability for the scale was obtained (α = .93)

Measure of Positive Peer Associations

A self-developed summated rating scale was created to measure the degree to which students are engaged in positive peer associations. Four items were created and participants were asked to respond to each item using a 5 point Likert type response scale, with 1 representing 'Strongly Disagree' and 5 representing 'Strongly Agree'. All item responses were summed and the overall score used to represent an individual's level of association with positive peers. The coefficient alpha of the scale in the current study was .60. The four items included: 1) my friends help me to stay out of trouble, 2) most of my friends do not drive after drinking or doing drugs, 3) most of my friends do not smoke cigarettes or chew tobacco, and, 4) most of my friends do not drink 5 or more drinks in one occasion. The highest attainable score is 20 while the lowest is 4 and greater scores reflect increased engagement in positive peer associations.

Measures of Alcohol and Marijuana Use

Alcohol and marijuana use were each measured using a single question querying drug use over the past three months. Participants were asked to respond to the two questions using a 5 point Likert type response scale, with 0 representing 'never' and 4 representing 'daily or almost daily'.

Results

The majority of the emerging adult sample fell between the ages of 20 and 21 (44.4%). Many of the participants were unemployed (72.4%) and were mostly full-time students (66.8%). Over 75% of the sample resided at home with their family, were single and never married (69.6%) and almost half of the sample (48%) were in the first year of their studies. Pearson product moment and Spearman rank order correlation coefficients were used to analyse the data and weak significant correlations were found between level of spirituality and all the psychosocial factors investigated. With greater levels of spirituality among emerging adults the more likely they were to have positive peer associations ($r = .248$, $p < 0.01$). Conversely, the more spiritual the individual the less likely he/she would have experienced dysfunctional and problematic familial relationships, ($r = -.230$, $p < 0.01$), consumed alcohol over the past three months ($rs = -.275$, $p < 0.01$) or use marijuana over the same time period ($rs = -.126$, $p < 0.05$).

Discussion

Spirituality is considered a primary construct of good intrapersonal and interpersonal wellbeing. In the current study it was found that with an increase in the level of spirituality, the greater the likelihood that an emerging adult would experience healthy family functioning, positive peer associations and be less likely to engage in alcohol and marijuana use. Hence, adopting spiritual principles and ways of being are advantageous to the social life of emerging adults. The findings of the current study are in keeping with extant literature where high levels of spirituality were associated with fewer problems and distress within the family unit (Brathwaite, 2009; DeSouza, 2014; Walsh, 1999). Such a relationship can be attributed to the values of respect, trust and commitment which are developed as a result of personal spiritual awareness; values, which can then contribute to cohesiveness and strong relational bonds among family members. In addition to the relationship between spirituality and adaptive family functioning, it was found that the more spiritual the individual, the more likely one would have positive peer associations. This is because spiritual emerging adults are more inclined to interact with like-minded peers to engage in pro-social, non-self-harming behaviours with the intent of promoting greater societal good (Lerner *et al*., 2015; Saroglou, 2013).

The significant adaptive relationships formed with peers and family members can also be attributed to the emerging adult's need for intimacy and interconnectedness. The family and the peer group are arguably the two most salient agents of socialisation for this demographic, and hence, will be the primary social groups from which their psychosocial needs are met. Although statistically significant, analyses revealed weak correlations between spirituality and positive peer and family relationships. These findings are likely a result of the way in which spirituality was measured in the research. Spirituality is a psychological construct and hence can be ordered hierarchically at different levels of abstraction or breadth (Comrey, 1988). That is, constructs can be either narrow-band, mid-level or broad in generality. In the current study, spirituality was measured as a broad unidimensional construct using the Spiritual Involvement and Beliefs Scale. Given that there are multiple dimensions to spirituality (Fisher, 2011; Zinnbauer, Pargament and Scott, 1999) a specific, narrow band domain of spiritual awareness such as 'relational spirituality' (Holloway, 2010) may have been more strongly related to the interpersonal and socially-based constructs of peer associations and family relationships.

The results of this study were also consistent with previous findings exploring the relationship between spirituality and personal alcohol and illicit drug use (Stewart', 2001; VonDras, Schmitt and Marx, 2007; Wood and Hebert, 2005). Daily spirituality can reduce stress thereby promoting health and wellbeing (Anstadt and Coccoma, 2010). Moreover, personal spirituality emphasises the growth of the self (Ellingson, 2001; Nasel and Haynes, 2005) and hence spirituality may counteract stress (Anstadt and Coccoma, 2010) and self-degradation, emphasise personal growth (Ellingson, 2001; Nasel and Haynes, 2005) and foster a positive self-image (Hodge, 2004). These protective factors when taken together act to mitigate against one's desire to use harmful substances such as alcohol and marijuana. Given that the spiritual emerging adult is more likely to have positive peer affiliations, the feedback provided by such a group would also act to discourage the use of such substances.

Emerging adults at university are at their most vulnerable to negative influences. Hence, with greater spiritual awareness they are more likely to develop and maintain close ties with positive peers and have supportive family relationships. These social bonds when strengthened can serve as protective factors against self-destructive behaviours and other challenges in

their social environment. Therefore, a practical implication of the findings of the current research would be for university personnel and other stakeholders (with a vested interest in youth development) to create more opportunities for students to develop their spirituality on campus given the many positive psycho-social correlates for this demographic.

Limitations

This study of Black Caribbean emerging adults is not without its limitations. The subject matter of spirituality is a psychological construct that can be interrelated with religion, hence some of the participants who responded to the Spiritual Involvement and Beliefs Scale may have interpreted the items from a religious standpoint even though all of the items clearly used terms that avoid cultural-religious bias. Another limitation involves the focus on spirituality as a correlate with the stated psychosocial variables in the study, notwithstanding that there are a number of other factors that may contribute to healthy family relationships, peer associations and drug use. We acknowledge that an individual's level of spirituality is not the only variable related to problem behaviour in Caribbean society and hence empirical studies exploring other factors should be conducted in the Caribbean.

The study was implemented at one university and data were collected from a sample of students using convenience sampling. Therefore, the findings obtained were not reflective of other universities nor could they be generalised beyond the sample. In addition, the scale items created to measure positive peer associations focused mainly on alcohol and drug use and did not take into consideration other forms of peer interactions.

Recommendations for Future Research

It is recommended that further research be conducted to investigate Caribbean emerging adults' definition of spirituality. In addition, to understanding specific sub-domains of spirituality experienced by emerging adults, unique differences can also be explored regarding the direction and strength of relationships between various spirituality subtypes and other psychosocial factors. Moreover, given the paucity of literature in the Caribbean, qualitative studies can be conducted in order to understand how and why spirituality affects the lives of Caribbean emerging adults.

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Return Migrations from Metropolitan France: a Qualitative Study of Representations of Otherness in Martinique

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Abstract

This article underlines the inclination to consider Martinican return migrants from France as a new type of 'outsider', that is, as a cultural 'Other'. As it shall be argued, this new trend is revealing another dimension of otherness as well as a new configuration of Martinique postcolonial relationship with the French Republic. Empirical data analysis from ethnographic fieldwork highlighted the cross-representations between the returnees and the local inhabitants and enabled an innovative understanding of the new modalities of alterity in Martinique. Moreover, this article focuses on return migrants' professional and family readjustment difficulties once back 'home'.

Key Words: Martinique, Return Migrations, Cultural Otherness, Readjustment Difficulties.

Introduction

'Overseas France' refers to the territories of the French Republic located outside the European continent. All descendants of French colonisation, those French-administered territories embrace a population higher than 2.65 million inhabitants (INSEE, 2014). My research mainly focuses on one of these territories: Martinique, a French West Indian society born of the transatlantic slave trade. At the very start of colonial independence struggles, Martinique (as French Guyana, Guadeloupe and the Reunion Island) became a French Overseas Department (DOM) in 1946. The transformation of these colonies into a political entity fully integrated into the French Republic stimulated a series of radical and widespread mutations. Among them, we witnessed the massive scaling of emigration to France, which reached its peak during the 1960s with the establishment of a state agency called the BUMIDOM that gave rise to the largest internal migration France has ever known. As a result, 365 000 people born in DOMs are now living in France (INSEE, 2012), which produced new transatlantic mobility practices including, among others, circular and return migrations.

Ethnographic fieldwork suggests that return migrants have encountered several obstacles at the time of return to their homeland. This article focuses on post-return adjustment problems migrants faced upon return. In addition to experiencing difficulties in readjusting to family life and professional world in their native island, the participants had also expressed difficulties in readapting to new local cultural standards. Moreover, participant observation and open-ended interviews highlighted the local community's antagonistic feeling towards the attitude of 'superiority' they claim returnees have *vis-à-vis* Creole's culture and lifestyle. Furthermore, I observed that returned migrants with a 'French' professional expertise and a willingness to act as 'agents of change' generated tensions in the Martinican society. Thus, the desire to stimulate changes in the island can be associated with colonial behaviors, which therefore expose returnees to recriminations from their work colleagues and family members who remained at 'home'. Being confronted with 'new' cultural differences, facing unexpected criticisms and having difficulties (re-)entering the familial and professional spheres in Martinique tended to reinforce a series of stereotypes highlighted by this qualitative analysis. The purpose of this article is not so much to discuss

these perceptions, but rather to better understand the context in which they emerged, while attempting to approach the inner world, representations and intentionality of the actors who participated in this research.

Moreover, this paper addresses the causes that lead non-migrants to consider returnees as a new type of 'stranger' or, more exactly, as a cultural 'Other'. Indeed, if social inequalities in Martinique were mostly theorised as resulting from racial differences (Bonniol, 1990; 2005; Jamard, 1982), return migrants reveal another aspect of distinctiveness in Martinique. Hence, I maintain that local tensions generated by return migrations are the result of a changing configuration in DOM's relationship with the French Republic. More precisely, I argue that a new paradigm of alterity took place in the 1990s with the requalification of Creole culture.

Methodology

In order to understand the perceptions and realities experienced by return migrants, I undertook an ethnographic fieldwork in 2011, during which I effectuated a participant observation while integrating in the activities and the acquaintanceship circles of 15 Martinican returnees who also shared their life stories. These men and women of different age ranges had all lived more than 8 years in mainland France before returning to settle, for the long term, in their home island. The longstanding residence in France was not a trivial research criterion in my selection of participants, but was intentionally chosen in order to ensure certain uniformity of the sample. Additionally, a long time spent abroad also helped to establish that participants have had time to accommodate, appropriate and assimilate French identity and culture. However, their return profile diverged: some participants had returned for less than two years and others for more than 10 years. Although they were met at different moments in their migratory routes 'back home', they nevertheless shared the following experiences: they had doubts about their return decision; faced difficulties in terms of family, professional and cultural reintegration; thought of re-migrating to mainland France, were involved in round trips between the island and mainland France and therefore, may not be strictly defined as returning migrants but as 'circular migrants'.

In this exploratory research, I adopted an empirical-inductive approach, using life-stories as a source for data collection. This allows for a 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) of participants' experiences, from their own standpoint, and thus avoids the danger of predetermined theoretical frames

(Bertaux, 1981). Olwig (2007: 285), who focused on Caribbean family networks in her ethnographic fieldwork, writes that life stories 'offer important insights into how migratory moves are experienced and given meaning by those most affected by them'. As Olwig suggests, the life story-based approach I have adopted for understanding French West Indians' return migration, perceptions and practices, appears particularly suitable for qualitative research on migration. Indeed, a biographical approach allows for the unveiling of individual cultural representations and everyday practices (Findlay and Stockdale, 2003; Halfacree, 2004), as well as, illustrates the 'intersection between an individual's life and wider historical or contextual forces' (Ní Laoire, 2008: 198) and testifies of a plurality of affective orientations punctuated by different migratory routes (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993; Findlay and Li, 1997). Futhermore, Gmelch (1992) argues in favor of the biographical approach to study return migration since it embraces different moments of the migratory paths: pre-departure, living abroad, multiple back and forth movements or return and post-return dynamics. In addition, at different stages of the investigation, the non-migrants' perspective has proven to be essential in understanding the local representations of returnees. Consequently, a dozen open-ended interviews were conducted with the family members of returnee's in order to gain an interlaced and broader perspective on return migration in Martinique.

