



Montreal Black Communities Demographics Project

# **The Evolution of the Black Community of Montreal: Change and Challenge**



An initiative of the McGill Consortium for Ethnicity and Strategic Social Planning

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McGill Consortium for Ethnicity and Strategic Social Planning

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**The Evolution of the Black Community of Montreal:  
Change and Challenge  
October 2001**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>MCGILL CONSORTIUM FOR ETHNICITY AND STRATEGIC SOCIAL PLANNING.</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>FOREWARD.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>I. HISTORY OF BLACKS IN MONTREAL: A SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>7</b>
History Section Endnotes .....	13
<b>II. DEFINING BLACKS IN CENSUS TERMS .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>III. DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES FACING THE BLACK COMMUNITY OF       MONTREAL IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>17</b>
1. GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF BLACKS IN CANADA .....	17
1.1 Regional Distribution of Blacks in Montreal.....	19
2. AGE AND GENDER STRUCTURE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN CANADA.....	20
2.1 Unique Characteristics Regarding the Age Structure of the Montreal Black Community .....	20
2.2 Gender Proportions .....	23
3. LINGUISTIC ABILITIES AMONG BLACKS IN MONTREAL.....	24
3.1 Gender and Age Differences in Language Acquisition .....	27
4. THE IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION ON THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN MONTREAL .....	29
5. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF BLACKS IN MONTREAL .....	38
5.1 Levels of Educational Attainment .....	38
5.1.1 Gender and Educational Attainment .....	42
5.1.2 Immigration Status and Educational Attainment .....	43
5.2 Income Levels .....	45
5.3 Composition of Total Income .....	47
5.3.1 Labour Force Activity (Participation and Unemployment Rates) 7.....	47
5.3.1.1 Level of Schooling and Labour Force Activity .....	51
5.3.1.2 Immigration Status and Labour Force Activity .....	52
5.4 Employment Income .....	53
5.5 Occupational Structure.....	54
5.6 Total income and government transfer payments.....	56
5.7 Total Income and Investments .....	58
6. POVERTY AMONG BLACKS IN MONTREAL .....	59
6.1 Poverty and Children .....	60
7. FAMILY STRUCTURE .....	62
7.1 Living Arrangements .....	62
7.2 Marital Rates.....	63
7.3 Husband-Wife Families .....	65

7.3.1 Interracial Families .....	68
7.4 Single Parent Families .....	69
<b>IV. EMERGING AGENDA.....</b>	<b>72</b>
Strengthening Families .....	72
Expanding Opportunities .....	73
Diversity and Cohesion.....	74
<b>V. RESPONSES .....</b>	<b>76</b>
1. <i>Being Black in Montreal</i> .....	76
2. <i>Improving the Profile of Black Communities in Montreal</i> .....	82
3. <i>Agenda Building in the Quebec Context – A Community Development Perspective</i> ....	87
<b>VI ANALYSIS OF RESIDENTIAL PATTERNS AMONG BLACKS IN MONTREAL..</b>	<b>91</b>
Bordeaux .....	92
Cote-des-Neiges .....	94
LaSalle .....	95
Laval .....	96
Little Burgundy/St. Henri .....	97
Montreal North.....	98
N.D.G. - Montreal West.....	100
Park Extension .....	101
Rivière-des-Prairies.....	103
St. Michel .....	105
<b>APPENDIX A: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>APPENDIX B GRAPH AND TABLE INDEX.....</b>	<b>113</b>

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### Leadership

Members of Montreal's Black community who accepted the invitation to participate on the Montreal Local Steering Committee have been meeting for three years to guide and steer this Project. Some have contributed sections to the Report. Others formed the editorial committee. Many met with groups in the community to present and consult on the Project. All have given generously of their time, ideas and leadership to bring this Project to fruition and especially to ensure that the end product serves the interests of the Black communities of Montreal and especially contributes to its advancement. **Steering Committee Members: Marielle Bauger, Boulou E. de B'éri, John Dike, Emerson Douyon, Bergman Fleury, Janis-Marika Smith, Shirlette Wint.** Other people contributed as steering committee members but for a variety of reasons resigned before the Project was completed: Edina Bayne, Brian Bishop, Ntunaguza Gabriel, Joseph Jean Gilles, Marlene Jennings, Lena Celine Moise, Linton Garner, Monique VanderHoost, Dorothy Williams

### Partnership

Thanks to an arrangement initiated by Jeff Bullard and carried out by Lorna Jansen at Heritage Canada, this study is based on the 1996 Census. Without their special collaboration, the Project would not have had the resources to use the 1996 data.

### MCESSP Staff

Over the duration of the Project, many MCESSP staff as well as students have made significant contributions.

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MCESSP expresses its appreciation to all those listed here and to the many others who have made contributions.

## MCGILL CONSORTIUM FOR ETHNICITY AND STRATEGIC SOCIAL PLANNING

The McGill Consortium for Ethnicity and Strategic Social Planning (MCESSP) is a unique facility, which assists ethnic communities to conduct research in relation to their demography - particularly by accessing Canadian Census data. The objective is to work with ethnic communities to render such data accessible and to be of assistance in determining the priorities and planning needs, which arise from these data. The Consortium focuses on issues of ethnic identity and discrimination, as well as the development of public and community planning systems to respond sensitively and strategically to the needs of these diverse groups. MCESSP has conducted extensive interviews with leaders of the Black, Chinese, Italian, Japanese, Jewish and Ukrainian communities. It has produced Census based demographic analysis of Jewish communities in Canada in 1981 and again in 1991, and published monographs regarding poverty and related issues. In 1997, MCESSP published Diversity Mobility and Change: The Dynamics of Black Communities in Canada, a national study of the Canadian Black population based on the 1991 Census. MCESSP assists numerous community organizations and public institutions to better understand and respond to the needs of ethnic communities.

The McGill Consortium for Ethnicity and Strategic Social Planning works in partnership and shares space with its sister organization, the Montreal Consortium for Human Rights Advocacy Training (MCHRAT). Through interdisciplinary legal and social work practice, MCHRAT provides expertise and assistance to frontline organizations that work with disadvantaged groups. MCHRAT's mandate includes training in human rights advocacy techniques, development of model programs, reviewing and proposing legislation and interdisciplinary research. The two consortiums combine expertise in community organization, law and demography and work in partnership with communities both in Canada and abroad.

## CANADIAN BLACK COMMUNITIES DEMOGRAPHIC PROJECT

There is an abundance of data regarding ethnic communities in Canada, which is housed in universities, libraries, governmental institutions and private organizations. Nevertheless, most groups lack the organizational infrastructure, the financial resources, or the planning staff to utilize the information in addressing the needs of their communities. Consequently, many ethnic communities find that their identities are determined by persons and institutions in ways that do not actually reflect or represent their characters. Assumptions about identity and social planning priorities are made about such groups, but often without their participation. Moreover, those groups that could most benefit from available data and expertise have the least access to these.

The Canadian Black Communities Demographic Project is intended to improve access to Census-based information as a tool for community building and empowerment. In seeking to facilitate an understanding of the forces that shape community life, the report Diversity Mobility and Change: The Dynamics of Black Communities in Canada was presented as an initial portrait of the "state of the nation" for Blacks in Canada. In light of the overall positive response that was received after the release of the national findings, efforts were made to continue with the second phase of the project - more in-depth profiles focusing on specific Black communities in Canada. As the



"Black experience" varies across regions, these profiles are to provide the Montreal and Toronto communities with a more comprehensive understanding of how Blacks within the city compare to Blacks nationally. They will also show how Blacks in these metropolitan areas compare to their non-Black counterparts in the city. Accepting that neighbourhoods within a city can have considerably different demographics as a result of historical and contemporary patterns of settlement and migration, a number of neighbourhoods have been selected for detailed analysis.

To facilitate community involvement and ownership of the data, a partnership was established between the McGill Consortium for Ethnicity and Strategic Social Planning (MCESSP) and members of the Black communities. The writing of Diversity Mobility and Change was guided by a National Steering Committee comprised of Black professors, researchers, historians, educators and community leaders resident in five Canadian cities. This committee was set up to guide the research, to gather input from Black communities, to disseminate the results of the study, and to address the policy issues arising from the results. The local steering committees established in Montreal and Toronto have provided critical links between the communities and MCESSP through their consultative role in the research process, involvement in various focus groups, editing and presentation of the data, and their determined efforts to have the local reports meet the needs of the communities.

## FOREWARD

**Shirlette Wint and Boulou E. de B'beri**

The Montreal Local Steering Committee (MLSC) began as a joint initiative between the Black community and the McGill Consortium for Ethnicity and Strategic Social Planning (MCESSP). It is a consulting body that was formed to assist MCESSP to develop research strategies related to the Canadian Black Demographic Project (CBCDP). The MLSC has been with CBCDP since its inception and is made up of representatives from several Black communities. Committee members include students and professionals from a diversity of fields (education, government, history, social work, accounting, criminology, psychology, and communication). The origins of committee members are also diverse and reflect the multiethnic and multilingual character of Montreal's Black community (Africans, Canadians, and Caribbean). Both the National and Local Steering Committees were formed to sensitize groups that would most benefit from the available data and expertise of those individuals associated with the project. One of the initial goals of this consulting body was to create public awareness of the project that would dispel the myths and fears of Blacks concerning public institutions that study their communities. Committee members were strongly committed to the task of ensuring that Montreal's Black communities understood the need and advantages to self-identification in the Canadian census. Members agreed that making use of census data would facilitate community building and lead to empowerment of Black communities.

The advisory committees explained to the community outreach meetings and focus group discussions the intent of the study, emphasizing its demographic importance as a tool for community building and empowerment. Concerted efforts have been made throughout the entire project to ensure that Black communities understand the value of this study, which is a demographic instrument that presents a profile of Blacks in Canada and not a sociological device with requisite cause and effect. In 1997, the first phase of the CBCDP was completed, and a national report was published (Torczyner: *Diversity, Mobility & Change: The Dynamics of Black Communities in Canada*). In addition, presenting a Montreal report at this time is an opportunity to recognise and make known the diversity of Montreal's Black communities.

Members also recognized that some ethnic communities might question the way in which individuals and institutions had determined their identities. This issue emphasized the difficulties that arise whenever efforts are made – even within the community itself – to determine who is Black. Nevertheless, the Committee was able to overcome this challenge in order to identify the specific social issues that we all hoped that this project would address through its demographic analysis. We therefore decided that the study would address the seven following areas:

- Black Immigration Patterns
- Age Structure
- Occupational and Income Patterns
- Incidence of Low Income and Lone Parent Families
- Knowledge of Official Language and Employment Patterns
- Education and Income Patterns
- The Structure of Black Families

The hope for the future is that the data will be accessible for public use and that MCESSP will continue to sensitize and assist Black community organisations where necessary, to use these demographic data for program planning and advocacy.

The Montreal Local Steering Committee anticipates that attempts will be made within the Black community to sensitize the Quebec government and decision-makers within the public and private sectors regarding the results of this study. Participants in the focus group discussions conducted by MCESSP and MLSC expressed these same concerns.

## I. HISTORY OF BLACKS IN MONTREAL: A SUMMARY

Dorothy W. Williams

The history of Blacks in Montreal dates back over 360 years, to the beginnings of Ville-Marie or Montreal, as we call it today. Black people, both men and women, have contributed to the growth and vitality that has made Montreal special throughout its long existence. From the creating and sustaining of Montreal's crucial transportation infrastructure, to making Montreal a premiere North American jazz center, to the development of great and far-reaching medical and scientific discoveries, Blacks have helped put Montreal on the map.

The Black presence in Montreal is fundamentally tied to African slavery, which began slowly in New France from 1628 onward and officially survived for seventy-one years.<sup>1</sup> May 1, 1689, is considered the official birth date of African slavery. Louis XIV, King of France, gave permission to New France to import African slaves. The practice of owning slaves by the French merchant class and the clergy was common. Blacks were a meaningful part of the city's economy. After the Conquest, slavery was supported by the British, and they entered Canada with their slaves. African slaves could be found in the homes of government officials, wealthy merchants and seigneurs.<sup>2</sup> For 125 years, a total of 4,092 people had been enslaved in the province-1,400 were Africans.<sup>3</sup>

On August 1, 1834, the Emancipation Act of Britain ended slavery. The fate of the freed Blacks thereafter has been a question although after 1834, Blacks in Montreal held low-paying and low-status positions: barbers, shoe shiners, domestics,<sup>4</sup> elevator boys, busboys, water boys, and porters.<sup>5</sup> At the same time freed American Blacks, refugee and fugitive slaves were entering other regions of the country in significant numbers. American fugitive slaves came via the Underground Railroad attracted by Canada's reputation as a land of freedom and opportunity. Still, Montreal was not the first choice of the fugitives. Those Blacks with professional or marketable skills went to the larger and wealthier Black communities of Canada West. Nevertheless, the Black community in Canada East (Quebec) was active. There was contact between the Black anti-slavery elements in Canada West and Canada East to financially and morally champion the anti-slavery cause.<sup>6</sup>

By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Black Americans in Montreal worked as sleeping car porters, cooks, and waiters.<sup>7</sup> This was the beginning of the era when the word 'porter' became synonymous with the Black man. Segregated in employment and status, Montreal's porters were a mobile group of young, strong temporary residents who stayed in isolated railway "quarters." Montreal was viewed simply as a layover between arrival and departure. The Canadian government encouraged this because they discouraged their wives and families from entering the country, even for a visit. Thus, these men maintained homes in both countries. On the other hand, Red Caps in the stations did not have to travel. They handled passengers' luggage, their boarding, and their disembarking. Generally, Red Caps were skilled or professional men, (such as doctors or lawyers) willing to accept decreased hours and lower wages.

As early as the 1880's, rail companies recruited men directly from the United States. A few Black Canadians from other provinces, and later the West Indians, were hired. They also made Montreal their home. A "Negro" community emerged almost exclusively within the lodgers' section of St. Antoine.<sup>8</sup> The porters' families lived in sub-standard housing and rear tenements. Housing was dilapidated, dangerous, and breeding ground for disease and death. Nevertheless, this area was affordable, available, and accessible; the rail companies were nearby and non-discriminating facilities and services existed. More importantly, this concentration of Black people offered a natural avenue for collective activity.

Community was evident by the inauguration of the Union United Church (Union) in 1907, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in 1919, and the Negro Community Center (NCC) in 1927. Each was aimed at helping Blacks survive the discrimination and isolation they experienced in the city. Such institutions provided links between families and the various Black cultures, and in doing so they helped to establish a unique Black Montreal identity. Thus, the basic purpose of community life was to ameliorate conditions, to support Blacks and encourage them to remain in Montreal.

For three decades Montreal's Black community was made up of three distinct English-speaking cultures: American, West Indian, and Canadian. Americans, mostly men, created the reputation, lifestyle, and economic life of the "St. Antoine" district. They controlled the district, opened the famous downtown nightclubs, and ran the infamous gambling joints and the prostitution rings on St. Antoine Street that catered to the monied White spenders escaping Prohibition.<sup>9</sup> Montreal, as a major North American location for jazz, was *the* place to be.<sup>10</sup> Until 1930, the percentage of Black Americans in Montreal, hovered between 40% and 50% of the total Montreal Black community. Proportionately, the American presence declined over time as other Blacks came into the community.

Within Montreal's Black community the second largest cultural group was comprised of English speaking West Indians. Initially recruited by the railway companies, they came into Montreal directly from the Caribbean or from the Maritimes, where they had previously settled. The period of 'mass' West Indian immigration occurred with the First World War. These British subjects came to enlist but discovered that His Majesty's forces in Canada did not want them. Options were few, and with the haphazard state of labour elsewhere, working on the railroads was a preferred option. Within the community, the railway men had status, prestige, and later, an image of professionalism that was alluring, especially for the educated and skilled West Indian male. Over time these men comprised the "porter's" aristocracy."<sup>11</sup>

Railway companies benefited greatly from the racism in the overall labour market because they were able to hire only the most educated men. This flies in the face of the stereotype of the ignorant, happy, Black porter. However, this image worked to the benefit of the rail companies, because they were able to justify their low wages, the segregated unions they supported, and the poor railway working conditions they maintained.

Some Blacks tried other avenues. There were more West Indian men in industry than any other sector. Many attempted to work for themselves and endeavored to create a strong Black economic base.<sup>12</sup> From 1897 to 1930 several Black businesses started, but, without economic support and resources, many failed. By 1928, West Indians made up forty percent of the total Black population in Montreal. They were the most educated, vocal, rural, and "British" of the Black population, and they found little in common with the Americans who had arrived before them.

As a consequence of racist immigration policies, the demographic base of the early West Indian population in the city was skewed. West Indian women outnumbered West Indian men. The majority of working women were in domestic service even though many were trained as teachers, secretaries and nurses. Their extra income made the difference in families between a marginal and satisfactory living. Yet despite all the hardships, many West Indians chose to stay in Montreal. This intention was also shared by the small core of Black families who had been in Montreal for several decades: the poorer Black Canadians from the Maritimes and Ontario who migrated specifically to work on the railroad, and some of the poor West Indians who had originally settled in the Maritimes. This poverty set them apart. Black Canadians were considered by other Blacks to be uneducated and crude, thus for several decades, Black Canadians occupied the lowest social place within

Montreal's Black community.

The Depression severely affected Montreal's St. Antoine community and the situation for Blacks, already on the bottom of the job scale, was dire. By March 1933, close to 80 percent of the Union United Church congregation was unemployed.<sup>13</sup> The railroads ceased to be the number one employer of Black men. This encouraged a major exodus to the U.S. Blacks who remained in the city had to reckon with no employment for many years, perpetuating a cycle of poverty from one generation into the next.

Yet, in the depths of the Depression people reached out to each other to keep their institutions alive and to develop a rich cultural life. Drama and literary clubs nurtured Black youth. These clubs cultivated the dramatic arts and music, and they maintained a sense of belonging, of challenge and self-discipline by encouraging contacts, volunteerism, and philanthropy within the community.

In direct contrast to the Depression, World War II helped to improve conditions for some Blacks. New work opportunities opened up. As early as 1941, the percentage of Blacks working as porters was around fifty percent.<sup>14</sup> Discrimination continued to be a barrier even within the National Selective Service, Canada's national employment agency. Until 1942, their office accepted racial restrictions and automatically placed Blacks in menial jobs, regardless of their qualifications. Only after Blacks protested did the policy change.

Taking advantage of an improved economic situation that the war brought, some young women shifted from domestic to factory and office work. However, there was not a wholesale alteration from domestic to other occupations. Working women remained as domestics at a rate of 80% and on the average, in 1941 only 14 percent of the Black female population worked.<sup>15</sup> Eventually factory work brought unions, and unionized Blacks eventually played a larger part in the removal of barriers to West Indian immigration. Lobbying and mobilization was necessary - for between 1946 -1950 there were just 947 Black immigrants or only a paltry .22 percent of the total Canadian immigrant population.<sup>16</sup>

The 1941 census was the first time that the percentage of Canadian born Blacks far exceeded other Blacks in Montreal. These Canadians were comprised of Quebec-born Blacks, and large numbers of Blacks from the Maritimes. Nova Scotians eventually became the third largest group in Montreal.

The mid- 1950's to the mid- 1960's was a period of consolidation as immigration from Black and Third World countries grew. The relative standard of living for a number of Blacks rose enormously and inter-city mobility increased. The urban renewal of the West End began, which changed the residential patterns of many. At the same time there was a proliferation of island associations and human rights organizations in the community as Caribbean immigration grew.

Recent immigrants entered Montreal beginning with the Domestic Immigration Program in 1955. It was really the first scheme of the post-war period deliberately designed to bring Blacks into Canada, and it was basically the only chance for young, childless, Black women to enter permanently. They filled Canada's need for domestic labour, but became virtually indentured servants in many homes. Conditions of domestic work were a shocking experience for many, and, though technically free to pursue other careers or to continue their education, generally few women had the opportunity. The positive aspect of this scheme though was the immigration of hundreds of other Blacks through the sponsorship of these domestics. Less than 3,000 women came to Canada, nevertheless it was the entry of thousands of their relatives and friends that started the expansion of Montreal's Black community.

The number of Black immigrants rocketed also due to the dictates of Canadian socio-economic

development. Canada eliminated certain discriminatory regulations from its Immigration Act. This heralded an unprecedented rise in non-White immigration. The massive numbers of West Indians entering Montreal accentuated island class and social divisions. Black immigration, particularly in the late sixties, brought new skills into the community and a wide variety of jobs were procured. These highly skilled immigrants were now able to use their professions as economic leverage. However, with the massive urban renewal in the downtown area, and its substandard accommodations, they did not move into Little Little Burgundy (previously called St. Antoine) and chose other areas. Some even followed the White suburban movement to the West Island.

In the Francophone Black community, a similar demographic pattern was emerging although these Haitians were linguistically and culturally different. Initially they were of a much higher economic class than the majority of the English speaking Blacks. Ninety-three percent of this first "wave" of French speaking Haitians in 1965 were designated as white collar working in teaching positions, and by 1972 they consisted of 3,539 affluent professionals. Many of these elite Haitians considered themselves under self-imposed political exile. French speaking, politicized and highly educated, they became in fact, the first immigrant group to be attracted to Canada primarily on the strength of Quebecois influence. Such nationalist sentiments were not found amongst even the radical element of the most educated English speaking Blacks.

The second group of Haitian immigrants slowly began to enter the city in 1968. This educated working class and blue-collar population began to form the bulk of the Haitian community we have today. This small Haitian population lived outside the core areas of the Black districts. They quickly established enclaves in older neighbourhoods particularly the working class areas of Montreal North.

Canadian Blacks in the fifties and sixties also moved into new areas as soon as they were able. From N.D.G. to the east end of the island, small clusters of Canadian Blacks grew with the influx of English and French speaking West Indian immigrants in the mid and late sixties. Successive waves of Black immigrants followed this pattern and by the early seventies Blacks were residing throughout the Montreal Urban Community (MUC). However, the inroads made in some districts were limited and considered exceptional due to the continued discrimination in Montreal's housing market.

Despite this dispersion, in the 1960's Black services were still largely confined to Little Little Burgundy and the southwest sectors. A debate arose, and Black institutions responded by creating Black umbrella organizations with two goals: a) to develop a united response to racism endemic to Quebec's society; and b) to accelerate the adaptation of thousands of newcomers. By 1972, branch services had been opened in those districts with large clusters of Black residents, although the growth of the Haitian population gave rise to the creation of community centers with uniquely different objectives.

For instance, in 1972, Maison d'Haiti, Montreal's first Haitian community organization, was created to assist Haitians to integrate and adapt to Quebec society in addition to maintaining their original culture. Haitians saw themselves as an exiled people, expecting that they would soon return home to Haiti. Thus they felt that they had to preserve their way of life so that when they returned to Haiti, they and their children would be prepared. As a result, Haitians are the only ethnic community that did not experience a generational change in ethno-political identity. Parents from Haiti and even 98% of their children born in Canada consider themselves as foreigners to Canada!<sup>17</sup> Though there were now two Black communities with two very different ways of handling their adaptation experience, Haitians readily aligned with English speaking Blacks whenever there was a need to fight racism.

The fastest growing Black cultural group during the 1970-1980 decades was the Haitian community. However, the growth was due to the entry of less educated Creole speaking Haitians beginning in 1968. By 1975-76, Creole speakers made up 70 percent of the working Haitian population. As of 1977, officially 17,000 Haitians were estimated to be in the Montreal area.<sup>18</sup>

Official statistics did not even cover the total working population of Haitians, since they included neither the non-immigrant individuals, (those holding a student, not a resident visa), nor alien or clandestine workers. Moreover, these statistics ignored all the children born in Quebec of Haitian parentage. The Haitian birthrate had jumped as spouses immigrated. The 1981 Census registered only 25,850 Haitians but in 1979, the most reliable figure had already been estimated to be closer to 35,000.<sup>19</sup> Unlike the English speaking West Indian immigration decades earlier, a large number of Haitians came as refugees thus the male/female ratio was nearly one to one. The 1981 Census also noted that eighty-five per cent of the Haitians had been in Quebec less than ten years, and it was only since that time that the French speaking Quebecois have felt their impact.<sup>20</sup>

In 1986 the Census established that there were 38,000 Haitians in Montreal. Between 1986 and 1992 the Haitian population underwent a contraction as many actually returned to Haiti.<sup>21</sup> The 1986 Census results also show, that despite their education, 25% of Haitians were unemployed.<sup>22</sup> Educational attainment did not produce a higher living status: the working population was ghettoized in manufacturing (50%) and the services sectors (20%), and their average income was only half that of the average Quebecois.<sup>23</sup>

During the 1970's Haitian domestics formed an increasing number of the non-immigrant workers or, temporary workers with a work visa. These women came into the country through private industry and connections through distant relatives. Necessity also created a working ghetto in the garment factories. Their desire to work was predicated upon familial obligations that remained in Haiti. Between the years 1973 and 1976, there was a relationship between the peaked entry of cohort spouses in 1974 and the 575.9% increase in the 1975 birth rate. Despite the sponsorship of elderly relatives, this high level of fertility of 20 and 30 year old women meant that during the 70's and early 1980's, the Haitian population in Montreal was actually becoming younger.<sup>24</sup>

Such youthfulness is exacerbated by gender concentration. Many population factors were accentuated. Women in the Haitian community now made up 56% of the population. It appears that accelerated 'domestic' entry had affected the Haitian populace in much the same way it had earlier affected the English speaking West Indians. Adding to the youthfulness was the student population. In the sixties and seventies the majority of student visas entered Quebec through a circuitous route. Many obtained visas through the large Haitian population in New York. They came to Quebec to learn French while others came directly from Haiti in order to obtain a technical skill in electronics, mechanics, hairdressing or secretarial training.

In the seventies and eighties, English-speaking West Indians were by far the largest group of Anglophone Blacks in Quebec. About half of the total Anglophone Black community had come from the Caribbean since 1966.<sup>25</sup> Another 25 percent were West Indians who had arrived between World War II and 1966, and a small 5 percent had migrated from the Caribbean prior to 1930. At least 70 percent of the present West Indian population was at least 15 years and older.<sup>26</sup> The period 1968 to 1977 revealed that this immigrant population was approximately 55% female.

In addition, African Canadians made up only 20 percent of the total English speaking Black population in the MUC, or roughly 12,000 persons. Fifty percent were first, second and third generation Canadians who had resided in Montreal prior to 1930. Another 10 to 20 percent were

descendants from, or were born in either Nova Scotia or New Brunswick.<sup>27</sup> The remaining 30 percent were first and second generation West Indians who had migrated after World War II. These two culturally diverse groups, since the forties, have comprised the bulk of the Black community in Montreal. Only recently have these English-speaking Black Canadians and West Indians been outnumbered by the Haitian population.

Africans, the newest group within the Black community in Quebec, numbered about 5,000.<sup>28</sup> From 1975 to 1978 Africans who immigrated to Canada numbered 27,252. These immigrants came from English speaking countries such as South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria and Egypt.

Francophone Africans came from Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, the Congo and Zaire. Six thousand seven hundred and seventeen Africans came to Quebec, which was 23.8 percent of all Africans who entered the country, a fraction of the annual West Indian immigration.<sup>29</sup> Only 148 Africans were allowed into Quebec with refugee status. Conversely, while the number of West Indian students dropped over the same period, the number of university students from Africa increased from 1,660 in 1979 to 3,464 in 1982.

Africans who entered this country were also highly educated. More than 80% had studied at the university level. Forty-eight percent had a B.A., 33.8% had their Masters and 14.3% had a Ph.D. Generally only the most highly educated or the wealthiest of Africans leave the continent. Africans in Montreal were educated in the human (social) sciences (16.5%), the applied sciences (15.8%), administration (32.3%), medical science (6.8%) and in the pure sciences (5.3%). Despite this education, 64% of the respondents that were authorized to work have been without employment for periods of between one and five years. Even more telling was the fact that 90.2% of respondents have an annual income of less than or equal to \$9,000. Only a mere 5.3% had incomes around \$20,000. The overwhelming majority (94%) could only afford to rent in areas east and north of the Anglophone population.<sup>30</sup>

From the beginning of their sojourn in this city, Blacks have struggled to ameliorate living conditions thereby making Montreal home. Whether African, West Indian, or Canadian, all Blacks have had to deal with the lack of social acceptance, youth unemployment, underemployment, and consequences of racism in this city. They have known that these issues are particularly damaging to the communities' youth and have organized a diverse array of responses, including the promotion of cultural heritages. Members of the various Black communities work together for several months of the year to create the month long celebration of Black History. This celebration, targeted to the Black youth of the city, has become a forum for the appreciation of all Black culture and arts, Black cultural diversity, and history, especially local Black history. February Black History Month in Montreal has become a source of pride and unity that has spread into the greater community.

The history of this Black community has shown that Montreal's Black community has never been a monolith. Rather it is a vibrant multicultural, multilingual community consisting of Blacks from Africa, Europe, Caribbean, Canada, and Latin America. It has also revealed that the Black presence in Quebec is not a recent one. It has had deep roots going back to the first French-speaking explorers to this continent. The history of Montreal's Black community lays bare the truth behind the Black stereotypes in this city. Blacks have not been Canada's uneducated immigrants, lacking motivation, poverty driven and feeding off the system. Upon entry, Blacks have been among Canada's most educated groups. This old community of Montreal has struggled together to make an environment that is home, that is safe, and enduring. Their history is a celebration of Canada - a diversity, their struggle for acceptance, and their nurturing of pride.



### History Section Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Other accounts such as « Black Days in the North : Sad Roots » in Canadian Heritage, (December, 1979) refer to earlier dates.

