

**HYBRIDITY AND INTEGRATION: A LOOK AT THE SECOND-GENERATION OF  
THE SRI LANKAN TAMIL DIASPORA IN TORONTO**

**by**

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## **Abstract**

This study illustrates that many second-generation members of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in Toronto display an identity of hybridity. This is evidenced by their self-identification practices as well as their conscientiousness in navigating around dominant cultural values and the Canadian society's general lack of knowledge about their ethnic origin. It further shows that these diasporic members believe that successful navigation may result in greater equality and subsequent integration in the realms of economy and politics. The results of this study confirm that hybridization instead brings about deception that the second-generation has the tools to re-negotiate power, when it is not the case- rather cultural ambivalence and ascription prevent the diaspora from challenging dominant cultures. In fact, the discourse on hybridity and its potential benefits may itself be a tool for the dominant group to reinforce oppressive power structures and uphold the barriers to true integration and equality.

Key words: diaspora, identity, hybridity, second-generation, Sri Lankan Tamils, Toronto, integration

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## **Dedication**

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## **Introduction**

Canada is known around the world as a multicultural country and the country of residence for numerous diasporas, including the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora, which began to arrive in large numbers in the early 1980s. This group, with its long history in Canada and diverse forms of transnationalism, is a rich community to study as a diaspora. Following the political protest rallies of 2008-2009 by the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora against the treatment of Tamils living in Sri Lanka, significant fractures appeared between the diaspora and the 'host' society regarding the identities and affiliations of the diasporic community. Canadian-born children of Sri Lankan Tamils who had migrated to Canada were particularly implicated in this discourse, as questions about 'us' and 'them,' and the limits of multiculturalism were raised in the aftermath of the protests.

Diasporic identity has been explored in literature for many years; however, theories that explain identity need to be challenged continually to evaluate their validity in different and changing contexts. Dominant theories, such as social identity theory and personal identity are dichotomous and static in nature, and overlook the autonomy of diasporic community members. This may now become especially problematic, as diasporas have resided in 'destination' countries for longer periods of time. Furthermore, the emergence of studies on second-generation members of diasporas are now contesting the attributes of personal identity theory and social identity theory, due to some of their high levels of social integration into both the host-society as well as their own ethnic communities.

This study asks a number of research questions, such as: how are second-generation members of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in Toronto identifying themselves? With a specific look at those who identify as having a hybrid identity or with combining parts of their ethnic

identity with their Canadian identity, this study also asks diasporic members who claim to have hybrid identities their perceptions of integration, their self-evaluations of integration, and how they feel their identities affect them in different realms of their lives.

## **Diaspora**

The term diaspora is derived from the Greek words “to sow” and “over” (Cohen, 1997, xi). Ethnic or national groups living in countries to which they have migrated are referred to as diasporic communities because of their dispersement in areas away from their places of origin.

While the etymological origin of the word ‘diaspora’ provides broad insight into its definition, a vast amount of literature refers to William Safran’s (1991) criteria for determining whether or not a community is a diaspora. Safran (1991) describes several attributes of diasporic communities but emphasizes that a community need not meet every prerequisite in order to be considered a diaspora. The first criterion is residence in a place away from the place of origin [homeland]; thus movement or dispersement itself is an attribute (Safran, 1991; Anthias, 1998; Brubaker, 2005). The second criterion is a collective memory or idea of a real or imagined homeland (Safran, 1991; Mishra, 1996). Thirdly, Safran (1991) points to a form of distinction that keeps separate the diaspora and host-society, which indicates unacceptance by or perpetual separation from a host community, or what Brubaker (2005) labels “boundary-maintenance” (p. 6).

Cohen (1997) discusses a typology of diasporas, and categorizes them according to the reasons for their trajectories. Some diaspora types are: imperial diasporas such as the British and French diasporas, who migrated for the purpose of colonization; labour diasporas, such as the

Indian diaspora who migrated to many other countries through indentureship; and victim diasporas, such as the Armenian diaspora which was displaced due to violence and persecution.

It is important, however, to assess the applicability of the above criteria and typologies for different groups and different times (Reis, 2004). Stuart Hall (1990) believed that the diasporic experience was not separate from the host society but rather intertwined with the host-society, and that a diaspora was not a distinct identity but one that was based on “hybridity.” Brubaker (2005) explained the diasporic state as the “tension” as between [Safran’s] ideas of boundary-maintenance between a distinct identity apart from the ‘host’ society and [Hall’s] ideas of hybridity, fluidity and “boundary-erosion” (6).

The use of the terms “homeland” and “host-society” in discourses about diaspora in and of themselves create the presumption of “us and them,” which reinforces the idea that diasporic groups may not be able to call a country of residence “home”, or that a diaspora is not entitled to the same sense of belonging as a member of a “host-society”. It promotes the idea that immigrants and their children are guests, who are expected to eventually leave, as they have no real right to permanence and a sense of belonging.

These are not the only problematic terms in the literature. Labelling second-generation members of a diaspora as ‘second-generation immigrants’ is also misleading because being an immigrant is not a feature that is passed down inter-generationally. Nevertheless, because these terms are often used in the literature, they will also be used in the paper with the understanding that “host-society” simply means the society in the country of residence, and that “homeland” is a real or imagined place or root of origin.

## **Diasporic Identity**

The study of diasporic identity began with the proposition of a dichotomy between a personal identity and social identity (Burke & Stets, 2009).

Personal identity relies heavily on continuities such as physical attributes seen in phenotypes, which show a physical continuity among members of a community, such as skin colour (Garrett, 1998). Another continuity is a psychological one, explained as a “retention of beliefs, desires, memories, character, etc. over time” (Garrett, 1998: 42), which can be seen in shared beliefs and practices such as religion, cultural traditions, myths and superstitions. Mishra (1996) uses the term “diasporic imaginary”, stating that even the nation itself is a non-existent entity that creates a connection between people and a “homeland”, or a “fantasy structure...through which society perceives itself as a homogeneous entity” (423). Additionally, Philips (2008) discusses the term “sociocultural baggage” as a psychological continuity that does not consider surrounding contexts and as a result prevents diasporas from successfully integrating into the host-society.

The notion of social identity was first articulated by Tajfel and Turner (1979) who focus on identity as more of a social construct based on external factors. They emphasize the formation of identity that is based on socially ascribed groupings, which dictate which groups one can claim to be a part of and which groups should be considered ‘others’ (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Jenkins, 2004).

Sarna’s (1978) research aligns with social identity theory and while he considers adversity, or communal struggles and perseverance to partake in identification processes, he also states that “ascription”, or the ethnicization of a group by the host or dominant society, plays a

large role in a group's identification. Lawrence Grossberg's idea of "mattering-maps" or social-structures that affect self-identification processes also reject the idea that identity can be partially formed without the action of outside forces (Dolby, 1999).

### *Core vs. Context Dichotomy*

This dichotomy of personal identity theory and social identity theory is echoed in the dispute between "core" and "context" in the process of identity construction (Jones & McEwen, 2000: 409). Core identity is unaffected by outside forces and runs parallel to the attributes associated with personal identity, while context-based identity is responsive to sociocultural landscapes and relationships as proposed in social identity theory. There are many references in existing literature that reflect this tension between core and context (Philips, 2008; Sarna, 1978; Dolby, 1999), which reject one identity theory in support of the other.

Most of the above works reinforce the idea of "us and them" that stems from both the retention of psychological and physical attributes which originate from outside of the country of residence, as well as the 'othering' of one's current sociocultural environment. From a critical race theory perspective, this emphasis on differentiation based on racialization is a form of oppression, created by the dominant white culture to maintain the inferiority of other groups (Bonilla-Silva, 1997). In other words, the white majority "raises its social position by exploiting, controlling, and keeping down others who are categorized in racial or ethnic terms (Blauener, 1972: 22).

Such theories also assume that assimilation [the greatest possible minimization of distinction] is the best way to integrate in the new society, which Doornick and Knippenberg

(2003) claim is not feasible in contemporary, pluralist societies. Furthermore, these theories reject the growing autonomy of diasporic communities as post-colonial entities, which have now been living in countries that they moved to for several generations. This rejection of autonomy is another way in which visible minorities are repressed and limited to the dominant group's ascribed parameters and strategies of identification, particularly strategies that set the stage for racism and othering (Bonilla-Silva, 1997).

Their emphasis on distinctions also reject any possibility of Stuart Hall's (1990) or Homi Bhabha's (1991) ideas of hybridization, which considers both outside contexts as well as a continuity of physical and psychological attributes that derive from a diaspora's country of origin. In other words, such ideologies forego any possibility that identity which is not solely based on distinction and othering can occur in a diaspora.