Return Migrations

Among the extensive body of literature on return migration in social sciences, many have focused on the economic impacts generated by return migrants in their country of origin (Diatta and Mbow, 1999; Thomas-Hope, 1999; Ammassari, 2004; King, 2015), on transnational belongings, families, ties or way of life (Plaza, 2006; 2008; Reynolds, 2008; Tsuda, 2009; De Bree, Davids and De Haas, 2010; De Haas and Fokkema, 2011; Olwig, 2012) or on circular migration (Berthold, 2001; Conway, Potter and Bernard, 2009; Sinatti, 2011). Moreover, since the 1980s, return migration is considered as an institutionalised aspect of Caribbean societies (Bryce-Laporte, Stinner and De Albuquerque, 1982) - that is to say, included in its landscapes and structures. Since then, a thriving scholarly literature has addressed the issues of return and circular migrations among Caribbean English-speaking countries and their former metropolis (see Byron, 1999; Chamberlain, 2002; Potter and Phillips, 2006; Plaza, 2006; 2008; Reynolds, 2008). However, only a small number of studies has yet focused on these topics in the French

West Indies. This lack of scientific attention could be linked to a statistical processing problem[1] since French West Indians and their children are not considered migrants *per se*, due to their French citizenship (Rallu, 2003). In addition to the statistical invisibility of intra-national migrants in France, this academic vacuum may also, according to Rallu, be related to the difficulty of defining French West Indian return migrants under intense circulatory dynamics. Unlike census data, which only allows for estimations and partial views on return and circulatory movements (Valentin and Temporal, 2011; Valentin and Rallu, 2004), I believe ethnographic data enriches and provides better insight into the complexity of the trajectories, interactions, practices and representations deployed by return migrants.

Return migration must not be regarded as definitive (Rallu, 2003), but as a moment within migratory routes. In this regard, Bovenkerk (1974) and Chamberlain (2002) present a labyrinthine terminology related to return migrations spectrum: return visits, circommuting, circular migration, bifurcated migration, oscillatory migration, recurrent migration, or transient labor. It is therefore a complex object of study embracing multiple 'cultures of mobility', taking into account 'migration and return', 'return and remigration' and 'remigration and return' (Conway and Potter, 2009) and becoming even more complex when considering the circular migration culture that tends to characterise the contemporary movements between the metropolitan 'Centre' and ultramarine 'peripheries'. Namely, in the West Indian context, return and circulation must be defined into a wide range of realities, experiences and landscapes and thus require a loose and flexible application.

More specifically in the case of DOM, the two concepts of 'return' and 'circulation' are expected to be understood within a 'transatlantic human space' (Nicolas, 2001). That is to say, Franco-Caribbean migrations are not multidirectional but intra-national, which deviates from the definition of transnationalism understood in the classical sense. In this regard, the geographer T. Nicolas (2001) denotes that intra-Caribbean mobility is low compared to circulatory movements with France since the migration flows

[1]If quantitative difficulties arise specifically in the case of migrant-citizens, return migrations are generally confronted with statistical difficulties as the return paths are harder to detect because of geographic dispersion of returned migrants. Also, it is difficult to establish reliable statistical categories of return migrants (see Douki, 2014).

are mainly directed towards the metropolis. In fact, among the 3.5 million individuals who had passed through Raizet (Guadeloupe) and Lamentin (Martinique) airports in 2000, more than 2 million were either coming from or departing for l'*Île de France* (Nicholas 2001: 403). At this point, a brief historical overview is needed in order to understand why many ultramarine citizens have settled in France and to provide some factual data on return migration dynamics.

French West Indians Emigrations and Return Migrations

The transformations of the plantation regime into an economic system based on financial transfers from the French state generated, during the 1950s, a series of local economic crises. At the same time post-war France was lacking unskilled workers, French West Indies were suffering from endemic unemployment coupled with a demographic boom (Sainte-Rose, 1983: 18). To remedy this, the French government created the BUMIDOM in 1962, a state agency mandated to promote and to plan the immigration of DOM's population in France. To convince young men and women to temporarily immigrate in France, BUMIDOM played on the emotional fiber of its former colonial subjects by linking social promotion with the assimilation into French culture. Furthermore, if immigration into continental France was an isolated, elitist and masculine phenomenon before 1946 (Condon, 2000), from 1963 to 1980, thanks to BUMIDOM, more than 160,000 working migrants from Guadeloupe and Martinique landed in France (Constant, 1987: 16).

The immigrant's profile was then completely transformed. Within the organised labor migration framework, women had a special place: There were 16,660 West Indian women in the *Métropole* compared to 22,080 men in 1962, the respective numbers shift to 28 556 and 32 604 in 1968 (Condon 2000). This labor migration has thus affected nearly 50% of West Indian women, most of them having few or no labor qualification skills. While some were engaged in government services (as nursing assistants or secretaries), most were employed as domestic workers, especially in the Paris region. Indeed, 45% of French Caribbean women who arrived in France between 1962 and 1968 were classified in the 'services employee' category (ibid.).[2]

[2]Using DOM as a pool of cheap labor was denounced by Aimé Césaire who characterised these policies as 'genocide by substitution', a locally well-known expression referring to that cross movement between,

However, from the mid-1970s, a significant decrease was observed in departure rates, coupled with a slowdown in economic activities and BUMIDOM's closure in 1981. Although the majority of BUMIDOM's migrants have remained in metropolitan France, this trend also marked the beginning of return movements.

Sociologist M.C. Valentin (2005: 159) estimates that approximately 16 000 French West Indians and Guyanese's adults in full activity age (25 – 45 years) returned to their native island in 1999. These returnees were almost twice graduated compared to their local counterparts and were therefore less vulnerable to unemployment (ibid.). However, the narrowness of the local economical market and the competition with the metropolitans settling into the DOMs, reinforced the risks of deskilling working returnees and, subsequently, professional integration tend to become a problematic issue (Valentin and Rallu, 2004). In addition, Valentin (2005) evokes the worrying case of graduated young adults who failed to stabilise professionally both in France and in their homeland, which meant for them a double failure.

Return movements were estimated to have declined between 1999 and 2006, albeit difficult to recognise because census data do not account for rotatory back and forth movements or to previous resettlement attempts (Rallu, 2003). During this period, approximately 6600 'returnees' aged 35 – 65 years were recorded in Martinique (Valentin 2011). We must also stress that for all return migrations recorded between 1999 and 2006 in the four overseas departments, men (59%), generally, outnumbered women (41%), highlighting a generalised gendered inclination.[3]

In summary, the latest figures from the 2006 census reflect the following trends: the decline of sustainable immigration of DOM's natives in France, faster return movements (less durable) to the DOM and an intensification of migratory circulation. Indeed, the circulatory dynamics between overseas

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on the one hand, a mass of Caribbean workers joining the ranks of French public services lower grades and, on the other hand, metropolitans intended to fill the high positions in the DOM's civil services (Constant, 1987: 31).

[3]Unfortunately this gendered differentiation remains a nebulous reality unexplained by scholarly publications and which, therefore, deserves to be investigated in future work. Life stories with women return migrants, however, suggest that the weight of family responsibilities and the precariousness of West

departments had increase of over 200% between 1985 and 2000 (Nicolas, 2001: 3). As stated by Giraud (2002), those incessant flow of individuals had a considerable impact in the DOM and, as we shall see in the next section, has had a considerable impact on the locals' representation schemes of the French Republic.

From the 'Landed' to the 'Négropolitans'

Return migrants' receiving context has vividly changed since the 1980s. Data from the present study and writings from Martinican author Frantz Fanon are brought together here in order to illustrate the modalities of this representational turn in the local imagery and to offer a better understanding of the returnee's present experiences and readjustment difficulties.

Few written sources have discussed how the first migrants returning to Martinique from continental France were perceived and received. The only study which, to our knowledge, can help in providing some qualitative thickness to this topic was written in Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*. Famous for his anti-colonial analysis, Fanon (1967) claimed that the awareness of racial inferiority dominates the postcolonial experience for black men and women living in the continent. According to Fanon's writings, their postcolonial condition results in them embarking on an endeavor to embody the European 'Other' while propelling a form of renunciation of their blackness. Here is how the Martinican essayist described in 1967 the ambient environment that surrounded the departure to the metropolis:

> There is a kind of magic vault in the distance, and the man who is leaving next week for France creates round himself a magic circle in which the words Paris, Marseille, Sorbonne, Pigalle become the keys to the vault. In the eyes of those who have come to see him off he can read the evidence of his own mutation, his power. (Fanon, 1967: 23)

In his absence, the black man who has lived in continental France radically changed: 'To express it in genetic terms, his phenotype undergoes a definitive, an absolute mutation. Even before he had gone away, one could tell from the almost aerial manner of his carriage that new forces had been set in motion' (Fanon, 1967: 19). Hence, several returnees, after a more or less long stay in France, returned to Martinique with a desire to be flattered.

Awaited by all on his arrival, 'The Negro who knows the mother country is a demigod' (Fanon, 1967: 22). Indeed, this aura of notoriety was once fed by a collective amazement towards the French nation of which, once home, the landed personified this image of an idolised France and thus, as indicated by Fanon, how he almost became 'White'.

Fanon's words are reflected in life stories of the non-migrant participants of our study. For example Johanna, a local PhD student, speaks in those terms of the admiration and infatuation that the return of one of her compatriots aroused in her family in the 1980s:

> Their arrival was an event and the family would go all together with several cars to Lamentin airport. There was quite a welcoming committee waiting for the travelers. After the extended family would regrouped to listen to the story of the returnee the same day of his arrival. (Johanna, 27 years)

In other words, the landed would become the epicenter of attention. His/or her arrival was an event in itself. It was a time of gathering, a time of grim reunion. Speech was therefore left to the returnee, now converted into 'the one who knows' (Fanon, 1967: 19).

But obviously, times have changed as Marielle, a local teacher of 34 years: 'Now when you go to pick someone up, you leave without him', meaning that the one who returns has been transformed into an 'Other': someone who is no longer admired by Martinicans. The aura of curiosity that used to surround the returnee turned into an attitude of mistrust. Therefore, the decrease in distance-time and distance-cost through airlines democratisation seems to have had a strong impact on the representational schemes designating France and its representatives (2001: 6). At the local level, one of the explanations provided by the non-migrants to explain this change in the representation patterns is precisely this normalisation and standardisation of DOM/Center mobility towards French metropolis. In this regard, the non-migrants insist on their own experiences in France during tourist stays, family visits, business appointments, schooling, medical care, or simply to make a few purchases to emphasise their own metropolitan experiences. Their testimonies illustrate the reduction of both mental and geographic distances (about 7000 km) with continental France. 'When I was little', says the manager of a local company,

‘France was paradise, the land where everything was possible, inaccessible. We all hoped to have the chance to see the snow, the Eiffel Tower. Now I go there every year to see my kids, to visit my sisters’ (Charles, 45 years).