<sup>2</sup> M. Trudel's, Dictionnaire des esclaves et de leurs propriétaires au Canada français. LaSalle : Editions Hurtubise HMH Ltee., 1990) contains the most thorough listing of individual officials, their role in New France, as well as the extent of their slave ownership. For other lists of prominent slave owners see : J. Walker, A History of Blacks in Canada : A Study Guide for Teachers and Students, (Hull : Minister of State, 1980), 12; L. Bertley, Canada and Its People of African Descent. Pierrefonds : Bilongo Publishers, (1977); Negro Slavery in Montreal. Montreal : Roy States Collection. n.d.; C. Marcil, Les communautés noires au Québec. In Education Québec. Vol. 2, no. 6. Avril, 1981; Winks (1971); E. Thornhill, Race and Class in Canada : the Case of Blacks in Quebec. Seminar paper presented to the National Council for Black Studies VI Annual Conference (Montreal : Commission de droits de la personne du Québec, 1982); W.R. Riddell, The Slave in Upper Canada, in The Journal of Negro History, vol. II., ed. G. Woodson, (Lancaster : The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History Inc., 1919); M. Trudel, L'esclavage au Canada français : histoire et condition, (Quebec : Presses Université de Laval, 1960) : 126-159, 319-320.

<sup>3</sup> M. Trudel's, Dictionnaire des esclaves et de leurs propriétaires au Canada français, (Lasalle : Editions Hurtubise HMH Ltee., 1990) : XV.

<sup>4</sup> It was not till the 20<sup>th</sup> century that Black women formed a sizable percentage of domestics. The 1861-1871 Census showed that 66% of all domestics who worked in Montreal were young Irish Catholics. M. Labelle, D. Lemay, C. Painchaud, Notes sur l'histoire et les conditions de vie de travailleurs immigrés au Québec, (Montreal : CEQ, Service de communications, Centre de Reprographie, 1980) : 12.

<sup>5</sup> The term 'porter' includes buffet car, observation car and sleeping porters, as well as cooks, cleaners, and other menial jobs on the trains.

<sup>6</sup> In Montreal support also came from outside the Black community. Montreal Witness and The Montreal Pilot were 2 pro-reform, anti-slavery newspapers in the 1850s.

<sup>7</sup> The Delaware and Hudson, the New York Central, the Rutland, and Central Vermont Rail employed only Americans hired in the U.S. Other American lines employed porters resident in Montreal. See : W. Israel, Montreal Negro Community. M.A. Sociology. (Montreal : McGill University, 1928); Marcil (1981).

<sup>8</sup> Using The Concentric Zone Model of, Parc, Burgess, McKenzie, The City (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1925) and, R.D. McKenzie, On Human Ecology, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), the 'natural' area is defined as a which is relatively homogenous with respect to a group. This term is far more applicable to the St. Antoine district at the turn of the century than the term 'segregated.'

<sup>9</sup> The most famous and enduring club was Rockhead's Paradise which opened in 1929. Mr. Rockhead was West Indian. Hostesses of Union United Church, Memory Book: Union United Church 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1907-1982. Montreal, 1982): 319.

<sup>10</sup> John Gilmore, Swinging in Paradise: The Story of Jazz in Montreal. (Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1988).

<sup>11</sup> Roy States, interview with Yvonne Greer, 1979-1980, Montreal. See also: R. Winks, The Blacks in Canada: A History. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1971): 424.

<sup>12</sup> Israel, 1928: 98. See also J. Bertley, The Role of the Black Community in Educating Blacks in Montreal, from 1910 to 1940, with Special reference to Dr. Charles Humphrey Este. M.A. Education. (Montreal: McGill University, 1982): 28, for a list of skills and other trades. Hostesses, 1982: 363, 341. Stories of the establishing of a business college, a doll hospital, restaurants, cafes, are here.

<sup>13</sup> L. Bertley, Montreal's Oldest Black Congregation: Union Church, (Pierrefonds: Bilongo Publishers, 1976).

<sup>14</sup> H. Potter, The Occupational Adjustments of the Montreal Negro, 1941-1948, M.A. Sociology. (Montreal: McGill University, 1949): 29.

<sup>15</sup> Dionne Brand, We weren't allowed to go into factory work until Hitler started the war: The 1920s to the 1940s in P. Bristow, et. al. We're Rooted Here and They Can't Pull Us Up: Essays in African Canadian Women's History. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994): 171-190.

<sup>16</sup> Mitchell Wolfe, The Black Community in Montreal Paper presented to Harvard College, (Massachusetts, 1973): 5.

<sup>17</sup> Of the 8 ethnic groups in the survey none had such a high correlation between generations. This indicates very little ethno-cultural diversity within the Haitian population. Note: this survey was done after the collapse of Duvalier and thus the results could be affected by the heightened sense of pride and the community's preoccupation with events in Haiti at that time. See: A. Ledoyen, Montreal au Pluriel, Huit communautés ethno-culturelles de la région montréalaise, Documents de Recherche no. 32 (Quebec: Institut Québécois de Recherche sur la culture, 1992): 63.

<sup>18</sup> P. Dejean, trans. In M. Dorsinville, The Haitians in Quebec: A Sociological Profile, (Ottawa: Tecumseh Press, 1980: 51. He proposed that 21, 500 was more realistic.

<sup>19</sup> M. Baillargeon, & G. Ste-Marie, Quelques caractéristiques ethno-culturelles de la population du Québec Cahier no. 2 (Montreal: Ministère des communautés culturelles et de l'immigration, 1984).

<sup>20</sup> Laferriere, M. "The Education of Black Students in Montreal Schools: An Emerging Anglophone problem, A Non-Existent Francophone Preoccupation." In Ethnic Canadians: Culture and Education. M.L. Kovacs, ed. (Regina: University of Regina, 1978: 253) claims that the "Haitian problem" started as result of the influx of Creole speaking children. It was this language barrier that created cultural friction within the schools. Laferriere does not racism/racial pressure played a role in the "Haitian problem," because at the school board level, "no "problem definer" has defined Haitian children as being first and foremost black."

<sup>21</sup> Ledoyen, 1992: 61.

<sup>22</sup> J. Bataille, interview with author, 1984.

<sup>23</sup> A. Ledoyen, Le Niveau d'Éducation, in Montreal au Pluriel, 1992: 61.

<sup>24</sup> Dejean, 1980: 51, 63.

<sup>25</sup> Warner, 1983: 17.

<sup>26</sup> Wolfe, 1984

<sup>27</sup> Warner, 1983: 17.

<sup>28</sup> This was the figure from the President, Rassemblement des Africains. (Interview with Mr. Kouka-Ganga 1984, Montreal). The 1977 immigration report showed that 999 persons born in Africa entered this city.

<sup>29</sup> This percentage of Black immigrants into Quebec was fairly consistent. Regardless of the decade or the cultural group, about on in four Black immigrants chose to live in Quebec. This was actually above average. From 1945 to 1982 Quebec received only 16 percent of all immigrants. Revue Justice, November, 1982: 38, Montreal; M. Kaseka, et al., "Les Ressortissants de l'Afrique au sud du Sahara et leur Perception de la coopération Québec-Afrique" (1983, June)

<sup>30</sup> Kaseka, 1983: 32,34.

## II. DEFINING BLACKS IN CENSUS TERMS

Jim Torczyner and Sharon Springer

Methods used by Census Canada to identify Blacks have evolved over the years, and have changed at each census taking from 1981 onwards. Prior to 1996, Census Canada was unable to provide an accurate count of Blacks because the questions asked were either too indirect or not comprehensive enough. As well, since the methods used to count Blacks changed from census to census, one could not make comparisons from one census to another in order to project growth rates or analyze demographic trends. These methods also resulted in an undercounting of Blacks and confusion as to their demographic characteristics.

This study is based on data from the 1996 Census of Population and Housing and uses a count for Blacks in Canada generated from the Employment Equity Definition of the 'visible minority' population.<sup>1</sup> The data was obtained from Statistics Canada from customized tables specifically constructed for this study as well as from data available publicly through the Statistics Canada Dimension Series.<sup>2</sup>

Only in 1996 did Census Canada introduce a "Visible Minority" concept, which listed ten groups - among them Blacks - which respondents could simply check off. This approach resulted in the largest count of Blacks ever recorded by Census Canada with the most reliable information - although here too the task of identifying Blacks in Census terms remains complex.

Persons who belonged to more than one group were instructed to identify all groups to which they belonged rather than indicating "bi-racial" or "mixed". There was also an "other category" where respondents could write in their own response if they felt that the ten categories did not adequately reflect their background. Thus, the resulting count of the Black population from the Visible Minority Question is not simply the sum of those individuals who indicated Black as a single response. Responses other than a mark-in of "Black" were also given consideration. Those who checked off "Black" along with a write-in answer strongly suggesting a similar identification (e.g., African Canadian, African American) were counted as Black as were respondents who checked off "Black and White" or wrote in "Black and Caucasian". However, if Black and another visible minority group were selected the respondent was considered to be a "multiple visible minority". Statistics Canada recognizes that this procedure results in a slight underestimation of the Black population.

Utilizing this methodology, the census Visible Minority Definition of Black was constructed. It is considered to be the most accurate, and, therefore, the one utilized for Employment Equity as well as this study. **Based on this definition, a national count of 573,860 Blacks was reported in 1996.**

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<sup>1</sup> Employment Equity legislation refers to 'visible minority' groups. It is under this legislation that it is required to have accurate information about racial minority groups in Canada. 'Visible minorities' are persons other than Aboriginal persons who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour (Statistics Canada, 1996 Census Dictionary, Catalogue no. 92-351-XPE: p. 97).

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada Dimensions Series: Ethnocultural and Social Characteristics of the Canadian Population; Catalogue no. 94F0004XCB.

This count comprises the following categories:

- all Black single responses

- all Black only multiple responses (i.e. an individual who checked off "Black" as a category but also wrote in African-Canadian, African-American, or some other description that strongly suggests that the person is Black); and all persons who checked off "Black" and "White", or "Black" and "Caucasian", but who did not indicate membership in any other racial minority group. Persons who indicated "Black" and another racial minority group were considered to be multiple visible minorities.

Two other definitions of Blacks in census terms and, therefore, two other counts of Blacks, which were derived from the census, are provided in Appendix D. For a full discussion of how Blacks were counted in prior censuses and the resulting numbers, refer to Wally Boxhill's piece in our national study: "Defining Blacks in Census Terms: Underlying factors, logic, and choices behind the generation of Census (hence official) counts of Blacks in Canada " (Diversity, Mobility and Change: The Dynamics of Black Communities in Canada; 1997 pp. 11).

It is clear that this approach to counting the Black population does not adequately address nor resolve subjective issues of identity and self-definition. Nevertheless, it is used by Statistics Canada because it is viewed as the best strategy of enumeration, providing the most accurate count.

The 1996 Employment Equity Definition differs substantially from the one used and first introduced by Statistics Canada in the 1991 Census. The size of the 'visible minority' population was estimated by taking into account respondents' answers to questions on ethnic origin, place of birth, language (mother tongue), and religion. Through this process, the 1991 Census counted 504,290 Blacks living in Canada, and 101,390 in Montreal. Given the disparity in numbers and the differences in definition, we strongly caution that information on visible minorities derived from the 1996 population group question cannot be directly compared to derived visible minority data from previous censuses. For this reason, only limited comparisons have been made between the findings presented below and those of the national study.

This study is not meant to be exhaustive. We have attempted to provide a demographic overview which projects a broad view of the state of the Black community in Montreal. It provides objective criteria through which Blacks can compare their social and economic progress to those of others in Montreal and in Canada nationally.

The Census, however, does not provide information about attitudes, the subjective experience of the quality of one's life, or other qualitative dimensions of the experiences of Black Montrealers or the beliefs and attitudes of the broader society in which they live. Consequently, Census data must be augmented with historical, attitudinal, and qualitative studies, and must be tested against the ideas and experiences of the leadership of the various communities, which make up the Black mosaic of Montreal. A selected bibliography has been included in Appendix A to complement and supplement the information in this study.

### III. DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES FACING THE BLACK COMMUNITY OF MONTREAL IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Jim Torczyner and Sharon Springer

#### Introduction

**In 1996, Statistics Canada counted 573,860 Blacks in Canada and 122,320 Blacks in Montreal in 1996. Today, more than one in five Canadian Blacks live in Montreal.** It is the second largest home to Blacks in Canada. Its deep-rooted ancestry in Montreal has contributed greatly to the life, culture and work force of this city. Infused with large numbers of immigrants during the past 30 years, the Montreal Black community like other Black communities in Canada, is growing rapidly.

Black newcomers from French and English speaking parts of the world, and particularly from the Caribbean, and Africa have added to the vibrancy of the complex mosaic of language, culture and experiences which form the collective reality of Montreal's Black community..

The Montreal Black community has spawned many organizations, which represent this diversity. The Black Community Resource Center lists 30 Black organizations serving the English speaking Black community in Montreal (**Resource Guide: Black Community Resource Center: June 2000, Volume 3**). A partial list of Black Francophone organizations compiled in 1995 identified 45 additional organizations.

Quebec government documents have consistently undercounted the number of Blacks in the Province. This has been the case both because of the difficulty of measuring Black identity in the past as well as because the methods utilized by government researchers did not appreciate this complexity and derived counts of Blacks from single variables such as ethnicity. For example, in the 1986 Census, 74,810 Blacks as reported in "Quelques Indicateurs Statistiques Sur Les Minorités Visibles, Québec, 1986. Our National study, which utilized a more precise definition, found that in 1991 Quebec had under-reported the number of Blacks by 40%.

Undercounting has serious repercussions. First, it influences the claims groups may make on the state. That is, communities that are undercounted cannot claim the public resources they require according to their numbers as long as the Province assumes that they have fewer members than they actually have. Second, undercounting skews analysis of issues confronting the Black community. Thus, claims for increased representation of visible minorities in public services can only be based on their percentage of the Provincial population as a whole. The smaller the percentage, the less one can claim. Thirdly, undercounting generates a sense of exclusion from the broader society.

#### 1. Geographic Distribution of Blacks in Canada

The 573,860 Blacks living in Canada in 1996 constituted 2% of the total population of Canada. The Black population, however, is not evenly distributed across the country. Rather, the Black community is heavily concentrated in the Eastern and Central provinces, and rather sparsely represented in Western Canada. Although almost three in ten Canadians live in the Western provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, only one in ten Canadian Blacks resided in these provinces in 1996. **Over 60% of the Canadian Black population live in Ontario and another 23% reside in Quebec.** Together, these two provinces account for more than eight of ten Blacks in Canada.

Blacks are predominately found in urban areas. **About 70% of all Blacks in Canada reside in Toronto (47.9%) and Montreal (21.3%).** Blacks are the largest visible minority group in Montreal, forming approximately 30% of the visible minority population in that city, and constituting more than 1 in 5 of all Blacks in Canada. **While Blacks formed 2% of the national population, in Toronto (6.5%) and Montreal (3.7%) their percentages were much higher.** In two other Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs), the Black population forms a larger percentage of the population than they do nationally. These are Ottawa-Hull (3.1%) which has a Black population of 31,000, and Halifax where 12,000 Blacks represent 3.6% of the entire population. Table 1 lists the size of Black populations and their percentages of the total population by Province and CMA.

Table 1

<b>Geographic Distribution of Black Population Across Canada</b>				
<b>Geographies</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Black Population</b>	<b>As % of Black Population.</b>	<b>As % of Geographic locale</b>
<b>Canada</b>	28,528,125	573,860	100%	2.0%
<i>Provinces</i>				
Alberta	2,669,195	24,915	4.3%	0.9%
British Columbia	3,689,755	23,275	4.1%	0.6%
Manitoba	1,100,290	10,775	1.9%	1.0%
New Brunswick	729,625	3,120	0.5%	0.4%
Newfoundland	547,160	600	0.1%	0.1%
Northwest Territories	64,125	225	0.0%	0.4%
Nova Scotia	899,970	18,105	3.2%	2.0%
Ontario	10,642,790	356,215	62.1%	3.3%
Prince Edward Island	132,855	265	0.0%	0.2%
Quebec	7,045,085	131,970	23.0%	1.9%
Saskatchewan	976,615	4,265	0.7%	0.4%
Yukon Territory	30,650	125	0.0%	0.4%
<i>Central Metropolitan Areas (CMAs)</i>				
Calgary	815,985	10,580	1.8%	1.3%
Edmonton	854,225	11,275	2.0%	1.3%
Halifax	329,745	12,000	2.1%	3.6%
Montreal	3,287,645	122,320	21.3%	3.7%
Ottawa	1,000,935	30,805	5.4%	3.1%
Quebec	663,885	3,065	0.5%	0.5%
Regina	191,485	1,805	0.3%	0.7%
Saskatoon	216,445	1,490	0.3%	0.7%
St. John's	172,090	320	0.1%	0.2%
Toronto	4,232,905	274,935	47.9%	6.4%
Vancouver	1,813,935	16,400	2.9%	0.9%
Winnipeg	660,055	10,025	1.7%	1.5%

### 1.1 Regional Distribution of Blacks in Montreal

In order to understand the dynamics and complexity of Black communal life in Montreal, ten geographic neighbourhoods were identified as central to the Black residential experience. In these ten neighbourhoods alone, 69,790 Black persons resided in 1996, and they represented 57% of all Blacks in Montreal. In each of these neighbourhoods, Blacks constituted a much higher percentage of the total neighbourhood population than in the rest of the city. **In the northeastern, primarily French-speaking neighbourhoods of St. Michel, Riviere-des-Prairies and Montreal North, there were higher percentages of Blacks than anywhere else in the city. Almost one in five residents of St. Michel is Black, as is one in seven in Riviere-des-Prairies, and one in eight in Montreal North. More than 27,000 Black persons lived in these neighbourhoods in 1996, and alone they constituted 22% of all Blacks in Montreal.**

In 1996, **22,000 Blacks lived in the Western, more Anglophone neighbourhoods of Cote-des-Neiges, N.D.G. /Montreal West, LaSalle and Little Little Burgundy/St. Henri.** They constituted 18% of all Blacks living in the city. In these neighbourhoods, one in eleven residents was Black in 1996. Table 2 presents these data.

**TABLE 2**  
***Montreal CMA and Neighbourhoods: Population Distribution***

Geographies	As % of Montreal Black Population	As % of Total Geographic Population
Montreal CMA	122,320 100.0%	122,320 3.7%
Cote-des-Neiges	7,445 6.1%	7,445 8.8%
LaSalle	5,945 4.9%	5,945 8.3%
Montreal North	9,555 7.8%	9,555 11.9%
N.D.G. /Montreal West	5,970 4.9%	5,970 8.9%
Little Little Burgundy/St. Henri	2,665 2.2%	2,665 10.8%
St. Michel	10,530 8.6%	10,530 19.7%
Laval	9,305 7.6%	9,305 2.8%
Riviere-des-Prairies	7,080 5.8%	7,080 14.3%
Park Extension	2,865 2.3%	2,865 10.0%
Bordeaux	8,430 6.9%	8,430 6.7%

## 2. Age and Gender Structure of the Black Community in Canada

### 2.1 Unique Characteristics Regarding the Age Structure of the Montreal Black Community

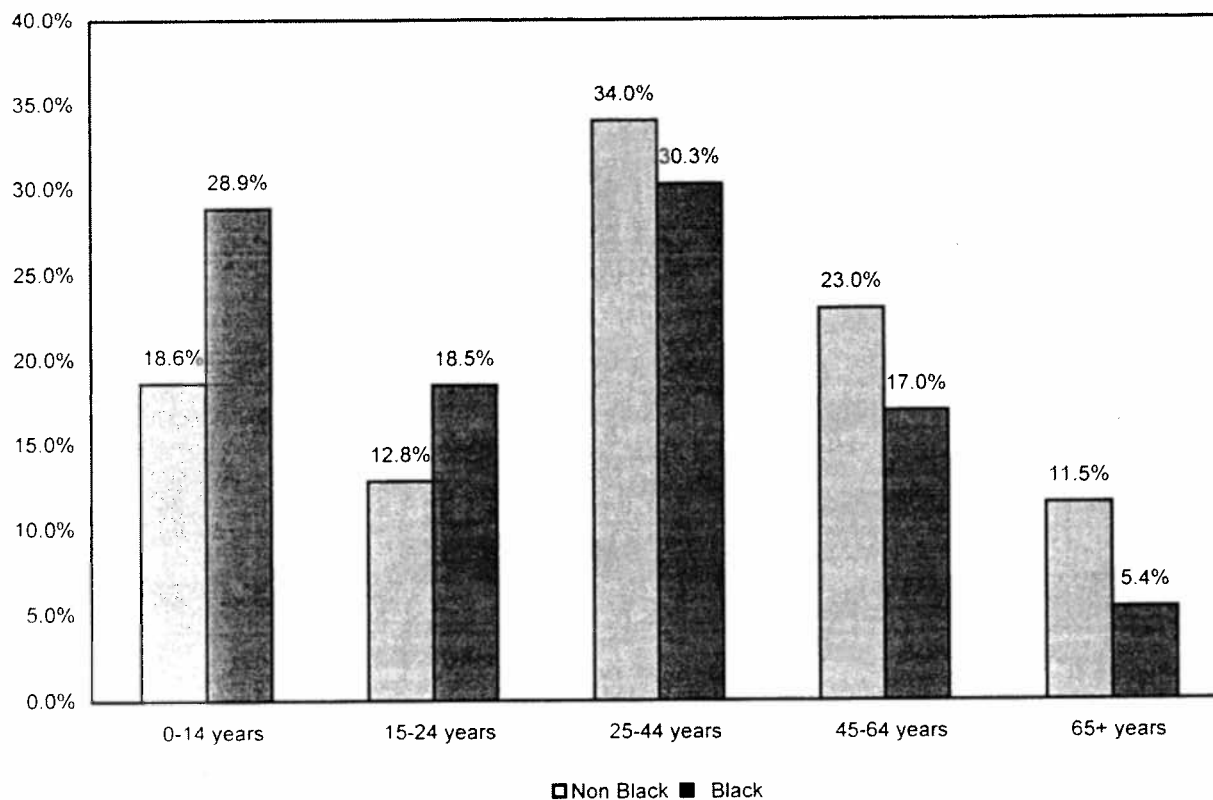
The age structure of the Black community in Montreal, though similar in **some respects to Montreal society as a whole, has unique and distinguishing characteristics. The Black community is considerably younger than the Montreal population as a whole. Almost one of every two Black persons in Montreal were under the age of 25 in 1996**, compared with slightly more than 30% of the total Montreal population. **Children under 14 constituted almost 30% of the Montreal Black community**, while they represented only 18% of all Montrealers.

There is a remarkable symmetry in the age structure of the Black and total populations of Montreal. Persons under the age of 25 constitute a higher percentage of the Black population than of the total population at every age interval. In the 35 to 44 age range, the differences between Blacks and non-Blacks begins to be reversed. More than 30% of Blacks and 34% of non-Blacks who lived in Montreal in 1996 were part of this age group. At age ranges of 45 and over this reversed trend becomes more pronounced. More than one in three Montrealers were over the age of 45 in 1996, and this compares to slightly more than one in 5 Black persons in Montreal who were over the age of 45 in 1996.

The differences in the age structure of the Black and non-Black community, are particularly striking in the 65+age category. Here, **more than twice as many non-Blacks were likely to be over the age of 65 than Blacks**. 11.5% of non-Blacks and only 5.4% of Blacks were over the age of 65 in 1996. These data are presented in Graph 1.

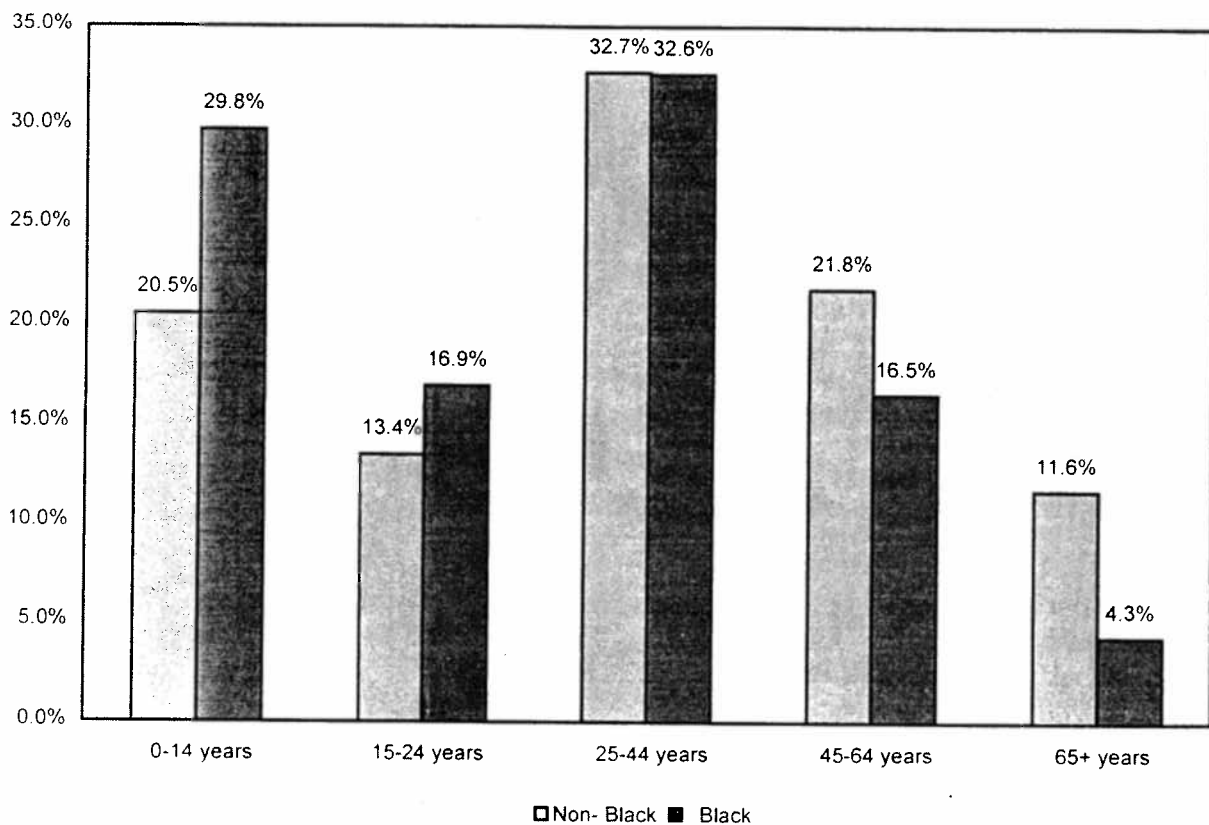


**Graph 1**  
**Montreal: Age Structure**



Generally, these age patterns are reproduced at the national level. As a group, Blacks in Canada are more highly concentrated in the 0-14 and 15-24 age categories than are their non-Black counterparts. There is relative symmetry between these two groups in the 25-44 age range, but the differences widen again in the older age categories. There are no major differences in the age distribution of Blacks in Montreal compared to that of Blacks in Canada (Graph 2).

**Graph 2**  
**Canada: Age Structure**



What are the implications of these data regarding policy claims on the Black communal agenda in Montreal? How do age and family structure impact on each other? What are the central claims, which emerge on the community agenda because young persons form such a dramatically high percentage of the Black population? To what extent does the scarcity of elderly family members impact on community cohesion and identity?

Economically, and as an important indicator of labour force activity, it is interesting to note that the Black population has a larger total percentage of persons who would not be in the labour force either because they are children or are retired than the Montreal population as a whole. Combining the 0-14 and the 65+ age categories accounts for 34.3% of the entire Black population, while the same age groups represent only 30% of the entire Montreal population.

Notwithstanding, children are more dependent and require greater financial and social support than the elderly. Most elderly persons in Canada are self sufficient, and Old Age Security and the supplement provide a far higher level of state support than family allowances, welfare and tax benefits for low-income families with small children. As well, significant numbers of elderly persons have been fortunate to accumulate substantial wealth during their lifetime. It is these persons who leave legacies for their children and increase and enhance the collective inheritance of their communities. The absence of elderly persons and the higher percentages of children, then, is likely

to create greater financial strain on members of the Black community than the reverse trend in the Canadian population as a whole.

These large numbers of young dependents in the Black community pose a challenge for Black families and communities to ensure the economic security and social mobility of Black youth. However, it also suggests a vibrant and growing community with an abundant source of dynamism and energy that are prerequisites for social and economic advancement.

## 2.2 Gender Proportions

The ratio of men to women shapes the demographic portrait of all communities, and **in the Black community, there are substantially more women than men when compared to the Montreal population as a whole. Women account for 53.6%**, and men 46.4% of the Black population. In the Montreal community as a whole, the percentages are more evenly divided. 51.4% of all Montrealers are women, and this compares to 48.6% of the population who are men. In actual numbers, there were approximately 8,700 more females than males in the Montreal Black population in 1996.