### *Effects of Diasporic Identity*

As the discourse on diasporic identity has evolved, scholars around the world have turned their focus toward studying the impacts of immigrants' identities on their lives, with particular to their integration into a host country. For example, Constant, Roberts and Zimmermann (2009) conducted a study in Germany, in which they found that immigrants were far less likely to own homes than their native counterparts (even after controlling for other variables). However, they found that immigrants with a stronger attachment to Germany were more likely to participate in home ownership (Constant, Roberts & Zimmermann, 2009). Similarly, while Islam and Raschky (2015) state that the effects of immigrant identity on labor market outcomes are generally negligible. Further examples include effects of ascription, as evidenced in the study by Block

and Galabuzi (2011), which illustrates that whether or not a person is racialized has an effect on their wages as employees as well as their rates of unemployment, regardless of labour market participation. Similarly, a study conducted by Oreopolous (2011) showed that the perception of certain ethnicities in resumes had an effect on a job applicant's chance of a call back from the employer.

## **Second-Generation**

While there is a vast amount of literature about first-generation immigrants, second-generation members of diasporas are slowly becoming a topic of interest amongst scholars and policy makers alike. While first-generation immigrants migrated to their host country, the second-generation consists of those who are born in the host-country but have one or more parent who was born outside of the host country. While some scholars believe that having one parent born in the host country makes you part of the 2.5 generation (Jantzen, 2008), others believe that having moved to the host country during childhood makes you part of the 1.5 generation; however, the bulk of immigration literature does not strive to distinguish these populations, and there has yet to be a clear consensus on whether or not there are unique aspects in the settlement experiences of each group.

Often and problematically called “second-generation immigrants” without actually being immigrants, these communities are valued by scholars as important groups to study (Boyd, 2008). They are considered the “cultural bridges” between their families and their host countries (Kobayashi, 2008: 4). Their general success is also seen as a measure of other things, such as

long-term immigrant integration and effectiveness of integration policy (Jedwab, 2008; Boyd, 2008).

### *Second-Generation Attributes*

The second generation is seen in the literature as a group, which has vastly different mobility and general experiences than their first-generation counterparts (Rumbaut, 2005). This generation is technologically apt and internet savvy; this generation is also exposed to social media and technological advances (Wang et al., 2009). As some literature points to the internet and media as “sources of identity” (Wang et al., 2009: 55), many scholars describe the increased autonomy second-generation members of diasporas have in self-identification. Their experiences with technology in tandem with their experiences of upbringings in the host country gives them unique tools to navigate through the societal and structural landscape of their place of settlement. Jantzen (2008) states that different sources countries and great varieties of second-generation communities (racialized) warrant the acknowledgement of there being unique experiences for the second-generations of each diaspora.

Rumbaut (2005) summarizes a vast amount of literature concerning the identification processes of second generation diasporas, stating that they [second-generation immigrants] are:

"[M]ore complex, and often entails the juggling of competing allegiances and attachments. Situated within two cultural worlds, they must define themselves in relation to multiple reference groups (sometimes in two countries and in two languages) and to the classifications into which they are placed by their native peers, the schools, the ethnic community, and the larger society." (304)

De la Rosa (2002) suggests a new framework with which to conceptualize identity formation, as a continuum of acculturation in which he describes as levels of identification. He illustrates the first as “Low-Low”, meaning little identification with either the “homeland” or dominant culture in the country of residence, otherwise described as “neither here nor there”. The three other levels are labelled as “here but not there” (strong identification with the dominant culture in country of residence, little identification with the “homeland”), “there but not here” (strong identification with homeland, little identification with country of residence) and “here and there” (strong identification with both country of residence and “homeland”) (442-443). These categories are similar to Berry’s categories of marginalization, separation, assimilation and integration (Berry, 2008). However, De la Rosa’s (2002) work still echoes the dichotomous nuances of old literature pertaining to the static nature of identity.

In line with Hall and Kostić’s (2008) movement away from the dichotomy of absolute alienation and marginalization in one aspect for complete assimilation and integration in another, and drawing parallels with their ideas of focusing on types of integration, Zubida et al. (2014) adjust De la Rosa’s (2002) theory, and view his list of four identity formations as “modes” of identity rather than levels. Zubida et al. (2014) do not imply a normative direction for these identities; instead they acknowledge the combinations of host and origin components, and rather than view them as static identities, they propose that second-generation diasporas regularly navigate through these modes to create a hybrid, ever-changing identity. It is clear that the new literature is beginning to subscribe to the idea that second-generation diasporas have the abilities to form identity using different processes and more autonomy than first-generation diasporas.

## Hybridity

Hybridity or a hybrid identity is an identity that is based on a combination of attachments to two or more ethnic origins or nationalities. It is particularly evident as globalization has increased and the importance of attachment to one particular nation has become questionable. Hybridity is a phenomenon that is often seen amongst the second-generation, who have attachments to their parents' country of origin as well as their own birthplace and country of settlement. It may stem from a variety of transnational activities, including travel, and the in-depth immersion of oneself into another culture, resulting in a feeling of belonging and attachment. Hybridity is seen by many scholars as a mark of post-nationalism, and a sign of crumbling borders, where attachment to one country does not mean the betrayal of another (Castles, 1999). Bhabha (1994) saw hybridity as evidence of post-colonialism, and as the unintended results of forcing dominant identities upon colonized subjects while maintaining the need to see them as 'other'. Stuart Hall (1998) goes further and states that attachments to culture are not tangible and that hybridity is actually an innate part of everybody.

Kathleen Hall (2002) states that through acts of translation, one can re-negotiate power; in other words, hybridity allows for individuals to interpret meanings of multiple cultures and knowledgeably navigate through them. It is through this process that a multi-faceted identity which can negotiate power in different contexts.

Bhabha (1994), who some have deemed the father of hybrid theory, describes hybridity as a 'liminal space' in which two different and unequal cultures are bridged together, stating that "liminal space, in-between the designations of identity [that] becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white" (5). He further describes hybridity as an attempt by colonized subjects to mimic their

colonizers, ending up with a version of European culture that is mixed with the attributes of their own ethnic origin. In doing so, they appropriate conceptual and linguistic tools which can help them create new knowledge, perspectives and communication strategies which could be used to challenge inequalities and power imbalances arising from their subjugation as colonized people:

“If the effect of colonial power is seen to be the production of hybridization rather than the noisy command of colonialist authority or the silent repression of native traditions, then an important change of perspective occurs. The ambivalence at the source of traditional discourses on authority enables a form of subversion, founded on the un-decidability that turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the grounds of intervention.” (Bhabha, 1994: 112)

While hybridity, according to many scholars (Hall, 2002) involves the negotiation of power, other scholars point out that power imbalances still exist scholars (Hall, 1998; Bhabha, 1994; Bhabha, 1985), and that immigrants continue to face ascription and othering (Van Heelsum and Koomen, 2015). Examples of this sort of ascription can be seen in Canada’s colour coded labour market (Block and Galabuzi, 2011), where racialized men are underemployed and underpaid despite their labour market participation, and where income gaps can be attributed to whether or not somebody is racialized. This disparity must be explored, to validate the ideas of those who believe that hybridity allows for immigrants and members of diasporas to re-negotiate power, or to bring to the forefront the reality that despite hybridization, ascription and a flawed multiculturalism framework of differences being acceptable as long as they do not challenge the dominant structures (Fleras, 2009: 23-53) limit the abilities diasporas may have to re-negotiate power and challenge inequalities.

## **Integration**

The notion of integration has often been used in the more recent literature on immigration. However, the literature is varied in terms of the interpretation of this concept. These variances are problematic, as different interpretations of integration result in different measures of integration, with ambiguous results. Collin (2013) describes the abstract concept, noting that interpretations of integration even vary according to the country in which it is being used. An important reason to deconstruct this concept is that many scholars have used the term differently in the post 9/11 world. After the attack, diversity and integration have been contested, with fears of terrorism leading to notions of diversity as that which has a negative effect on society; thus, perceived differences now cause more fear than ever, creating a barrier to the idea that integration can be achieved despite the maintenance of differences (Hersi, 2014). However, as previously mentioned, Doornick and Knippenberg (2003) state that assimilation is no longer a viable strategy of integration, considering the already pluralist landscape of Canada. Considering the added air of discrimination and ascription, it is even more vital to find successful methods of integration.

### *Defining Integration*

The first of many issues relating to ambiguous terminology is the apparent exchangeability of the term immigrant integration with immigrant incorporation or immigrant acculturation. It should be noted that integration can be a form of immigrant incorporation, but is not necessarily the only form of incorporation. Berry and Sabatier (2010) list strategies of incorporation as: assimilation/acculturation, integration, marginalization and segregation.

However, assimilation is now impossible (Doomernick and Knippenberg, 2003) and segregation is also no longer realistic for pluralist societies.

Hersi (2014) states that definitions largely differ according to the context in which the term is being used. Political, social, and economic integration are some of the key areas in which integration is often discussed. Many academics have focused on studying economic integration (seen as participation in the labour market) but there is still a lot debate over what constitutes economic integration. Some scholars argue that entrepreneurship, particularly that which is located in ethnic enclaves or caters to a particular ethnic group, is not necessarily a sign of integration and could instead potentially be a sign of segregation (Liebermann et al, 2014). Other types of integration include social integration, which some scholars measure through self-reported sense of belonging, while others use different measures of social capital or social networks. Political integration is often assessed in terms of participation in political processes, and representation in municipal, provincial, or federal governments.