In the life stories conducted with the returnees, participants also tended to identify themselves as actors in motion: as persons who had moved and were broad-minded, affirming thereby a form of cosmopolitan belonging. The same iterative terms have been raised by Gmelch (1992: 297) in the case of Barbadian returnees, terms that the anthropologist considers as ‘such a typical response that it seems almost a cliché’. He argues that they displayed this attitude of openness to the world, that is, a cosmopolitan identification that transcends the local community through which they are ‘not merely emancipated but enlightened’ (1992: 298).[4]

A second explanation of disjuncture on the representational level was detected thanks to the testimonies recorded. In fact, around the 1980s, Antilleans became aware and concerned with the precarious living conditions reserved to their compatriots in metropolitan France. As mentioned above, BUMIDOM attracted DOM’s residents by disseminating the idea that their arrival in France will increase their social and professional upward mobility. Despite the promises made by the French Republic, the fate of BUMIDOM’s migrant was rather embedded within a proletarianisation process added to the rise of racial discrimination and the ghettoisation of French West Indians in the Paris suburbs (Giraud, 2002, Valentin, 2005; Calmont, Daniel, Destouches, Giraud and Marie-Luces, 2008). In this regard, Valentin (2005: 160) noted that since 1990, Caribbean families were twice as likely to live in social housing of mediocre quality while attesting of a low employment rate, which were almost identical to that of the immigrant ‘foreigners’. All these factors involved in the minorisation of overseas citizens have contributed to devaluate the image of the French Republic. The living conditions and daily realities of French West Indians living in France became progressively known and disseminated through the intensification of transatlantic mobilities and new communication technologies. This assisted in fomenting the feeling and awareness amongst some French West Indians of not being full-fledged citizens.

[4]This cosmopolitan vision can be linked to the cosmopolitan tradition, which is defined by Fog Olwig (2010: 417) as ‘the universalist intellectual tradition of the European Enlightenment’ and is linked to other Caribbean vernacular perspective on cosmopolitanism (See Olwig, 2010).

Nowadays, several Martinicans argued that those who returned tended to ignore their negative experiences in France in order to impress or make sense of their migratory path. Their descriptions of life conditions reflected the social segregation that their family members lived abroad as a new 'socio-cultural insularity' (Laventure, Durpaire, Giraud, Numa Perri, Melyon-Reinette and Romana, 2009: 129). 'Posers', 'liars' and 'impostors' were frequently used by locals to describe returnees. In this regard, a Martinican manager questioned the authenticity of homecoming migrant's narratives: 'They lived in poverty there. When they return, they lie. The Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, they have never been there and lived a life of exclusion in the suburbs' (Michelle, 52 years). In sum, open-ended interviews with non-migrants deconstruct the idealised vision of France and its egalitarian and universal claims. The admiration gives way to skepticism and secular perceptions of France and, by extension, to the returnees. This representational turn appears to be concomitant with the rise of a categorical and essentialist neologism: the term 'négropolitain',[5] which, as we shall see in the last section, refers to the Black but symbolically White individual who believes himself Antillean, but has yet lost the cultural features beneath his attitudes to incorporate the norms and codes borrowed from the 'metro' (metropolitan 'White' citizens).

Return Adjustments and Cultural Otherness

Participant observation has helped to identify the readjustment challenges faced by returnees while qualitative analysis of life stories has allowed to underline returnees' iterative representation patterns. Similar adjustment difficulties and cultural representations pertaining to the professional and familial spheres happen to be recurrent in the 15 collected life stories; nevertheless, they tend to differ depending on gender, occupation and time elapsed since the return. Now, if all the 15 participants admitted suffering racial discrimination in the metropolis, they all equally recognised, in their own terms, having been subject to another form of exclusion since their return. These forms of rejection that are not directly, only based on race and colour

[5]The term négropolitain consists of the junction of the prefix 'Negro' (Black) and the suffix 'politan' in reference to 'metropolitan' (White of France, called 'metro' in the island) in many respects similar to 'Nuyoricans' (Puerto Rican return migrants back from New York) (see Grosfoguel, 2002).

are conceived here in terms of cultural otherness or strangeness.[6] However, data also underline that the experience of French West Indians is far from attesting of some Martinican or French overseas exceptionalism, but rather reflect similar traits that have been raised by researchers concerned with other areas of the Caribbean Region. Despite their French citizenship, French West Indian returnees' perceptions and readjustment problems resemble in many ways those of Barbadian, Surinamese or Puerto Rican returnees.[7] In fact, as displayed by our qualitative data, many scholars (Hall, 1990; Potter and Phillips 2006; Thomas-Hope, 1992) detected that returnees tend to broadcast a set of stereotypes arising directly from the colonial representation order. Moreover, Conway and Potter, (2009: 7) conclude that in the peculiar context of British West Indies, return must be regarded as an ambivalent experience that contribute to the 'reinforcements and vulnerabilities of Caribbean people's livelihood options', a statement that appears particularly suitable in the French West Indian case. Those connections must encourage future investigations, focusing attention on return, transmigrants and circular migrants in the Caribbean region notwithstanding the singular DOM administrative status.

Work Ethic and Returning as Agent of Change

The transformation of the economic system initially based on monocrop agriculture during the plantation era towards a new logic led by a mass consumption of objects – objects produced almost exclusively in France – brutally transformed the DOM economical structures and working social relations (Lucrèce, 1994). Numerous analyses (Price, 1985; Daniel, 2009; Maddox, 2015) have stressed DOM's economical dependency and specific culture of consumption as symptomatic of a 'new' hegemonic or postcolonial form of domination. As we shall see, the salience of Martinican 'assisted mentality', 'dependent' and 'over-consumerist' behaviors in returnees' life stories often come along with returnees' perception of having superior French work ethic and the ambition to act as agent of change.

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[6]As for Simmel, the 'Other' is conceived here 'as the Stranger who is beyond being far and near. The Stranger is an element of the group itself, not unlike the poor and sundry "inner enemy" — an element whose membership within the group involves both being outside it and confronting it' (Simmel, 1971 [1908]: 144).

[7]On British and French West Indies historical, cultural and political similarities and differences see Hall (1990).

Professional integration is an important indicator of the 'returning home project' success. If we did not establish a correlation between age and motivations to return, achieving a successful professional life in the homeland appears as a more masculine incentive to return as five men (out of seven) referred to professional ambition as the first return factor and as a key issue of their migratory paths. Moreover, several representational differences based on gender stood out from the qualitative analysis based on gender. Indeed, men of all ages defined themselves in opposition to this prejudice against Martinican lack of professional ethic: 'I am pragmatic', 'I have a reputation' 'I work, I'm not kidding' 'I manage' 'I am "a" man of skill', et cetera, terms that are all connoted with the idea of performance and 'good' professional standards. Their labor skills and strategies, through the internalisation of French working ethic codes and meritocratic values, allowed, from the male returnees' standpoints, for ascending the socio-professional hierarchy.

Notwithstanding, all returnees characterised local economic behaviors as 'irresponsible', 'inadequate' or 'hyper-consumerist'. As in the case of Surinamese return migrants, studied by Bovenkerk (1981), Martinican returnees denigrated the country's bureaucratic rigidity and its inhabitants' poor job performance, and irresponsibility. The dependence of the DOM is, according to the interviewees, generally associated with 'laziness', 'passivity', 'unproductivity' and is seen as being a 'costly labor force' for the French republic. In this logic, inactivity is viewed as social complacency, as a low standard reproduced and stimulated by the social and familial environment (Memmi 2004: 56). Nevertheless those perceptions often stood out as a negative reaction to returnees' sense of exclusion, since they tend to decline or be expressed in a more nuanced way for returnees who experienced better professional integration, especially for those working in the civil service sector.

Additionally, a new trend echoed was the requalification of Creole culture as stated in the previous section. Indeed, new claims for a 'local preference' in employment, (that is, an informal attempt to raise local working market protection from outsiders) emerged in the late 2000s in reaction to the high rates of metropolitan occupying high skilled professions in the public sector. Many Martinicans thus felt threatened by the arrival of 'metro' newcomers in their working place and were concerns about 'good jobs' being stolen by 'strangers' (Daniel, 2009). Nonetheless, this division of the professional sphere now seems to exceed Black (islanders)/White (metro) dichotomy

with the return of Black French Caribbean from France. For example, on the migrants' side, Pierre (returnee of 55 years old) explained that when he reintegrated into the local professional market, he was automatically considered as a 'metropolitan', despite his skin color and 28 years living in Martinique. Pierre added that his 'national experience' as an engineer brought him taunts and mistrust from his new work colleagues: 'Often they feel that I am stealing something from them. I got to fight for my place and reputation here'.

Moreover, academic literature has longed questioned the role of return migrants as agents of change.[8] Indeed, return migration has interested the economic field from an utilitarian vision of mobility, – '(which) views return as the natural outcome of a successful experience abroad during which migrants met their goals (that is, higher incomes and accumulation of savings) while naturally remitting part of their income to the household' (Cassarino, 2004: 255).[9] In response to scholars describing returnees as 'agents of change' with too much optimism, Bovenkerk (1981), surprised by how local media were attacking return migrants, illustrated with the Surinamese's case the difficulties returnees faced in order to contribute to the 'modernisation' of their homeland. Indeed, trying to understand why returnees were excluded as potential actors in the economic development of their country, Bovenkerk (1981: 166) observed that 'they expect to earn too much, they would have become estranged from the Surinamese way of doing things, they would make their colleagues jealous by constantly bragging about how wonderful everything was in Europe, they would be arrogant (…)'. Those behaviors progressively generated the rise of a new kind of stigmatisation in Surinam, returnees now being marginalised as a heterogeneous but socially minoritised category of outsiders. Fieldwork data strengthened Bovenkerk's statement and confirmed this hostile climate in the labor sector.

[8]Cerase (1974: 251) defines 'agents of change' as those who planned their return as a long term project to set in motion their acquired European skills. They see themselves as bearers of modern knowledge and as benefactors wishing to improve the fate of their home country.

[9]Emigration from 'underdeveloped' countries was seen as a strategy to maximise the standard of living of the migrant, and his/her return was therefore theorised as a failure or an abnormality (Cassarino, 2004).

Indeed, several returnees (at least 5 men and 1 woman) have imagined themselves returning as agents of change. However, this self-projection was quickly replaced by a turnaround since their premeditated ambition rapidly disenchants once back 'home'. The entrepreneurial attitude of homecoming migrants thus faced the reactions of local population who perceived this stance as arrogance. Definitely, those returned migrants gradually lost their initial enthusiasm as well as losing the scope of their return project. For example, Sylvia (27 years returnee), who returned two years ago, at the time of this study, to set up an environmental project to help 'her country', quickly became disenchanted: 'I do not know if it's pretentious to say that you come home and you just want to get things done, because there are plenty of things that are not yet won here. I was rather in that spirit before leaving, now I want to return to France'. Likewise, Richard (58 years returnee) adds, 'They DO NOT accept your experience. THEY could understand that we just want to bring something else, but it is not accepted'. By wanting to improve Martinique, thanks to their national experience, returnees tends to be amalgamated as newcomer, stranger or worst, as colonialists when they return with the certainty of knowing what is good for the 'Other'. Agent of change returnees are now perceived as usurpers by acting as promoters of metropolitan development. If rehabilitation difficulties in working milieus emerged more clearly in male life stories, women, as we shall see, tend rather to identify complications related to family, educational values and gender relations.

Family Readjustments and Gendered Differences

Three of the eight women returnees (aged 50 – 65), returned to Martinique for familial reasons, essentially to take care of a sick or dying family member; while, three (two aged 35 – 50 and one 50 – 65) followed their husbands who had professional opportunities in Martinique. This professional success or ambition appear as secondary in their narratives compared to local family or migrant spouses support. Only two women (aged 20 – 35) who left Martinique at a young age admitted having returned first to pursue their careers and then to better know their families who remained on the island. These findings appear to contradict theories suggesting that the act of return involves a rational economic calculation in the return project. Rational choice theory appears as too mechanistic a model of human behavior, ignoring the socio-psychological dimensions (Janis and Mann, 1977), the transnational family networks (Massey, 1990) or the gendered roles and responsibilities in the

return decision-making process (Pedraza, 1991; Condon 2000; Olwig, 2012). One must note that those dimensions must be applied as complementary frames of reference for understanding the decisions to return, stay or re-migrate. Their scope on return migration studies thus require more extensive research to diversify the small sample established for the purposes of this exploratory research.