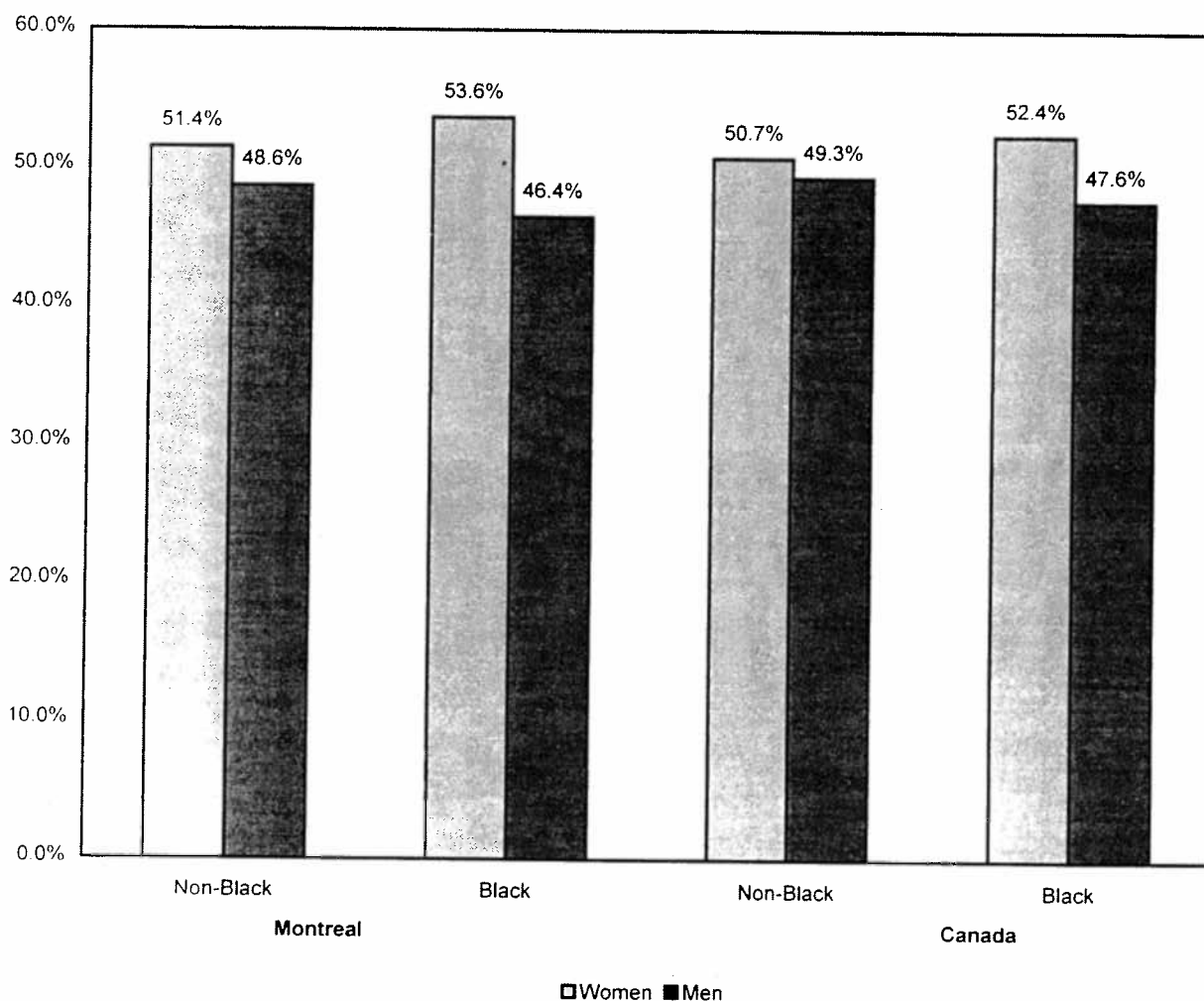
In both the Black and overall Montreal populations, the ratio of men to women varies according to age cohort. Children are more equally, if not randomly, divided by gender, and the percentages of boys and girls are almost identical for Blacks and non-Blacks in Montreal. The same pattern continues in the 15-24 age cohort.

Dramatic differences are noted at every age range above 25. **Among Montreal Blacks, the number of females exceeds that of males in every adult age category, and the gender gap grows as age increases.** 54% of Blacks aged 25-44, 56% aged 45-64 and 66% of those 65 and over were women in the Black community in 1996. Among Montrealers generally, there are only very small differences between the percentage of men and women in the 25-44, and the 45-64 age ranges. Among elderly Montrealers as a whole, women constitute a higher percentage than men. Though less pronounced than in the Black community, almost 6 in 10 of all Montrealers aged 65+ were women in 1996. The national data for Blacks indicates a less marked, but still quite pronounced gender imbalance in the Black population across age categories. Nationally, the number of Black females exceeds those of males by about 27,000 (52.4% female). Again, the ratio of males to females is more similar among non-Blacks in Canada (Graph 3).

The predominance of females in the Black population is only partly a result of women's generally longer life span. The gender imbalance in the Black community can be directly attributed to Canadian immigration policies of the 1950s and 1960s (as previously outlined in Dorothy Williams' "History of Blacks in Montreal"), which encouraged the immigration of West Indian women, but not men.

Clearly, the ratio of men to women influences choices of partners and these choices influence one's sense of identity and continuity. Significantly greater percentages of women of child rearing age, impact as well on family structure and can account on its own for substantially higher proportions of female headed single parent families. There is a likely economic effect as well. Women in Canada continue to earn less than men. The combined effect then of the greater percentage of women and children in the Black community likely portends greater economic disparity.

**Graph 3**  
**Montreal and Canada: Gender Ratios**

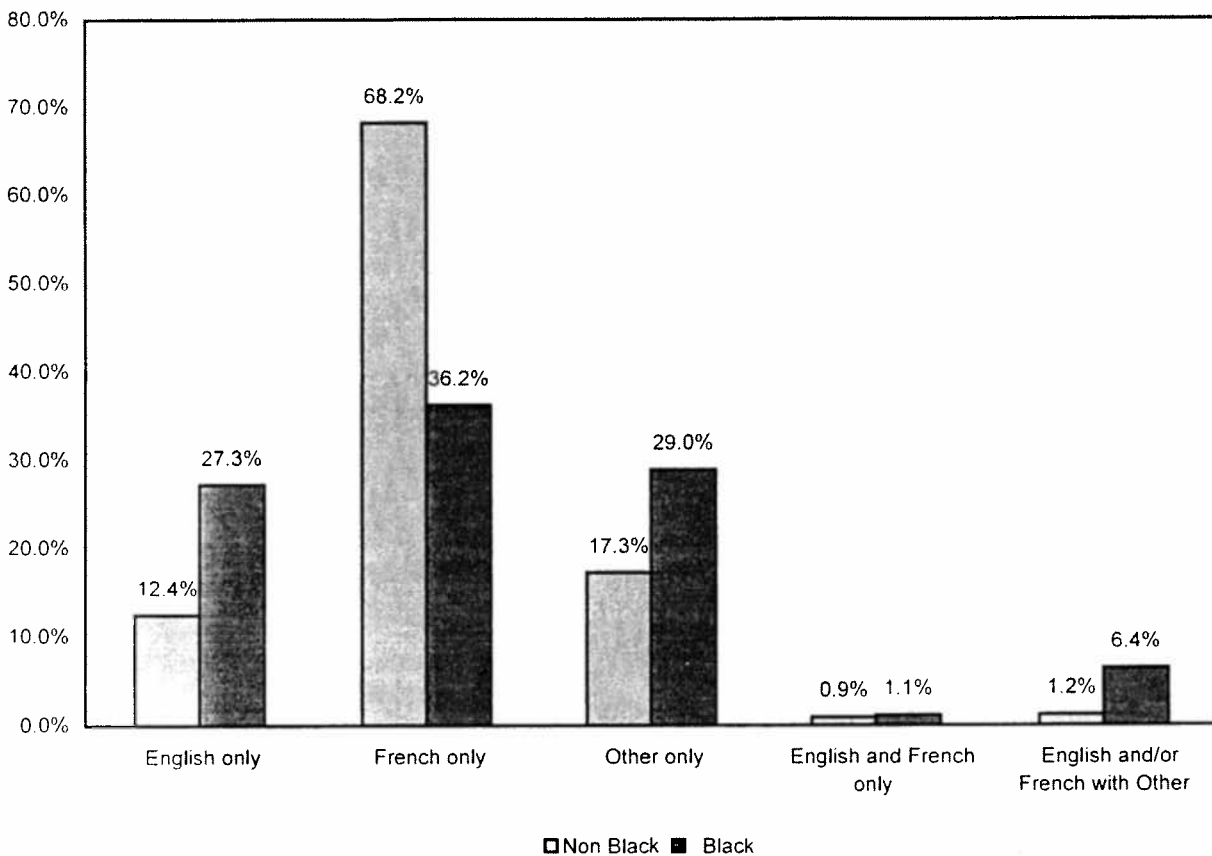


### 3. Linguistic Abilities Among Blacks in Montreal

In Quebec, the language of work is French and fluency in it is essential for most jobs in Montreal as well as to participate in the social, political and cultural life of the city. Those who speak both English and French tend to be particularly marketable and earn the most. For them, the richness of Montreal life is open, be it in the French or English milieu.

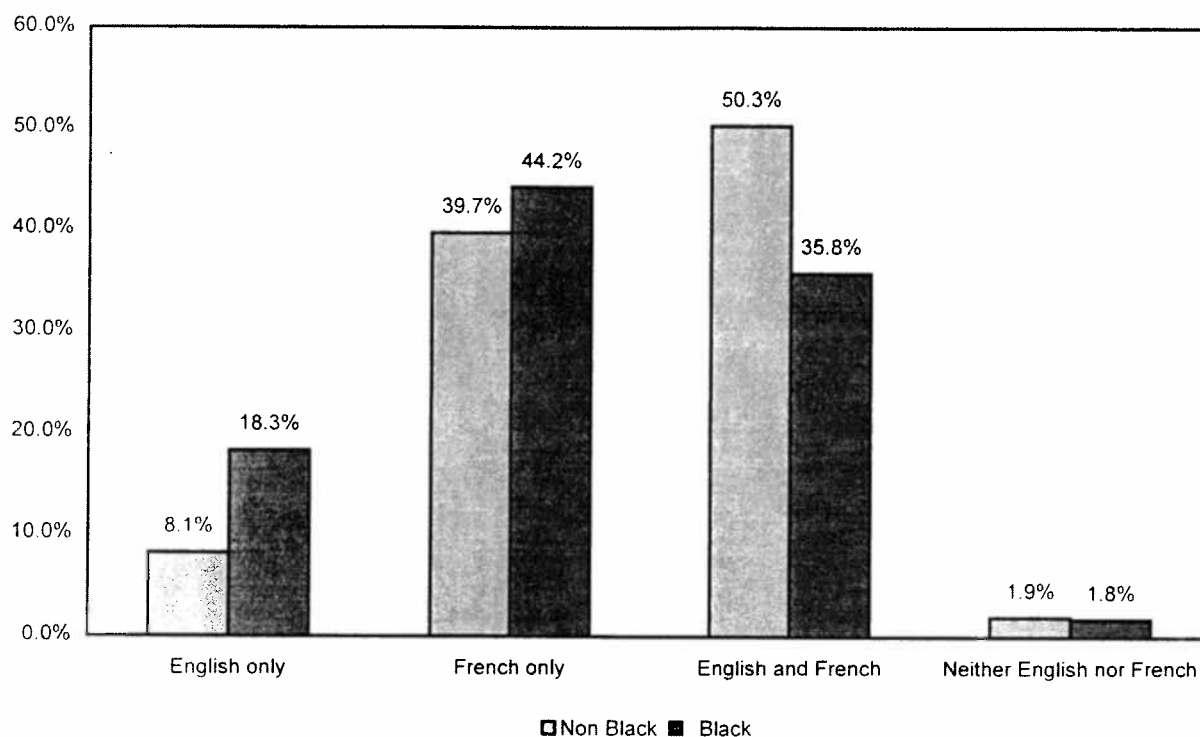
**For more than half of all Blacks in Montreal, French was not the first language learned at home.** The home language for more than one in four Blacks (27.3%) is English, and an additional three in ten (29%) spoke neither English nor French at home. Among Montrealers generally, only one in eight persons spoke English at home, and one in six spoke a language other than French or English at home (Graph 4)

**Graph 4**  
**Montreal: Mother Tongue**



Despite this critical lack of exposure to French in the home, Blacks in Montreal have made important gains in their abilities in French. Eighty percent indicated that they spoke either French only or were bilingual in 1996. While this is lower than the city average, the gap has narrowed. Here nine of ten Montrealers were either bilingual in 1996 or spoke French only. Notwithstanding, one in five Blacks did not speak sufficient French in order to carry out a conversation - let alone work. Only one in three Blacks were bilingual, and this compares to 50% of the Montreal population generally. Graph 5 illustrates these findings.

**Graph 5**  
**Montreal: Knowledge of Official Languages**



Bilingualism has a profound impact on community cohesion at the neighbourhood, city-wide and national levels. **Only one in three Blacks are bilingual** and can speak to both English and French speaking Blacks in Montreal. The 18% who only speak English cannot communicate with the 44% who only speak French. This data raises issues concerning the ability of Blacks to engage each other and speak in one voice when it comes to common community concerns.

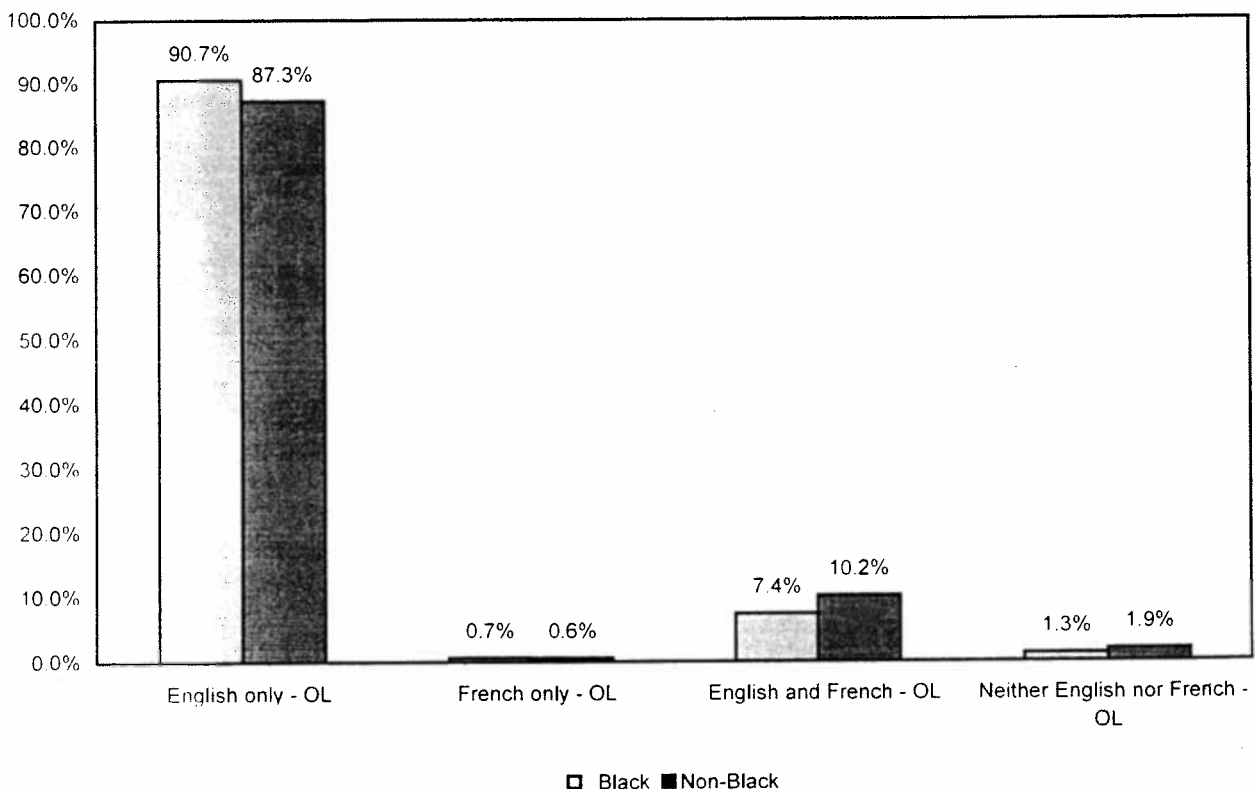
Language facility also affects the choice of neighbourhoods in which Montrealers reside as well as the quality of interaction within these neighbourhoods. Thus, unilingual French and unilingual English Blacks in Montreal tend to live in neighbourhoods where their languages are more commonly spoken. These neighbourhoods are geographically divided with the majority of French speaking Blacks living in the Northern and Eastern parts of the city, and the majority of English speaking Blacks residing in the center-west part of Montreal. Thus cohesiveness in the Black community becomes further compounded not only by language but by geographic distance as well.

In certain English speaking neighbourhoods such as LaSalle, unilingual Blacks cannot communicate with many of their neighbors. More than half of LaSalle's Black residents are unilingual English, while 25% of the total population speaks no English at all. Similarly in Little Burgundy, more than half of all Blacks were unilingual English while 35% of all residents spoke no English. In these communities, the experience of many Blacks may be to hold double minority status - both linguistically as well as visibly.

In no geographic community in Montreal did the majority of Blacks speak both English and French. For seven of the ten neighbourhoods studied, bilingualism was greater than 50% for the overall population. For Blacks, Cote-des-Neiges came closest, as 43% of Blacks were fluent in both English and French.

An ability to speak English and French also impacts on Black identity at the national level as well. Outside Quebec, most Blacks in Canada do not speak French. Only one in ten (10.2%) were bilingual and less than 1% (0.7%) spoke French only. Graph 6 indicates the results for Blacks and non-Blacks living outside Quebec.

**Graph 6**  
**Outside Quebec: Knowledge of Official Languages**



### 3.1 Gender and Age Differences in Language Acquisition

There is some variation in language proficiency among men and women in the Montreal Black community. **Men have a higher tendency to have French only as a mother tongue and women to have English only as the first language learned in the home. Clear differences emerge with regard to rates of bilingualism. Forty percent (40.0%) of Black men while only 32% of Black women speak both of Canada's official languages.**

There are variations in language comprehension across age groupings. Black Montrealers at younger ages are more likely than older Blacks in the city to have French only as a mother tongue. For instance, the mother tongue of over half of all Black children is French, and French was the first language learned at home for 46% of Black persons between 15 and 24 years of age. However, only 13.7% of Black elderly persons had French as a mother tongue in 1996. The elderly are also the most likely of all age groups to have a mother tongue that was neither English nor French.

**Young Blacks in Montreal have a similar language profile compared to their non-Black counterparts in the city.** In the case of knowledge of official languages, **rates of bilingualism are almost identical for Blacks and non-Blacks aged 15-24. (60% vs. 62%).** This promising indication reflects changes in educational instruction, which has assisted more young Blacks to become bilingual. Rates of bilingualism drop to 43% of Blacks aged 25-44 and this compares with 61% of all Montrealers in this age grouping. Bilingualism rates are further reduced among older age categories. Only 29% of Blacks aged 45-64, and only 10% of Blacks over the age of 65 are bilingual.

A number of factors may explain this finding. There has been an increasing influx of French-speaking Blacks into Montreal from the Caribbean and Africa. Many of their children, as well as the children of immigrants who speak languages other than French attend French school and become bilingual or even trilingual. French classes for children in English schools have also become more intensive and comprehensive, providing opportunities for young Anglophone Blacks to learn French. Finally, children are more likely than older people in the Black population to be Canadian-born, attend schools and other activities with their non-Black counterparts, and, thus, are likely to become more similar to them in terms of language acquisition. Generally speaking, age differences in language acquisition between Blacks and non-Blacks in Canada reveal similar patterns.

The politics of language continues to be an important theme in Canada, especially in Quebec where debates and conflicts over preservation and promotion of the French language inevitably have an effect on how education, work, and community life in general is experienced. Few Blacks are unable to speak either of Canada's official languages, and in this respect they have an advantage over other immigrant groups, who come to Canada knowing very little, if any English or French. However, many young Black persons who have English as a mother tongue, while becoming bilingual, experience difficulties in making the transition from an English to a French learning environment. Language knowledge is also likely to affect Black's chances of becoming employed, in a city where French is the language of the workplace. The data suggest that Black females, and Blacks coming to Canada from areas where languages other than French are spoken may face particular difficulties in employment.

Thus the data about linguistic abilities in the Black community is multi-faceted. Increased hardship for Blacks to find employment and to be included as full participants in Quebec life could result from lower rates of bilingualism and fluency in French. Language divisions make community cohesion more difficult and also divide the Black community geographically in terms of their residential patterns. On the other hand, younger Blacks are increasingly bilingual. They hold the promise of bridging the gap among Blacks within Montreal and Canada as well as to secure a greater share in Montreal's economic and social life.



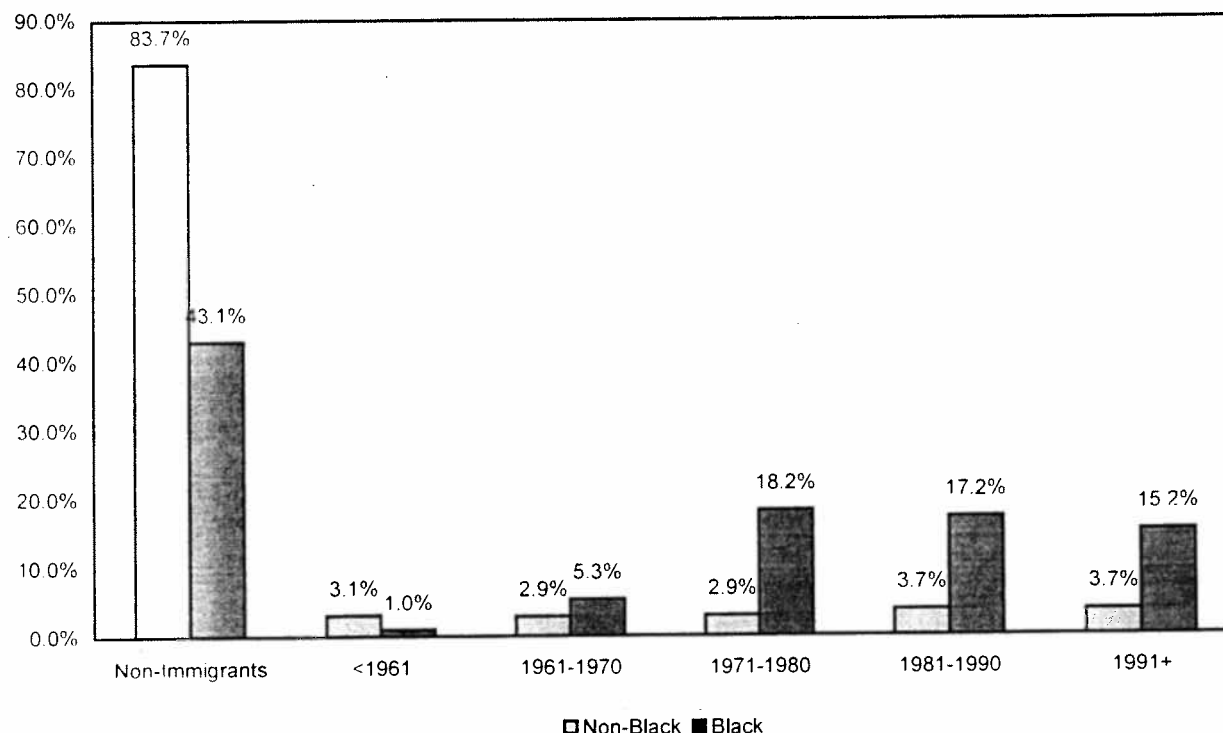
#### 4. The Impact of Immigration on the Black Community in Montreal

Earlier, Dorothy Williams described the deep and rich history of Blacks in Montreal, which first took root over 360 years ago. Notwithstanding these long standing Quebec origins, the phenomenal growth of the Black community in the past quarter of a century is a result of increased immigration and higher birth rates. Fifty-seven percent of Blacks in Montreal are immigrants, and an additional 5% (4.6%) are non-permanent residents.<sup>3</sup> Only 16% of all Montrealers immigrated to Canada at some time, and 1% are non-permanent residents.

Indeed, **more than half (50.6%) of all Black persons in Montreal immigrated to Canada during the past twenty-five years.** The corresponding figure for the non-Black population was only one in ten (10.3%)!

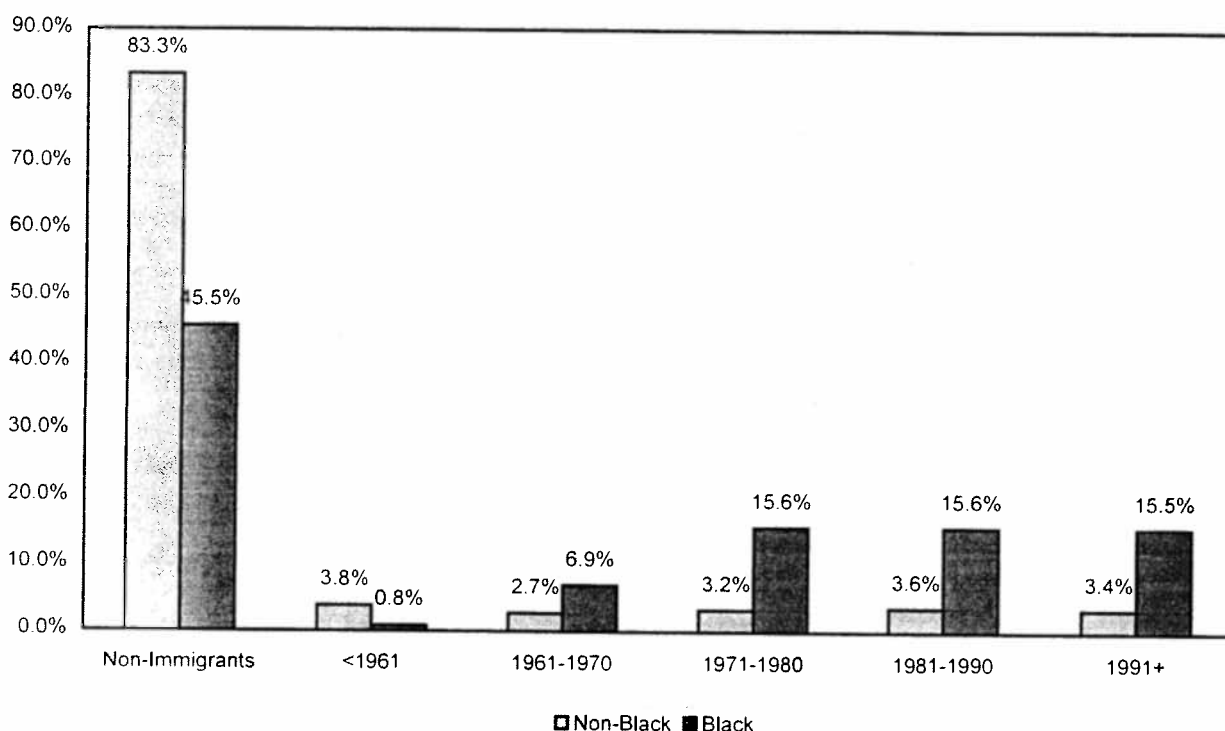
As a thriving multicultural city, Montreal attracts a somewhat greater share of Black immigrants and about the same percentage of Non-Black immigrants than Canada does as a whole. 46.7% of all Blacks immigrated to Canada in the past 25 years, and 10.2% of all Canadians immigrated to Canada during the same years. Graphs 7 and 8 present these findings for Montreal and Canada.

**Graph 7**  
**Montreal: Period of Immigration**



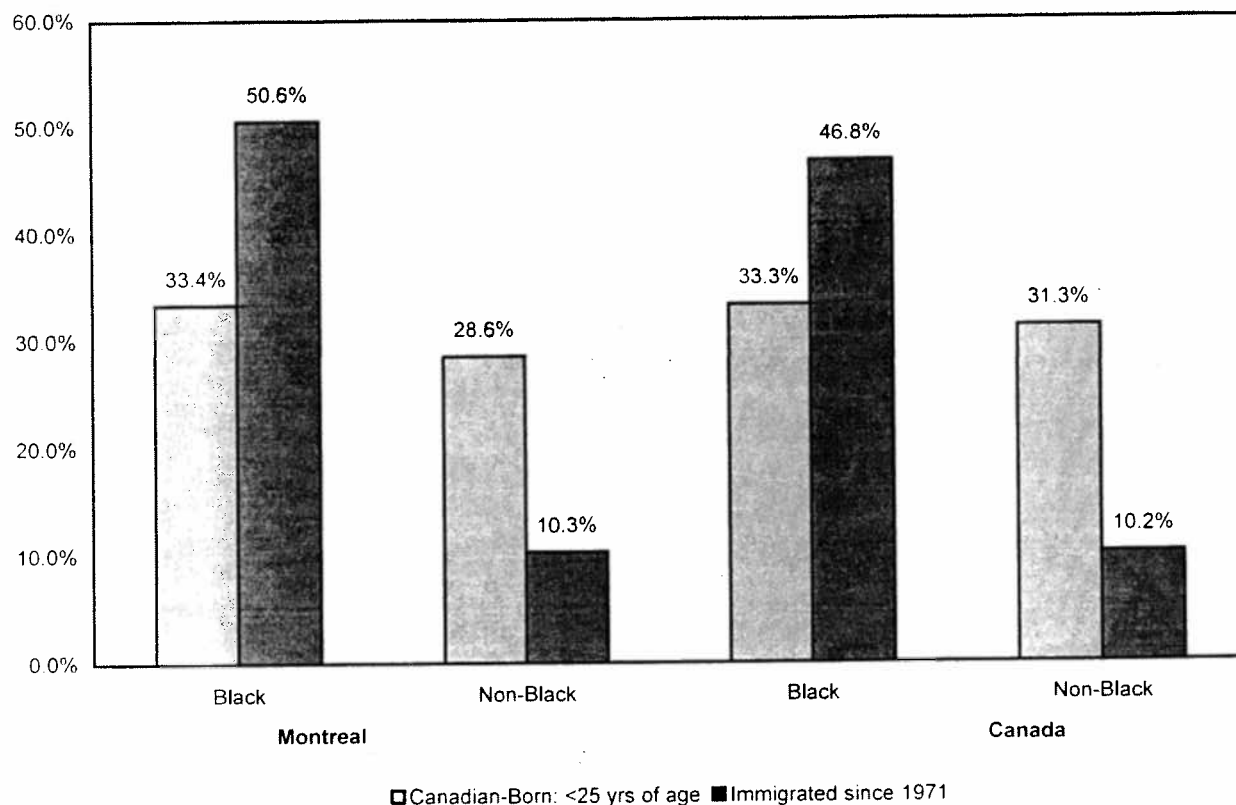
<sup>3</sup>Non-permanent residents are people who held a student authorization, an employment authorization, a Minister's permit, or who were refugee claimants at the time of the 1996 Census (Statistics Canada, 1996 Dictionary: Reference. Catalogue no. 92-351-XPE).