Hall and Kostić (2008) categorize different types of integration into two forms: structural and social. Structural integration can be seen as “social positioning” in areas of political participation, educational attainment and role in the labour market (Hall & Kostić, 2008: 2). Social integration can be seen in the adoption of dominant values and traditions of the host society and the creation and maintenance of informal contacts within the host society (Hall & Kostić, 2008).

### *Measurements of Integration*

With different interpretations of integration, the measurements of integration also vary. Li (2003) points out that many pieces of literature measure the integration of an immigrant based on how similar they are to natives of the host country. He acknowledges that this form of measure is very narrow in scope and does not actually gage one's level of integration. Soysal and Hollifield (1994) believe that integration occurs when legal participation begins, and when rights and privileges that are afforded by natives of the host country are also afforded by immigrants.

Scholars also focus on the responsibility of immigrant integration and where it lies. While previous literature focused on the adaptability of immigrants to their host countries, contemporary literature is increasingly holding governments and host societies partially accountable for failures of immigrant integration. Collins (2013) states that both institutional and individual racism are barriers to immigrant integration. Similarly, Heisler (1992) believes that true integration only occurs only in the absence of discrimination and prejudice. Furthermore, Couton (2014) argues that public policy holds back the success of ethno-immigrant organizations, and that the work that is done to achieve immigrant integration is hindered by bureaucratic red tape. Martone et al. (2014) conducted a study in which the participants, who were immigrants, expressed their concerns that the weight of responsibility to integrate immigrants was on local communities, rather than on federal governments as it should be because the federal government regulates and processes the intake of immigrants.

## **The Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora in Canada**

The Tamil diaspora in Canada is a particularly interesting one to study, as it has unique elements in its history, formation and attributes. According to Cohen's (1997) typology, Tamils in Sri Lanka could be referred to as a labour diaspora as many of them were moved from India to Sri Lanka by the British as indentured labourers, as well as a victim diaspora because of their treatment during the civil war Sri Lanka. As the ruling British colonizers favoured the Tamil as workers, this angered the Sinhalese majority, who felt that stratification was taking place (Dubey, 2011). When the Sinhalese regained power, these feelings gradually lead to institutionalized marginalization such as the "Sinhala-only" law and a decades long civil war with the Tamil minority. Dubey (2011) considers the Tamil community a part of the lost Indian diaspora, a group of communities, which in their most essential forms, find their roots in India, but for various reasons through the passages of history have relinquished India as their country of origin. In the case of the Sri Lankan Tamils, their belief was that retaining an identification with India weakened their demands for equal rights as Sri Lankans (Dubey, 2011). They therefore emphasized the term "Sri Lankan Tamil" in their self-identification. However, this assertion of "Sri Lankan-ness" was unsuccessful; the over 30 year-long civil war (O'Neill, 2015) claimed the lives of numerous Tamil people and resulted in the fleeing of many other Tamil civilians to other countries such as Malaysia, Germany, England and Canada.

Canada began to receive Tamil migrants from Sri Lanka in 1983 after a mass exodus that followed extreme violence and murders of Tamil civilians in what is now known as "Black July" (O'Neill, 2015). For the most part of the 1990's, Sri Lanka quickly rose to become one of the top five source countries for immigration to Canada (Thurairajah, 2011). Many of these immigrants arrived in Canada as refugees, with the remaining migrants arriving through the

family class category. Toronto is currently home to the largest Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora in the world.

Since their arrival, the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora has created measures to maintain its continuity of psychological and physical attributes. There are many Tamil-language newspapers and even one English language newspaper about news concerning the Tamil diaspora, several radio and television stations (all of which operate 24 hours a day) and a variety of Tamil businesses and numerous organizations located in Toronto (Sriskandarajah, 2014).

The Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora's establishment in businesses, media, and community organizations appear to illustrate a high level of structural integration. However, these establishments do not indicate how well they are socially integrated in Canadian society. We also do not know if the diaspora's strong retention of Tamil heritage and the associated socio-cultural baggage (Philips, 2008) prevent it from integrating and building social capital within the host society.

#### *2008-2009 Political Protests*

Victim diasporas, such as the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora, have attributes that are unique, and which differentiate them from labour and classical diasporas. Victim diasporas have displayed patterns of explicit appeals that “are made to the wider community to maintain the safety and prosperity of their homelands and to show solidarity when they are in danger” (Cohen, 1997: 58). Thus it is no surprise that, in the face of a civil war that was quickly becoming a genocide of Sri Lankan Tamils, numerous demonstrations occurred in the downtown area of Toronto in 2008-2009 (Sriskandarajah, 2014; Godwin, 2012). In one particular protest,

demonstrators made their way to the Gardiner Expressway (a major highway) and blockaded it, stopping traffic on a major route in the city of Toronto.

It was stated by many of the demonstrators that they felt their Canadian citizenship (what can be seen as structural integration) gave them the impression that they had the right as Canadians to protest for the lives of Tamil people in Sri Lanka. They believed that demonstrating and protesting was the Canadian way to have their voices heard (Sriskandarajah; 2014). However, many media outlets and public opinion showed that this expression of solidarity with a Tamil community elsewhere was largely unaccepted and looked down upon. Sriskandarajah's (2014) media analysis of the demonstrations show the extreme "othering" that occurred due to the demonstrations, particularly the one that blocked the Gardiner Expressway, a major highway in Toronto. She identified many articles that explicitly stated that the downtown area of Toronto and its major highway were "hijacked", and that the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora was behaving "un-Canadian" (Sriskandarajah, 2014: 182-183). There was such a strong response to these protests, the majority being negative, that the Toronto Star published a special section entitled "More Voices on Tamil Protest" for readers to write in their opinions (Thurairajah, 2011: 141). Eventually the leader of the Tamil liberation front in Sri Lanka was killed and the war was deemed over; however, the animosity towards the Tamil protests remained.

It is apparent that the political expression of psychological continuity by the diaspora with "their hyper-extended Tamil family" (Sriskandarajah, 2014: 183) had a negative result on their social integration. However, it is the post-demonstration views of and changes in political activity orchestrated by second-generation Canadian members of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora

that raises the possibility that they subscribe to Stuart Hall's (1990) ideas of hybridity, and acted in tandem with Hall and Kostić's (2008) tenets of social integration.

### **The Second-Generation of the Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora**

In studies conducted after the protests, many second-generation diasporic members criticised the way in which the protests were conducted. Disapproval from the host society was also evident, for example, in the use of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (also known as the LTT E and the Tamil Tigers) flag during the protests, which was considered by many to be a violent and outlawed organization. Sriskandarajah (2014) quotes one contributor to the National Post (a major newspaper) John Eisan, who stated:

“As a *downtown resident*, I would like to thank Michael Ignatieff [former leader of the Liberal Party] for giving in to another hostage-taking by the Tamil Tigers... The protesters have said that should promises not be fulfilled, they will be back at it again and again until they get what they want... And there's not much *we* can do about it.” (emphasis added) (182)

Thurairajah (2011) considers the use of the LTTE flag, and how it derailed the message the protesters were trying to send to the general public, of the genocide that was killing thousands of Tamil civilians. Godwin (2012) echoes this sentiment, stating that the flags were misunderstood by the masses and as a result delegitimized the protests, as they were then seen as support for terrorism rather than the protesting of human rights violations. In an interview with one second-generation diasporic member, she, in tandem with Godwin (2012) and Thurairajah (2011), expressed distaste for the way in which the flag was used:

“I didn’t protest, because I...was upset at the way they were doing it. Like I asked, someone there, I asked him, like ‘You’re holding up this Tamil Tiger flag’—I understand the reason why, but the Tamil flag is like this growling tiger with guns—‘so, you want the mainstream who’s annoyed at you for stopping traffic to listen to your cause, have you thought of just putting down the flags?’ And, like, they had other posters they were holding up, and like—or, like reducing the—like, I understand why, because it’s very part of the identity, and they felt helped by the Tigers, but I’m like, you’re trying to get to the mainstream person, and it’s very scary for them. In Canada, they don’t know about like, like freedom fighters, or rebels, they don’t know what that means....” (Thurairajah, 2011: 141)

These sentiments were echoed by other second-generation interviewees in Thurairajah’s (2011) study. This interviewee, along with several others, was aware of the limited information many Canadians outside of the diaspora have on the civil war and the Tamil people in general, and acknowledged that they would have to navigate the dominant beliefs in Canada in order to successfully express views of solidarity with people of their ethnic origin (Thurairajah, 2011). In other words, the interviewees expressed an awareness that they would have to be both “here and there” to exercise any political influence.