Despite the restricted nature of the collected qualitative data, it nevertheless established that familial reason is a gendered return factor on one hand and a main reintegration obstacle on the other. Indeed, all returnees first reestablished themselves with a family member on their arrival from France, attesting to the importance of family networks as a first step of the installation. In this regard, Ambrosini (2008) and Åkesson *et al*. (2012) show that the distance is not necessarily synonymous with family division and, in some cases, separation may even participate in the consolidation of family ties. However, ethnographic data analysis suggest that if return visits are generally felt by relatives as a happy event, long-term returns are often seen as an intrusion and may generate familial tensions and conflicts. On the migrant side, those who previously returned on holiday or short-term visits recalled cherished family reunion moments: 'On vacation, everyone wants you', remembers Nina (56 year returnee), but 'as soon as they feel that you came to live here, they close their door in your face'. Distance seems to increase when the returnee acquires a long-term duration feature, as Nina continues: 'When it's the holidays, it's always good. But in every family it's always the same story. When you return to stay, they always tend to think that you came back to take their place or to take something'. Thus, return migration appears to have stronger familial implications and consequences than circular migration.

Numerous anthropological investigations on Caribbean kinship (Smith, 1973; Blackwood, 2006) focused on the matrifocal Creole's family structure,[10] characterised by the frequency of men's multi-partnership as well as the occurrence of marital unions without common residence, which are more widely distributed in the lower classes of those societies. All women

[10]According to Guillemaut (2013), in a matrifocality organisation, the mother is defined as the pillar of the family dynamics. Men are present, but *volage* and unsteady. Fathers can be legally identified, but are generally not very present.

narratives described the challenge of returning in a 'misogynic' society, as Rachel (30 years returnee) expresses: 'We're still in a society where there are multiple relationships and infidelities. This is still very misogynist. The place of women here is still less respectable compared to France'.

Women returnees were also particularly affected in terms of parental education values, (considered too permissive), marital identity and gendered roles, which are perceived as distant from their own (nuclear family and feminist) model. A confrontation then seems to emerge between two parental 'cultures' involving different emotional and moral values and critical stances towards the Caribbean family model as supported by Veronique (60 years returnee) :

> When I arrived, I found it absurd how they educated children. So when I arrived, with my brothers and sisters, it was always the war: what are you meddling? You just arrived! But my big sister she was on my side since, she has lived there too. She thought it was not normal.

Moreover, Jeanne (55 years returnee), who returned since the illness of her mother started seven years ago, blamed local women of being too lenient with their sons or educated girls 'to serve men'. She added: 'When I say that, people look at me as if I was an alien. It's a reality. [They] often get angry with me'.

It should also be added that according to women life stories, a feeling of foreignness was ostensibly expressed through women returnees' representations of Martinican women perceived as granting too much importance to appearance. Several terms were used to refer to bad inputs of local women consumerist codes and the excess of seriousness attributed to the desire of showing their standing: women 'wants (sic) to shine', 'to showoff', 'are too elegant' et cetera. In this perspectives the 'native' woman is 'not modern', because 'she does not like to party', 'does not drink', 'does not travel', 'married too young', 'is superficial', 'not independent', 'anti-feminists'.[11] They thus described local women either as too 'traditional' or

[11]One could refer to Guillemaut (2006) writings, arguing in this respect that French Caribbean women have not incorporated black American feminist theories because of the ethnic diversity of French overseas populations, the geographical barriers and the creolisation of culture.

as sharing behaviors, life styles or ways of being conceived as bad or a misused appropriation of 'modernity'. The sense of men/women equality and gendered cultural norms in women life stories appears to play a significant role in women returnees' challenges in reintegrating their home society.

Cultural Otherness

Qualitative analysis attested that the figure of the négropolitain refers to a particular form of otherness, that of 'l'Autre proche' (the near other) (Augé and Fabre, 2007) at the crossroads of the dialectic of sameness and difference. This cultural distinctive type could be linked to Tsuda's (2009) 'problem with similarity' formula, which signifies an ironic form of alterity often produced by the return of a member of the same ethnic or cultural group. Following Tsuda's statements, the more the returned migrant is ethnically 'close' to the host society, the more he/she will experience an ambivalent sense of otherness and the more he/she risk being perceived as a new cultural minority. Indeed, this assumption resonates through the qualitative analysis since local antagonisms are generated in spite of returnees' ethno-cultural affinities. Furthermore, empirical data enlightened that non-migrants more easily forgive (White) metropolitans behaviors than those adopted by *négropolitans*:

> For *négropolitans*, criticisms are easy because they speak to people close to him. Often these complaints are formulated to their family. This is not the case of Metropolitans because they will avoid criticising the locals or the country itself because they know they aren't home. *Négropolitans* does not feel that because they believe to be home. But the image he forwards to his family suggests quite the opposite. The problem is they do not know where is 'home'. (Johanna, 27 years non-migrant)

For Célestine (2004: 30) the classificatory term *négropolitain* reflects a desire to impose a distance, which is felt by the returnees as a rejection from the local community. In other words, this differential marker referring to individuals' perception of having incorporated "metro" behavioral traits underlies a willingness to distinguish Creole identity from the hegemonic French culture. In fact, this appellation is perceived as depreciatory and wounding as evoked by Jeanne (55 years returnee): 'When I came back, they used to call me "négropolitaine". I could not stand it. This is pejorative.

I was upset that they dare making ME feel like a foreigner in my country'. Négropolitan appellation is therefore a symbol of identity assignment as the result of new cultural and identity boundaries or unreleased forms of postcolonial hybridity.

Indeed, négropolitans are also known locally for imitating the West Indian social codes. They try 'to act like' Antilleans and we sometimes call them 'bounty' (referring to sweet coconut with a chocolatey coating), says Mary (38 years non-migrant). To testify to a Caribbean belonging without yet perfectly mastering its cultural codes thus appears to contribute to the returnees' exclusion. By doing so, one could hypothesise that local inhabitants now tend to distance themselves from the 'Mimic men' (See Bhabha 1984), that is, those imitating and reflecting the coloniser's values, norms and life styles. Furthermore, the criterion most often cited to characterise négropolitans refers to the misuse of the Creole language or having an accent denoting a too long passage in France. Indeed, in the French West Indies a struggle process for the recognition of its cultural and historical specificities began slowly in late 1980s (Daniel, 2009; Giraud, 1997; Confiant, 2005). This requalification movement intensified during returnees' absence. Before their departure, Creole was seen as a stigmatised vernacular language, as Fanon expresses it:

> The middle class in the Antilles never speak Creole except to their servants. In school the children of Martinique are taught to scorn the dialect. One avoids Creolisms. Some families completely forbid the use of Creole, and mothers ridicule their children for speaking it." (Fanon 1967: 20)

Since the late 1990s, however, French Creole started to be considered as a rich and codified idiom and a sign of collective belonging. This new dynamic appears as an unprecedented turn in the way French West Indians perceived themselves and their differences with metropolitan people. Also, those who left Martinique before the requalification of Creole language complained of being pushed outward from the local community because of the way of they speak Creole, as Rachel stated:

> I do not speak Creole because my mother did not speak it. She is born in a completely assimilated generation. We do not understand Creole interest[s], or braids; it's not from here, it's African! My

> mother think[s] we should not speak of slavery… Well, Creole is not my language. I won't force myself on it. Of course, I find it hard to integrate here because I use phrases they do not use, and for me, Creole culture is folklore. (Rachel, 30 years returnee)

Indeed, reclassified markers of the Creole's culture such as language, but also Creole food, *zouk* music, African arts and symbolisms or historical emblems (See Nicolas 2009) now appear as key indicators of otherness between continental Antilleans and insular Antilleans.

Beside this cultural gap, one of the main criticism against returnees is, as previously mentioned, the constant comparison of the island with mainland France, of which Universalist pretensions are no longer unanimously acknowledged. Indeed, a superiority tone tends to intensify unfavorable judgments against the returned migrants who compare the island with the 'modern world'. In this respect, the returnees we encountered often '"arise" as the holder of modernity by giving to the Caribbean "native" the image of its own insularity and creating a distance not only geographical but also cultural with its continental metropolis' (Zobda-Zebina, 2008: 51). However, migrants resettling in a society that has struggled to gain recognition and to promote its cultural and historical features can expect a cultural clash and societal exclusion if they do not return with openness and humility.

Conclusion

The main objective of this article was to highlight the salient features of Martinican returnees' readjustment difficulties and representations. By doing so, this paper intended to fill an academic void on French overseas migration realities. However, Martinican return migrants narratives should be understood as embedded and intertwined within the specific socio-historical relationship that France maintained with Martinique. In this respect, this article, deriving from a single case study, calls for larger cross-cultural investigations in order to deepen understanding of post-return experiences face by return migrants according to different postcolonial contexts.

Indeed, this essay has highlighted that Martinican returnees discovered a new form of otherness upon their return from France. From racial alterity in the former colonial state, they then discovered themselves as the cultural 'Other' once back 'home', a reality they neither expected nor apprehended

when they previously returned home for holidays. Although today's returned migrants shared the same ethnic identity as most of the islanders do, returnees' distinctiveness and sense of rejection is to be revealed through a metropolitan sensibility that determines a cultural alterity marked by a heavy colonial past.

Nowadays, being likened to 'metros' makes returnees less likely to fully integrate in Martinique. This reveals an historical turn. Indeed, the dominant cultural model, the 'Frenchness', no longer carries the unequivocal power of attraction as it used to. French West Indians' representational scheme thus changed thanks to an increasing mobility phenomenon which improved the collective awareness of French West Indians' living conditions and discrimination problems in France.

This article also underlines that being a man or a woman appears to determine several gendered differences in terms of return factors and resettlement adjustments. The familial milieu is undoubtedly the place where women first discovered their new cultural differences as the professional one did for a majority of men. French language, accent and culture, European professional ethic, family model and feminism or being a 'citizen of the world' are claims that were highly discernible in the life stories. Those distinctive traits appears to contribute to a new form of cultural alterity for returnees and concurs in new forms of in-between spaces as they continue to circulate, or finally decided to remigrate. In this regard, 4 of the 15 returnees had already remigrated to France since the end of this research, which calls for the need for longitudinal studies in order to grasp migratory routes in their entirety. Finally, we must insist that if the present essay has focused on the problems and difficulties encountered by return migrants it does not fully address their agency, achievements or integration strategies, which, although less abundant than adjustment problems, remained important in return migrant's narratives.

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Jesus, Reigning King of Culture: The *WalkHoly* Kadooment Band in Barbados and its Disruption of the Sacred/Secular Divide

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Introduction

> The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
> the world, and all who live in it…
> Who may stand in his holy place?
> The one who has clean hands and a pure heart…
> Lift up your heads, you gates;
> be lifted up, you ancient doors,
> that the King of glory may come in.
> Who is this King of glory?
> The LORD strong and mighty,
> the LORD mighty in battle…
> The LORD Almighty –
> he is the King of glory.

(New International Version Anglicised, Psalm 24.1, 3b-4a, 7-8, 10b)

The *WalkHoly Kadooment Band* is a self-proclaimed Christian costume band founded in 2002. Since its inception it has led the masquerade procession every year at Grand Kadooment, the street parade which is the climax of Barbados' annual Crop Over festival. Critics claim that, as an entity which professes Christianity, *WalkHoly* is out of place in the bacchanalian celebration. They debate the efficacy of the band's evangelistic efforts. The band members, however, strongly believe that they have the freedom to worship their God and evangelise on the streets.

In this essay, I argue that *WalkHoly* disrupts the sacred/secular divide. I defend *WalkHoly's* evangelistic strategy of making a cultural and social impact which provides a platform for spreading the gospel.