**Graph 8**  
**Canada: Period of Immigration**



The combined effect of immigration during the past 25 years and high birth rates is striking. **Only one in seven (15.9%) Black persons in Montreal in 1996 had been born or were living in Canada twenty-five years ago. The corresponding figure for the Montreal population as a whole was six in ten (61.1%)!** Graph 9 illustrates the combined effect of immigration and birth rates on the Black community and on the total Canadian population.

**Graph 9**  
**Montreal and Canada:**  
**Percent of Population Attributable to Immigration and Birthrates: 1971-1996**

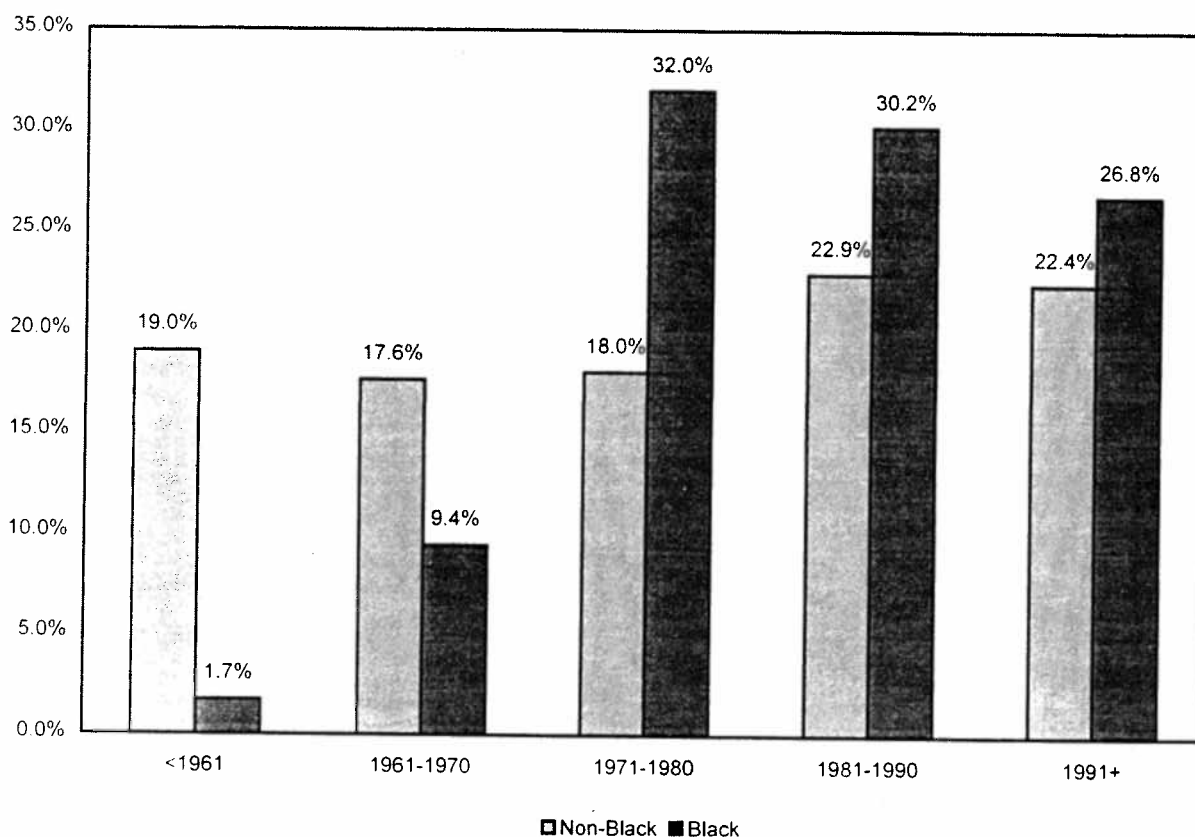


Clearly the pace of immigration in the Black community has quickened in the past twenty-five years. **Virtually 90% of all Black immigrants in Montreal immigrated to Canada between 1971 and 1996.<sup>4</sup>** In 1996, there were 6,520 Black persons living in Montreal who had immigrated to Canada between the years 1961 and 1970. More than three times as many Black persons - 22,280 - arrived in Canada between 1971 and 1980 and now live in Montreal. A nearly identical number arrived between 1981 and 1990 (21,020).

**Rapid immigration is continuing.** Between 1991 and 1996, 18,640 Black persons immigrated to Canada and now live in Montreal. Should this trend be substantiated in the 2001 Census, Black immigration rates to Montreal will have been 70% higher for the 1991-2000 time period than they were for either the 1981-1990 or the 1971-1980 periods. Graph 10 illustrates these increases in immigration rate.

<sup>4</sup> The year 1996 includes January to Census Day, May 14.

**Graph 10**  
**Montreal Black Immigrant Population: Period of Immigration**



These spiralling immigration rates can only be attributed to changes in Canadian and Quebec immigration policy which opened doors to increasing numbers of Black persons in general, and to people of Caribbean origin<sup>5</sup> in particular. Through this process, the Montreal and Canadian Black experience has been transformed. The centuries rooted Canadian born Black population has become a minority within the Black community. The majority and dominant motifs in Black Montreal life today reflect the Francophone and Anglophone Caribbean immigrant experience, and these motifs are reshaping Black identity in Quebec.

Overall, **almost one of every two Black persons in Montreal in 1996 was born in the Caribbean (48.8%). Of all Black immigrants living in Montreal, almost eight out of ten were born in the Caribbean.** In fact, a higher percentage of Black persons in Montreal are Caribbean born than Canadian born (48.8% vs. 38.3%). Across Canada, but principally located in Toronto and Montreal where 80% of all Caribbean born Black persons live, this 211,000 strong Caribbean born Black population represented one of every three Black Canadians in 1996.

<sup>5</sup>Any references to 'Caribbean' in the report should be understood to include Bermuda also.

There is, however, a distinctive character to Caribbean immigration to Montreal, which is different than that of Canada as a whole. In Quebec's French speaking milieu, three out of four Black Caribbean immigrants were born in Haiti. Haitian born Blacks accounted for more than one third of all Blacks (35%) in Montreal in 1996. Almost half (47%) of all Haitians live in the north-eastern quadrant of Montreal -Montreal North, St. Michel, Laval, and Riviere-des-Prairies. In St. Michel, almost one in eight residents was born in Haiti (12.1%). The following table portrays the number of persons who immigrated to Canada and now live in Montreal from various Caribbean countries (Table 3).

TABLE 3		
<i>Montreal Black Immigrant Population</i>		
<i>Caribbean Origins</i>		
Place of Birth		
Barbados	2,715	4.7%
Haiti	42,595	74.3%
Jamaica	5,330	9.3%
Trinidad and Tobago	2,890	5.0%
Caribbean and Bermuda	57,310	93.4%

Persons born in Africa accounted for over one in ten (12.7%) of Blacks living in Montreal in 1996. African immigration is rising. Only 2% of all Blacks who immigrated to Canada between 1971 and 1981 and now live in Montreal were born in Africa. In the 1981-1990 time period, African born immigrants increased four fold to 10.5%. Between 1991 and 1996, the percentage of Black immigrants born in Africa rose to more than three in ten (32%). Table 4 describes the various places of birth of Black immigrants to Montreal and the periods in which they arrived.

TABLE 4						
<i>Montreal Black Immigrant Population: Place of Birth by Period of Immigration</i>						
Place of Birth	Total	<1961	1961-1970	1971-1980	1981-1990	1991+
Canada	85 0.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	20 0.1%	25 0.1%	40 0.2%
United States	960 1.4%	10 0.8%	110 1.7%	310 1.4%	250 1.2%	280 1.5%
Europe	1,045 1.5%	25 2.1%	175 2.7%	190 0.9%	245 1.2%	410 2.2%
Central/South/Latin America	1,220 1.8%	65 5.5%	275 4.2%	380 1.7%	335 1.6%	165 0.9%
Caribbean and Bermuda	57,310 82.3%	1,055 88.7%	5,830 89.4%	20,790 93.3%	17,935 85.3%	11,700 62.8%
Africa	8,870 12.7%	25 2.1%	125 1.9%	565 2.5%	2,210 10.5%	5,945 31.9%
Other	140 0.2%	10 0.8%	0 0.0%	20 0.1%	15 0.1%	95 0.5%
Total	69,645 100.0%	1,190 100.0%	6,520 99.9%	22,280 100.0%	21,020 100.0%	18,635 100.0%

These changes in Canadian and Quebec immigration policy, which heralded this large influx of Black immigrants, had a profound effect on the age structure and gender ratio of the overall Montreal Black community. Canadian quotas at the time facilitated the entry of Caribbean women into Canada for work in various service occupations. Often unable to bring their family with them, Black women have had consistently higher rates of immigration to Canada since the 1950's.

In our national study, we indicated that women accounted for 53.8% of all Black immigrants. In Quebec this percentage is even higher. **55.6% of all Black immigrants living in Montreal in 1996 were women, and there were 7,780 more Black women immigrants in Montreal than men.** Thus, these immigration policies decisively altered the overall gender balance of the Black community in Montreal to an even larger degree than in Canada as a whole- resulting in immigrant Black women accounting for almost the entire gender imbalance in the Montreal Black community, which we described in Section 2.2.

**Favouritism in immigration policy toward Black women over Black men is evident in every immigration period since 1961.** Between 1961 and 1991, women accounted for 57% of all Black immigrants living in Montreal, while men only represented 43% of Black immigrants. Only since 1991, is there evidence that this trend may be changing. Between 1991 and 1996 women accounted for 51.6% of Black immigrants living in Montreal while Black men constituted 48.4% of this immigrant group.

The data suggests that these findings result not only from favouritism toward Black women, but from discrimination against Black men. When one compares the gender ratios of immigrant Blacks with non-Blacks, one finds striking discrepancies both in Canada as a whole and in Montreal specifically. In Canada, 51.4% of all non-Black persons who immigrated to Canada since 1961 were women. In Montreal, there are identical proportions of men and women in the non-Black immigrant community. Tables 5 and 6 demonstrate the gender proportions of immigrants in Montreal and Canada as a whole.

Table 5

<i>Montreal Gender Ratios by Period of Immigration</i>				
Population Group	Black		Non Black	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Non-permanent residents	2,640 47.2%	2,950 52.8%	14,100 45.3%	17,015 54.7%
Non-immigrants	24,200 51.4%	22,875 48.6%	1,353,205 51.7%	1,264,190 48.3%
Immigrated before 1961	795 67.1%	390 32.9%	49,845 50.8%	48,275 49.2%
Immigrated 1961-1970	3,730 57.2%	2,790 42.8%	45,055 49.4%	46,110 50.6%
Immigrated 1971-1980	12,730 57.1%	9,555 42.9%	46,015 49.4%	47,065 50.6%
Immigrated 1981-1990	11,835 56.3%	9,185 43.7%	58,795 49.6%	59,750 50.4%
Immigrated 1991+	9,625 51.6%	9,015 48.4%	58,555 50.5%	57,340 49.5%
Total	65,555 53.6%	56,765 46.4%	1,625,565 51.4%	1,539,760 48.6%

Table 6

Canada: Gender Ratios by Period of Immigration				
Population Group	Black		Non Black	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
<b>Non-permanent residents</b>	9,810	10,395	74,045	72,460
	<b>48.6%</b>	<b>51.4%</b>	<b>50.5%</b>	<b>49.5%</b>
<b>Non-immigrants</b>	121,180	119,600	11,710,530	11,439,025
	<b>50.3%</b>	<b>49.7%</b>	<b>50.6%</b>	<b>49.4%</b>
<b>Immigrated before 1961</b>	2,735	2,010	538,465	511,730
	<b>57.6%</b>	<b>42.4%</b>	<b>51.3%</b>	<b>48.7%</b>
<b>Immigrated 1961-1970</b>	22,200	17,440	379,325	369,620
	<b>56.0%</b>	<b>44.0%</b>	<b>50.6%</b>	<b>49.4%</b>
<b>Immigrated 1971-1980</b>	50,100	39,575	464,965	441,515
	<b>55.9%</b>	<b>44.1%</b>	<b>51.3%</b>	<b>48.7%</b>
<b>Immigrated 1981-1990</b>	47,565	42,110	514,770	487,960
	<b>53.0%</b>	<b>47.0%</b>	<b>51.3%</b>	<b>48.7%</b>
<b>Immigrated 1991+</b>	46,955	42,180	498,605	451,255
	<b>52.7%</b>	<b>47.3%</b>	<b>52.5%</b>	<b>47.5%</b>
<b>Total</b>	300,550	273,315	14,180,695	13,773,565
	<b>52.4%</b>	<b>47.6%</b>	<b>50.7%</b>	<b>49.3%</b>

There are some variations between where males and females in the Black immigrant population were born. First, **Black females were more likely to have been born in the Caribbean.** Secondly, **there are more male than female Africans who are immigrants to Canada.** Otherwise, the differences are negligible. In general, these findings are reproduced for Blacks in Canada as a whole.

Black immigrants are vital, youthful and upwardly mobile. **Immigrants constitute the overwhelming percentage of the Black labour force in Montreal.** Of the 87,000 Black persons aged 15+, **about 60% were in the labour force.** However, of Canadian born Blacks in Montreal in this age range, less than half were in the labour force (48%). Only 36% of Canadian born Blacks aged 15+ were employed in 1996, among immigrants the percentage was much higher at 48% in 1996.

**Black immigration patterns have also had a profound effect on neighbourhood life.** 61% of Blacks in Montreal in 1996 were immigrants or non-permanent residents. **In Cotes-des-Neiges in the western part of Montreal, immigrants constituted 67.6% of the Black population.** In the primarily Francophone, North East neighbourhood of St. Michel, 66.7% of Blacks were immigrants.

**The preferred neighbourhoods for African immigrants were Cotes-des-Neiges and N.D.G. in the West.** 22% of all Black African immigrants in Montreal lived in these neighbourhoods in 1996. An additional 20% of Black African immigrants lived in New Bordeaux.



Caribbean immigrants formed a somewhat different residential pattern. **Some 25,000 Black immigrants from the Caribbean lived in the northeast quadrant of the communities of New Bordeaux, Rivières-des-Prairies, St. Michel, Montreal North and Laval**, and they accounted for more than four of every ten (41.9 %) of Black immigrants from the Caribbean living in Montreal in 1996. **An additional 9,000 Caribbean Black immigrants lived in the western quadrant of Cote-des-Neiges, N.D.G. , LaSalle and Little Little Burgundy**, and they accounted for 15% of all Black Caribbean immigrants living in Montreal.

What will be the long-term effects of this rapid population growth on Black life in Montreal? How will the structures of families be affected by these immigration patterns and the resulting imbalance in gender ratios? How will Black communal organisations respond to greater demand and need--particularly in relation to the very large number of children? How can Black community organisations respond best to a community that is constantly changing through renewal and expansion as recent immigrants attempt to establish themselves in a new and sometimes daunting environment?

**Thus, the Black community in Montreal has undergone a profound transformation in the past twenty-five years. Due to high immigration and birth rates, immigrants have doubled the size of the Black community.** They have brought to Montreal a diversity of languages and cultures, and an unmistakable Caribbean influence to the Montreal Black experience, and a visible and vibrant presence to specific neighbourhoods in both what is generally considered Francophone and Anglophone Montreal. Their numbers give strength to Black communal claims for resources from both governmental and nongovernmental sources and provide a distinctly Caribbean texture to Black cultural, social, political and economic life.

**The demographic transformation of the Black community in Montreal and its "Caribbeanization"** gains expression culturally through links to homelands, restaurants and music, which increasingly reflect Caribbean influences. In the past 25 years, scores of Black organisations linked to particular countries of origin such as Jamaica, St. Vincent, Barbados, and Haiti and numerous island associations whose activities include social, cultural and recreational events have taken root in Montreal-- and the Carafette has become a major public festival.

These newly emerging organisations and their representatives lay considerable claim to the Black agenda in Montreal. Within this diverse context, the Black community attempts to organise alliances and to strengthen associations across linguistic, ethnic, and cultural lines. Consequently, alliances and accommodations are emerging slowly among the diverse Black immigrant groups and long standing organisations in the Black community.

**Funding scarcity and language impede these organising efforts.** The emergence of more than 75 Caribbean based organisations has led at times to competition for funding from public sources to support a rapidly increasing and diverse population in an era of scarcity. An inability to speak both English and French poses obstacles to broad based exchanges between English and French speaking Blacks. What are the implications of the emergence of two somewhat distinct Black communities in Montreal who are not often bilingual enough to speak the language of the other? What processes are necessary to develop an organisational capacity among Blacks in Montreal to speak with one voice about issues, which affect them similarly --irrespective of country of origin or language?

What will be the long-term effects of this rapid population growth on Black life in Montreal? How will the structures of families be affected by these immigration patterns and the resulting imbalance in gender ratios? How will Black communal organisations respond to greater demand and need--

particularly in relation to the very large number of children? How can Black community organisations respond best to a community that is constantly changing through renewal and expansion as recent immigrants attempt to establish themselves in a new and sometimes daunting environment? As these complex forces interact, they find expression in the various Black community organisations, which represent this diversity of origins and interests. As organisations articulate aspects of this evolving Montreal Black identity, the identity itself becomes re-crystallized—leaving a profound effect on the Black experience in Montreal and on society as a whole.

## 5. Socio-Economic Characteristics of Blacks in Montreal

### 5.1 Levels of Educational Attainment

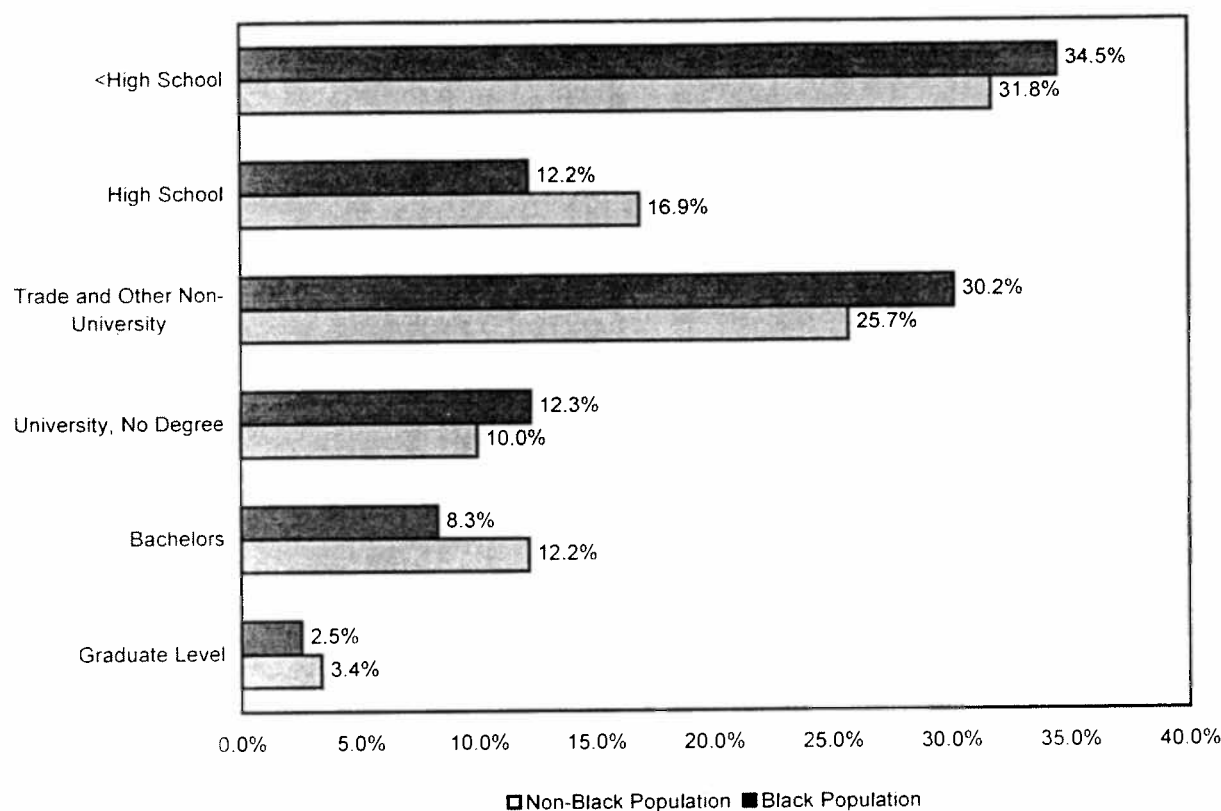
**A higher percentage of Blacks in Montreal are currently attending school than are non-Blacks.** More than twice the percentage of Blacks aged 15+ were attending school full-time in 1996 (28% for Blacks and 12.6% for non-Blacks). This finding is consistent at every age level. Among the upwardly mobile 25-44 year old age groups the figures were strikingly higher. Here, one in five Blacks was attending school full-time, and this compares to one in twenty non-Black Montreal residents (19.8% vs. 5.8%). (TABLE 7)

<b>TABLE 7</b>					
<b><i>Montreal Black Population Ages 15+: School Attendance</i></b>					
<b>School Attendance</b>	<b>Total Age</b>	<b>15-24 yrs</b>	<b>25-44 yrs</b>	<b>45-64 yrs</b>	<b>65+ yrs</b>
<b>Not attending school</b>	55,250	4,995	25,475	18,395	6,385
	63.5	22.1%	68.8%	88.7%	97.0%
<b>Attending school full time</b>	24,375	15,945	7,345	1,005	80
	28.0	70.4%	19.8%	4.8%	1.2%
<b>Attending school part time</b>	7,385	1,695	4,230	1,335	120
	8.5	7.5%	11.4%	6.4%	1.8%
<b>Total population 15+</b>	87,005	22,635	37,050	20,735	6,580
	100.0	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.1%

**On the whole, the educational attainment levels of Blacks in Montreal are reasonably similar to those of all Montrealers.** A slightly higher percentage of blacks have attended education beyond high school (53.3% vs. 51.3%). Slightly fewer have gone to university (23.1% vs. 25.4%).

**Notwithstanding** these positive findings, widening gaps become evident at each end of the educational spectrum. **Blacks are less likely to have completed high school or graduated from university than non-Blacks.** **10.8% of all Blacks in Montreal have obtained a university degree.** This rate is 40% higher in the Montreal population as a whole where **15.6% have obtained a university degree.** As well, 34.5% of Blacks have less than a high school education, and this compares to 31.85% of all Montrealers (Graph 11).

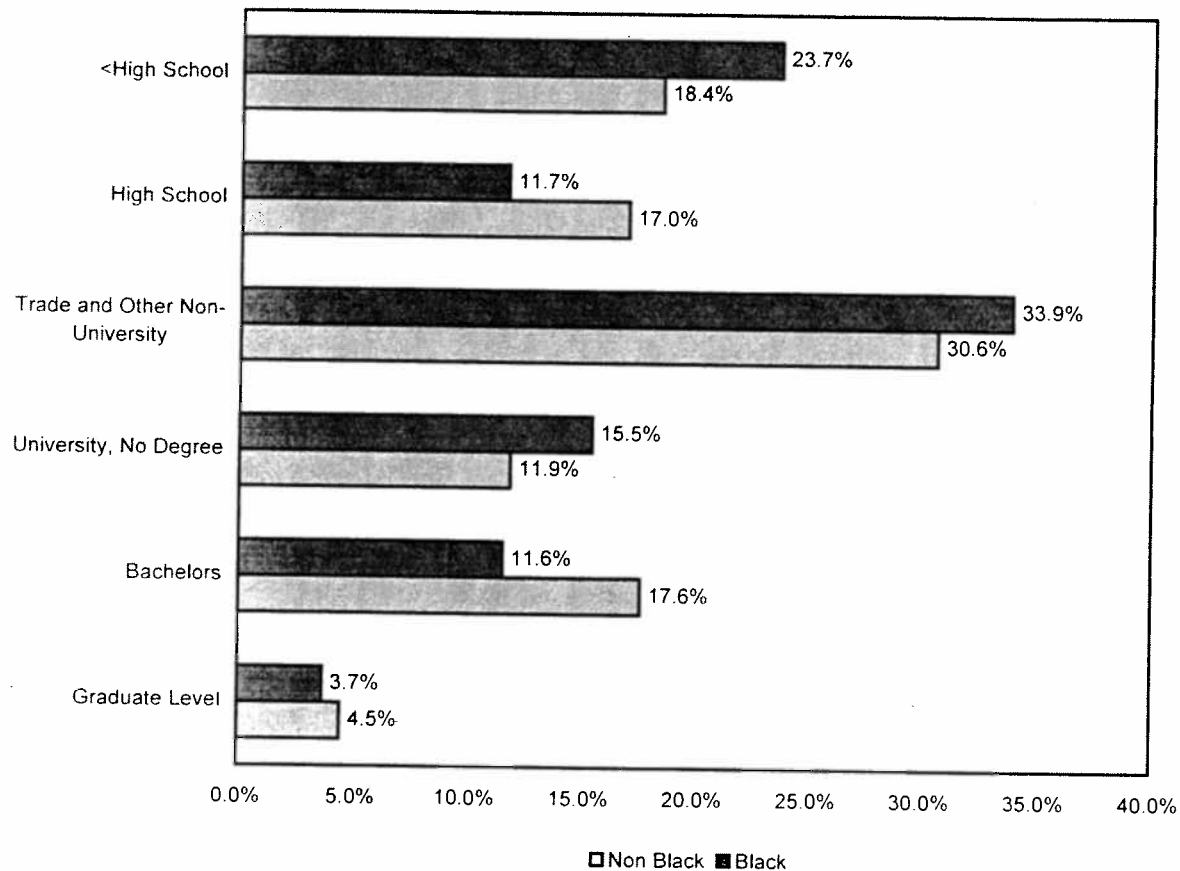
**Graph 11**  
**Montreal: Levels of Educational Attainment**



These lower rates of high school and university completion in the Black community are partially explained by the differences between the age structure of the Black community and Montrealers generally. That is, as Blacks have a higher proportion of young people, they will have a higher proportion of persons currently in high school. Secondly, the 'less than high school category' includes both people who have dropped out of high school and people who are currently enrolled in them. And there is no way to separate out these two groups from the census data. As well, the combination of a substantially younger population and higher rates of Black persons currently attending school may create a natural, but temporary, time lag before these differences in levels of high school and university completion disappear.

To further understand how the age structure of the community affects levels of educational achievement, a specific analysis was focussed on the 25-44 population group. The data demonstrates that **the 25-44 year old age cohort in the Black community has substantially higher educational levels than the Black community generally. A much smaller percentage did not complete high school (23.7% vs. 34.5%). A much higher percentage has completed university (15.3% vs. 10.8%).** (Graph 12) This data projects hopeful signs for the future as increasingly well educated, younger Blacks will become role models and assume leadership positions in the community.