O’Neill (2015) shows further evidence of this awareness in his study on members of Tamil Students Associations in Canadian universities, and how they do not focus on the LTTE’s call for an independent territory, but call for cessation of the Sri Lankan government’s human rights violations. They use the Tamil Eelam flag, which does not include any illustration of weapons, but instead shows illustration of a flower that is native to the Tamil occupied areas of Sri Lanka. O’Neill (2015) concluded in his study that “Tamil-Canadian youth have proved to be more ambivalent to the aims of the LTTE than Vellupillai Prabhakaran [leader of the LTTE] had imagined, and their activism displayed more sensitivity to the stated values of their new home than their distracters allowed” (137-138). Such post-protest studies echo Ali’s (2008) and Sriskandarajah’s (2014) findings regarding the limits of multiculturalism for second-generation

members of diasporic communities. In fact, second-generation members of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in Canada believed that it was predominantly through their assertion of Canadian-ness that they would be able to connect to their Tamil Sri Lankan counterparts in Sri Lanka, and thus create positive circumstances for them (Sriskandarajah, 2014). Sundar (2008) attests to the legitimacy of these ambitions, explaining that second-generation members of diasporas have extremely flexible identities that are a product of their multi-dimensional upbringing. This allows them to incorporate their ethno-cultural histories and their own Canadian experiences into their identities. It is clear that this unique community has the social integration that Hall and Kostić (2008) describe, evidenced by their awareness of the dominant culture and their perceived importance of support from the host-society.

While the immediacy of post-protest discourse about the identity of the second-generation members of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in Toronto has diminished, the question of how they identify themselves still remains. Associated questions about those who claim a hybrid Sri Lankan Tamil- Canadian identity, such as why do they think they have such identities, and how does it affect their lives also need answers. To investigate these questions, the following methodology was used for this study.

## **Methodology**

### *Philosophical Assumptions & Theoretical Approach*

With a social constructivist and critical race theory approach, I make the following philosophical assumptions: “multiple realities are constructed through lived experiences” and that reality involves struggles between identity and power (Creswell, 2013a: 36). While I believe

that individual experiences help to construct reality, I also know that reality can be understood through the “study of social structures, freedom, oppression, power and control” (Creswell, 2013a: 36). Furthermore, both individual and diverse social values are important in the construction of reality (Creswell, 2013a). I also assume that racial discrimination and oppression is deeply embedded in society and that research should evoke social change (Morrow and Brown, 1994).

### *Operational Definitions*

These philosophical assumptions and theoretical approaches shape this study in a number of ways, including the choice of operational definitions, the choice of sample, and the ways in which the data were collected and analyzed.

Identity in general is increasingly understood as a combination of that which is constructed by the individual and by the society in which they live. Individuals include imagined attachments or bonds to identify themselves in particular ways. At the same time, they are also influenced by how others see them, and the features ascribed to them by dominant groups in a society, often with oppressive intentions (Van Heelsum and Koomen, 2015). The operational definition of hybridity is a combination of identification with and attachments to aspects of one’s heritage, such as country of origin, ethnicity, language, and religion, with habits, behaviours, beliefs and language etc. acquired in one’s current socio-cultural location. Social integration will include: the adoption of the dominant culture in the host society, as well as the establishment of social capital (Hall and Kostić, 2008). To define structural integration, I will merge both Hall and Kostić’s (2008) definition with Heisler’s (1992) belief that true structural

integration is full participation in the labour market and civic engagement (primary relationships) in the absence of discrimination and prejudice.

### *Research Design*

A primarily qualitative approach to this study was selected in order to explore the perceptions of second-generation members of the Tamil diaspora residing in Toronto about their self-identity and its implications for them. The study began with the administration of an online survey to collect some descriptive statistics as a snapshot view of the cohort, and to select appropriate participants for more detailed interviews. The survey was advertised in major online magazines (geared toward second-generation Tamils) as well as the Facebook groups of various Tamil organizations. Following that, interviews were carried out, as recommended for both phenomenological and ethnographical studies by scholars (Creswell, 2013a; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The interviews provided an opportunity to collect detailed information about why the participants identified themselves in certain ways, their reasons for doing so, and the perceived effects of their hybrid identities. Both the survey and the interview went through pilot testing; this was particularly vital in a study with a small sample size, as the credibility of these instruments needed to be established (Creswell, 2013a; Creswell, 2013b).

### *Sampling Design*

The criteria for participation in the survey was that one must have been born in Canada, be 18 years or older, currently residing in Toronto, have one or more parent who was born outside of Canada and be of Sri Lankan Tamil origin. The conditions for participation in the

interviews included one additional criterion; they self-identified as a hybrid identity or reported that they felt they were encompassing a combination of identities/attachments to identities (e.g. Tamil Canadian, Canadian Tamil, Canadian Sri Lankan, etc.).

### *Online Survey*

First, data was collected in the form of online surveys. Initial recruitment of potential participants involved the distribution of recruitment posters in online magazines that were geared toward second-generation Tamils, Facebook interest groups for Canadian Tamils and on the Facebook pages of several unnamed Tamil Canadians who are well known in the community. The medium through which surveys were collected was the Qualtrics website ([www.qualtrics.com](http://www.qualtrics.com)), an online survey platform which allowed for surveys to be accessed and completed at potential participants' convenience. The website was highly secure and allowed for even greater accessibility as participants were able to complete the surveys on their computers or even using their mobile devices. A total of 85 surveys were completed. These surveys serviced two purposes, one of which was to screen participants for interviews and the other which was to obtain a snapshot of general perceptions of the second-generation Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora in Toronto. While some scholars find that online data collection can create risks regarding participants' identities (James and Busher, 2007), it can also be a form through which a great number of participants can be reached (Creswell, 2013a).

At the end of the surveys, participants were asked whether or not they were willing to participate in an interview at a later date and were asked to provide contact data if they were agreeable to the participation. Participants who were selected for the interview were those

claimed having a hybrid identity. This was determined by their answers to specific questions that were in the survey, which asked the participant how they identified themselves. The online survey also contained a number of Likert scale questions asking participants how often they felt they had multiple identities and attachments. Participants who claimed that this feeling occurred 71% of the time or greater were also selected to participate in the interview.

### *Interview*

Qualitative studies can include 1-25 interviews (Creswell, 2013a), and this study collected data from 11 interview participants. This sample size was chosen largely due to the limited time and resources available to complete the study.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which were audio-recorded and transcribed (Creswell, 2013a: 160). An interview protocol (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009) was used as a guide. Interview participants were asked questions over the phone and through Skype. The interview included questions about the participants' social networks in Toronto and their transnational activities. They were then asked to share their ideas about the meanings of various sorts of integration, such as political integration and economic integration; they were also asked to provide what they perceived to be examples of these forms of integration. The interview participants were asked about how they felt that their hybrid identities affected their lives, in areas such as social networks, as well as the forms of integration that they described earlier. They were also asked about their experiences with discrimination and whether or not their hybrid identities had any effect on the occurrences of discrimination and/or how they reacted to it.

The collected data was then coded in a number of stages; first open, then axial and finally selective coding (Neuman, 2009). Through this coding, a number of themes emerged from the

data, which will be discussed later in this paper. Even though the intended number of participants remained relatively low (85 survey respondents and 11 interview respondents), this small set of demographic data has provided great insight into this population, particularly regarding experiences that are unique to the second-generation of diasporic communities.

## **Findings**

In this section, the findings from the survey will be summarized using descriptive statistics to provide a brief snapshot of what the respondents thought about their identities and affiliations and how it shaped their lives. This will be followed by an in-depth analysis of data collected through interviews.

### *Identification*

Out of 85 survey participants, 62% of participants identified themselves as having hybrid identity, such as Tamil Canadian, Canadian Sri Lankan Tamil, etc. 17.65% of participants identified themselves as Canadian 16.47% of participants identified themselves as Tamil, and 3.53% identified themselves as Sri Lankan Tamil/Tamil Sri Lankan (See Appendix A). Despite these identifications, most of the participants acknowledged that they often embodied/reflected two or more cultures. When asked to rate how often they embodied/reflected two or more cultures out of 7 (1 being never and 7 being always) each group rated an average of greater than 4.5 (See Appendix B).

### *Belonging in Canada*

When asked to rate how often they felt like foreigners in Canada, there were no discernable patterns based on initial identifications. Those who identified as Canadian and as Sri Lankan Tamil/Tamil Sri Lankan reported the lowest occurrences of feeling like a foreigner (See Appendix C). However, those who identified themselves as Tamil, Tamil Canadian and Canadian Tamil also reported similar occurrences of feeling like a foreigner. Feelings of belonging were rated highest by those who identified themselves as Canadian and those who identified themselves as Canadian Tamil – other groups rated lower feelings of belonging, even those who identified as Tamil Canadian (See Appendix D). One area in which there was a small difference was in perceptions of race-relations in Canada. Those who described their identities as singular had rated race-relations in Canada as worse than those who described their identities as hybrid or as a combination (See Appendix E).

### *Perceptions of Integration*

When asked to provide examples of political integration, social integration and economic integration, the survey participants gave a number of micro level suggestions. The most common examples of political integration were voting and watching politics on the news. The most common examples of economic integration were financial stability and home ownership. There were a variety of examples provided for social integration: language, clothing, social networks, education, and more.

