Book Review/CompteRendu

Creese, Gillian. 2020. *"Where Are You From?" Growing Up African-Canadian in Vancouver.* Toronto. University of Toronto Press, pp. 208, paperback, (9781487524562).

Vancouver, much like Toronto and Montreal, is a diverse city where half of the population identify as people of colour, but only one percent of the population racially identify as Black (7). Throughout their time in Canada, first generation African immigrants have experienced significant barriers to occupational mobility, mainly because their African English accent and foreign credentials are not recognized and valued in the Canadian labour market (23). Despite the plethora of challenges first generation African immigrants have experienced while continuing to settle in Canada, they work hard to build an inclusive community and create new "spaces of belonging" (12). At the same time, immigrant African parents attempt to find new opportunities for their Canadian-raised children who they hope will not experience similar challenges (3). Notwithstanding their parents' setbacks, the second-generation tries to meet their parents' expectations, while continuing to experience racism and marginalization.

Informed by both critical race and intersectionality theories, "*Where are you from*? *Growing Up African Canadian in Vancouver* explores the experiences of thirty-five second-generation African-Canadian men and women who attended high school in Vancouver and whose parents migrated from sub-Saharan Africa (31). Creese uses the term second-generation to include those who were born and raised in Canada, and those who migrated to Canada as children, also known as the 1.5 generation (42). There is surprisingly a small amount of qualitative research on the second generation, a group that receives little scholarly attention (7). Most research studies on the second-generation is quantitative and often focuses on their economic achievements while ignoring how they reflect on "growing up or negotiate life as young adults" (8). Creese not only examines their economic achievements but also the complex processes of identity formation and belonging from adolescence to adulthood, with a particular focus on the relationship between racialization, gender, and sexuality.

The book has nine chapters. In the first part of the book, Creese examines second-generation African-Canadian's childhood and adolescence experiences. She explores memories of adjusting to life in Canada

and the experiences of social exclusion and adaptation in elementary school. All her participants who migrated before adolescence experienced significant isolation when adjusting to life in Vancouver. For example, Terrence noted "There weren't that many Black people." (44). As a result, some of their peers made fun of their hair, food, skin tone, and accent (69). Participants who migrated during adolescence as refugees were more likely to focus on new opportunities presented, rather than the challenges encountered in their previous country, because they were able to find a greater sense of security and safety in their new home (48). According to Creese, the biggest challenges participants faced during their transition to life in Canada were language barriers, accents, and the absence of extended family (44). Conversely, those born in Canada did not face the same range of issues growing up. Regardless of their place of birth, many participants experienced difficulties forming and maintaining friendships, and incidents of racism and prejudice were so "frequent and hurtful enough to be remembered in adulthood" (69).

Overall narratives of developing friendships and experiencing isolation were highly gendered. Unlike boys, who identified sports as a bridge to friendship, girls had a harder time because of racialized beauty norms (70).

These racialized gender differences became more prominent in high school. Creese explores the teenage years and how representations of Blackness, particularly through the spread of mainstream hip-hop music and videos, shaped African-Canadian men's and women's lives differently. Images of Black masculinity and femininity in hip-hop shaped how African-Canadian youth stood out in high school (77). The majority of Black men in the study remembered gaining great popularity if they behaved as the "cool Black guy" (77). Creese argues that being the "cool Black guy" has three dimensions: it is a form of cultural capital that involves embracing stereotypical hip-hop identities and dress codes, combined with athleticism, while receiving considerable romantic attention from adolescent girls, particularly white girls (79). Fitting the "cool Black guy" stereotype helped Black men gain acceptance in high school but these youth were less likely to excel academically (83). Young men who academically excelled noted that being a good student detracted them from the "cool Black guy" stereotype (84). In contrast, hypersexualized representations of Black femininity in hip hop and white beauty standards resulted in Black girls being depicted as less attractive, undesirable, angry and aggressive amongst their peers (88). Black women typically recalled that their priority was on academic excellence, despite teachers underestimating their potential (89).

In the remainder of the book, Creese explores second generation African-Canadian's adulthood experiences. Friendships among second-generation adults included greater connections with the local African diaspora as well as friends from other ethnic backgrounds with "recent immigrant experiences" (99). Nevertheless, there were still gender differences in their adulthood in terms of personal relationships. African-Canadian men had a much wider range of romantic opportunities in comparison to African-Canadian women. More than 70 percent of men developed relationships with women from a diverse range of racial and ethnic backgrounds, usually with white women (101-102). In contrast, African-Canadian women with current or former romantic partners predominantly developed relationships with African men who moved to Canada as adults. In terms of their education and career goals, most participants had some form of post-secondary education and expressed great pride in their accomplishments, though women were more likely to pursue higher education. Interestingly, Creese argues that gendered cultural expectations and the differential treatment of Black men and women in society may help explain why more second-generation women than men pursue post-secondary education (120).

Lastly, Creese explores how gendered representations of Blackness affect how second-generation African-Canadian men and women interact with individuals in public spaces. African-Canadian men were subjected to heightened levels of surveillance due to their masculinity, and consequently, often had negative encounters with the police (127). Second-generation African-Canadians developed strategies to survive "living under a microscope." Many examples included men wearing business-related outfits and women wearing modest clothing to deflect away from discourses about hypersexuality and criminality (127-128). Sadly, second-generation African-Canadians continue to be bothered with the question of "Where are you from?" by strangers and acquaintances despite growing up in Vancouver (150).

This book would be most suitable for undergraduate and graduate students in sociology, political science, anthropology, women and gender studies and African studies. There are, however, some limitations with this work. Creese leaves us questioning whether white Canadians are the only group that are racist and prejudice towards the second-generation. Given that four in ten people in Vancouver are people of colour (175), Creese makes very few connections about the Anti-Black racism among other racial groups. Overall, "*Where are you from?"* is a unique study that critiques the notion of Canadian multiculturalism and tolerance, while further contributing to the field of race, ethnicity and migration.

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