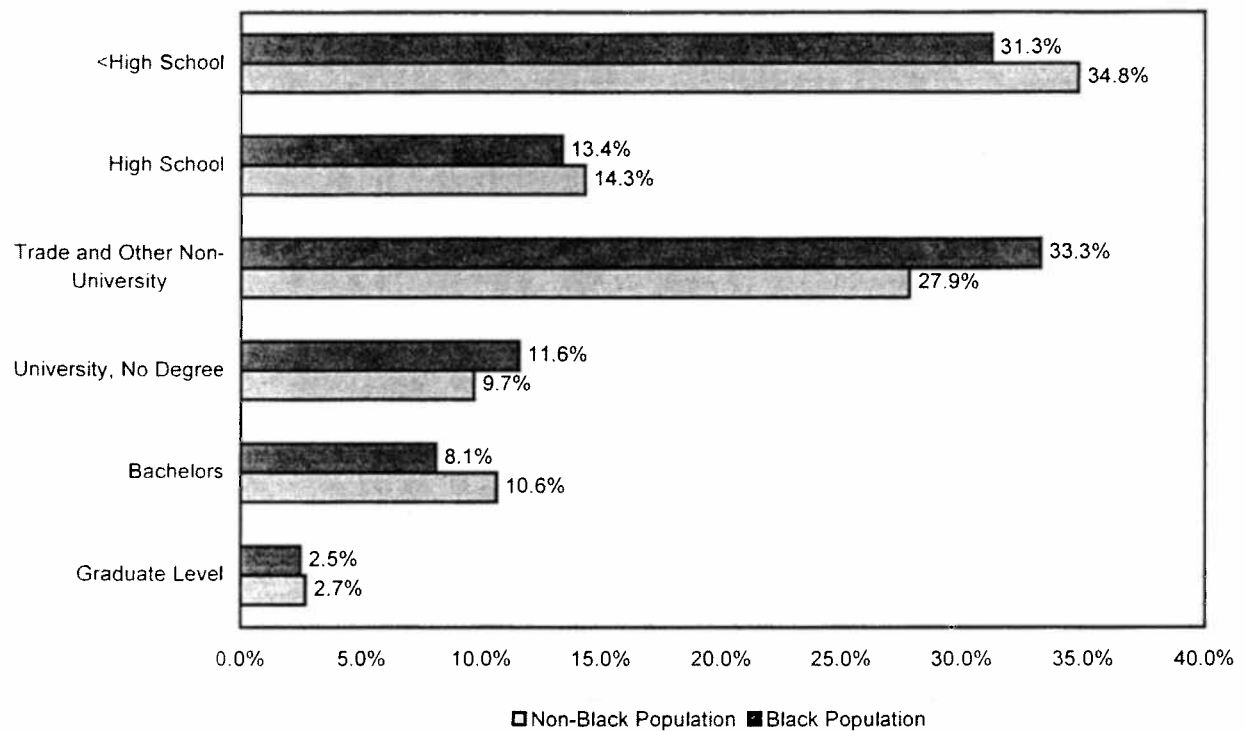
**Graph 12**  
**Montreal: Levels of Educational Attainment for 25-44 Age Group**

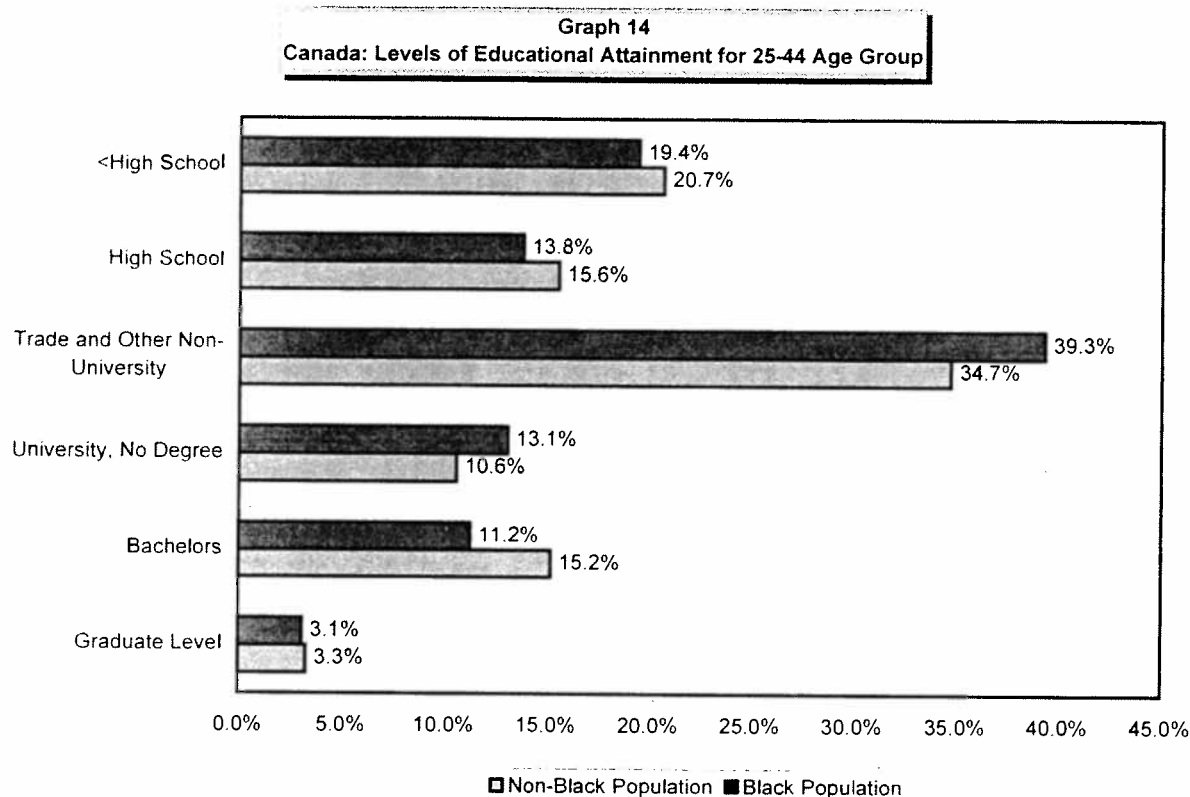


At the same time, however, Blacks aged 25-44 continue to lag behind Montrealers generally in the same age cohort. For all Montrealers, only 18.4% of the 25-44 population has not completed high school, and 22.1% has obtained a university degree. Thus, while there are hopeful signs on the horizon, there are also indications that much work needs to be done in order for Blacks to obtain the same levels of educational achievement as their non-Black counterparts. Table 7 demonstrates these results.

Montrealers generally have higher levels of educational attainment attendance and completion than the national average as do Montreal Blacks when compared with their national counterparts. Montrealers have higher rates of university attendance and completion than the national average. Similarly, Montreal Blacks have somewhat higher levels of university attendance and completion than the Black Canadian national average. Still, Blacks in Montreal are less likely than Blacks nationally to have completed high school. Graph 13 shows these national educational levels of attainment.

**Graph 13**  
**Canada: Levels of Educational Attainment**





This pattern is partially replicated when comparing the Montreal 25-44 age cohort with the national average. Montreal blacks aged 25-44 are more likely to have completed university but less likely to have finished high school than Blacks nationally (15.3% vs. 14.3%) and for university 23.7% vs. 20.7%.

### 5.1.1 Gender and Educational Attainment

**Black women lag far behind Black men and all Montreal women in terms of levels of educational attainment. 37% of Black women have not completed high school** and this compares with 31% of Black men and 33% of all women in Montreal. **Almost twice the percentage of all women in Montreal have a university degree when compared with Black women (14.0% vs. 8.5%).** Black men and Montreal women generally have similar levels of university completion (13.7% vs. 14.0%), but Black men have substantially higher rates of graduate degrees than Montreal women generally, and Black women in particular (3.7% vs. 2.6% vs. 1.6%).

The same pattern persists when focusing on the 25-44 age cohort. Here Black women demonstrate better levels of educational attainment than the norm for all Black women, but still lag far behind Black men and non-Black women. The gap narrows, however, among the percentage of each group that has not completed high school. 19.7% of Black women aged 25-44 have not completed high school. The rate for Black men and for women generally in Montreal is identical at 19.1%

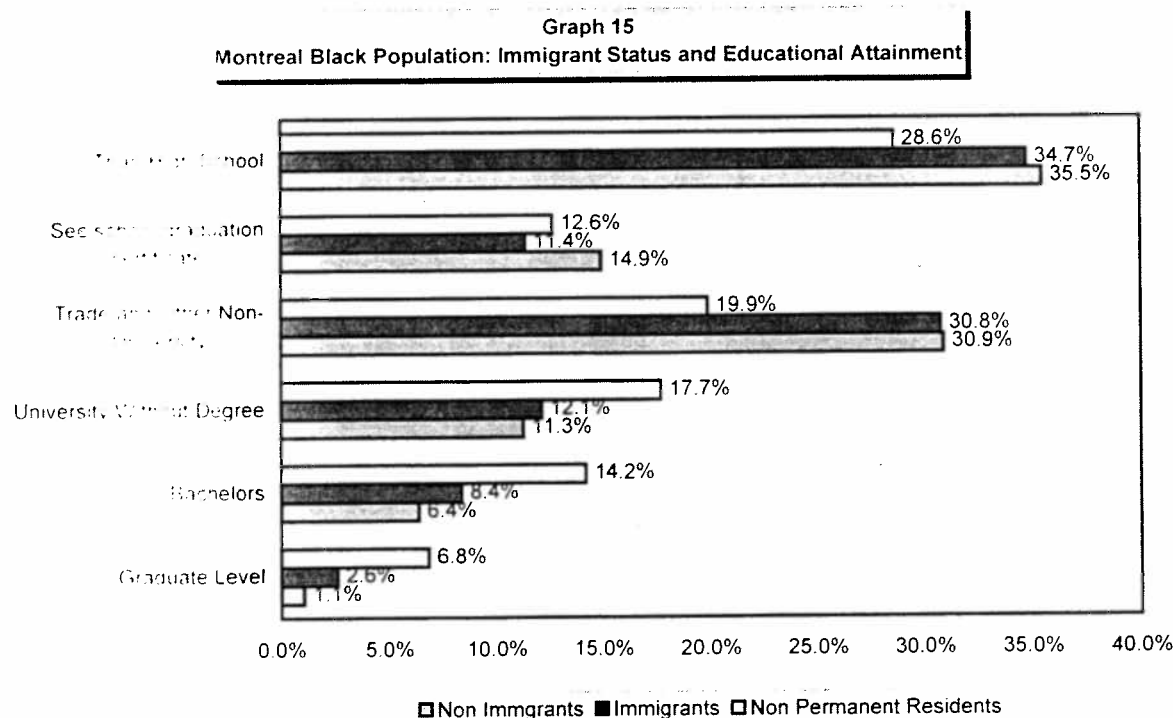
While university completion rates improve for black women aged 25-44, the gap between them and their Montreal women counterparts and Black men of the same age group widens profoundly. 12.3% of Black women aged 25-44 have obtained a university degree. The corresponding figures for Montreal women generally and Black men are 21.6% and 18.7%.

Educational attainment rates are much more similar among Black men and male Montrealers generally in the 25-44 year age cohort. 22.5% of all Montreal men in this age range have a university degree, and this compares with 18.7% of Black men. Black men are even somewhat more likely to have obtained a graduate degree than men generally in Montreal in the 25-44 age cohort (5.3% vs. 5.0%)

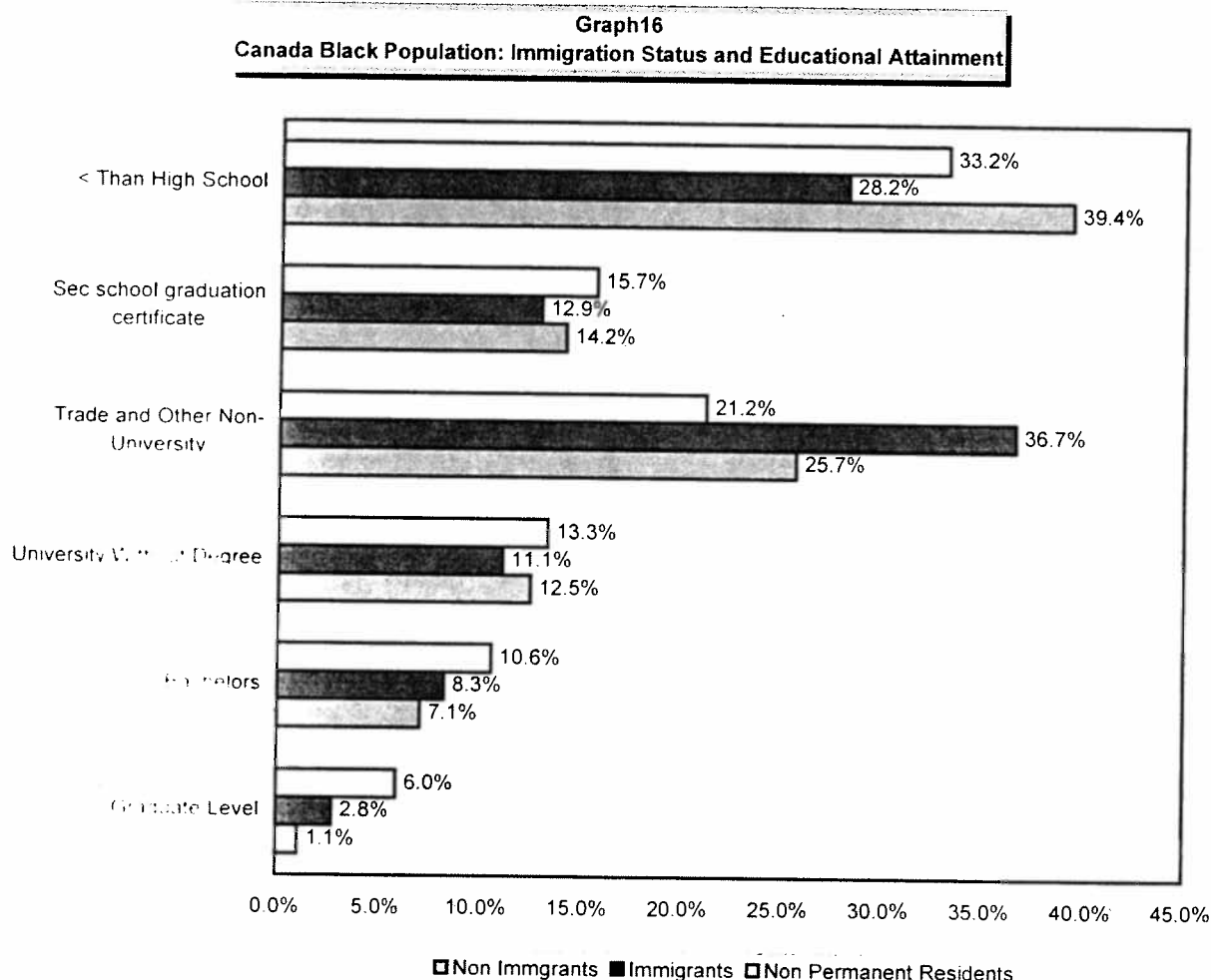
**Promoting greater educational opportunity for Black women at all age ranges is clearly indicated by the census data in order to promote social and economic equality** of Black women in Montreal. These findings have implications not only for economic mobility patterns, but for community cohesion as well. As most young people meet partners in educational settings, the likelihood of young Black men and women to meet on campus will increase with greater support for Black women to complete university. Community leaders ought to consider intensifying partnerships with government and the private sector to promote scholarships, day care and other forms of assistance for Black women in Montreal.

### 5.1.2 Immigration Status and Educational Attainment

**Black immigrants have higher rates of educational achievement than native born Blacks** in Montreal. Less than one in thirteen Canadian born blacks have completed university (7.5%), and this compares with one in nine immigrant Blacks (11.0%). Non-permanent residents who are often in Canada on student visas or work permits have the highest rates of university completion. More than one in five Black non-permanent residents had obtained a university degree in 1996 (21.0%) (Graph 15).



At the national level, the picture is similar. Only one in twelve Canadian born Blacks obtained a university degree (8.2%). One in nine Black immigrants living in Canada have completed university (11.1%), and one in six Black non-permanent residents have graduated university (16.6%). Similarly, less than three in ten Black immigrants have not completed high school (28.2%) while almost four in ten Canadian born Blacks have not obtained a high school degree (39.4%) (Graph 16)



Three sets of factors may explain these results. First, immigration selection criteria awards applicants by granting more points to those who have higher levels of education. Secondly, immigrants tend to focus more on taking advantage of Canadian educational opportunities, which were often not available or affordable in their country of origin. Third, younger people are more likely to attend university than older people, and immigrants are generally younger than the Canadian born population.



There is a very clear relationship between levels of education in the Black community and the neighbourhoods in which they live. **Cote-des-Neiges housed the highest percentage of Black university graduates.** Almost one in five Black residents of Cote-des-Neiges has completed university (18.6%). N.D.G., Laval, and New Bordeaux followed in terms of highest rates of university completion for Black residents (12.6% for N.D.G., 11.1% for Laval and 10.4% for New Bordeaux). **Blacks in St. Michel and Park Extension had the lowest rates of university graduation. No more than three of every hundred Blacks in St. Michel and Park Extension had completed university in 1996.**

**Generally, the educational levels of Blacks in various neighbourhoods follow the overall pattern in these geographic communities.** Thus, Cote-des-Neiges, N.D.G. and Laval contain significant numbers of middle class persons and their educational levels are higher. St. Michel, and Park Extension have more widespread poverty and along with poverty come lower educational rates.

Consequently, **community leaders may wish to consider a strategy to advance educational levels among blacks in Montreal which focuses on specific neighbourhoods where poverty levels are high and educational achievement is low, as well as on advancing opportunities for Black women generally in Montreal.**

This section documented variations in levels of attainment between Blacks and non-Blacks based entirely on the census. From this data, we are able to make comparisons between Blacks and the broader society. This data provides a broad comprehensive view, but it is not in itself a sufficient tool to understand the Black educational experience in Quebec and Canada. Other studies are necessary to provide detail and qualitative information to augment the census profile. A number of scholars<sup>6</sup> have examined Blacks' educational experiences and performance in Canadian schools. Some of the themes they explored include the difficulties that some Black immigrants face in navigating the Canadian educational system, how educational tracking systems can affect Black youth, Black identity and school subcultures, as well as multicultural and anti-racist educational practice. Census data complements this literature and provides a general framework for understanding these qualitative educational experiences.

How do these findings about educational attainment impact on employment levels and earning capacity of Black men and women in Montreal, and how do the earning capacity and labour force activity of Blacks in Montreal compare to those of Montrealers generally? Are Black Montrealers and Montrealers generally better off economically than their counterparts in Canada as a whole?

We now focus on these issues and seek to understand the findings presented below in relation to age structure, gender, immigration patterns and the like. We focus first on income ranges, labour force activity and rates of unemployment.

## 5.2 Income Levels

**Blacks in Montreal have substantially less income than Montrealers generally. The average Black income from all sources was one third less than the average income for all Montrealers (\$15,397 for Blacks vs. \$24,625 for Montrealers generally).** The Canadian Black national average is 20% higher than that of the Montreal Black population (\$19,033 in 1996). The National average income for all Canadians was highest at \$25,196, but not substantially higher than the Montreal average.

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<sup>6</sup>E.g., see writings by Carl James, George Dei, etc.

Income disparities are particularly acute at the lowest and highest income ranges. In Montreal, **almost 3 out of 4 Blacks had incomes less than \$20,000 per year (72%), and this compares with about one out of two non-Blacks (52.8%)**. At the higher levels of the income spectrum, the reverse is true. Here, **more than three times as many non-Blacks as Blacks in Montreal had total incomes of more than \$60,000 (6.2% vs. 1.6%)**. This pattern persists in the \$40,000-\$59,000 income category as well, where one in eight non-Blacks (12.4%) and only 1 in 20 Blacks (5.3%) had total incomes in this range.

The national picture is similar, although the gaps between Blacks and non-Blacks are not quite as wide. Six out of ten Blacks had incomes of less than \$20,000 (62%), and this compares to 51% of non-Blacks. At the upper income range, 7% of non-Blacks and 3% of Blacks had incomes greater than \$60,000 in 1996. Table 8 demonstrates these results for Montreal.

<b>TABLE 8</b>						
<b>Montreal Black and Total Population Ages 15+: Total Income</b>						
<b>Income</b>	<b>Total Black Pop</b>	<b>Black Women</b>	<b>Black Men</b>	<b>Total Mtl Pop</b>	<b>Total Women</b>	<b>Total Men</b>
<b>Under \$20,000</b>	53,860 72.5%	31,010 76.8%	22,845 67.4%	1,287,275 52.8%	760,540 62.0%	526,730 43.5%
<b>\$20,000-\$39,999</b>	15,305 20.6%	7,295 18.1%	8,010 23.6%	696,090 28.6%	336,245 27.4%	359,850 29.7%
<b>\$40,000-\$59,999</b>	3,910 5.3%	1,750 4.3%	2,165 6.4%	302,120 12.4%	99,410 8.1%	202,705 16.8%
<b>\$60,000+</b>	1,195 1.6%	300 0.7%	890 2.6%	150,785 6.2%	30,090 2.5%	120,690 10.0%
<b>Total With Income</b>	74,275 100.0%	40,360 100.0%	33,915 100.0%	2,436,265 100.0%	1,226,285 100.0%	1,209,975 100.0%
<b>Average income \$</b>	15,397	13,944	17,127	24,625	19,298	30,024

**Black women are at greater economic risk. The average income for Black women was \$13,944 in 1996.** Montreal women as a whole had average incomes of \$19,298.

Black men, while having incomes 20% higher than Black women, have substantially lower incomes than do Montrealers generally. The average income for Black men was \$17,127 in 1996, 10% less than the income of all Montreal women and 45% less than the average income of all men in Montreal. Tables 8 and 9 present these findings for Montreal and Canada, respectively.

**TABLE 9**  
**Canada Black and Total Population Ages 15+: Total Income**

Income	Total Black Pop	Black Women	Black Men	Total Mtl Pop	Total Women	Total Men
<b>Under \$20,000</b>	217,635 61.3%	123,850 65.7%	93,790 56.3%	10,822,115 51.7%	6,497,795 62.5%	4,324,325 41.1%
<b>\$20,000-\$39,999</b>	97,430 27.4%	50,485 26.8%	46,950 28.2%	5,971,805 28.6%	2,786,810 26.8%	3,185,000 30.3%
<b>\$40,000-\$59,999</b>	29,900 8.4%	11,430 6.1%	18,480 11.1%	2,716,595 13.0%	836,670 8.0%	1,879,915 17.9%
<b>60,000+</b>	10,260 2.9%	2,735 1.5%	7,520 4.5%	1,406,235 6.7%	278,670 2.7%	1,127,560 10.7%
<b>Total With Income</b>	355,225 100.0%	188,495 100.0%	166,730 100.0%	20,916,760 100.0%	10,399,950 100.0%	10,516,805 100.0%
<b>Average income \$</b>	19,033	16,959	21,378	25,196	19,208	31,117

### 5.3 Composition of Total Income

Census Canada includes three categories, which together comprise total income. These are: income from earnings, income from government transfer payments, and other income from sources such as interest and investments. **For both Blacks and non-Blacks, the major portion of total income is derived from employment earnings.** In Montreal, 70% of the total income of Blacks was derived from earnings while for non-Blacks the figure was 75%. The same pattern persists in Canada as a whole where 78% of Black total income and 75% of non-Black total income was derived from employment earnings.

Given the centrality of employment to economic and social well being, we first turn to an analysis of labour force activity, employment patterns and occupational structure and relate these to an analysis of what people earn in relation to what they do.

#### 5.3.1 Labour Force Activity (Participation and Unemployment Rates) <sup>7</sup>

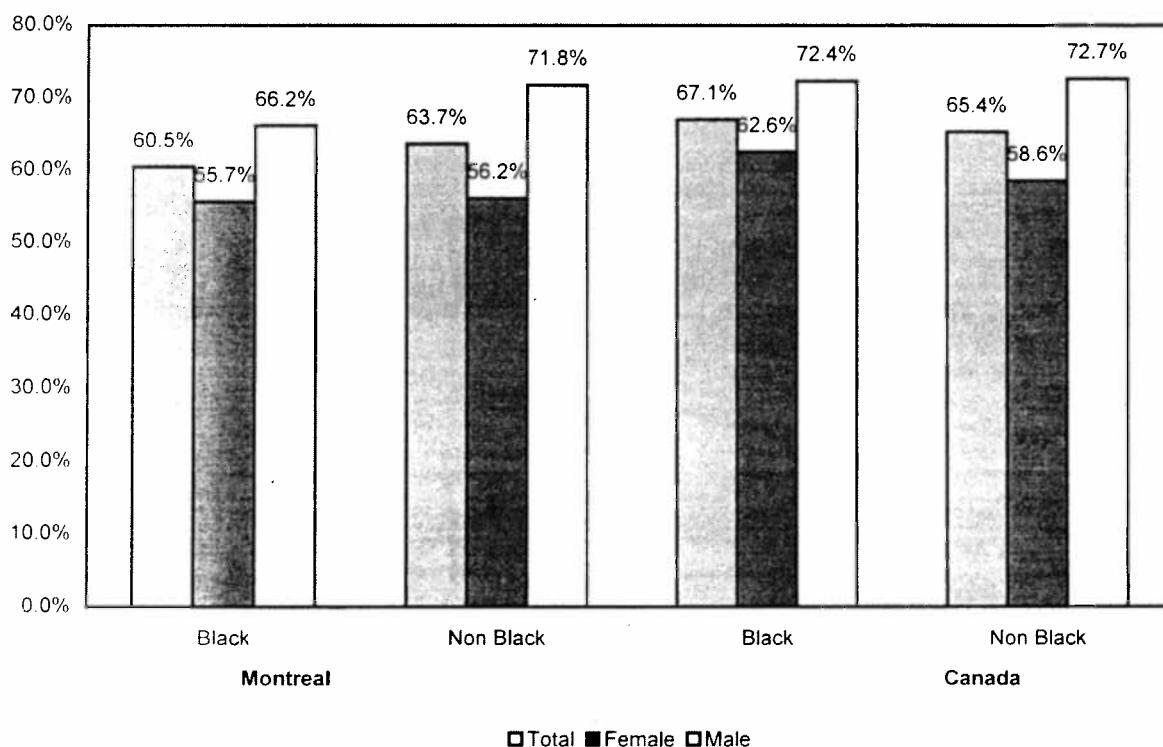
Overall, Montrealers were less likely to be in the labour force than were Canadians nationally, and this applies both to the Black and non-Black Montreal populations. As well, women were less likely to be in the paid labour force than men at both the national Canadian level as well as in Montreal, and this is equally true for the Black and non-Black populations. Montreal's economy in 1996 was weak relative to the Canadian economy, and this may explain the lower participation rates.

Nationally in Canada, participation rates were slightly higher for Blacks than for non-Blacks. (67.1% vs. 65.4%). The reverse is true in Montreal where Black participation rates were 60.5%, while the average for Montrealers reached 63.7%.

<sup>7</sup>Labour Force Activity refers to the workforce status of the population 15 years of age and over in the week prior to Census Day. Respondents are either (a) employed, (b) unemployed, or (c) not in the labour force. The participation rate is calculated by dividing the sum of the employed and unemployed by the total population over 14 years of age. The unemployment rate is calculated by dividing the unemployed into the population of labour force participants (Statistics Canada, 1996 Census Dictionary: Reference. Catalogue no. 92-351-XPE).

One factor accounting for these differences relates to the relative labour force strength of Black women nationally, and the under participation of Black men in the labour force in Montreal. On the national level, a higher percentage of Black women were in the labour force than non-Black women (62.6% vs. 58.6%), while the rates of participation of Black and non-Black men were identical. In Montreal, the participation rates for Black women and non-Black women were similar, but Black men had substantially lower participation rates than non-Black men (66.2% vs. 71.8%) (Graph 16)

**Graph 16**  
**Montreal and Canada: Labour Force Participation Rates**

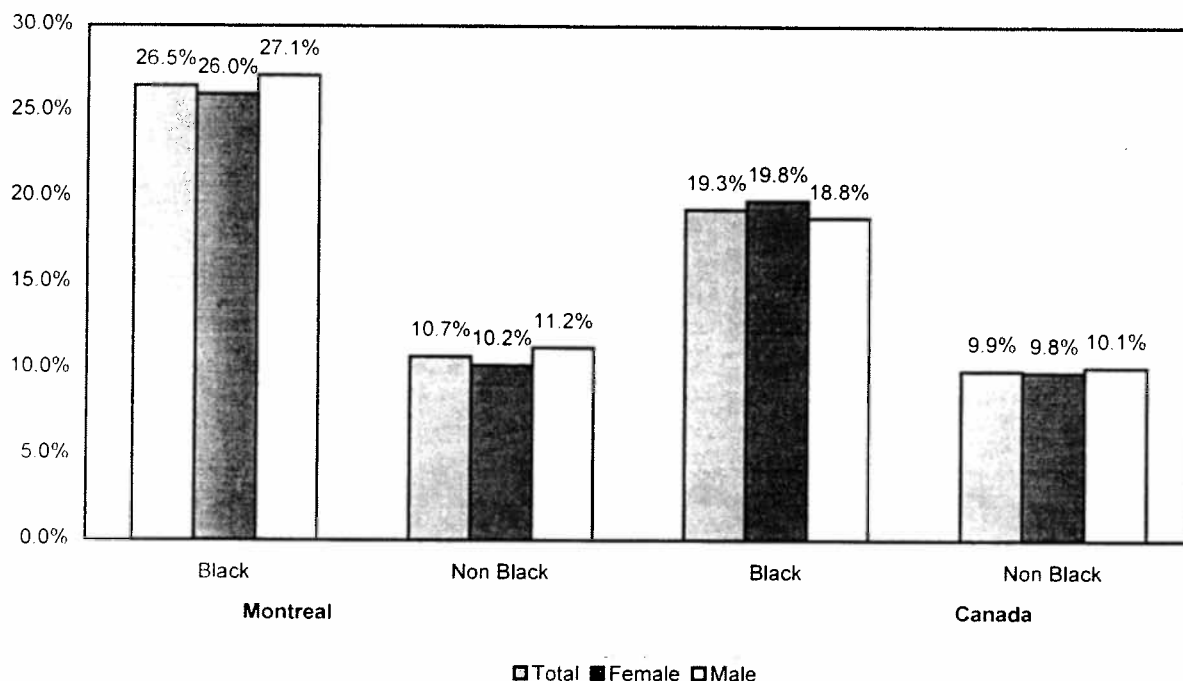


A second factor may be due to the fact that a higher percentage of Blacks than non-Blacks are currently enrolled in school, and, as a result, a portion of them might not be in the labour force. Conversely, they may be in school because they are unable to find work despite their educational qualifications.

Focussing on unemployment rates alone, we find dramatic differences between Blacks and non-Blacks both nationally and in Montreal. **Unemployment rates were 2.5 times higher for Blacks in Montreal than they were for non-Blacks in 1996. More than one in four Blacks in the labour force in 1996 was unemployed (26.5%). For Montrealers as a whole, only one in ten persons in the labour force was unemployed (10.7%).** These alarming rates of unemployment were consistently higher for both Black men and women in Montreal.