Most of the participants showed that they had achieved high social integration, having been educated in Canada (many with university degrees) and having strong social networks.

They also expressed that they encompassed parts of Canadian identity, which is social integration in itself – the conscious attachment to host culture. All of the respondents also had a strong enough grasp of the English language to complete the survey, which was only provided in English, displaying social integration in the form of language acquisition.

The only respondents who reported having doctorate degrees included ‘Canadian’ in their self-identification, regardless of whether or not that identification was singular or hybrid (e.g. Canadian or Canadian Tamil) (See Appendix F). About 11.6% of respondents reported having masters degrees and 54.12% of respondents reported having a bachelor’s degree. While there was a significant portion of respondents fell into the high income bracket (19.67%), many second-generation members reported income that fell into lower and lower-middle income brackets (37.77%). A small percentage were also employed in ‘under the table’ paying jobs. However, there was no correlation between the way in which respondents identified themselves and their incomes. The way in which participants identified themselves also had a dismissible effect on their political participation in both local and Sri Lankan politics; respondents reported low occurrences of political participation in either realm.

Despite this information, it appears that regardless of the way the participants described their identity, many believed that they earned the same income as a white person would in the same position of employment. This shows a form of ambivalence amongst the entire second-generation diaspora, towards the dominance of the host-society and their subsequent experiences with inequality, despite their identification. 8 out of 11 interview respondents also believed that a person with a hybrid identity would be able to obtain higher paying employment, more prestigious employment and better schooling than a person with solely a Sri Lankan Tamil identity. The remaining participants felt that identity made no difference in these situations.

These answers shed a spotlight on the perceived outcomes of identifications amongst the second-generation.

### *Attachments to the Tamil Culture*

Most interview participants had many friends of Sri Lankan Tamil origin and/or South Asian origin; some participants had friends of other ethnic origins. The participants with friends of Sri Lankan Tamil/South Asian origin reported that the reasons for these friendships ranged from common interests such as music and movies to having similar cultures; some further described the cultural commonalities as those relating to strictness and conservative beliefs. Those with many friends of Sri Lankan Tamil origin stated that they met their friends in places such as school, extra-curricular activities and social events organized by Tamil community groups; all stated that it was not difficult to meet people of Sri Lankan Tamil origin in Toronto.

All interview participants reported learning about the Tamil culture through family members, social media as well as art forms such as music and movies. As one interviewee stated,

“I didn’t know very many Tamil people when I was younger, but as soon as I started going to a university in Toronto, I met so many people- they’re a very close but welcoming community; also I went to a lot of university events – like – not just my own university but other Toronto universities would hold events for Tamil university students like formals and stuff.. even through that I started watching more Tamil movies and being more interested in Tamil fashion”.

## *Racial Discrimination*

All interview participants stated that they felt as though they were treated differently due to their skin colour. Descriptions of this variance in treatment ranged from “they [white Canadians] put in less effort to pronounce my name correctly” to “I could tell they [job interviewers] were expecting a white person because of my Christian name and because of their disappointed looks when I walked in”.

All of the interview participants felt that they had a greater awareness of the ignorance [about their ethnicity and culture] within Canada, and felt that the Canadian parts of their identities helped with the growth of this awareness. However, only seven out of eleven interview participants explicitly remarked that they felt their Canadian identity warranted respect and the end of racist attitudes towards them. As one interviewee stated, “I am just like them [white Canadians], I speak English and was educated in Canada, so it makes me upset that they see me as a different skin colour and don’t even look at the stuff we have in common”.

Another interviewee described the discrimination she felt, particularly in the forms of ascription and labelling:

“It’s like no matter what I do, I will always be the brown girl at work, no matter how I dress or talk, they will always ask me questions like I am a brown ambassador and like we are all the same... basically like I am not one of the white people... but I try to just nicely let people know if something really bothers me, otherwise I let it slide, if I didn’t I would be arguing with people all day”.

When asked about how she felt about racist or discriminatory remarks, one interview stated that “as mad as I get about that kind of stuff, and I do, once I got so mad that I entered into an online argument with someone who was saying racist stuff, but the Canadian part of me empathizes with them, like, I know they don’t know any better”.

### *Awareness of “Canadian-ness”*

The second-generation of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in Canada is certainly aware of “Canadian-ness” and the perceptions of white Canadians. They realize that charter Canadians have very little knowledge of their ethnic origin and that many may have racist feelings, feelings of discomfort or race-based prejudice in regard to them. Most of the respondents stated that the Canadian part of their hybrid identity and subsequent awareness of Canadian societal norms allows them to navigate through various forms of racism and discrimination such as being called another ethnicity and hearing stereotypes about their ethnic origin. As one respondent stated, “When I was younger, it never bothered me. Now that I’m older, the stereotypes and assumptions actually upset me more- I guess the Tamil part of me gets upset about that – it’s actually the Canadian side of me that wants to be polite and let those things go”. Similarly, another respondent described his workplace, “I saw a few of the supervisors laughing at a brown guy because his lunch was different, but – it was so stupid, you know? Everybody knows [that] it’s stupid, but if I said something they would just start being like that with me, because I already look like him too... but that’s just ignorance, what can you do?”.

Most respondents stated that while their hybrid identities influenced the way they reacted to racial discrimination and racism, that their identities didn’t appear to prevent or reduce discrimination towards them or around them. The remaining respondents felt that their hybrid identities reduced discrimination towards them, however they believed they did not reduce the discrimination occurring around them. This further reinforces the idea that while hybridization gives diasporic community members a slight advantage in understanding the system, it does not necessarily provide the tools to change it.

### *Predictions of Integration for Future Generations*

When asked about the integration of future generations within the diaspora, 10 out of 11 respondents stated that they would probably be more integrated. 7 out of 11 respondents stated that they believed the next generation would not be as in touch with the Tamil culture as they or their parents were. Two respondents stated that they would try very hard to teach their future children about their Tamil heritage and the Tamil language; however, these respondents stated that they expected their future children to be more integrated regardless of how connected their children would be to their ethnic origin.

## **ANALYSIS**

### *Integration*

It is clear that high self-perceptions of social integration of diasporic community members does not necessarily equal structural integration, as evidenced by the results of this study. If one considers true integration as that which is void of prejudice and discrimination (Heisler, 1992), the second-generation of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora has yet to be 'truly' integrated. It is evidenced by the numerous illustrations of racism and racial discrimination by the respondents. This lack of true integration can also be seen in how many second-generation Sri Lankan Tamil diasporic members have lower to lower-middle incomes despite their educational attainments, as well as knowledge of Canadian language and culture. The lack of political participation amongst second-generation Sri Lankan Tamil Canadians in Toronto further signals a lack of integration.

All interview respondents were asked to give examples of economic and political integration. In their answers, all respondents focused on micro-level forms of integration, and no respondents gave answers that related to greater equality. For example, many of the interview respondents suggested home-ownership as a form of economic integration. This is aligned with Constant et al.'s (2009) ideas of using home ownership as a measurement of economic integration. However, as Heisler (1992) points out, true integration is not limited to micro-level forms of integration such as home-ownership, and such benchmarks do not equal an absence of discrimination.

Bhabha's (1994) ideas of ambivalence are displayed in many respondents' perceptions and self-evaluations of integration. On the one hand the interviewees were grateful for their micro-level indicators of integration, and felt that their discriminatory treatment was excusable because of the dominant group's ignorance. On the other hand, they recognized the injustices they had to endure because of their racial and ethnic 'otherness.' Ambivalence is also displayed in the respondents' low ratings of feeling like foreigner (See Appendix C) and highly rated feelings of belonging (See Appendix D) despite their numerous illustrations of experiences with discrimination. This ambivalence is further evidenced in the respondents' predictions about the integration of future generations within the diaspora; despite the respondents' acknowledgements that faced ascription based on their skin colour and subsequent discrimination and racism no matter how much they tried to integrate socially, the respondents predicted that their future children would be better integrated into Canada than they were.

## *Awareness*

The results of the study also show that there are many members of the second-generation Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora who claim to have a hybrid identity or identify with multiple attachments, and that this hybridity contributes to an illusion of greater structural integration. These results echo the findings of Ali's (2008) study of second-generation Canadians who, due to their residence in a highly pluralist city such as Toronto, have strong beliefs in multiculturalism and equality. In Ali's (2008) study, second-generation Canadians only began to understand the underlying racism woven into the fabric of Canadian society once they left their pluralist but low-income neighbourhoods. Similarly, second-generation Sri Lankan Tamil Canadians believe they are generally experiencing equality, until they find themselves in situations where they are othered (such as in the workplace of a mostly white organization). It is through these experiences which they experience the growth of their awareness.

The study's results also align with Sriskandarajah's (2014) study, in which second-generation Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora members showed awareness that many white Canadians did not understand or know about the genocide in Sri Lanka, and that the diaspora should have considered the dominant group's [white Canadians] feelings towards them more if they expected better reactions from the dominant group to their political action.