As a Christian who has been a member of the *WalkHoly* band for the past three years (2013-2016), this topic is of personal interest for me. I was alarmed to see the decline in the number of band members over the years. Through analysis of newspaper articles and participatory-observation, I came to the painful yet intriguing realisation that the most vocal critics of the band are members of the Christian community themselves. Having had my own uncertainties about the band before participating, I understand that its existence raises issues about Caribbean identities, which can be uncomfortable for some Christians to address. I also believe that there are some misconceptions or lack of information surrounding the band that should be rectified.

Crop Over is Barbados' national festival. It was initially celebrated on individual plantations after the harvest of crops, thus it took place 'from slavery, through the emancipation period and into the 1960s' (Burrowes, 2011: 73). It was later repackaged as a single festival in 1974, and used as a summer tourist attraction to boost the Barbadian economy. 'In 1978, *Kadooment Day*, the day designated for masquerade and 'jump-up', was added to the festival' (Burrowes, 2013: 49). The Crop Over Festival now includes events such as a thanksgiving service, folk concert, exhibitions and private and state-sponsored fetes.

Although Crop Over is a *national* festival, the Church in Barbados finds itself largely outside the modern Crop Over tradition. Kadooment Day is problematic for the Christian community due to its performance aesthetic. As its linguistic roots indicate, Kadooment is 'much noise and confusion… commotion; disturbance; entertainment; merry-making' (Allsopp, 1996: 324). Kadooment is 'push and shove and jostle and shove and move hip sway hip wine in your wine and look how we enjoying we self' (Philip, 1998: 132). A celebration with drunken merry-making, bikini-clad women and bare-chested men 'wining'/'wukking up' (gyrating the waist) to soca music with salacious lyrics has not been reconciled with Christian notions of holiness in the Caribbean.

I have chosen the following definition of Christianity to guide my analysis: 'a monotheistic faith…essentially distinguished from other such faiths by the fact that in it everything is related to the redemption accomplished by Jesus of Nazareth' (Eliade, 1993: 348). The complexities within Christianity are many and denominational differences determine to a large extent styles of worship, doctrine and level of engagement with the surrounding culture. Although the *WalkHoly Band* is interdenominational, I consider its performance aesthetic to be Pentecostal-Charismatic. Joel Robbins draws upon Brouwer *et al*, Corten, d'Epinay and Burdick to define the Pentecostal-Charismatic worship style as 'spontaneous, experiential and exuberant [with] an eventful quality, with people waiting to see what the Spirit will do… often eras[ing] older boundaries between worship and leisure' (quoted in Robbins, 2004: 126). I use the terms 'the Christian Church' and 'the Church' to refer broadly to certain Christian denominations - for example Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Seventh Day Adventist, Pentecostal - which have patterned their 'modes of government and styles of worship…after European and North American modes' (Mulrain, 1995: 57). I choose not to include the Spiritual Baptist denomination in this category to distinguish it as demonstrating an Afrocentric performance aesthetic and participating openly in the Crop Over Festival.

'Gospel music' and 'Christian music', that is, music which proclaims a Christian message, are used interchangeably in this paper as they are in the Caribbean where, as Best (2004:55) notes, the term 'gospel music' is not limited to 'African-American Protestant vocal music'. For a definition of the term 'evangelism', I make reference to The Lausanne Covenant, a statement of belief drafted out of a 1974 international inter-denominational conference on evangelism. Evangelism is spreading the good news or 'gospel' that 'Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord he now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gifts of the Spirit to all who repent and believe' (Lausanne Movement, 2015). The gifts include 'word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, [speaking in] tongues and the interpretation of tongues' *(King James Version, 1 Corinthians 12.8-10)*.

A theoretical framework of space, the sacred/secular divide, representation and embodiment is used to support my discussion. Indeed, the arguments in this study surround human bodies' occupation of a festive space. According

to Michel Foucault (2001: 361), "Space is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power." The power to occupy a space is the power to create an identity, and this creation of identity is precisely what *WalkHoly* is engaged in.

The Christian community has labelled certain spaces (and times) 'holy' and 'unholy,' thus illustrating a belief in the separation and differentiation between the secular and the sacred. Kim, McCalman and Fisher (2012: 204) express the sacred/secular divide as

> the commonly held notion that life is divided between a sacred realm, limited to things like worship and personal morality, and a secular realm that includes science, politics, economics, and the rest of the public arena.

Popular expressions such as festivals are then relegated to the secular domain, if they do not overtly profess a religious connection.

The thinking of many Christians today relating to the sacred-secular divide has been influenced by Fundamentalism. It is not the reverence for the Bible, but rather the (lack of) interpretation of biblical texts which caused Fundamentalists to avoid what they considered 'secular' culture. 'The word "fundamentalism" was coined in 1920 to describe the conservative wing of North American Protestantism'. For Fundamentalists the Bible is seen as the

> infallible word of God and the biblical message is regarded as clear and unchanging and unchangeable…the Bible is an unquestionable authority that does not require interpretation (Soares, 2001: 106).

The origins of the divide are identified as lying in "modernism, or the post-enlightenment philosophy of empiricism and human reason" (Kim, McCalman and Fisher, 2012: 205). Best (2012) however, traces the sacred/secular divide in the Caribbean to plantation society. He states that enslaved society constructed 'a range of binary oppositions' including 'the religious versus the secular' (2012: 182). Among the enslaved, this division may have been somewhat superficial at first, since they continued to imbue apparently secular festivities with spiritual significance. (Beckles, 2002: 261). In a similar vein, Kenneth Bilby (2010) makes a case for the religious significance

behind the creole festival Jankunnu, arguing that masquerade was used by the enslaved Africans to disguise and protect their religious forms (180). According to Warner-Lewis (2011), masking (and masquerade) 'has religious associations' and is 'an aspect of annual ancestral remembrance' (562).

In the modern Crop Over festival, masquerade is promoted by The National Cultural Foundation (NCF) as a 'secular' concept. The NCF states the following objectives for Grand Kadooment:

a) To promote research and the exploration of Barbados' and the Caribbean's historical and contemporary cultural heritage.
b) To promote innovation in the design, production and development of a costume mas' industry.
c) To provide a meaningful outlet for the creative energy of designers, artists, producers, students and the general public.
d) To create a great entertainment event for one and all, and as a fitting finale to the Crop Over Festival (National Cultural Foundation Barbados, 2016: 1).

Thus, the application of spiritual significance is left up to the interpretation of the masquerader.

Gordon Rohlehr is quoted as saying that, 'carnival … is a festival which occupies a certain space, neuter time. You suspend what you are, what you do, who you are, for a space…' (quoted in Philip, 1998: 131). *WalkHoly* is a masquerade band, and as such wears costume to perform as an organised group along the street. Costumes do allow *WalkHoly* band members to adopt other identities. However, while the *WalkHoly* band-members, like all other band-members, suspend their everyday professions and social status, their identities as Christians are reinforced.

Jean Comaroff argues that 'the body is the tangible frame of selfhood in individual and collective experience' (Niaah and Hope, 2007: 218). This paper will discuss issues related to the tangible human body and also to the concept of incarnation (the Word of God becoming flesh) and how this incarnation can be manifested in a contemporary Caribbean context. The terms 'Christian community', 'the Church' and 'the Body of Christ' are used interchangeably and appear throughout the paper.

Stuart Hall (1997: 28) defines representation as the 'production of meaning through [visual and spoken] language'. On the band's draft brochure, *WalkHoly* identifies itself as 're-presenting God in culture' (*WalkHoly Kadooment Outreach*, 2015). In my opinion, 're-presentation' implies the replacement of old stereotypes. This is effectively representation or 'production of meaning'. Through *WalkHoly's* efforts to make an impact on Kadooment, it represents Christianity to the nation as a culturally relevant element which not only forms part of society but is an asset to it. This is in contrast to a mixture of post-colonial definitions of holiness and fundamentalist-based views which together display a rigid condemnation of popular cultural expressions and reinforce a sacred-secular divide. However, meaning can be 'reflective [face-value], intended [the purpose of the author] or constructed [the interpretation of the audience]' (Hall, 1997: 24). This accounts for the arguments for and against *WalkHoly's* participation.

Excerpts from Psalm 24 are used as a reference in the paper. Although the psalm was written in the context of Jewish culture, I have interpreted it in this paper as an encapsulation of five interrelated concepts which are essential to my analysis of *WalkHoly*. They are culture, holiness, decolonisation, the Kingdom of God and spiritual warfare, undergirded by the theoretical framework of space and identity. These will be analysed in relation to a broader overview of the band: the decision to worship in the pew and on Spring Garden, the significance of its banner, vision, brand, logo, song and impact as well as a critical reflection on my participation as flag-person.

Moreover, the intent of the psalmist and usage of the psalm by the Jewish community is significant. It is 'a processional liturgy…celebrating the Lord's entrance into Zion—composed either for the occasion when David brought the ark to Jerusalem…or for a festival commemorating the event' (*NIV Study Bible Notes, NIV Study Bible*). In a similar vein, *WalkHoly* considers itself to be a sacred procession in a festival of thanksgiving: its performance is worship as the band invites and celebrates God's presence on Kadooment Day. Finally, the very act of interpreting a Jewish text to illustrate themes relevant to the Caribbean mirrors the adaptation or representation by *WalkHoly* of the Judeo-Christian religion in a creolised Caribbean context.

My primary research methods include an auto-ethnographic analysis of my experience as a Christian, a dancer and the 2015 flag-person for the *WalkHoly* band. Newspaper articles and personal interviews are also examined. I further draw upon scholarly articles and undertake discourse analysis of relevant song lyrics.

'In the Pew and Down Spring Garden Too'

Psalm 24 is my personal reference for my participation in the *WalkHoly* Kadooment band. I believe that 'the earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it' (*New International Version Anglicised, Psalm 24.1*); every culture, including Barbadian culture, belongs to him. If the whole earth is his, he can send me anywhere on it -whether to a 'sacred' or 'secular' space - at any time and I can do whatever he leads me to do. However, the execution of this carries with it various dynamics that are rooted within our Caribbean histories. Furthermore, 'God led me to do it' is not adequate justification for most other people. Hence, the perspectives are worth exploring.

Even from Crop Over's roots in plantation society, there was contention over the festive space. In 1875, the Moravians at Mount Tabor Church in St. John sought a 'suitable form of punishment for "…several sisters who were known to have taken part in the dancings which formed part of the rejoicings at the conclusion of the crop'" (Burrowes, 2011: 62- 63). Similarly, Curwen Best (2012) notes the Christian community's scorn for or avoidance of music and dance (as an organised grouping) in Crop Over. He highlights exceptions, which included: the blessing and ceremonial delivery of the last canes and the operation of a food tent by the Sons of God Apostolic Church (Spiritual Baptists); the Kadooment Band of Father Harcourt Blackett; the Christian-based 'Experience Calypso Tent' and the 'intrusion' of the *WalkHoly* band, all of which were met with their share of controversy. The Spiritual Baptists, however, were relatively well received, in part due to their Afrocentric performance aesthetic which meshes with the African roots of Crop Over (C. Best, 2012:133).

WalkHoly was the second Christian band to ever participate in Kadooment, although it has no formal connection or collaboration with the previous band. Roman Catholic priest Father Harcourt Blackett (now Monsignor Vincent Blackett) was the first who dared to enter this space, which the Church associated with revelry and raucous abandon. Best (2012) notes that, 'Father

Blackett's masquerade band had presented wholesome messages, but did not seek to distinguish itself by parading to religious music, as the Walk Holy band would later do' (133). Blackett's band of the 1980s and 1990s generated press headlines such as the incendiary "'Jam To Hell, Father Harry' [and] 'No Jamming Priest Can Enter God's Kingdom'" (Ally, 1996). However, despite the influence of this bold precursor and the presence of the *WalkHoly* band, non-involvement of the Church has continued to be the greater narrative surrounding Kadooment.