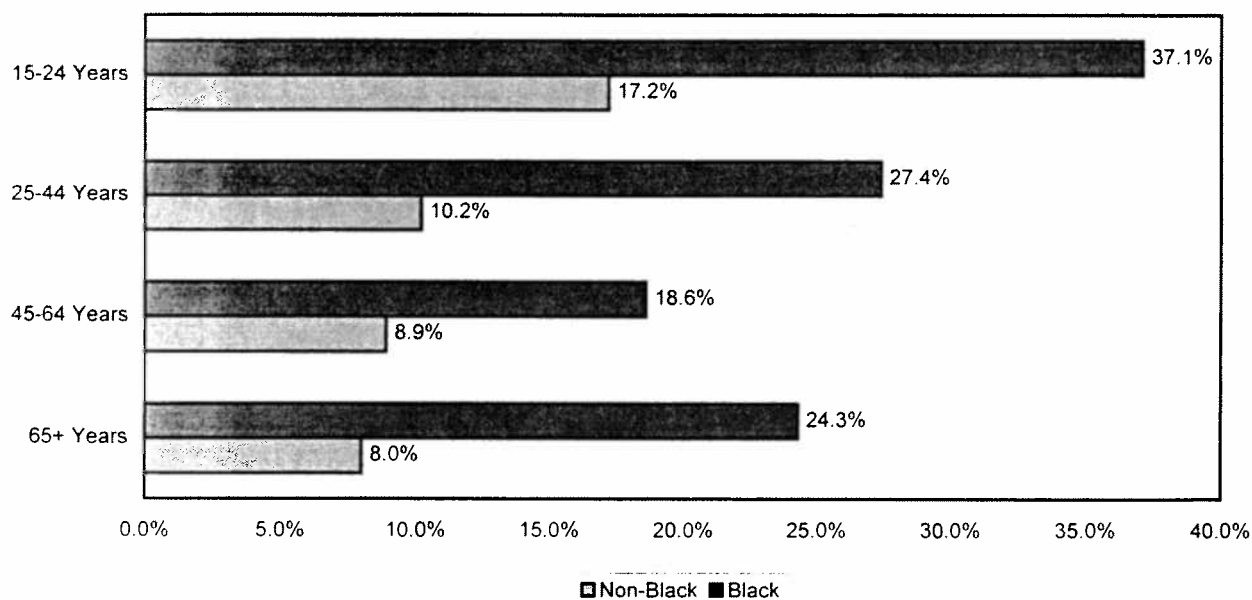
At the national level, unemployment rates were lower than for Montreal, and this was equally true for Blacks and non-Blacks. The discrepancy in employment rates at the national level between Blacks and non-Blacks was also quite large, albeit the differences were somewhat lower. One in five Blacks were unemployed at the national level in 1996 (19.3%), and this rate is twice the unemployment rate of non-Blacks. Graph 17 demonstrates these findings.

**Graph 17**  
**Montreal and Canada: Unemployment Rates**



**Higher unemployment rates in the Black community may reflect, in part, differences in the age structure.** With unemployment rates traditionally higher in the 15-24 and the 25-44 age ranges, one would expect unemployment rates to be higher in the Black community given the higher percentages of younger persons in these age categories. Graph 18 provides evidence to support this view.

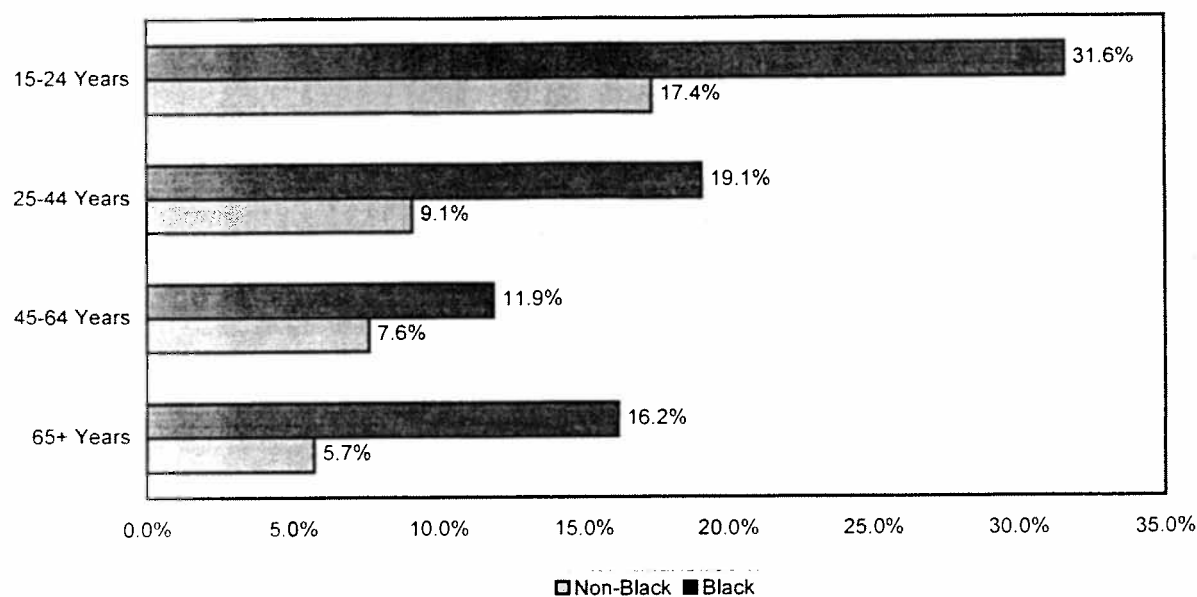
**Graph 18**  
**Montreal: Age Group Differences in Unemployment Rates**



**Almost four in ten Blacks aged 15-24 were unemployed in 1996. This rate of youth unemployment was more than twice as high for Blacks than for non-Blacks in Montreal (37.1% vs. 17.2%).** Unemployment rates were lower for Blacks and non-Blacks aged 25-44, but the rates for Blacks remained 2.7 times higher than for non-Blacks (27.4% vs. 10.2%).

Lowest unemployment rates are in the 45-64 age group and stood at 18% for Montreal Blacks in 1996. Notwithstanding, unemployment for this middle aged group and usually the most economically secure in the Black community is higher than for non-Blacks aged 15-24! This finding has striking implications for family stability and economic security for Blacks in Montreal. Graph 19 demonstrates these results.

Graph 19  
Canada: Age Group Differences in Unemployment Rates

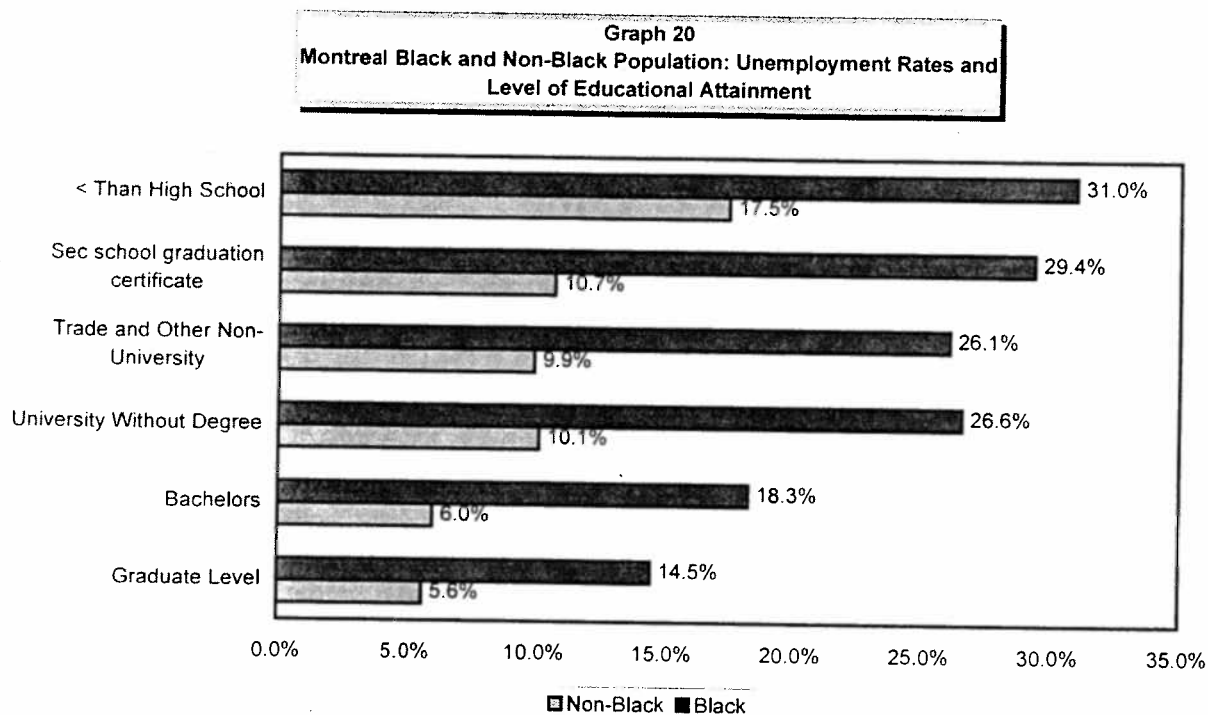


Blacks in Canada generally show a similar unemployment pattern when compared with the non-Black population. Notwithstanding, compared to Blacks in Montreal, Blacks in Canada have a higher participation rate and lower unemployment rates across all age categories (Graph 20).

#### 5.3.1.1 Level of Schooling and Labour Force Activity

Higher education levels correspond with higher participation rates and lower unemployment rates. Unemployment rates are substantially lower for people who have obtained a university degree than for people who have not. People who have not completed high school have the highest unemployment rates. Three of 10 Blacks in the labour force with less than a high school education were unemployed in Montreal in 1996 (31%). For Blacks with a university degree, unemployment rates drop to 18%.

Notwithstanding, **Blacks in Montreal are far less likely to be employed than non-Blacks even when they have comparable levels of education.** Only 17.5% of non-Blacks without a high school degree were unemployed in Montreal in 1996. Unemployment among Black university graduates in Montreal was three times higher when compared with non-Black university graduates. Strikingly, **the level of unemployment for Black University graduates was identical to that of non-Blacks who had not completed high school in 1996** (Graph 20).



Clearly, the data indicates that high unemployment levels are a major concern for Blacks in Montreal. When university education does not produce more jobs for Blacks than less than a high school education produces for non-Blacks in Montreal, and despite continuing efforts of Blacks to improve circumstances by pursuing higher education, central questions arise for the Black communal agenda. What accounts for these inequalities, and what remedies are necessary?

### 5.3.1.2 Immigration Status and Labour Force Activity

**Black immigrants in Montreal have a higher labour force participation rate than non-immigrants** and non-permanent residents, while non-permanent residents are the least likely to be employed. Participation rates in the Montreal Black community are highest among immigrants as two out of three (64.7%) Black immigrants were in the labour force in 1996 compared with less than half (48.5%) of Canadian born Blacks. Despite immigrants' higher participation rates, both immigrants and non-immigrants had an unemployment rate of approximately 26% in 1996.

Nationally as well, Black immigrants in Canada have higher participation rates than Canadian born Blacks (71% vs. 59%). Canadian born Blacks are only slightly more likely than immigrants to be unemployed.

These differences between native born and immigrant Blacks may be partially explained by differences in the age distribution among these groups. About seventy percent of Black immigrants are between the ages of 25 and 64 when labour force participation rates are highest in the Black community. Canadian born Blacks are more heavily concentrated in the 15-24 age group where participation rates are lower.



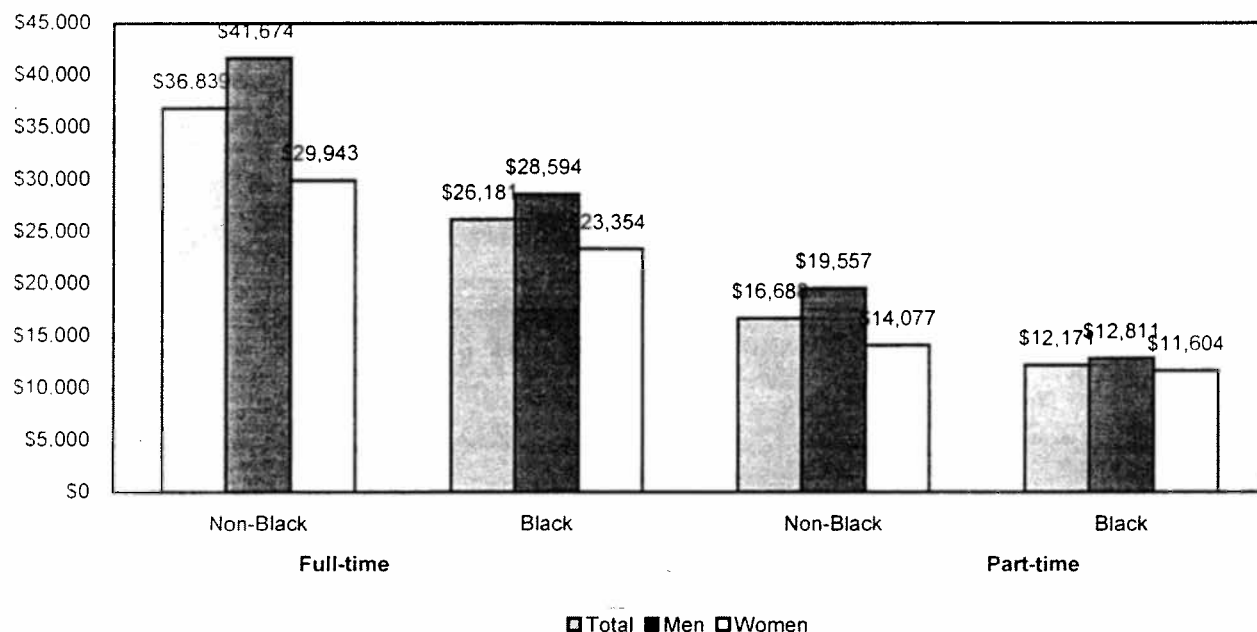
Unemployment rates differed among Blacks from neighbourhood to neighbourhood, and were consistent with the findings on education. The neighbourhoods which had the lowest levels of university graduation among Blacks, had the highest levels of unemployment. In Park Extension, almost four in ten Blacks were unemployed. In St. Michel and New Bordeaux, one in three Blacks were unemployed in 1996. N.D.G., LaSalle and Laval had the lowest unemployment levels, which stood at approximately one in five in 1996.

## 5.4 Employment Income

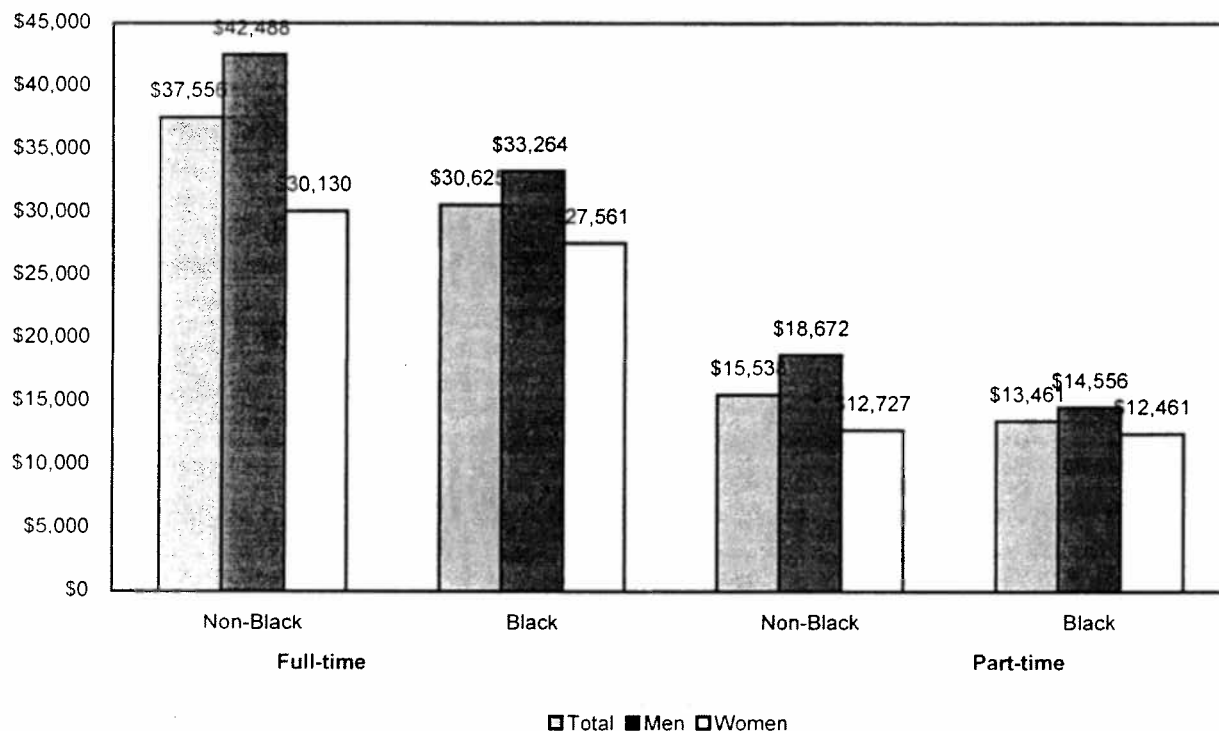
**Blacks are less likely to have full time jobs, and, when they do, their average pay is 30% less than the average for all full time employees in Montreal.** One in five Blacks (21%) who were in the labour force in 1996 held full time jobs, and this compares to one in three (33%) of Montrealers generally. Blacks in Montreal working full-time on average earn 30% less than non-Blacks (\$26,181 and \$36,839, respectively). The earning gap between Blacks and non-Blacks is less pronounced at the national level where Blacks earn about 20% less than non-Blacks for full time work

A slightly higher percentage of Blacks in the labour force held part time positions in 1996 when compared to the Montreal workforce generally (33% vs. 30%). Here too, however, Blacks are paid less. Blacks earn 25% less than non-Blacks employed part-time (\$12,171 and \$16,688, respectively). In Canada as a whole, the gap between Black and non-Black Canadians is further reduced. Here, Blacks earn a little less than 90% of what non-Blacks earn in Canada for part time work. Graphs 21 and 22 demonstrate these findings.

**Graph 21**  
**Montreal Full-time and Part-time Workers: Average Employment Income**



**Graph 22**  
**Canada Full-time and Part-time Workers: Average Employment Income**



**Black women in Montreal are least likely to have full time employment.** One in six (18%) of all Black women in the labour force worked full time in 1996, and this compares to one in four (25%) Black men. **Black men earned more than 20% more for full time work than Black women (\$28,594 on average vs. \$23,354 for women).**

Women generally in Montreal are marginally more likely to hold full-time employment and are paid slightly more than Black men. Twenty six percent of all Montreal women in the labour force held full time jobs in 1996, and on average they earned \$29,943. Overall, Montreal men fared best. More than four out of ten worked full time in 1996 (41%), and they earned on average \$41,674.

In Canada, the same pattern persists. On average, Canadian men earned \$42,488 for full time work while Black men earned 22% less (\$33,264). Non-Black women followed with \$30,123. Black women earned the least- \$27,561 on average for full time work.

Why is it that Blacks in general and women in particular are paid less for both full time and part time work? Part of the explanation lies in the occupational structure of the Black community.

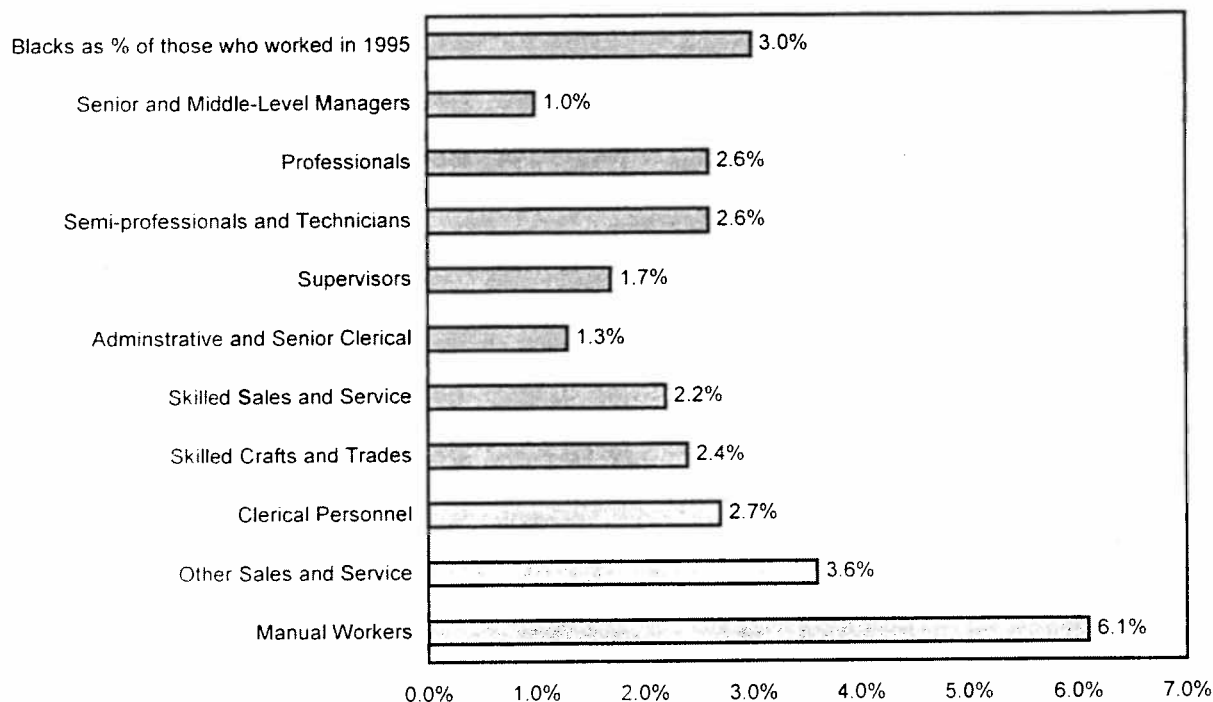
### 5.5 Occupational Structure

In order to examine the relationship between the kinds of occupations people hold and their

education and earnings, ten categories of occupations were identified. In 1995, Blacks formed 2.9% of the work force. One can gauge their representation in various occupations by examining in which occupational categories Blacks were over- represented, and in which ones they were under- represented.

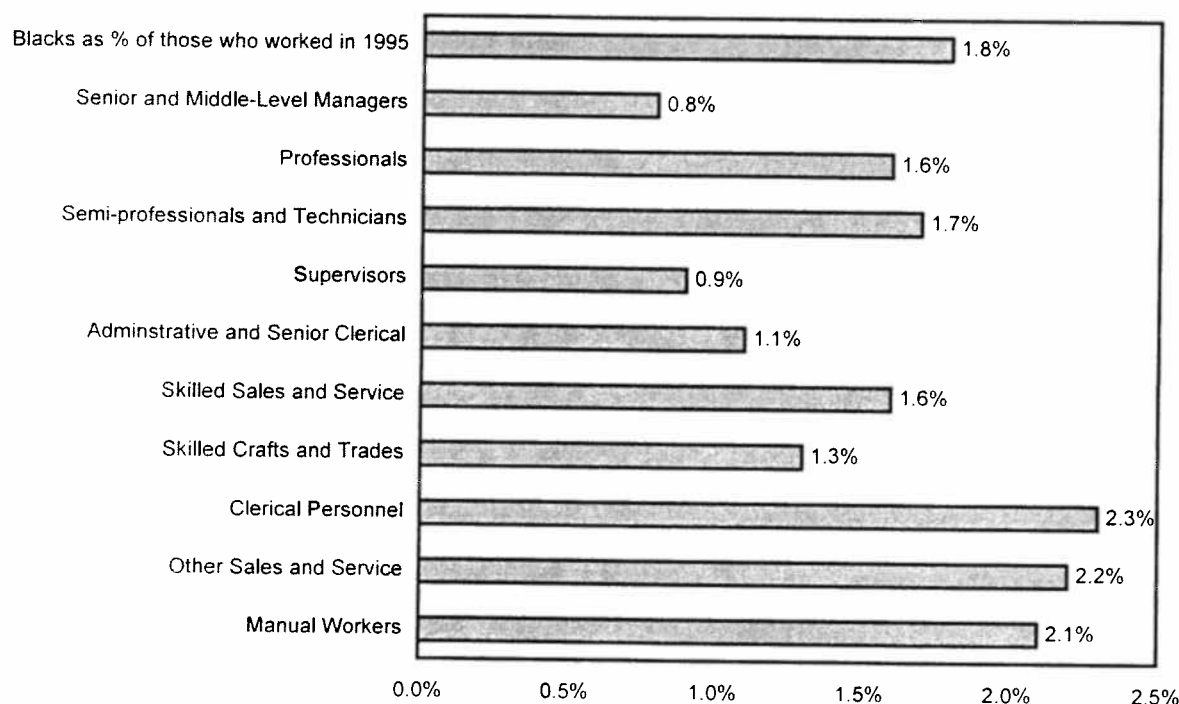
**Blacks in Montreal are under-represented in the types of occupations characterised by management, increased responsibility, and higher pay.**

**Graph 23**  
**Montreal Black Population: Representation Across**  
**Employment Equity Occupation Groups**



Graph 23 suggests at least one reason for these disparities in employment income between Blacks and non-Blacks. Blacks in Montreal formed 3% of all Montrealers who worked in 1995, yet only 1% of all senior and middle-level managers in the city were members of the Montreal Black community. Blacks are also slightly under-represented as professionals, semi-professionals and technicians, supervisors, and administrative and senior clerical positions. Indeed, **the only occupational categories where Blacks are over-represented are the 'other sales and service' and 'manual worker' occupational categories where wages and salaries are comparatively low and unemployment rates are higher.** Graph 24 demonstrates the same trends for Blacks in Canada as a whole although these differences are less pronounced than they are in Montreal.

**Graph 24**  
**Canada Black Population: Representation Across**  
**Employment Equity Occupation Groups**



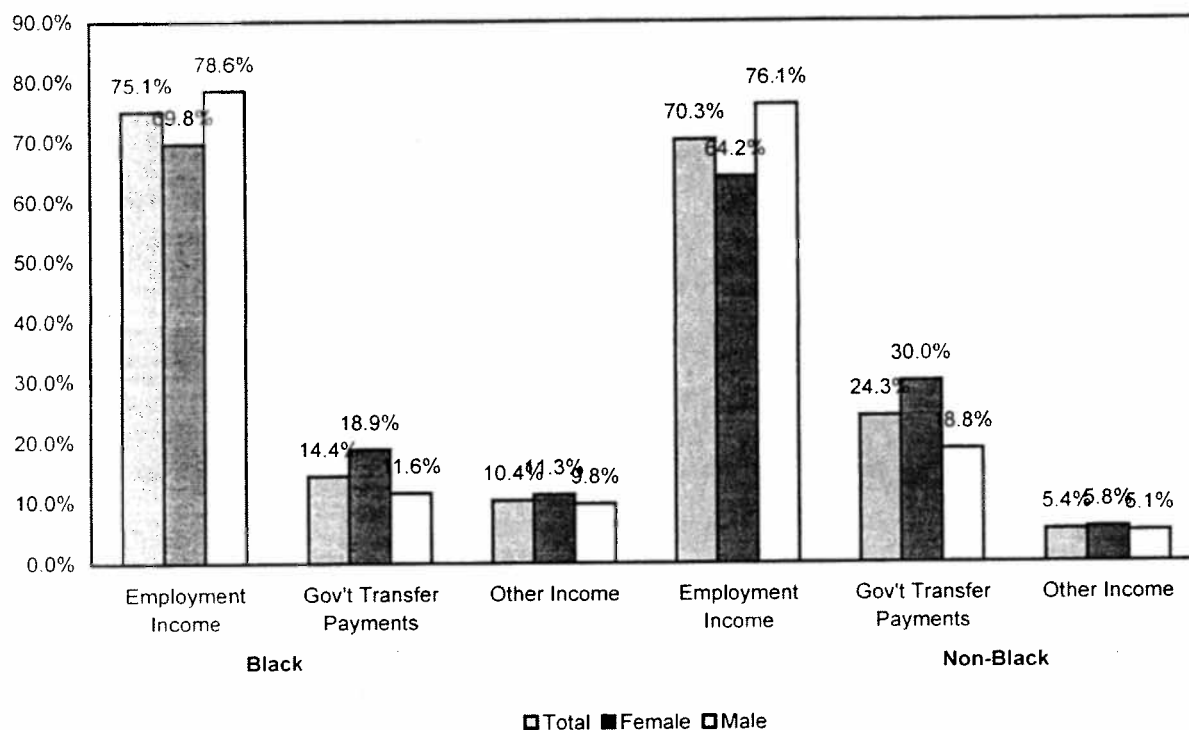
A further analysis was conducted on the 25-44 age group to determine whether younger Blacks are entering better paying occupations. The same pattern persists. Blacks are under-represented as a proportion of senior and middle level managers, and over-represented in sales, service, and manual worker occupations. Notwithstanding, 3.7% of Blacks aged 25-44 were managers, and 14.5% were professionals, and this trend represents a hopeful sign for the future.

### 5.6 Total income and government transfer payments

In Montreal, one-quarter of the total income of Blacks derived from government transfer payments and this compares to 14% of the total income of non-Blacks. These transfers include family allowance payments, unemployment, disability and welfare. The data does not differentiate among these categories. The data only provides an indication of the proportion of one's total income, which can be attributed to government transfer payments.