However, this awareness also reflects the ambivalence that Bhabha (1994) refers to in colonized subjects who, in the process of mimicry [of the colonizer's culture] develop hybrid identities. It is this very ambivalence that causes these hybrid second-generation members to work around oppressive and unwelcoming structures rather than change them. Bhabha (1994) explained that despite the desire of the colonizer to have the colonized subjects mimic their culture in every way, they still wanted to maintain the labelling of the colonized subject as an

‘other’. The second-generation shows awareness that this labelling will occur despite the depths of their mimicry, but show ambivalence towards the colonizer culture that propels such labelling of subjects, writing it off as a ‘limitation of Canadianness’.

### *Limitations of ‘Canadianness’*

As evidenced by the participants’ answers, the second-generation of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora believe that they have the ability to understand popular Canadian beliefs about “others”. In some circumstances, this knowledge could enable them to negotiate power. However, as Sriskandarajah (2014) points out, there are flaws within the multiculturalism framework, where “Canadianness” is accepted until the point at which re-negotiating power is attempted. It thus appears that the awareness which results from hybridity actually gives the second-generation enough knowledge about popular Canadian beliefs to understand the limitations of Canadianness and the existing power imbalances which, if challenged, would result in negative consequences, such as the poor responses to the 2008-2009 protests (Sriskandarajah, 2014; O’Neill, 2015; Thurairajah, 2011). It also shows that the second generation believes that “hybridity has the potential to allow once subjugated collectivities to reclaim a part of the cultural space in which they move” (Yazdiha, 2010: 36). However, in line with Bhabha’s (1994) beliefs, ascription and ambivalence towards the host-society ensures that it will difficult for the second-generation to re-negotiate their power.

While hybridity seems to help people deal with day-to-day matters, the results of this study show an alarming trend. Second-generation members believe that their hybrid identities allow them to better navigate the social landscape of Canada. However, their hybridity appears

to only give them tools to navigate *around* the landscape, rather than give them the power to change it. Kathleen Hall (2002) believes that it is through a third space, an act of translation that diasporic members may negotiate their power and identity. On the other hand, Stuart Hall (1998) warns that diasporas see themselves as ‘others’ when they are subject to ascription, and feel strong pressure to identify themselves within those ascriptions and within the walls of a prescribed regime of representation. As one respondent stated, “When I am with my family, to them, I am the Canadian – but where I work, with only white Canadians, I am the brown person or the Tamil person to my co-workers – they don’t see me as Canadian”.

### *The Paradox of Hybridity and Power*

Ideas about the negotiation of power and its connection to hybridity need to be challenged with this emerging evidence. It is clear that key ideas of Hall (1998) and Bhabha (1994) are affirmed in this study. Radhakrishnan (1996) also discusses this form of hybridization, one that does not challenge oppressive structures, as “metropolitan hybridity”, which is a combination of cultures and just that, nothing more. He describes it as the encompassing of two cultures that do not effect an individual in the areas of structural integration or negotiation of power.

However, metropolitan hybridity and cultural ambivalence do seem to have an effect - they reinforce the dominant power structures; what is understood as ‘awareness’ of the power structure appears to subjugate diasporic members further. Their awareness of their limitations of power and oppressive system seems to encourage these second-generation members to work within the structures rather than challenge them, while their mimicry of ‘Canadianness’

minimizes differences within the Canadian society. In other words, their awareness simply acknowledges that the unequal structures will not be easily changed, and creates the perception that little will come of challenges to these institutions. Such sentiments echo those of the participants in Godwin's (2012), Sriskandarajah's (2014), O'Neill's (2015) and Thurairajah's (2011) studies, where attempts to protest in the downtown core of Toronto resulted in negative backlash and extreme 'othering'.

What is problematic is the evidence that many second-generation members of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora encompass 'metropolitan hybridity', but as Hall (1998) and Bhabha (1994) pointed out, they experience deceptive perceptions of greater abilities to re-negotiate power. Such misinformation does not only create great barriers to true integration but as previously mentioned, reinforces dominant power structures. However, the barriers become particularly dangerous, and the reinforcement of power structures becomes particularly insidious because those who face the barriers do not realize that they exist and those who reinforce the power structures do not realize that they are doing so. It is an extension of the current multicultural framework in Canada that creates an illusion of inclusivity, especially in the face of hybridization, which is marketed by not only white Canadians but the social sciences as a way to increase one's sense of belonging (Hall, 2002). Just as communities who believe that multicultural events and many ethnic restaurants is a sign of growing equality, hybridization is occurring with a belief of subsequent equality without actually compromising the power of the dominant communities.

It is important to understand that while Homi Bhabha (1994) acknowledges the ambivalence that stems from hybridity, the true roots of hybridity and ambivalence as a repressed state of being must be examined through a critical race theory lens, with the

understanding that race and racism are used to exert power over visible minority groups. Sicakkan (2012) discusses the public sphere as a matrix of governance using different components such as discourses and collective actors; thus, the lengths to which such white governance extends should not be underestimated. As Bhabha (1994) stated, it was the colonizer who forced colonized subjects to mimic their culture; however, he believed that hybridity was an unintentional result of this attempted dominance, and that hybridity could potentially be a tool for the colonized to overcome subjugation. On the other hand, critical race theory and the belief that deeply embedded and systemic racism maintains the power of the dominant group (Aylward, 1999) as well as Sicakkan's (2012) ideas of the public sphere being a matrix of governance shed light on the possibility that hybridity could be yet another tool of the colonizer to keep the colonized subjects oppressed; in fact, the discourse on hybridity could even be seen as propaganda by collective actors in the public sphere.

When referring to Nazi propaganda, American writer Eric Hoffer stated that “propaganda does not deceive people; it merely helps them deceive themselves” (Schmidt, 1997:9); the discourse of hybridity as a tool to overcome power is similarly an instrument for the oppressed to deceive themselves, by autonomously holding the belief that their hybridity gives them the capacity to challenge dominant structures. Thus, Bhabha (1994) fails to see that a ‘tool’ [hybridity] that stems from the colonizer itself is not one that should be taken as it is marketed in dominant discourses; it should instead be explored as a deceptive instrument which subjugates the user and maintains the status quo. Dabashi (2015) discussed the extent to which even other thinkers and theorists have in some ways been subjugated by imperial, Eurocentric ideologies. He also notes that there is “racist imperial ideology that seeks to control and dominate” the world (Dabashi, 2015: 288); this aligns with Sicakkan's (2012) ideas of a matrix of dominance, which

include discourse as a vital component. Dabashi (2015) further discusses the deceptive faces worn by these dominant ideologies; his example of “Islamophobia that now camouflages itself as the *new atheism*” (288) is parallel to the idea that dominant, oppressive ideologies can wear the mask of benign theories, or as those which appear to benefit the oppressed, such as the discourse on hybridity.

### *Limitations*

There is a great need for growth in this area of research. While scholars have pointed out unique aspects of the second-generation members of diasporas, it has yet to be determined, whether or not they possess the capabilities to overcome the barriers to integration (such as discrimination) faced by their parents. As previously mentioned, the term second-generation immigrant itself could be seen as a force of colonialism, as charter groups in Canada do not face the same terminology that reduces them down to an immigrant, regardless of their birthplace.

The term integration is also problematic, as it is very broad and has been interpreted by scholars in a number of different ways. While the numerous interpretations provide many options for operational definitions in research, it creates too abstract of a concept for the generalizability of research findings and reliability of measurement tools. Research should strive to create a multi-pronged definition that acknowledges heterogeneous immigrant experiences, yet illustrates overarching themes of integration.

Besides increased consistency in diaspora terminology, a greater variety of second-generation experiences need to be investigated to truly understand the population. Studies with larger samples and various settings need to be conducted to further explore the link between

identity and power. However, tools of measurement must be defined more clearly, and identity must be understood as more complex. Iyall and Leavy (2008) state that all studies relating to immigrant adaptation have referred to multi-ethnic labels and hyphenated identities as a sign of hybridization, through which measures of educational attainment and employment outcomes are taken. This is a practise that not been questioned – however this study shows evidence that regardless of the ethnic label used to identify oneself, many second-generation members of the diaspora encompassed multiple identities. Furthermore, identity should be seen less through essentialist views, which imply that there is a normative form of identity and more as social constructivism, which aligns with the self’s constructed realities (Motyl, 2010). This shows a gap in the understanding of identity, and a need to move from using labels as understandings of hybridity to truly understanding hybridity as a consciousness, and subsequently learning more accurate ways to determine the existence of hybridization.