Although I am not implying that all Christian denominations have criticised the *WalkHoly* band, I have observed that opposition comes predominantly from within the Christian community. Allegations were made that the band was acting in contradiction to the principles of God, was misguided and even deceptive in their efforts. In 2002, days before the band's first Kadooment, a letter by Andrew Squires appeared in the public's 'Comment' section of the *Nation* newspaper, admonishing the organisers and members of the band to 'repent and worship Jesus, in spirit and truth' (Squires, *Daily Nation*, July 30, 2002, p. 10). Moreover, Apostle T. Wayne Bishop of New Covenant Ministries declared that *WalkHoly's* efforts were ineffective and even prophesied, falsely as it turned out, that 2005 would be the band's last year (Jordan, *Saturday Sun*, March 04, 2006).

There are 'approved' spaces for Christian ministry; specifically, canalised zones that are created by the Church, traversing space and time (Foucault, 2001: 361). Church services are expected and approved, 'open-air outreaches' are encouraged, the 'March for Jesus' (Y. Best, *Nationnews*, June 12, 2010) has seen support across the Christian community and Christian concerts are accepted. However, the *WalkHoly Band* has 'transgressed' onto the Kadooment route on Kadooment Day (Cresswell, 2004: 103).

Roger Marshall, founder of the Barbadian Christian Apologetics Organisation Project (PROBE) Ministries, expresses this notion of approved spaces. He accepts the presence of Christians in the 'more benign aspects of the Crop-Over Festival in Barbados such as folk concerts, art and craft, and photographic exhibitions, et cetera' but questions *WalkHoly's* involvement in 'the Carnival aspects' (R. Marshall, 2006). Similarly, Evangelical pastor Peter Millington evokes the notion of 'sacred' and 'secular' spaces when he comments, 'Christians should not be involved in this revelry but church people want to be in the pew and down Spring Garden too' (Dottin,

Nationnews, August 08, 2010). The Spring Garden Highway in the capital city of Bridgetown is the end of the Kadooment route, where thousands of people converge for a street party. As such, 'Spring Garden' is synonymous with Kadooment. 'I feel that if the Church wants to show how you can party in a holy manner or in a wholesome way, then come out and have their own festival' (Dottin, *Nationnews*, August 08, 2010).

Conversely, *WalkHoly*, in a struggle for spiritual space, is redefining the boundaries of where Christians should go and when they should go to these places. It is more than a group of Christian 'party-ers'. As the band combines the 'unholy' Kadooment route with the ethos of 'holy' worship, it is proclaiming that it is possible for Christians, with the blessing of God, to be 'in the pew and down Spring Garden too' (Dottin, *Nationnews*, August 08, 2010).

The Banner

The title of this study comes in part from one of the banners on the side of the *WalkHoly* music truck. It reads 'Jesus Reigning King of Culture' (see fig. 1). The scope of this paper does not allow for a theological analysis of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity – God the Father, the Son (Jesus) and God, the Holy Spirit (Wesley n.d.) – but I will say that Christians sometimes interchange the terms 'Jesus' and 'God'. Moreover, the banner proclaims Jesus to be the 'reigning' king; he has authority over culture at the present moment. This king is not separated from his people; he is a part of the celebration, *WalkHoly* suggests.

Fig.1. *WalkHoly* music truck with banner

Raymond Williams (2002: 92) opines that 'culture is ordinary: that is where we must start'. However, the term 'culture' has gone through centuries of change and varying meanings have been ascribed to it. 'Culture in all its early uses was a noun of process: the tending of something, basically crops or animals…from eC16 [the first third of the 16th century] the tending of natural growth was extended to a process of human development' (Williams, 1983: 87). Matthew Arnold 'represented culture as a standard of aesthetic excellence: "the best that has been thought and said in the world" (Arnold, 1868), and it derived from an appreciation of "classic" aesthetic form (opera, ballet, drama, literature, art)' (quoted in Hebdige 2007: 432).

Arnold's 'Culture with a big "C"' definition (Longhurst *et al*., 2008: 2) differs from the concept of Kathy Weekes, present *WalkHoly* band-leader. K. Weekes presents an 'ordinary' look at culture, stating that,

> [Culture is] the way we [human beings] express ourselves and the way we identify ourselves that makes us distinct from other people, like the food, the way we dress, the way we behave in general… because God gave us culture, there is nothing wrong with it...so our cultural expressions should always be reflective of the one who gave it [culture] to us (K. Weekes, Personal Interview with the author).

Here, culture is being presented as a gift from God. I interpret this to mean that culture is precious and inherently sacred. Weekes defends taking an active role in culture, when she states that 'nothing is wrong with it'. She stresses that the expressions must 'always' be reflective of God, which suggests that the possibility exists for them to be corrupted. There is therefore a responsibility to guard and develop culture, to be constantly engaged with it, to make efforts to keep it holy.

Band-leader Weekes' definition also carries nuances of the 16th century agricultural definition (Williams, 1983: 87), specifically, the idea that culture is something to be taken care of because it is necessary to society. In the same vein, *WalkHoly* assumes a measure of cultural responsibility in entering the Kadooment space. When *WalkHoly* declares that Jesus is the 'Reigning King of Culture', the band is affirming the right and freedom as 'children' of the King, to be present in the Kadooment space, using our God-given Caribbean artistic creativity to practise and enhance cultural expression.

The Vision

Visionary and founder of the band, Jamaican-born Marcia Weekes, had no experience in participating in or producing carnival/masquerade bands and initially did not understand how controversial such a venture would be. She explains that God spoke to her in an evangelical church service five months after relocating to Barbados from New York with Dave Weekes, her Barbadian husband. The instruction she heard was to 'impact Kadooment' (M. Weekes, Personal Interview with the author).

Weekes further explains that through fasting and praying she received a vision of a Kadooment band. She was introduced to Gina Hunte of the 'Living Room' Church, who revealed that through prayer and fasting she too had been given the vision of a Kadooment band, but complete with the names of the sections, designs and colours. Weekes and Hunte fused their visions and the first *WalkHoly* Band was born in 2002. Its theme was 'The River of God, The Fire of God, The Glory of God' (M. Weekes, Personal Interview with the author). Hunte's designs were used and members of the church were included in the band. Other partners in the outreach were Youth with a Mission, Teen Challenge, Kingdom First International, Sanctification Promotions, Thankful Family Church and City Slam Productions (Jordan, *Daily Nation*, August 01, 2006).

The Band and the Brand

The *WalkHoly* Kadooment Band has made efforts to ensure that it is recognised as such – a band. It therefore, registers with the National Cultural Foundation (NCF), parades in costume and travels along the highway with a standard music truck, under the direction of the NCF marshal and the local police. Thus, even though the band members are instantly distinguished due to their choices of costuming and behaviour, the aim has always been to be a part of the festival.

However, the label 'band' has been problematic. Kadooment 'bands' are associated with the concept of 'revelling,' which is viewed in Christian circles as 'sinful.' Accordingly, the *WalkHoly* band does not identify its members as revellers, describing the costumed contingent as "worshippers" (*WalkHoly* Kadooment Outreach, 2015). Although some band members may drink alcohol in their personal lives, the band does not carry alcohol.

Journalist Eric Smith notes that,

> As the first band on the road, it seeks to publicly give praise to, and worship God, in an uncompromising way. They also seek to lead by example in costume, music, dance, drink and behaviour, setting them apart from what follows on the parade route. 'The contrast is clear,' [band-member Errol Griffith] stressed (Smith, *Daily Nation*, August 25, 2014, p.13).

However, during a 2015 Kadooment Day interview, a group of young women gave voice to the 'band/revelry' connection. They were members of a 'secular' band, wearing bikini-style costumes. They identified themselves as Christians but found the idea of the band to be 'contradictory,' noting that,

> I feel like if you believe that Kadooment is wrong …having a band named *WalkHoly* is…contradicting yourself…you say you shouldn't 'jump', you try to get children out of jumping...but it is a band and it's still Kadooment, it's still 'revelling' which is supposed to be a 'sin'…they're calling it by a different name just to make it sound better" (Rowe and D-J. Weekes, Kadooment Day 2015 Interviews)

WalkHoly has had to grapple with the worship/revelry binary from the inception. *Daily Nation* reports from 2002 quote Marcia Weekes affirming that the band's involvement was not to 'sanction the event [but to] lift up the name of Jesus' (Jordan, *Daily Nation*, August 01, 2006) and that it was 'an evangelistic outreach' (Mayers, *Daily Nation*, July 03, 2002, p. 9a). Nevertheless, the band also represents itself as not being anti-Kadooment, but a proud part of the festival. M. Weekes stated in 2006, 'We want to bless the festival' (Jordan, *Daily Nation*, August 01, 2006, p. 6). On Kadooment Day 2015, people interviewed on the street also expressed satisfaction that the band was indeed 'blessing the road' (Rowe and D-J. Weekes, Kadooment Day 2015 Interviews).

During my research and in casual discussions with members of the band's management team, I was informed that *WalkHoly* is deliberately written as one word to reflect its status as a brand. I note that this may have been decided after the inception, since it is written as two words on the logo. Branding, arguably, speaks to the intention of the organisers to establish a longstanding presence in the festival and gives *WalkHoly* the space to expand its operations beyond Kadooment, if it so desires.

Logo

The *WalkHoly* logo was designed by Barbadian graphic-turned-fine artist, Ronald 'Ron' Cumberbatch (see fig. 2). Cumberbatch states that he took clip art figures and adapted them to form caricatures that portray 'giving glory to God through movement and worship…not revelry' (Cumberbatch, Telephone Interview with the author). In the logo, the notion of giving glory and thanks to a Judeo-Christian God is seen in crosses emblazoned on the shirts of the worshippers and in their upraised arms and seemingly pleasant, energetic facial expressions. Cumberbatch also notes that the characters are 'fully clothed' and 'orderly' (Cumberbatch, Telephone Interview with the author), which was done to make a clear distinction between *WalkHoly* and other bands. In this context I read 'fully clothed' and 'orderly' to mean that the chest, torso, upper legs and upper arms are covered; they are sober and not bending over, stumbling or falling or wukking up on objects or each other as is characteristic of other bands.

The logo carries the phrase 'Kadooment Outreach,' which is chosen to portray that the venture is ministry initiative as opposed to purely an avenue for enjoyment. Moreover, the biblical verse Mark 16:15: 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel' (*King James Version, Mark 16.1*) - what Christians refer to as the Great Commission- is used to justify the band's presence in Kadooment.

Fig. 2. *WalkHoly* logo

The Song

The band was named after the song 'Walk Holy' (M. Weekes, Personal Interview with the author). The song was chosen because it was well-known among the Barbadian people, having been popularised in Barbados by well-loved gospel artiste Sister Marshall. The song carries a bouncy beat which fit into the rhythm of Kadooment Day. The lyrics, 'O Zion's children, walk holy' (Sister Marshall 2013) worked well to depict the band's movement along the street. It also served as an encouragement for 'Zion'- the 'Christian Church' (Oxford University Press, 1992: 1071) to live a life pleasing to God.

Presently, the band uses a remake of the song which was recorded in 2009 by 'the calypso-soca artist Adrian Clarke' (C. Best, 2012: 134). Clarke named it 'Holy Walk' as opposed to 'Walk Holy' for copyright purposes (Clarke, Telephone Interview with the author). He infused it with a more modern soca beat and 'chanting' style reminiscent of dancehall. The band's choice to play the more modern song reflects the fact that it wanted to remain culturally relevant.

Kingdom Impact

One popular narrative of 'holiness' places emphasis on such things as full body coverage, the colour white and living a dull life, which consists of a withdrawal from earthly pleasures in order to dedicate oneself to church activities, bible reading and prayer. *WalkHoly* does portray being set apart or consecrated for a particular purpose, that is, to worship God on the Kadooment route. Most members do go to church and they engage in bible-reading and prayer. However, the band looks and sounds quite different from the old narrative, but nevertheless still calls itself holy. 'Holiness,' then, is a consecration of the heart (*New International Version Anglicised, Psalm 24.4a*), which manifests itself in outward appearance and actions. Whilst these actions look different from the norm, their interpretation within a Caribbean context makes them culturally and socially relevant, but no less holy.

