



By: Rahel Oqbayohanes

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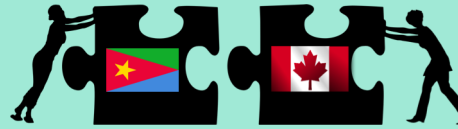
Functionalities of Cultural Third Space Within a Canadian Framework

Abstract

In conjunction with a literature review, I used qualitative research methods to explore how concepts of cultural third space function within a Canadian framework. It is often assumed that different groups within a society are able to assimilate into dominant culture, while retaining their own cultural identities. Specifically looking at the Eritrean community in Toronto, my research will look at the following: how language is retained, how cultural customs are preserved or passed down, and how segmented assimilation affects labour opportunities and access to educational opportunities. When can third space be used then? How are forms of social capital utilized by Eritrean immigrant communities in Toronto? My research will expand on these questions.

Why Migration?

From about 1961-1991 Eritrea had fought a long war of independence against Ethiopia, during this time and still continuing in certain locations to this day, every Eritrean citizen is required to serve 18 months in national service as soon as they turn 18. There is no freedom of expression or speech, as the same president has ruled for over 25 years and standing. The government owns all forms of media, which in turn means they control the public perception of this country. No one is aware of the human rights atrocities that are being committed and have been committed because of Eritrea's extreme isolation in the global conversation.



How do Eritrean immigrant communities in Toronto retain and negotiate their own cultural identities within a multiculturalist Canadian framework?



Methods

In gathering my data I used two semi-structured interviews as they allowed me to ask specific questions, while also letting the conversation flow naturally. I interviewed two Eritrean individuals of different age range that immigrated to Toronto.

- **Akeza Tsadu:** Born in Asmara, Eritrea. Immigrated to Toronto, Ontario in 1989. (Age: 54 years old)
- **Lina Mariam:** Born in Asmara, Eritrea. Immigrated to Toronto, Ontario in 1999. (Age: 25 years old)

Findings

- Eritrean immigrants inhabit forms of cultural hybridity through language, having to switch between Tigrinya and English in front of their children and in the work place.
- Younger Eritrean immigrants feel a sense of loss from their culture because of friend groups, but feel re connected through cultural events such as weddings, festivals and dinners where customs are in place.
- **Interviewee #1 (Akeza)** understood the importance of her kids being able to maintain Canadian identity but was also fearful that her kids would stray too far from traditional morals and ideals that being Canadian would usurp their Eritrean identities.
- **Interviewee #2 (Lina)** often felt like nobody understood her culture, so she never shared that part of her life with her non-Eritrean peers. Though when she did meet with other Eritrean youth at community based events, it felt like switching between identities, being Eritrean & Canadian all in one.