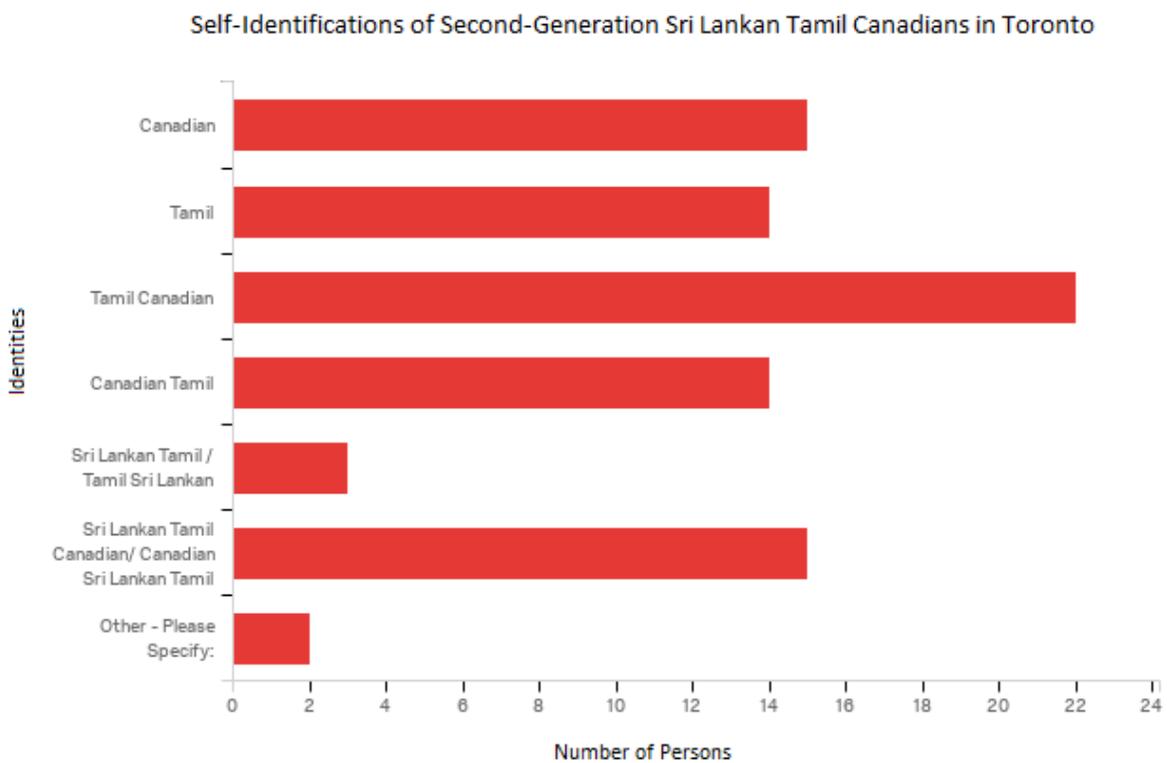
Ultimately, the literature shows that the experiences of second-generations in diasporas are not homogenous (Boyd, 2008); they not only differ between non-racialized and racialized second-generation members of diasporas but also differ among various racialized groups. Thus, it is important to avoid generalizations in primary stages of research about the second-generation of diasporas; rather, it is important to collect as much data as possible for future comparative analyses.

## **Conclusion**

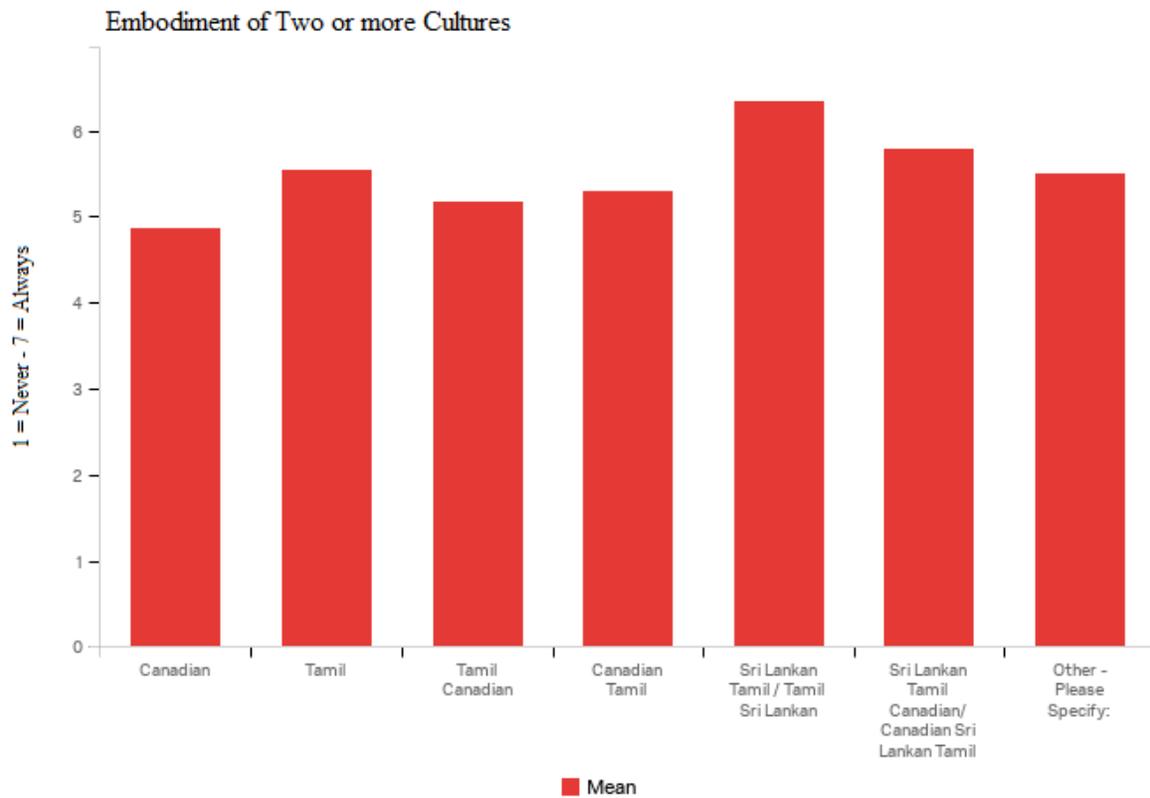
The second-generation of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora display shifts in identity formation and fluidity of identity, particularly with reference to hybridity. However, despite

theoretical projections that hybridization leads to greater power, such hybridity has made minimal difference in any power shifts. Hybridization has instead created greater awareness about the dominant culture amongst the second-generation of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora; this awareness has also led to greater acceptance of the limitations of 'Canadianness' for themselves. The combination of awareness and acceptance lead to a paradox of hybridity and power. While most theorists believe that hybridity results in the negotiation of power, in this case, with metropolitan hybridity, it instead reinforces already dominant power structures. Hybridity should, as a result, been viewed as an imperial tool which, instead of giving the oppressed greater power as it appears to do so, deceptively motivates the oppressed to remain subjugated by the dominant group. It is then no surprise then, that while second-generation members have socially integrated, they have not truly become integrated in either the economic or political realm. It is only with a deeper understanding of these power structures and the ways in which they govern some while repressing others that scholars can then begin to understand new ways of tackling power imbalances. Through this pursuit of knowledge there is opportunity to challenge repressive systems in Canada to allow its citizens to achieve true integration.

