

# **Who Am I When a Part of Me Is Elsewhere? Narratives Of Transnational Homes and Multicultural Identities Among Black Canadian Youth**

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## **Abstract**

This paper explores how second-generation Black Canadian youth in Canada make sense of their multiple 'home(s)', Canada and the country of origin, and establish an empowering multicultural identity in the context of transnationalism. The question, "*Who am I when a part of me is elsewhere?*" is not foreign to these youth as connections to culture, origin, and family provide a link between place and identity. However, this link may be threatened due to exposure to multiple cultural frameworks and histories, as well as experiences of c/overt discrimination (in Canada) and disconnection (in the country of origin). This paper draws on the theoretical conception of "transnational homemaking" (Sandhu, 2013), which posits real and symbolic practices that encourage continuity and belonging across borders, and a qualitative research method (Berg & Lune, 2017) which consists of semi-structured interviews conducted in Ontario, Canada in 2023/2024. The findings demonstrate that second-generation Black Canadian youth negotiate their multicultural identities in multiple, often opposing, cultural worlds. In this process, families and the ethnic community serve an important role in passing down cultural knowledge and facilitating transnational attachments, as well as in helping youth challenge local and global inequities. This has shown to cultivate belonging within and across borders, thus fostering a sense of 'home' and strengthening youths' multicultural identity. Participant narratives reveal that this feeling of 'home' is characterized by authenticity, community, comfortability, connection, inclusion, and familiarity. This paper thus offers a better understanding of how transnational homes can be valuable sites of multicultural identity formation.

**Keywords:** Canada; identity formation; multiculturalism; transnational attachments; transnational homemaking