WalkHoly's evangelistic strategy is to make a cultural and social impact, through which evangelistic efforts can be realised. Dave Weekes explains that Marcia Weekes was told by God to,

> impact culture with the Kingdom. Hence to evangelise via directly seeing people 'save[d]' was never the objective, but rather to keep the salt of the Gospel in [Crop Over] and to influence people's behaviours and remind people [that] the original purpose/intent of Crop Over was Thanksgiving to God for successful Crop (D. Weekes, Email message to the author).

The 'Kingdom' of Heaven/God is a biblical concept which can be used to refer to heaven, but generally, the definitions I encountered through interviews are along the lines of the one posited by Judith Soares (2001: 110) that,

> the Kingdom of God is…God's political rule on earth and encompasses all spheres of life–social, political, economic and cultural…the Kingdom of God is interwoven into the daily lives of people and implies a society where justice and dignity would prevail for all, a society that would correspond to Christian principles and biblical and doctrinal reflection.

Thus, when in 2007 *WalkHoly* members cried 'Let your kingdom come!' along the Kadooment route (*The Nation*, August 07, 2007), they were praying that God's principles would be established on the earth. Moreover, when the band declares that Jesus is the 'Reigning King of Culture' it is affirming its right as 'children' of the King, to be present and practise their freedom in this space, using their inherited cultural expression. This concept of the Kingdom of God varies from prior portrayals of the Kingdom as somewhat of a vague separate a-cultural entity to which all Christian believers belonged, in a different dimension from the rest of the world. The issue was that little consideration was given to the varied cultural contexts in which Christians lived and the need of Christians to be firmly rooted in an earthly culture. *WalkHoly* thus claims dual citizenship - citizens of the Kingdom of God and citizens of the Caribbean, as opposed to separating themselves from the festivals of their nation-state.

Connected to this idea of the Kingdom of Heaven is the notion of spiritual warfare. *WalkHoly* considers itself to be engaged in spiritual warfare, which is essentially a battle between two kingdoms (*New International Version Anglicised, Psalm 24.8*). It is 'imagined to be in action invisibly on a spiritual and moral plane. A battle between good and evil is actually in progress and can be accessed through fortunes and misfortunes in the material world.

The battle can be over a single soul, or over an entire territory' (Mc Alister, 2005: 252). The warfare begins through prayer in committee meetings and cyberspace months before Kadooment Day and then moves to the street days before the August jump-up. Some of the members walk the length of the route before the day of the event, praying for the success of the outreach. This action is understood to cleanse and prepare the way for ministry on Kadooment Day.

The 'salt' previously mentioned by D. Weekes, is a reference to a biblical account in which Jesus explains the importance of his disciples and their responsibility to society (*New International Version Anglicised, Matthew 5.13*). M. Weekes also made reference to 'salt' in the band's first year, that is in 2002, when she responded to concerns that Christians were out of place in the Kadooment festivities: 'As Christians we believe we are the salt. You don't cook the salt separately; and we are the light and light shines brightest in the darkest places' (Mayers, *Daily Nation*, July 03, 2002, p. 9a). M. Weekes transfers the biblical message to a need for the present-day Christian Church to establish a meaningful presence in culture. *WalkHoly*, therefore seeks to be a part of the festival in order to exercise what the band considers a positive influence.

The band's 'cultural' impact includes the depiction of the theme through costume and pageantry at the national stadium, on the street and even before, on the band's online advertisements. On the road, the band and DJ on the *WalkHoly* truck play all gospel music, but only in the soca genre. These include local and regional gospel songs, as well as soca covers of North American gospel music and songs sung in local churches. Thus, the band tries to show that the Christian God is in touch with Barbadian culture and that *WalkHoly* is respectful of the festival.

Additionally, *WalkHoly* mingles the sacred concept of worship and the secular concept of pleasure. Its members experience not only communion with God, but enjoyment on the street, singing, dancing and interacting with bystanders. Through *WalkHoly's* performance, we see a representation of Christian worship as pleasurable and of Christians as happy, fun-loving people, all of which, the band implies, is compatible with holiness. The band also represents Christianity as being concerned about the everyday matters of the people, whether they identify as Christians or not. This is the social

aspect of its outreach. Along the parade route, the band stops at symbolic locations to pray: in front of a police station for the security of the nation (see fig. 3), at a usually busy crossroads for the financial prosperity of the country and in front of the psychiatric hospital for the healing of the patients.

Fig. 3. *WalkHoly* 2013 - 'Caribbean Prayze II' praying in front of police station in Station Hill, St. Michael

A significant part of the *WalkHoly* team is the individuals who walk alongside the band or operate from stationary prayer tables, distributing Christian-based inspirational and educational 'leaflets', which speak directly to social issues such as HIV/ AIDS and domestic abuse and provide 'information that can better your life' (Skeete, Personal Interview with the author). The band also distributes hundreds of Bibles to by-standers. In 2014, *WalkHoly* began distribution of gifts of school supplies, baby items and snacks along the parade route in an effort to be more socially relevant at a time of economic crisis. Even the fact that the band does not litter the road contributes to the image of Christians as socially responsible people (Skeete, Personal Interview with the author). In 2016, the 'social' representation effort was expanded to a 'family friendly prize of $2000 for the Kadooment band exhibiting the most family-friendly costumes and behaviour during the Kadooment parade,…a free children's camp on Kadooment Day @ Praise Academy studios for children while parents jump [in any band] on Kadooment Day…and a child protection campaign comprising a petition for a fine to be levied on any adult who engages in inappropriate behaviour with a child or children in a festival' (*WalkHoly* Barbados, 2016). These activities, arguably, form part of the representation efforts previously discussed.

Steve Skeete, the leader of the said evangelistic team that accompanies the band, notes that the team is ready to share the gospel as they interact with the bystanders but that the strength of the band is its ability to be a part of the festival and show, through the arts, that they can contribute positively and exalt Christ through redemption of the arts (Skeete, Personal Interview with the author). Redemption refers to the shifting of the usage of a form or person from evil to good, from the service of Satan to the service of God. Therefore, while the band does engage in evangelism to promote the 'saving of souls,' its focus and success lie more so in its cultural influence, which is in itself a platform for spreading the gospel.

Over the years, *WalkHoly* has had support on the streets from Trinidadian, Guyanese and Jamaican Christians who flew to the island specifically to participate as costumed members. In a radio interview, one of a group of Trinidadians who visited Barbados in order to be part of the band explained his interpretation of the band's focus:

> 'It's not really …just to be part of a carnival or be part of a walk. It's bigger than that; it's more… a lifestyle, it's more Kingdom-purpose driven…we have a mandate to go into all the Kingdom and preach the gospel but we using this carnival as a tool to get the word out, 'cause there is already crowd there…we have a truck playing the music, declaring the Word of God, stopping and praying because these things are the cries of the nation, if it's the financial part, if it's health, crime, whatever the community wants to pray about, we take the issues of the community and we pray…' (Christ Is The Answer Radio).

The band has also sent a delegation to be part of a similar outreach in the Guyanese festival of Mashramani. In Barbados, *WalkHoly* is closely linked to The Experience Tent, the Christian dance school Praise Academy of Dance Barbados and the media company Step by Step Productions, with many individuals, including myself, shifting among the different entities to participate and offer support. Praise Academy of Dance Barbados is itself part of the larger regional Praise Academy of Dance body, founded in Jamaica. The aptly named 'Kingdom Arts' festival, now under different management (Islandworship), is also a product of these Christian initiatives for 'redemption' of the arts.

If the Kingdom of God is so powerful, then why is the band so small? The band recorded a mere 18 costumed members plus musicians in 2014 as opposed to 150-200 members at the inception, twelve years earlier. Barbados' predominant religion is Christianity; and, in 2010 there were over 15, 000 people between the ages of 20-44 who identified themselves as Pentecostal (Barbados Statistical Service, 2010: 56). I refer to this denomination specifically because of the identical nature of its worship style to *WalkHoly's*. Although this statistic does not indicate the number of people who are actively involved in their assemblies or feel the need to express their Christianity in the public sphere, it is a significantly large figure. Furthermore, the Pentecostal community in Barbados is a visually vibrant one, engaging in church services and other church-based events in the island during the year. This has not, however, translated to large numbers in the band of recent years.

Although lack of support or outright condemnation from church leaders has affected the band, there are other issues that may also have an influence on the declining membership. The band is also not without its own management inadequacies, which are revealed in comparatively late advertisement of costumes and insufficient promotion. Limited finances also affect the band's productivity. The band's music selection is not varied and contemporary enough to cater to the tastes of young Christians. Notwithstanding *WalkHoly's* internal challenges, I see a greater issue. Why until 2016 were there no other Christian bands? If the problem was that *WalkHoly's* product was sub-standard, but the body of Christ believed in the vision, surely alternative bands would have been created. I have concluded that the Church prefers to stay away.

Rather than becoming directly involved, some churches hold events on Kadooment Day as alternatives to the festivities. I support the idea of producing wholesome activities on Kadooment Day that are suitable for all ages and have participated in and enjoyed them myself. I also respect people's right to use a public holiday for group or private recreation. I do not believe that the entire Christian community of Barbados needs to be a part of Kadooment Day, any more than I want to attend every national event or feel divinely called to be a part of every evangelical outreach. I have not been a member of the *WalkHoly* band from its inception, neither can I predict whether I will be a part of every single *WalkHoly* offering in the

future. Nevertheless, I do recognise a deliberate attempt from the Christian community to ignore or disregard Kadooment, and to a lesser extent Crop Over, which is, in my opinion, disappointing.

This year (2016), for the first time since 2002, there was another Christian band in Kadooment – 'De Church Pun De Road' (*WalkHoly* Barbados, 2016). It had a contingent of 95-97 people (Stuart, Telephone Conversation) and paraded second. Similar to *WalkHoly*, 'De Church Pun De Road' forfeited the right to compete in order to occupy a position at the beginning of the procession. This band wore t-shirts as opposed to costumes and painted their faces to depict their theme. The band came from the Kingdom Culture International church, which also hosts the Christian 'Ultimate Calypso Tent.' This is the same church (though called 'Love and Faith' at the time) that Marcia Weekes visited when she was divinely instructed to enter Kadooment. Arguably, the church's present name is in keeping with its evangelistic approaches. The church has been on the road as a part of *WalkHoly* before, so its presence does not indicate a change in their pastors' opinions on the legitimacy of participating in a Kadooment outreach. Their decision to create their own band might encourage more Christians to participate in the festival, either by joining one of the two existing bands or creating a third.

The presence of another Christian band does raise certain issues. Is it necessary for all Christian bands to be at the head of the Kadooment Day parade, or should they spread themselves throughout the parade to better be 'salt'? Perhaps it would be better for the two bands to collaborate. However this would call for a relinquishing of some autonomy from both bands. Bystanders have embraced *WalkHoly*, but is it a token Christian band? That is to say, will the society welcome several others or consider that one representation of Christianity is enough before getting into the 'real' party? Time will tell how these matters are resolved.

Jumping On a Mindset—My Flag-Person Experience

Even though it may be an unconscious act on the part of *WalkHoly* members, I see a significant act of decolonisation of some of the cultural norms of Christianity in the Caribbean. This is not a full decolonisation in itself but one aspect, or rather convergence of aspects, some of which did not originate with *WalkHoly*.

Decolonisation can be defined as the 'restoration of nationhood to the people' (Fanon, 1963: 27). The Caribbean is a diaspora -Stuart Hall (2001: 28) calls it 'the first, the original and the purest diaspora' - and as such, nationhood did not need to be restored but was rather constructed for the first time in these creolised (Brathwaite, 1974: 11) societies. In the Caribbean, decolonisation is connected to processes of creolisation because the removal of a colonial figure or even a colonial mindset does not erase all influence of the coloniser. An Afro-Caribbean person can never be solely African again. When I speak of decolonisation, I am therefore, referring to ownership. Who owns Christianity? The answer should be no one or even all Christians. However, as a religion that was imposed in the Caribbean, it was presented as the property of Europeans – one that the enslaved were at first denied. Even after emancipation, Christianity was presented to the formerly enslaved and their descendants mostly on the former masters' terms.