## Appendix A

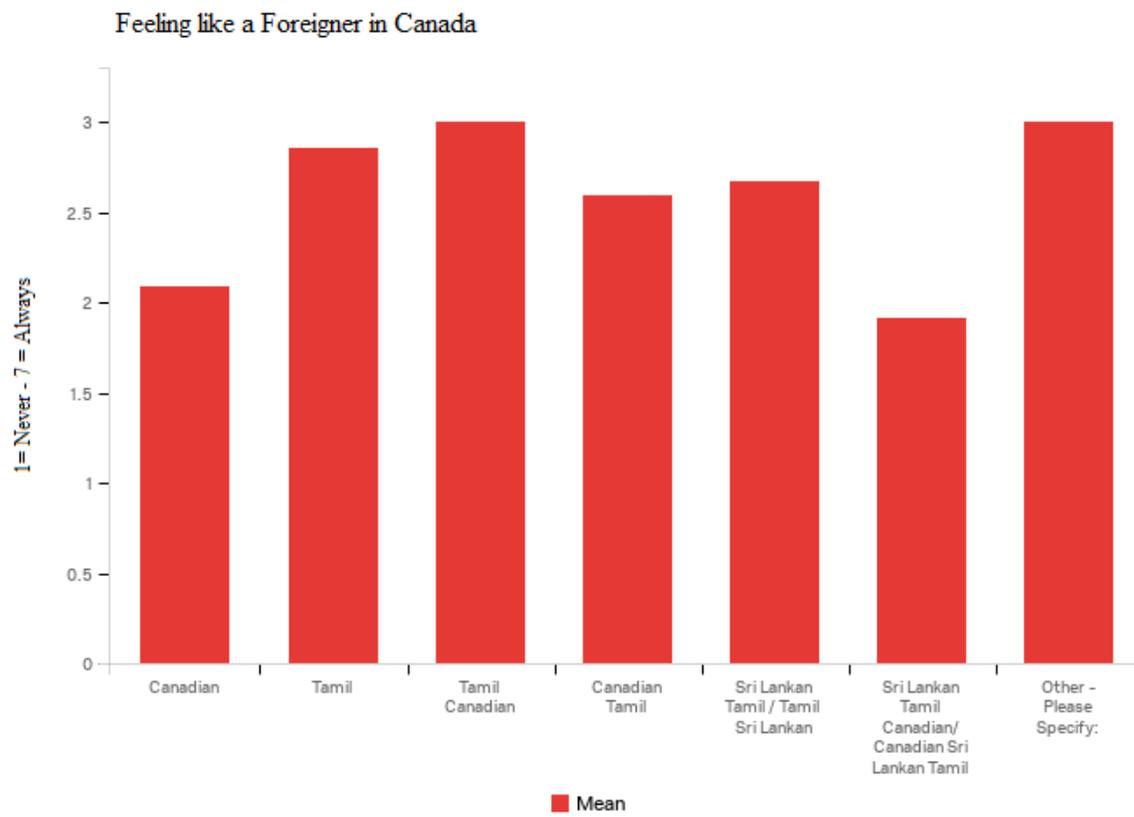


## Appendix B

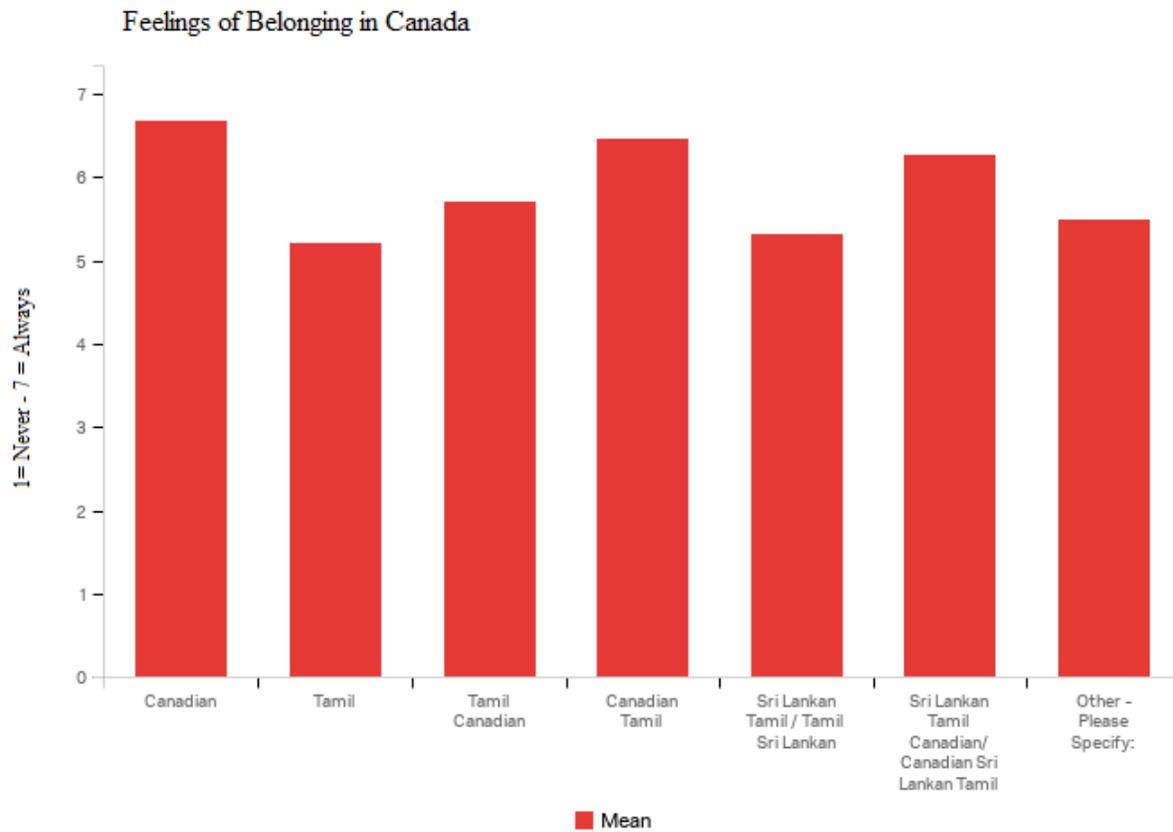


| Field         | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std Deviation | Variance | Count |
|---------------|---------|---------|------|---------------|----------|-------|
| Please Select | 1.00    | 7.00    | 2.54 | 1.34          | 1.81     | 68    |

## Appendix C

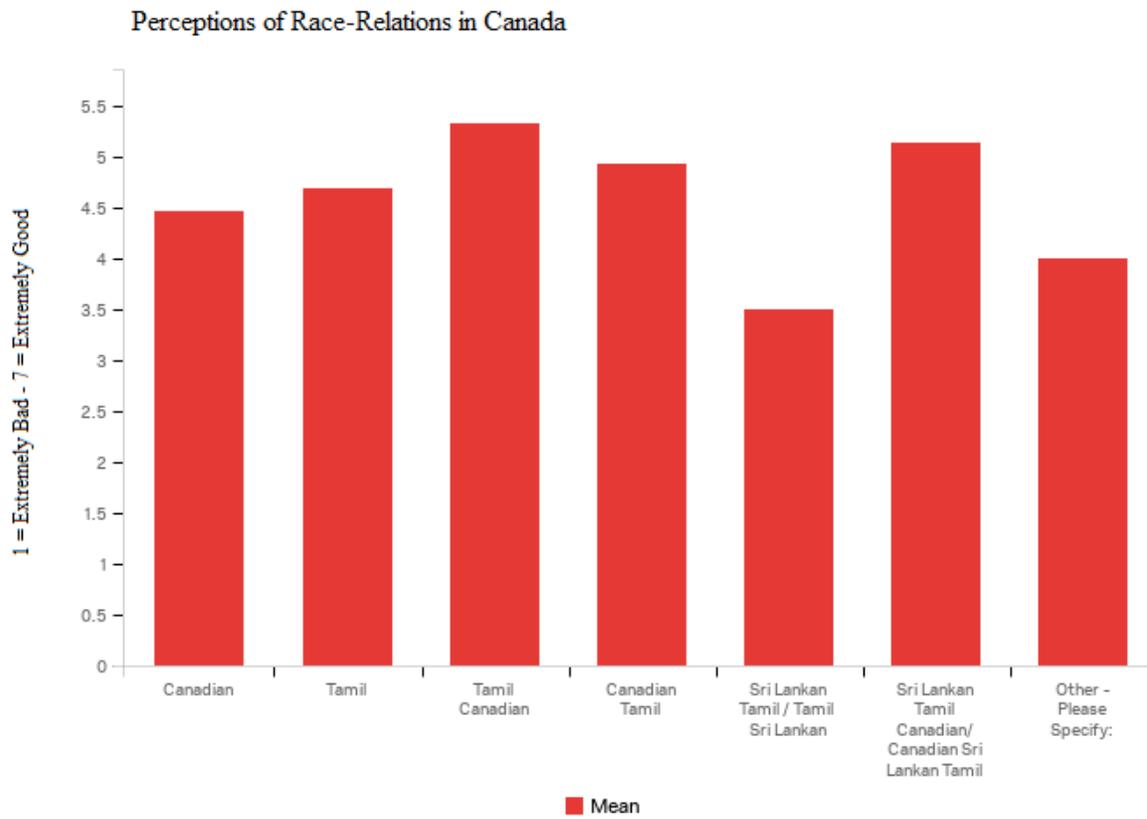


## Appendix D



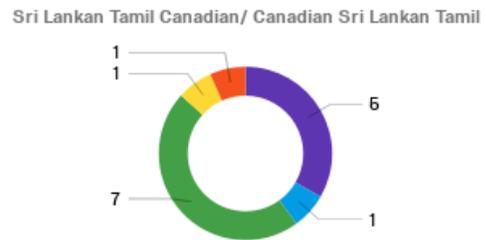
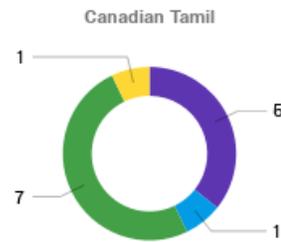
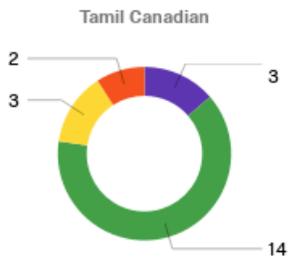
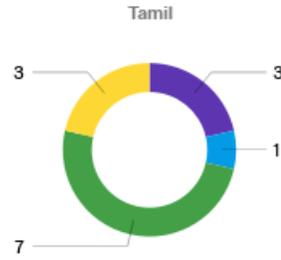
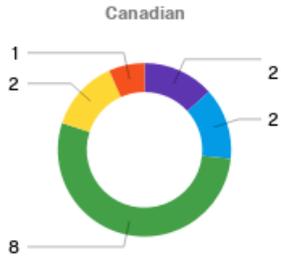
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|---------------|---------|---------|------|---------------|----------|-------|
| Please Select | 2.00    | 7.00    | 6.00 | 1.19          | 1.41     | 82    |

## Appendix E



# Appendix F

## Educational Attainment



Other - Please Specify:



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