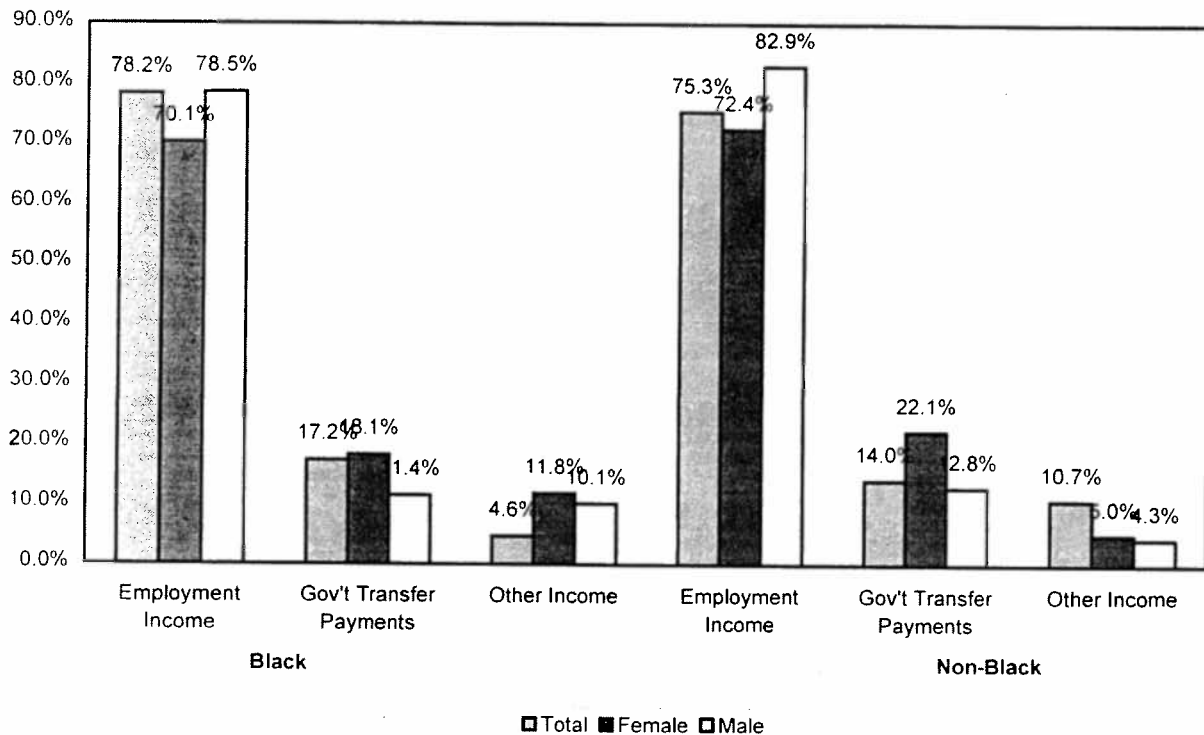
Women were more likely to derive a greater proportion of their total income from government transfer payments than men, and this is particularly true for Black women in Montreal. As we shall see in the chapter on family composition, women are far more likely to head households and care for children in the Black community than they are in the non-Black community. 30% of the total income of Black women in Montreal was derived from government transfer payments. For Black men and non-Black women, 19% of total income came from government sources. Non-Black men counted far less on government transfers, as these payments only contributed 11% to their total income in 1996. Graph 25 presents these findings on government transfer payments and also includes data on employment income and other sources of income discussed in the report.

**Graph 25**  
**Montreal: Composition of Total Income**



Nationally, the picture is similar, although income from government transfers makes up a smaller percentage of total incomes. For Black women nationally, government transfers accounted for 22% of total income. For Black men in Canada, however, derive substantially less of their total income from government transfers than Black men in Montreal (12.8% vs. 18.8%). This difference is explained by the higher unemployment and lower earning rates of Black men in Montreal when compared to Black men nationally (Graph 26).

**Graph 26**  
**Canada: Composition of Total Income**



It is not surprising to find that **Blacks derive a greater portion of their income from government sources than do non-Blacks** for the following reason. Since Blacks earn less, the amounts they receive from government such as family allowance will account for a much larger percentage of their income than for those who earn more. Second, since there are more children in the Black community, a larger percentage of families will be receiving family allowance payments. Third, higher unemployment rates also mean lower employment earnings. Unemployment insurance and welfare, for example, will consequently be of greater importance to Blacks than non-Blacks, as it will contribute more to their total incomes than to the incomes of non-Blacks. An important finding, therefore, is that both universal programs such as family allowance as well as selective programs such as unemployment and welfare will have a greater impact on the Black community than they do for Canadians generally, and that Black families rely on these funds to a greater extent than non-Blacks. Strengthening and enhancing these programs may, therefore, become an important agenda item for the Black community.

### 5.7 Total Income and Investments

**Only 5% of total Black incomes in Montreal and in Canada was derived from investment income. The figure for non-Blacks is twice as high (10.7%).** This finding is also not surprising given the higher percentages of immigrants in the Black community and the lower rates of income earnings. People who earn more can put away more. People who have been in Canada longer are more likely to have received inheritances and to be able to save money and invest it than people who earn less and are more recently arrived, as is the case in the Black community. There are no

noticeable differences between the proportion of total income obtained from investments by Black men and Black women in Montreal.

To summarise, the findings portray a bleak portrait of economic life for Blacks in Montreal. Less likely to be employed, Blacks earn substantially less. They are under-represented in positions, which command greater authority and salaries than Montrealers generally. Even for those Blacks who have completed university, life does not hold the same promise as it does for their non-Black counterparts. It appears that not only positions of authority are blocked for Blacks, but also a university degree does not give a Black member of the labour force a greater opportunity of finding a job than Montrealers who have not even completed high school. And, while this bleak economic portrait describes the situation for all Blacks in Montreal, the prospects for Black women are even less promising and their economic conditions are far more severe.

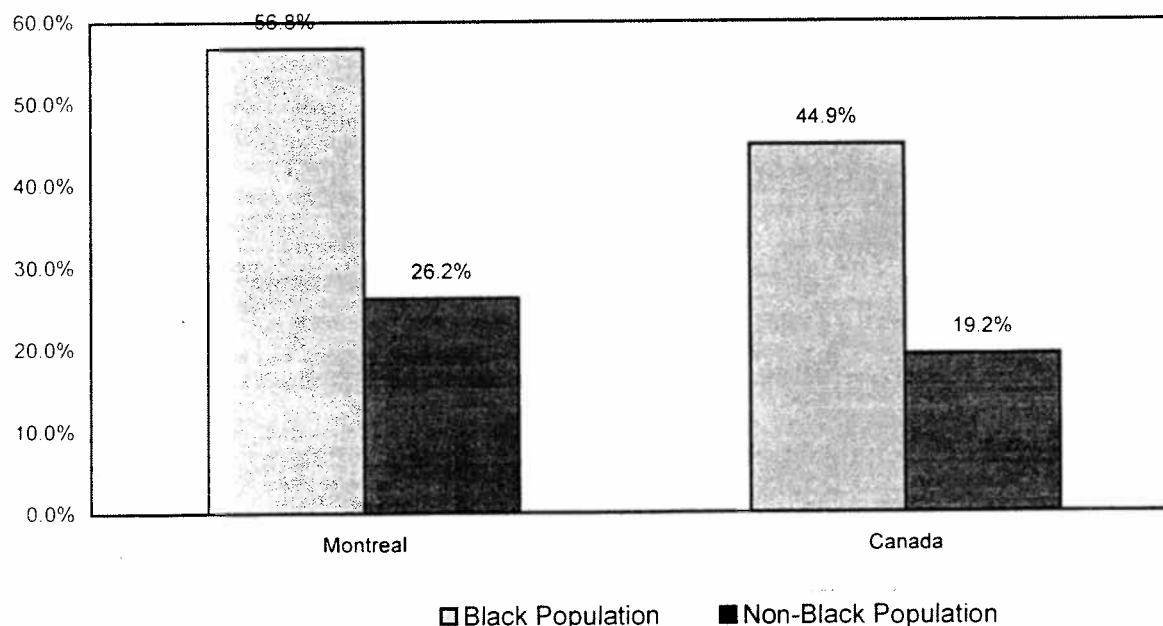
These data formulate urgent agenda items for the Black community and may be enhanced through increased partnerships with government and the private sector.

## 6. Poverty Among Blacks in Montreal

Poverty rates were higher for all Montrealers and Blacks in particular in 1996 than they were for Canada as a whole. 26.2% of Montrealers and 19.2% of all Canadians were poor in 1996.

Sixty nine thousand Black persons lived in poverty in Montreal in 1996 and they represented 57% of the Black population of Montreal. Poverty rates for Montrealers generally were dramatically lower. About one in four Montrealers were poor in 1996 (26.2%), and this compares with almost six of ten poor persons in the Black community (56.8%). Graph 27 demonstrates these findings.

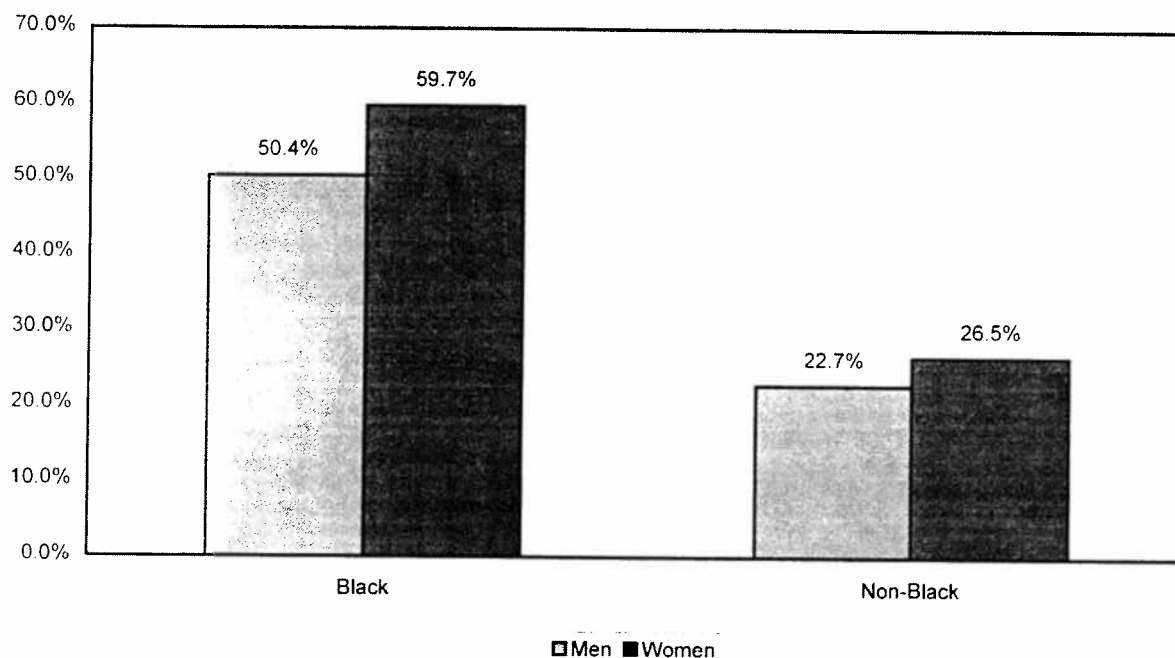
Graph 27  
Montreal and Canada: Incidence of Low Income



Consistent with our findings regarding income disparities between men and women in both the Black community and the population generally, **women have much higher poverty rates than men**. Six out of ten Black women in Montreal lived below the poverty line in 1996. In the Black community, women represented 53.1% of the population. **57.3% of persons who are Black and poor, however, are women**--and this percentage would even be higher if one excluded children from this particular analysis.

**Men are less likely to be poor than women, but one in two Black men are poor, and this is almost twice the percentage for women generally in Montreal. In the Montreal population as a whole, women accounted for 52.1% of the population. They represented 55.9% of the poor.** More than 1 in four women (26.5%) in Montreal were poor in 1996, and this compares with 22.7% of men who were poor. Graph 28 illustrates the predominance of women among the poor in both the Black and Montreal population generally.

Graph 28  
Montreal Population 15+: Gender Differences in Incidence of Low Income



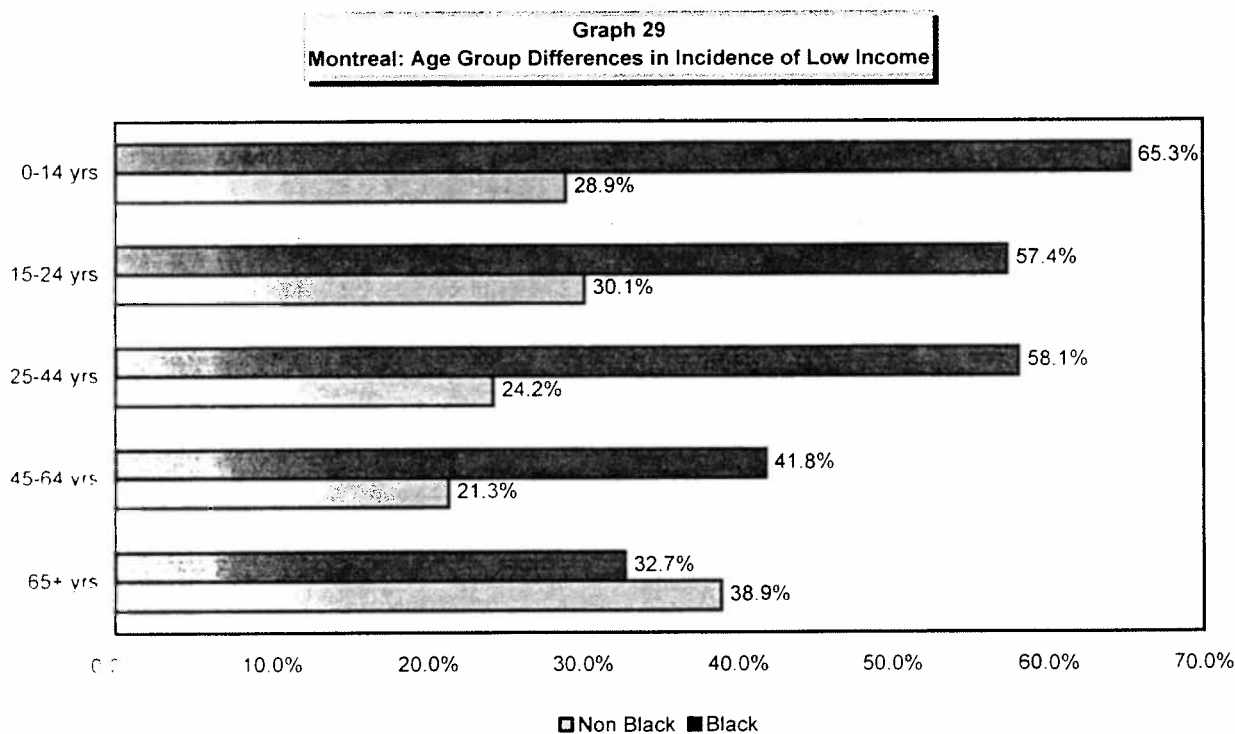
### 6.1 Poverty and Children

**Two out of every three Black children in Montreal lived below the poverty line in 1996.** In actual numbers, there are about 23,000 poor Black children in the city. Children 0-14 represented 28.9% of all Black persons in Montreal in 1996, but were over represented among the poor. One in three (33.1%) of all persons who were poor and Black in Montreal in 1996 were children. For the Montreal population generally, rates of child poverty are substantially lower but remain unacceptably high as **three out of every ten children lived in poverty (28.9%)**. Children aged 0-14 represented 18.6% of the population, but accounted for 20.6% of the poor.



This data then points to the particular vulnerability of children to forces of poverty which may have life long consequences and which are beyond their control. Clearly the issue of child poverty is far more severe in the Black community both because children constitute a larger percentage of the Black population than they do of the Montreal population generally, and because **more than twice the percentage of Black children are poor than are Montreal children generally.**

For teenagers and young adults aged 15-24, the data shows little improvement. Over 20,000 people in this age group are poor. In fact, almost six in ten (57.4%) Black persons between the ages of 15- 24 were poor in 1996. For Montrealers generally, about three in ten young adults in this age range were poor. Poverty rates are higher among Blacks at every age interval when compared with the total population. Poverty rates begin to decline in the mid-forties age range both in the Black and Montreal population generally, and then rise again for persons over the age of 65. **One out of two Black Montrealers (or 6,500 Black persons) aged 65 and over was poor in 1996.** For Montrealers generally, one in three elderly persons lived below the poverty line. (Graph 29).



Blacks have higher incidences of poverty nationwide. Approximately 45% (or 250,000 Black persons) of all Blacks in Canada have low incomes compared to 19.2% of non-Blacks in the country (Graph 27)

What accounts for the higher rates of poverty among Blacks in Montreal? To a certain extent, the higher percentage of economically vulnerable populations such as immigrants, children and, women along with higher unemployment and lower incomes in the Black community accounts for much higher poverty rates. These factors also affect families and the arrangements people make to live together. For example, what will be the long term consequences for Blacks in Montreal when two out of three Black children grow up in poverty, and how do parents cope with these pressures? What challenges do these data pose for the Black communal agenda?

Family stability and economic security are closely linked. In the following section, we explore the dynamics of how people live together in Montreal, and then relate it to issues of gender, children and poverty.

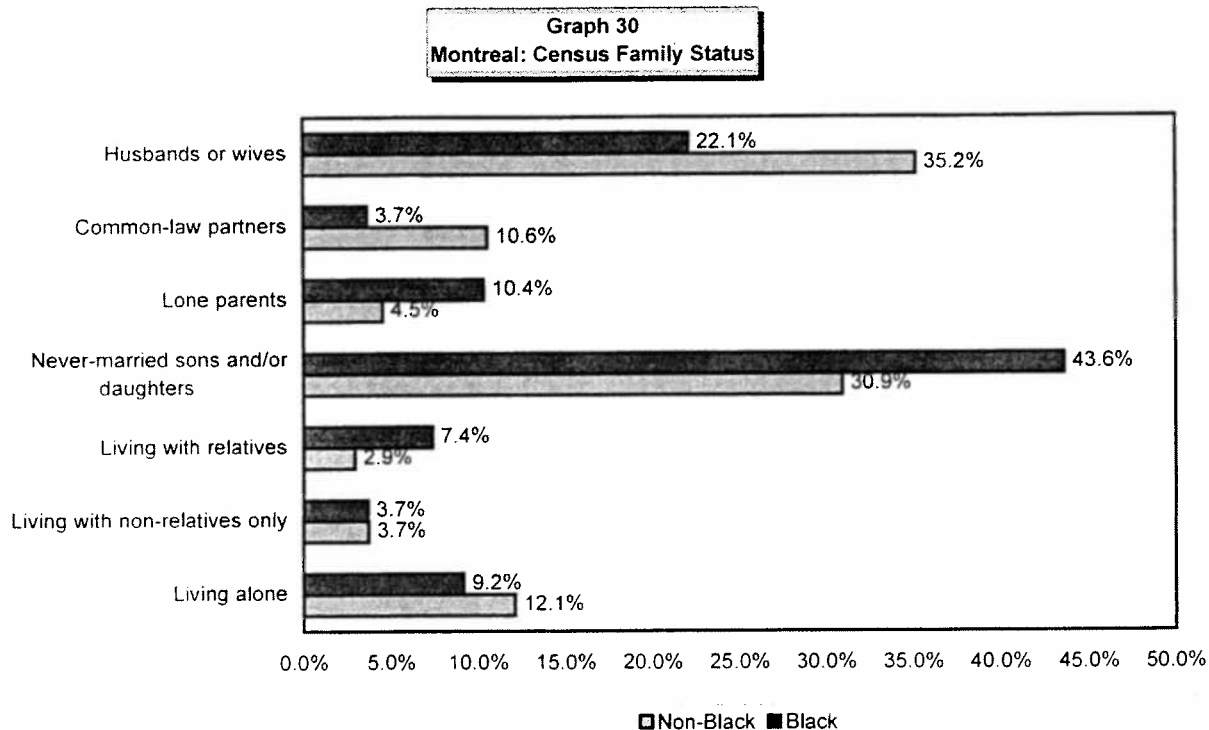
## 7. Family Structure

### 7.1 Living Arrangements

**Living arrangements are much more diverse in the Black community than they are among Montrealers generally.** In both the Black and total populations, Census family living arrangements are the predominant household expression. Census families include husbands and wives, persons living in common-law relationships, single parents and the children who grow up in these different types of households. **About eight out of ten persons in both the Black community and among Montrealers generally lived in Census families in 1996** (79.7% of Blacks and 81.2% of all Montrealers).

Notwithstanding, the structure of Census families is much more diverse in the Black community than among Montrealers generally. **In the Montreal population as a whole, aged 15+, 44% were married at the time the 1996 Census was taken. Among Blacks, only one in three were married (33.7%). More than twice the percentage of persons in the Black community were single parents when compared to Montreal as a whole (10.4% vs. 4.5%).** While rates of single parent families were much higher in the Black community, a much smaller percentage of Black persons lived in common-law relationships when compared to Montrealers generally (3.7% vs. 10.6%).

Census non-family persons include persons who live alone, persons who live with non-family members (for example as roomers and boarders), and persons who live with relatives but not with their own parents or children. A comparable percentage of persons in the Black population (20.3%) and total population (18.8%) lived either alone or with non-relatives. **A higher percentage of Black persons, however, was likely to live with relatives outside of the immediate family (7.4% vs. 3.7%), and a larger percentage of Montrealers was likely to live alone (9.2% vs. 12.1%).** Graph 30 illustrates this diversity in living arrangements among Blacks in Montreal.



What accounts for the differing living arrangements in the Black community? Why is a smaller percentage of the Black adult population married than in the Montreal population as a whole? Why are there strikingly higher percentages of single parent families in the Black community than in the Montreal population as a whole? What are the implications of these living arrangements on family life, child development, and community and family cohesion?

Clearly, the number of marriages in a community is predicated on the availability of suitable partners. Given the gender imbalance resulting from Canadian immigration processes, it is not surprising to find a smaller percentage of currently married persons in the Black population. It is also clear that the significantly higher levels of single parents in the Black community can be attributed to a large degree to this gender imbalance.

Other demographic factors impact on marriage rates and patterns of living arrangement. The higher numbers of children and the younger age of the Black community also partially accounts for lower rates of currently married persons. Similarly, the higher percentages of elderly persons in the Montreal community as a whole underscores the higher percentage of widowed persons in the overall population. To understand these dynamics further, a specific analysis was conducted of various aspects of these living arrangements.

## 7.2 Marital Rates

An analysis by age reveals that Blacks and non-Blacks in Montreal have comparable marriage rates at the 15-24 (4.1% vs. 3.3%) and 25-44 age ranges (42.1 vs. 43.3%). Differences in marriage rates between Blacks and non-Blacks are pronounced at the 45-64 and 65+ age ranges. Slightly

more than half (51.4%) of all Blacks aged 45-64 were married in 1996, and this compares with almost two thirds (62.8%) of non-Blacks in this age range. Among persons aged 65 and over, the discrepancies are even wider (33.3% of Blacks vs. 51.2% of non-Blacks).

**Divorce rates are generally comparable between Blacks and non-Blacks in Montreal** at all age ranges, although there is a tendency for a somewhat larger percentage of Blacks to be divorced than non-Blacks (10.9% vs. 9.4%).

The most startling differences between Blacks and non-Blacks concern those who never married. **46% of all Blacks in Montreal have never been married, compared with 38% of non-Blacks.** In the 15-24 and 25-44 age groups fewer Blacks have never been married than non-Blacks. Of Black Montrealers aged 25-44, 37.3% were never married and this compares with 43.3% of non-Blacks.

At age 45 and over, the trend is reversed. Among Blacks aged 45-64, 16.6% were never married, and this compares to 11.2% of non-Blacks. For persons aged 65 and over, the differences are even more pronounced. 21.5% of all Blacks aged 65+ had never been married, while only 9.2% of non-Blacks had remained single. Tables 10 and 11 present these findings for Blacks and non-Blacks, respectively.

**TABLE 10**
**Montreal Black Population Ages 15+: Legal Marital Status**

Legal Marital Status	Total Age	15-24 yrs	25-44 yrs	45-64 yrs	65+ yrs
<b>Never married (single)</b>	40,075 46.1%	21,390 94.5%	13,825 37.3%	3,445 16.6%	1,415 21.5%
<b>Legally married (and not separated)</b>	29,365 33.7%	925 4.1%	15,595 42.1%	10,655 51.4%	2,190 33.3%
<b>Separated, but still legally married</b>	5,045 5.8%	155 0.7%	2,665 7.2%	1,690 8.2%	535 8.1%
<b>Divorced</b>	9,450 10.9%	155 0.7%	4,630 12.5%	4,120 19.9%	545 8.3%
<b>Widowed</b>	3,055 3.5%	0 0.0%	335 0.9%	825 4.0%	1,895 28.8%
<b>Total population by legal marital status</b>	87,010 100.0%	22,635 100.0%	37,055 100.0%	20,735 100.0%	6,585 99.9%

**TABLE 11**  
**Montreal Non-Black Population Ages 15+: Legal Marital Status**

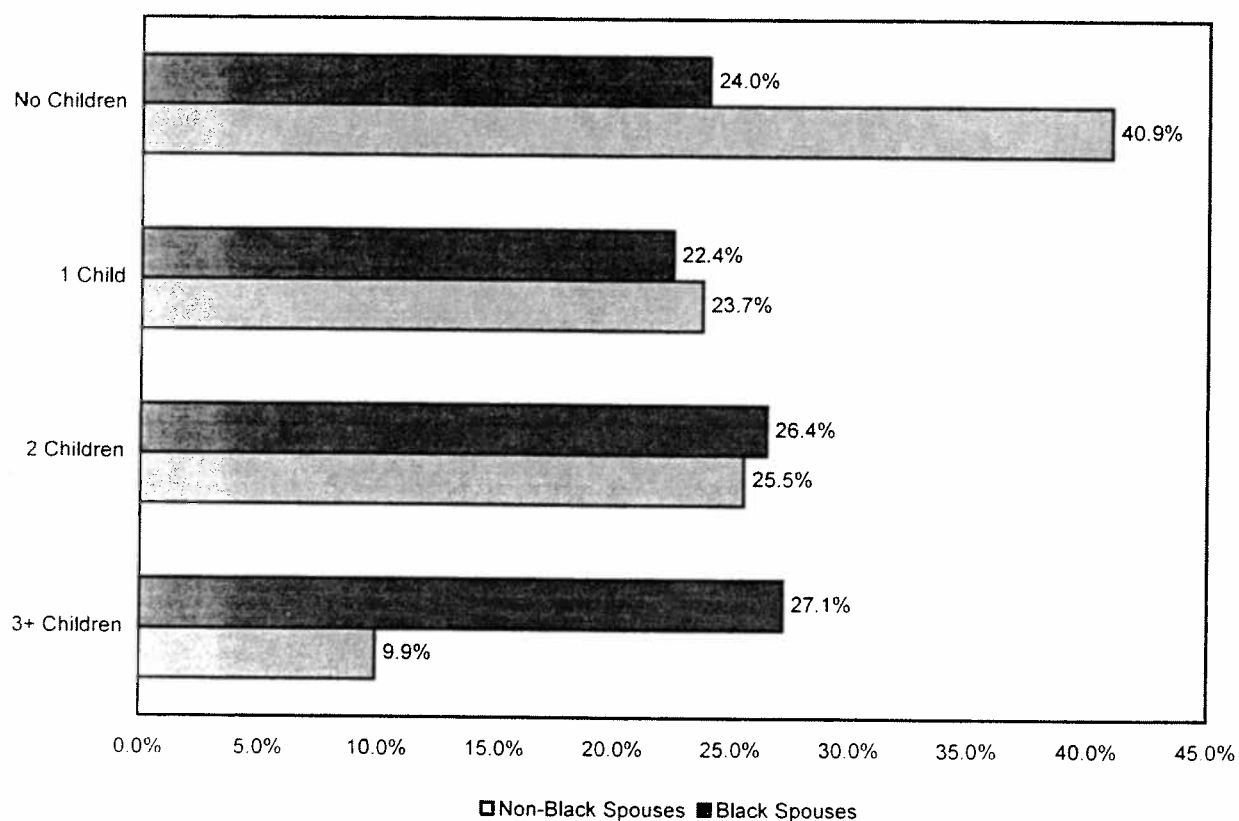
Legal Marital Status	Total	Age 15-24 yrs	25-44 yrs	45-64 yrs	65+ yrs
Never married (single)	983,745 38.2%	390,710 96.2%	477,985 44.4%	81,580 11.2%	33,470 9.2%
Legally married (and not separated)	1,123,355 43.6%	13,510 3.3%	466,360 43.3%	456,775 62.8%	186,710 51.2%
Separated, but still legally married	69,645 2.7%	1,015 0.2%	30,060 2.8%	29,295 4.0%	9,275 2.5%
Divorced	240,805 9.4%	900 0.2%	97,580 9.1%	123,395 17.0%	18,930 5.2%
Widowed	157,490 6.1%	220 0.1%	4,750 0.4%	36,530 5.0%	115,990 31.8%
Total population by legal marital status	2,575,045 100.0%	406,345 100.0%	1,076,735 100.0%	727,585 100.0%	364,380 100.0%

It is among Black women over the age of 45 that past immigration policies have had the most profound effect on family structure. Twice the percentage of Black women aged 45 and over had never been married. 21.7% of Black women aged 45-64 had never been married and this compares to 10.2% of Black men and 10.8% of all Montreal women.