According to Frantz Fanon (1963), 'decolonisation is always a violent phenomenon (35). Mindsets have to be altered, stereotypes and insecurities destroyed and self-love and cultural confidence affirmed. *WalkHoly*, in taking to the streets with Afro-Caribbean rhythms to take possession of a space which for centuries the Christian Church had closed its doors on, is engaging in a form of decolonisation. I interpret this centuries-old rejection of self, of indigenous cultural expression, as the 'ancient doors' of Psalm 24 (*New International Version Anglicised, Psalm 24.7*).

A poignant way to explain my argument is to relate my own experience on the road. In 2015, I substituted for Patricia Evanson, the customary flag-person for the *WalkHoly* band. As I performed my role, I sensed that I was embodying this decolonisation. It was a powerful experience dancing at the national stadium where bands perform for the judges as well as on the parade route, notably to the soca song 'Giving Thanks' by Barbadian artiste MRBLOOD. MRBLOOD also blurs the sacred and secular divide through his appearance with *WalkHoly*. Likewise, though he is internationally known as a secular soca artiste, he has declared that he is a Christian (Rowe and D-J. Weekes, Kadooment 2015 Interviews). MRBLOOD sings,

> I wanna give Him thanks in this festival (Ah giving thanks)
> Ah wanna jump and wave for the carnival
> I don't care what nobody say

Cause today He deserves a wave
Father thank you for all your blessings
Your love has covered me through the years
(Armstrong and Yarde, 2015)

Before leading the band onto the stadium track, I had an unmistakable sense of taking ownership of that space. On the road, dancing and waving, *WalkHoly* was not only expressing Christian worship. *WalkHoly* was resisting four hundred years of colonial legacy, which dictated that drums must not be played in Church, African rhythms must not be sung and Christian hips must not be moved. 'I don't care what nobody say'; I am a Christian and God gave me the right to dance and praise him on the streets of my country; in the middle of the road I was stamping and jumping on a mindset that prescribed times and places in which my worship would supposedly be acceptable to my God. It was a public display of faith, freedom, joy, Africanness, creolité, self-love and Rohlehr's (2013: 378) self-affirmation.

The Christian Body and the Body of Christ

Anna Kasafi Perkins (2011) argues that, 'Christianity, a faith which boasts of a God that became human (incarnation), demonstrates a clear ambivalence towards the body, the flesh' (371). I believe that within the contemporary Christian community, the human body is considered with respect, even though women's bodies, as is also the case outside of Christianity, are more scrutinised and policed than men's. However, it is the notion of respecting one's body that reveals the 'ambivalence.'

A frequently quoted Bible verse states, 'Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies' (*New International Version Anglicised, 1 Corinthians 6.19-20*). The body is of great value in that it is the 'temple of the Holy Spirit'. However, there are different interpretations of how this 'honouring' should take place. Some women work hard to get their bodies into shape specifically for Kadooment. They then proudly display their bodies in 'skimpy' costumes with pride. Christian doctrine sits uneasily with this performance, as 'honour' is interpreted as dressing 'modestly' and avoiding excessive public display of the body. For many Christians, 'honouring God' entails avoiding sexual immorality. To avoid sexual immorality one must

resist lust. To discourage others from lusting is then translated to covering the body. Consequently, *WalkHoly* uses costumes that cover at a minimum the chest, torso and upper thighs and are loose-fitting in the pelvic area.

However, it must also be noted that the band's choice of costumes is affected by fashion. Costumes at the inception of Crop Over covered more of the body than they do now. Styles change and the band will most likely continue to adapt its costume aesthetic.

Cláudio Carvalhaes (2008) speaks of 'the doctrine of the incarnation, God's *excessive knee movement* in Christ' (2) and calls for an emancipation of the knees, claiming that as a result of colonialism, most of the Church has forgotten how to dance (ibid.). In my view, Praise Academy of Dance (where some of the *WalkHoly* members have trained) is at the forefront of this emancipation of the Caribbean Christian body. As a result of their influence and training, several Christian churches are now more freely able to bend knees and move backs and hips, although the level of freedom varies according to the congregation. Traditional and contemporary Caribbean folk dance steps are now being utilised. In fact, any dance form is liable to be appropriated and used for worship through the redemption of the dance.

One of the inherent qualities of carnival celebrations is to 'provide a space for unbridled self-expression' (Burke, 2008: 81). *WalkHoly*, the unusual Kadooment band, claims freedom of movement but regulates the waist. Waist movement (wining or wukking up) is generally avoided by the Christian community in the public space even if on a personal level or in informal discussions among some Christians it is accepted. Women's 'wining' has been represented as the enactment of agency, the 'social, artistic, economic and sexual independence and freedom' (Noel, 2010: 76). However, the prevailing narrative is that Caribbean Christians frown on wukking-up, individually or with a partner because it is seen as sexually expressive and therefore sinful, apart from in private expressions between husband and wife.

Furthermore, *WalkHoly* has created its own discourse of embodiment of freedom to contrast with that of the 'wining revellers'. The band's concept is that Christianity is a way of life. Freedom, then, is embedded in the Christian

life and is exercised in the open-air. Celebration and worship on the road is a continuation or explosion of celebration and worship in everyday holy life, that is, a life devoted to God following his divine instruction.

John Hunte (2013) argues that, 'wukking up emerges as a dominant African retention in Barbados' (81). Although I have heard from some Christians that various levels of wukking-up are acceptable and that it is an expression of African heritage, others are quick to denounce it as sin. A song written and performed by contemporary young Trinidadian gospel reggae and gospel soca artiste Jaron Nurse brings to light the liberations and struggles which Caribbean Christians encounter in expressing themselves through music and movement in our creolised environment. The song's lyrics are a social commentary on the need for the submerged self (Rohlehr, 2013: 377), that rhythm which flows through the blood of the Caribbean person, to be released into the outer space (Nettleford, 1996: 389) in a dance that is natural in a Caribbean context. Fittingly, Nurse sings on the African-influenced Kan Kan Riddim, which is the creation of young Trinidadian producers and has also been made popular by secular soca artistes. Nurse, in singing on this soca 'riddim' brings a 'sacred' message to a 'secular' beat, promoting inculturation of the message and 'redemption' of the rhythm, just as his life has been redeemed. He begins with a short wordless vocal improvisation common to Caribbean tradition and goes on to sing predominantly in the Trinidadian nation language, mixed with standard British English and hints of Jamaican syntax.

Moreover, the song reveals the unease with the release of the waist in Christian dance, out of a sincere desire to live righteously and possible fear of falling into temptation. Do not restrict us, Nurse says to an oppressive system of church leadership, let the Christian people of the Caribbean dance and be free. He defends dancing, just as Kathy Weekes has defended culture – 'nothing is wrong with it' - but warns his fellow Christians not to rotate their waists in the public space. Nurse sings

> When they ask me where I'm from, I'm from the Caribbean
> And I'm a Christian
> Nutting wrong with dancin', part o' our culture
> No waist rotatin', no, don't let di devil tempt yuh…

> Can't promote no revellin' cause di Bible ah tell me dem ting is sin…
>
> Don't hold me, just leave me leh meh dance –tell dem I worship
> Leh meh go, leh me go, leh me dance…
> Caribbean Christian and dancing in meh blood…
>
> Don' hold meh… let meh dance for Jesus! … (Nurse, 2015)

Conclusion

> Yuh hear wha' we say
> We walkin' holy pun de highway… (Clarke, Holy Walk 2009)

Identity, according to Stuart Hall (2001), 'is not in the past to be found but in the future to be constructed' (37). *WalkHoly* strives to assert itself in the face of stereotypes of what Christian expression and ministry should look like. It calls for an 'inculturación' of the Gospel, or becoming part of the culture, just as Christ became incarnate as part of humankind, or more specifically Jewish culture' (Matallana, 2012: 156). Crop Over is a symbol of national identity and the band has selected the climax of the festival, which it considers to be 'one of the greatest days in Barbados for Christian outreach and evangelism' (Smith, *Daily Nation*, August 25, 2014, p. 12), to represent Christianity to the nation and the world.

Nevertheless, the worship/revelry binary continues to be problematic and unresolved, causing Crop Over to remain a site of contestation for Christians. In general, Crop Over's status as a 'national' festival remains nominal for the body of Christ in Barbados. A number of factors have negatively influenced *WalkHoly's* output and membership. These include opposing views in the Christian community as well as the band's managerial challenges.

Rex Nettleford (1996: xv) made the following observation, which I find thought-provoking. He states that in the African diaspora:

> the creolisation process, through the cross-fertilisation of cultures, defines the existence of all inhabitants and pushes a great number of the cross-fertilised beings and their cultural expressions to stations of

> confusion as to what, of the ingredients in the plurality are proper and what not, what are superior and what inferior, what are aesthetically acceptable, and what are forbidden and so on.

I think that when it comes to artistic expression, Caribbean Christians are as a whole, quite confused or at least uncertain and even afraid. And we have good intentions: we want to please God, we don't want to 'backslide', we want to be holy. We also want to feel part of a community. We want to feel part of a culture but we end up running from our own. How can we ignore our national festival when Crop Over is a Bajan cultural expression?

Thank God for *WalkHoly*. Suddenly I was able to be more deeply involved in my national festival, and not just the 'benign' aspects (R. Marshall, 2006). Suddenly ancient gates lifted up their heads and I could see the King of Glory entering and walking and dancing with us on the streets (*New International Version Anglicized, Psalm 24.7*). Suddenly, Christians didn't have to close their eyes and wait until Crop Over or Kadooment was over.

The *WalkHoly Kadooment Band* challenges colonially-influenced concepts of how a Christian body should behave. Christians in the Pacific islands have practised '*coconut theology*' in which they used the 'flesh and milk of the coconut' for Holy Communion (Mulrain,1995: 64). In Barbados, can we not explore the relevance and the place of the body in Kadooment worship?

I wonder, would we Caribbean Christians take a greater involvement in the development and/or redemption of our 'indigenous' forms of expression if we had the cultural confidence to see them as gifts from God and believe that God wanted to take pleasure in them? If Christians were to take mental and emotional ownership of the Crop Over Festival, as a whole and not Kadooment specifically, I believe it would result in a richer and more diverse Crop Over and reduce some of the issues of moral degradation that church leaders speak out against. *WalkHoly* being a staple in the Kadooment parade is testament to the fact that it has made a mark in Barbadian society. One of the strengths of the band, despite its small size, is its outward focus: the attention is on the spectators and the country and what the band can do to be of service. This, I believe, goes a long way in helping people to appreciate the band's efforts. However, because the band's focus is on making a cultural and social impact, it is difficult to measure the number of people who have

converted to Christianity as a direct result of its presence. Reactions from spectators along the Kadooment route, however, generally indicate an appreciation of or nonchalance towards the band's activities.

WalkHoly does not hold all the answers. The 'revolution of self-perception' (Rohlehr, 2013: 378) is by no means complete. Although I have used the *WalkHoly* band as a case study, the work lends itself towards broader research on the ways in which through the body, dance and artistic performance, Christians are reinterpreting a religion that was first imposed and received in a colonial setting.

There is something about walking: walking to clear the mind, walking for inspiration, feeling the ground under your feet, taking in the surroundings, moving. The *WalkHoly* band has certainly been an inspiration to me and I believe it is a powerful entity which is a blessing to the Crop Over Festival. I hope that, despite and because of its challenges, it is able to reflect and improve.

As Adrian Clarke says, "Keep on walking" (Clarke, Holy Walk 2009).

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