### 7.3 Husband-Wife Families

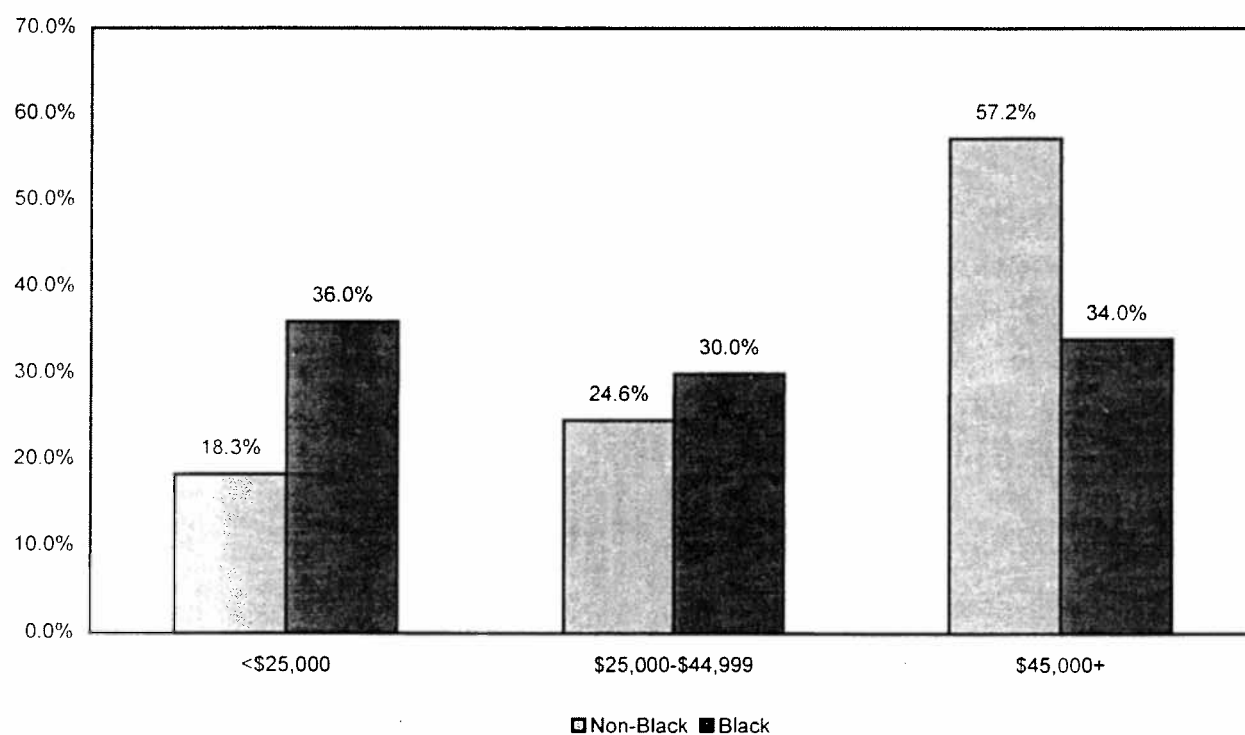
There were 31,385 adult Blacks living in husband-wife families in 1996. These persons represented 36% of all Blacks in Montreal aged 15+. Among non-Blacks, husband wife families accounted for 56% of the 15+ population. Black husband and wife families tend to have more children than their non-Black counterparts. Less than 1 in 4 Black husband-wife families had no children (23.9%), and this compares with more than 4 of 10 childless non-Black husband-wife families (40.9%). Three times as many Black husband-wife families had three or more children than did non-Black husband-wife families (27.1% vs. 9.8%) (Graph 31).

**Graph 31**  
**Montreal Spouses: Number of Children**

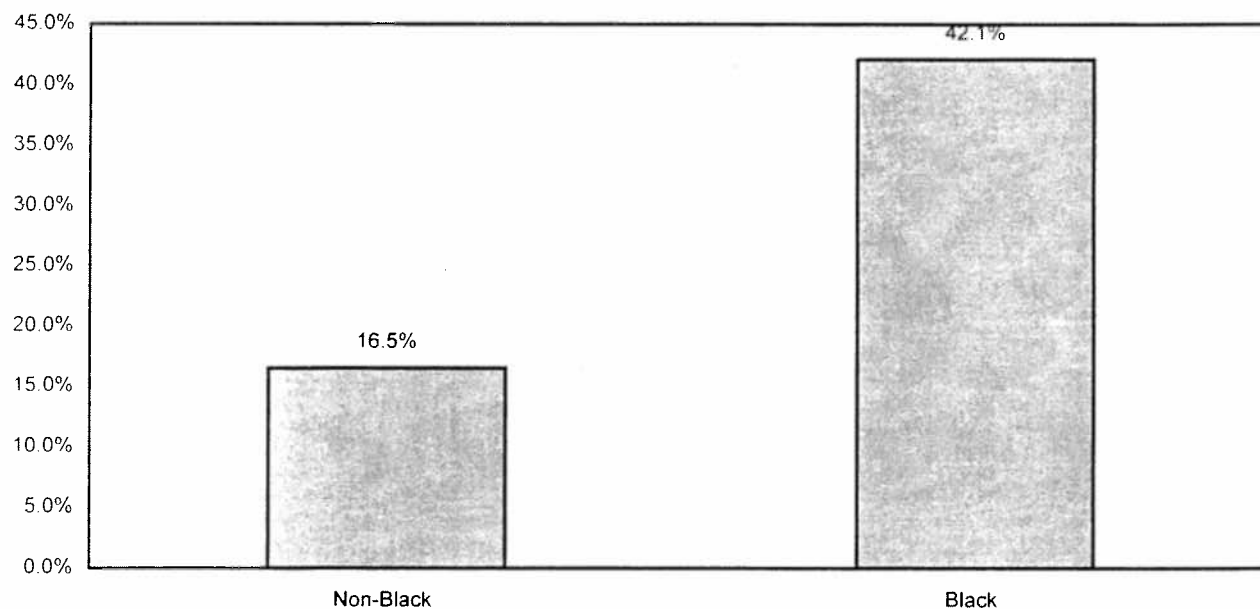


**Despite having more children, Black husband-wife families had substantially lower incomes than did non-Blacks.** Twice as many Black husband-wife families earned less than \$25,000 in 1996 (36.0% vs. 18.3%). Only one third of Black husband-wife families earned more than \$45,000 in 1996 and this compares with more than half of non-Black husband-wife families (57.2%). Moreover, 42% of Black husband-wife families lived below the poverty line, and this percentage was 2 1/2 times greater than the poverty rates for non-Black husband-wife families (42.1% vs. 16.5%) (Graphs 32 and 33).

**Graph 32**  
**Montreal Spouses: Census Family Income**



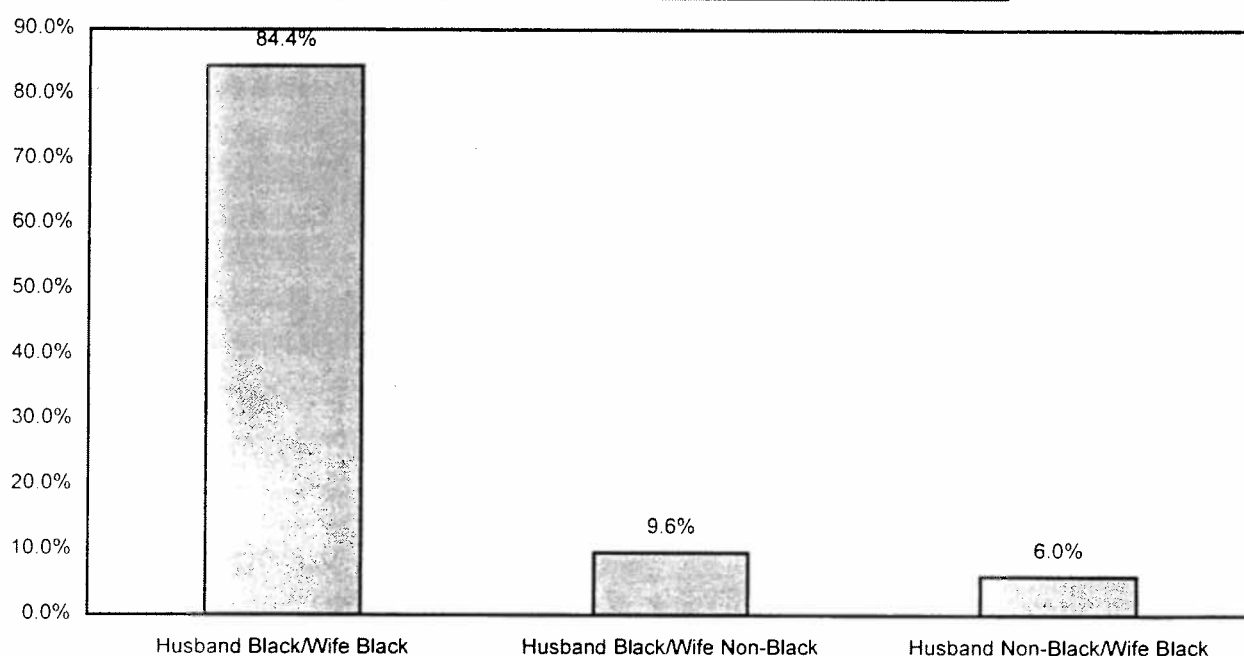
**Graph 33**  
**Montreal: Spouses: Incidence of Low Income**



### 7.3.1 Interracial Families

Of the 31,385 Black adults living in husband-wife families, almost 5,000 were living with a partner who was not Black. **Interracial couples accounted for about one in seven Blacks living in husband wife families (4,895 persons or 15.6%). Black men were more likely to be married to a non-Black woman than were Black women likely to be married to a non-Black male.** Of the 4,895 Blacks married to non-Blacks, 62% were men and 38% were women (Graph 34).

**Graph 34**  
**Montreal Black Population: Intra- and Inter-racial Husband-Wife Families**



**Interracial husband wife families have produced more than 5,000 children** living in Montreal, and this figure reflects only those children who are living currently with both parents in an interracial family. What unique challenges do interracial families and their children raise for the Black communal agenda?



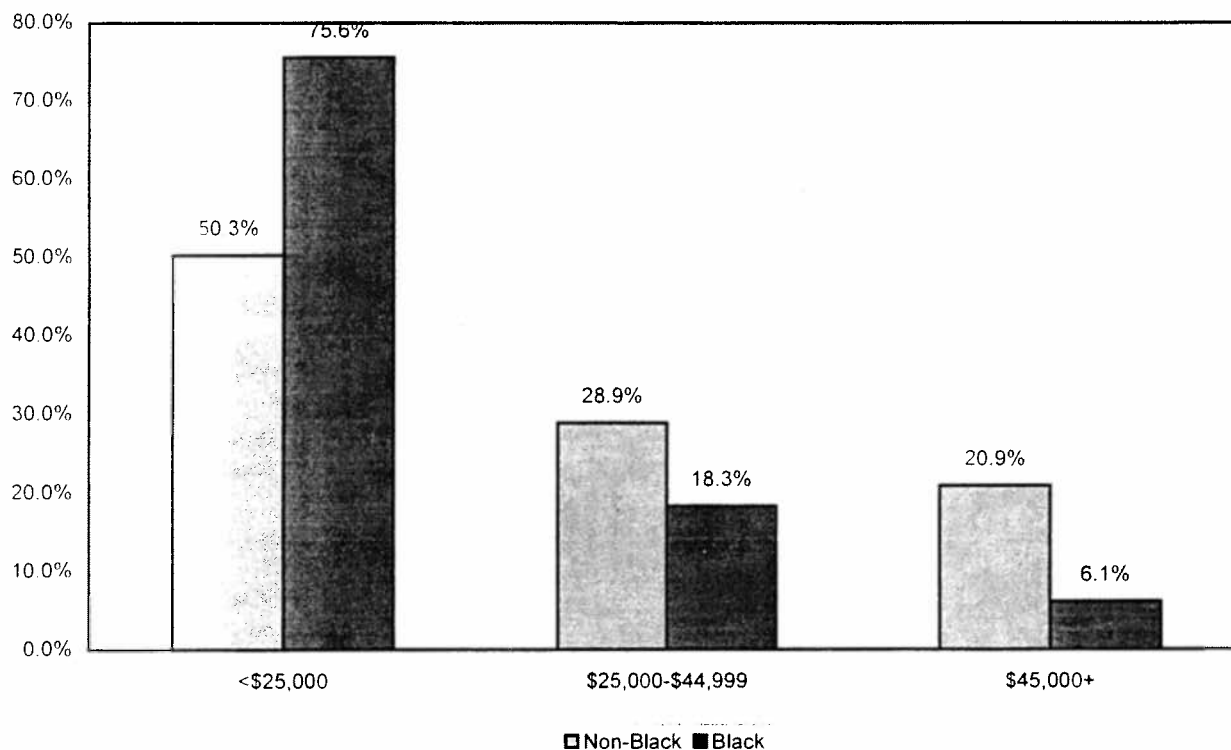
## 7.4 Single Parent Families

In 1996 there were 12,625 Black single parents in Montreal, and they accounted for one in ten Black persons in Montreal of all age ranges (10.4%). This percentage of single parents is more than double than Montreal as a whole (4.5%).

More startling, however, are the overall percentages, which single parent households comprise of the Black community as a whole. Single parents and their children accounted for close to three in ten Black persons living in Montreal in 1996 (34,371 persons or 28.1%).<sup>7</sup> For Montrealers as a whole, single parents and their children accounted for slightly more than one in ten Montrealers (11.0%).

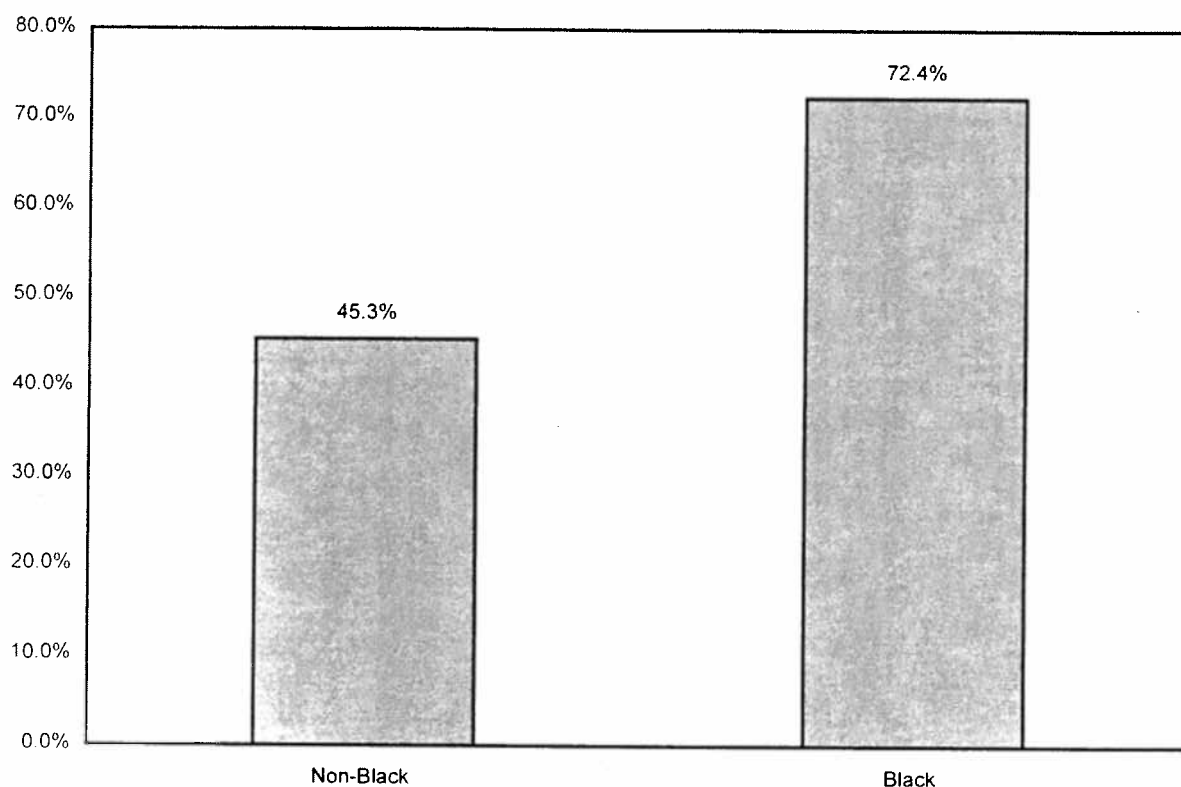
Single parents earned less and were even more likely to be poor. Three quarters of Black single parents (75.6%) and half of all of Montreal's single parents (50.3%) earned less than \$25,000 in 1996. Close to three in four Black single parent families lived below the poverty line in 1996 (72.5%). For Montrealers generally, 45% of single parent families lived below the poverty line. Graphs 35 and 36 present these findings.

**Graph 35**  
**Montreal Single Parents: Census Family Income**



<sup>7</sup> The 34,230 is a minimum figure as it represents the totals of single parents with 1 child, 2 children, and 3 plus children. We do not have data on how many children the 3+ category contains, and our calculations are based on the minimum projection of having only 3 children.

**Graph 36**  
**Montreal Single Parents: Incidence of Low Income**



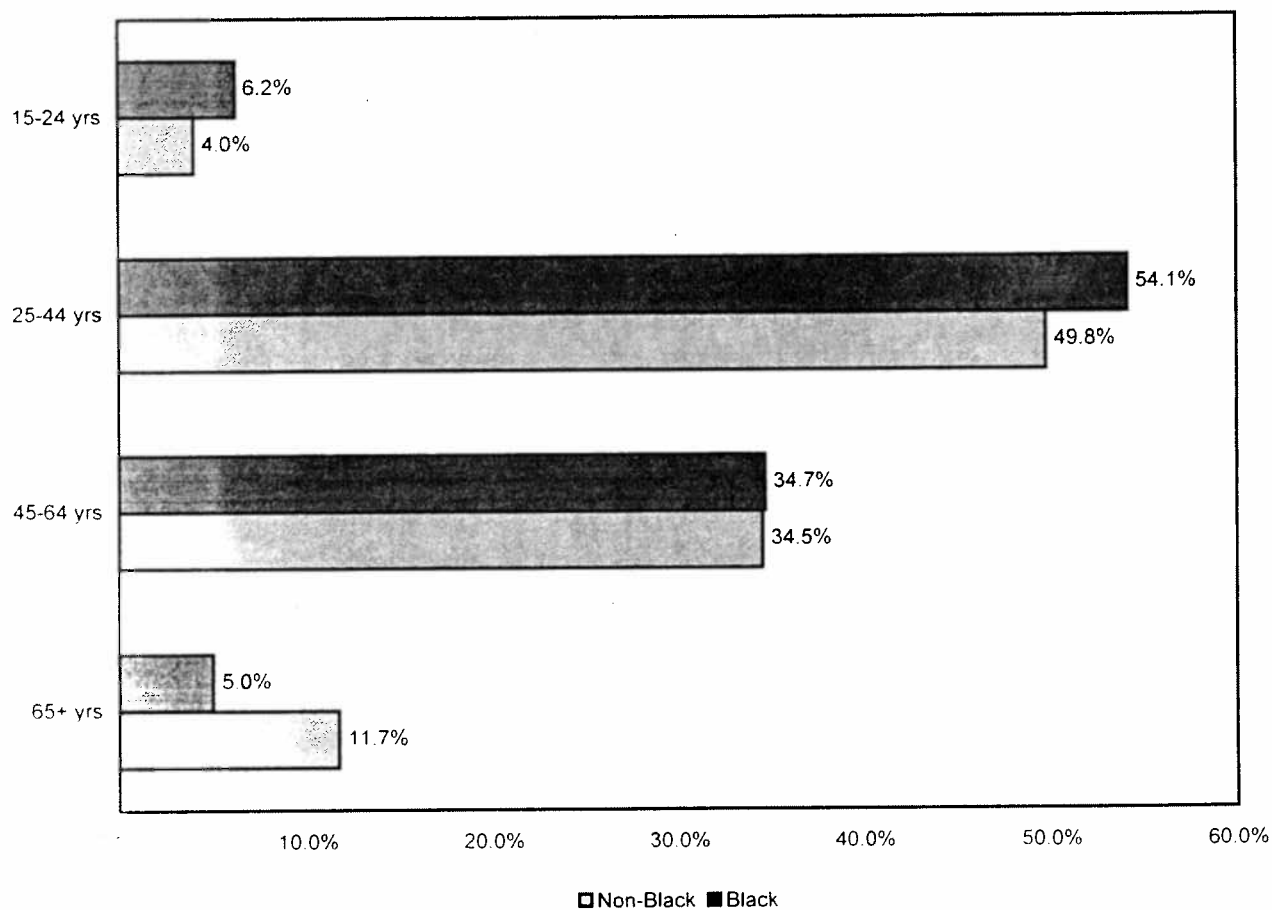
The vast majority of single parent families are headed by women in Montreal. Eighty three percent of all single parent families and 89% of all Black single parent families were headed by women in 1996.

Most single parents are between the ages of 25-44. For Black Montrealers, 54.1% of all single parents were in this age range. For Montrealers generally, a slightly lower percentage (49.8%) were of this age range. Persons aged 45-64 accounted for slightly more than one third of all single parent families in both the Black community and for Montrealers generally (34.7% for Blacks and 34.5% for Montrealers generally).

There were a higher percentage of elderly single parents among Montrealers generally than in the Black community. 11.7% of all single parent families were headed by a person over the age of 65 in Montreal as a whole. For Blacks, only 5.0% of single parents were 65 and over.

There were, however, higher percentages of young single parents in the Black community. 6.2% of all Black single parents were between the ages of 15 and 24 in 1996. For Montrealers generally only 4.0% of single parents were under the age of 25 (Graph 37).

**Graph 37**  
**Montreal Single Parents: Age Distribution**



Particular concentrations of single parent families were highest in St. Michel and Montreal North. These two communities accounted for almost one in five Black single parent families in Montreal (19.4%). The predominantly English speaking Black communities of N.D.G. , Cote-des-Neiges, Little Burgundy and LaSalle accounted for an additional one in five Black single parent families (21%). The Laval, Rivières-des-Prairies and New Bordeaux quadrant accounted for an additional 18.3% of Black single parent families in Montreal.

#### IV. Emerging Agenda

Jim Torczyner and Sharon Springer

This study has outlined the broad contours of the diverse Montreal Black experience. The Black community is dynamic, and contains many strands, streams, cultures and languages. The multi-faceted Montreal Black identity is drawn from the experiences of the descendants of early settlers, of Caribbean, and more recently, of African immigrants, of ethnically mixed families, and of characteristics of Montreal and specific neighbourhoods which Black persons call "home". "Home" in Montreal has much to do with language, country of origin, and income, and there are distinct residential patterns for French speaking Blacks and English speaking Blacks, and for educated, upwardly mobile Blacks and for those who are of low-income and are poverty stricken.

Notwithstanding this great diversity, the data suggest that there are common themes. Three major themes emerge from the data: **Family, Opportunity, and Diversity--Cohesion**. We use these themes to organise our central findings, which, taken together, have a profound effect on shaping the demographic realities of Blacks in Montreal. Further detail is provided by Bergman Fleury and Dr. Emerson Douyon and other members of the committee in response to this study.

At the same time, the diversity of the Black experience in Canada, as reflected in this demographic study makes it clear that there are many points of view on the issues which emerge from the data, and on what should be done about them. The task of this study is not to provide answers. If this study helps to inform debate, raise consciousness, and articulate common concerns, then everyone affiliated with this study will feel gratified at having made a modest contribution to this important emerging agenda.

This study concludes by summarising the data, organising the questions they raise around the themes of **family, opportunity and cohesion**, and identifying issues which might be considered as part of this programme.

#### Strengthening Families

**The data suggests that Black families in Montreal are experiencing considerable financial and emotional stress.** Marriage rates and husband-wife families are lower in the Black community when compared with Montrealers as a whole. Single parent rates are twice as high in the Black community. Two out of every three Black children lived below the poverty line in 1996. High rates of poverty, unemployment and lack of opportunity generate considerable stress on Black families in Montreal.

Unique demographic data exert a powerful influence on Black families in Montreal. First, rapid immigration has doubled the Black population in the past 25 years. Immigration policies which brought large numbers of Black immigrants to Canada have impacted also on the age and gender structure of the Black community, resulting in there being far more Black women of "marriage age" than Black men. Immigration policies have separated parents from children, and immigrants in general do not have the same social support systems as in their home countries.

Second, the Black population is substantially younger than the Montreal population as a whole. It has a much higher percentage of children. It also has a much larger percentage of single parent families. Single parents lack money and social support, and this is particularly true in the Black community. Close to three out of four Blacks who live in single parent families are below the poverty line. Among the immigrant Black community, traditional social support networks are not as available. The absence of elders in the Black community further erodes family cohesion. The presence of more than 5,000 children living in interracial families presents increasing diversity and further challenges to community cohesion.

Taken together with economic pressures experienced by both single-parent and husband-wife families, these demographic forces will shape the experience of Black families in Montreal for many years to come.

Clearly, the needs are very different for different kinds of Black families. Particular cultures, issues, languages and histories shape perceptions, needs and ideas. Black family support organisations may be an important vehicle to provide cohesion to this diverse experience, as they are necessary tools for community building and empowerment. The kind of agenda items which emerge from the data could include the following:

- To develop support systems for families.
- To respond to children and their mothers who are threatened by poverty and who live in single-parent families.
- To build support for working families.
- To increase the voluntary capacity of Black communities to provide Black male role models to their children through programs such as the Black Star program in Montreal.
- To respond to the specific needs of children who live in racially mixed families.
- To advocate for services which are culturally sensitive to the unique demographic make-up of Black families.
- To advocate for changes in public policy (e.g. immigration, day care) which would better respond to the needs of Black families.

### **Expanding Opportunities**

The data demonstrate substantial inequity for Blacks in the labour market. Unemployment rates are two and a half times higher for Blacks than non-Blacks in Montreal. A Black university graduate has the same rate of unemployment as a non-Black who has not completed high school. Blacks are under represented in such higher paying occupations as upper- and middle-level management.

What accounts for these disparities? Are there "invisible barriers" operating in Montreal which prevent Blacks from gaining equitable access to employment? Breaking down barriers to employment generally and with senior occupational positions in particular can expand opportunities for Blacks in Montreal and promote economic well-being. The possibility of expanding scholarships for outstanding young Black persons to study and gain entry to these occupations should be considered.

Public advocacy to change policies detrimental to the economic base of Blacks in Montreal might also be considered. Given the past, official, Provincial under reporting of the numbers of Blacks,

advocacy strategies might be considered in gaining access to a fairer share of public funds. The data show clearly that a much smaller percentage of the Black population is self-employed. Giving consideration then to methods to expand the base of Black capital might be of value. Promoting Black business, assisting in the development of Black businesses, and encouraging entrepreneurship might be strategies worthy of further investment.

Lack of bilingualism among Blacks, and lack of knowledge of French by 20% of the Black community, inhibits employability as well as full participation in political and cultural life. Rates of bilingualism for younger Blacks are identical to those of non-Blacks. Six out of ten Blacks aged 15-24 were bilingual in 1996. Having a French mother tongue is rapidly increasing for Black children.

There remains much to do to assist those who do not speak French to become fluent, as there is to promote bilingualism generally in the Black community. Programs which encourage these goals will impact not only on economic well being, but on family stability. A range of partnerships involving business, government and the voluntary sector might be considered by Black communal leaders.

Since such a significant portion of the Black population lives below the poverty line, and, particularly given the high incidence of poverty among Black single parent families, a consideration of public advocacy strategies and coalition building to promote economic security for families and their children would seem useful. Current cutbacks to the social safety net will adversely affect the Black community to a greater degree than to the population at large because of its higher proportion of children and rates of poverty.

At the same time, community organising strategies to promote neighbourhood entitlements should be considered. The data indicate that the St. Michel neighbourhood could particularly benefit from a Black community run, professionally managed, and university linked advocacy centre. Other neighbourhoods, where large percentages of Black persons live, might be enhanced by such a community based, empowerment approach. It may be more difficult for recent immigrants to negotiate the Quebec institutional system and access entitlements than it is for persons who are more familiar with the system. Neighbourhoods like Cote-des-Neiges and St. Michel have high concentrations of Black immigrants and poor persons.

The perception that few Blacks work in the public service sector also impedes access. People who have not experienced a system of social rights, may be less likely to apply for public benefits to which they are entitled. Accessing entitlements democratises them, and is important to the economic security of substantial numbers of Black persons in Montreal.

Community leaders may wish to further emphasize specific programs to advance the economic and social well-being of Black women particularly with regard to enhancing educational and occupational opportunities. Similarly, the data indicates that further programming for Black youth to counteract high unemployment rates may be essential and might benefit from partnerships with government and the business sector

### **Diversity and Cohesion**

Given the significant and increasing diversity among Blacks in Montreal and the complexity of Black identity who speak French or English, are Canadian, Caribbean or African born, it would be neither feasible nor desirable to expect unanimity of direction, expectation, or strategic orientation. The data suggest, however, that there are common themes and, perhaps, common purposes around which there might be a Black consensus. Some of these were identified as vehicles to strengthen families and to expand economic opportunities. The data suggest that consideration be given to those

issues, which might constitute such a Black agenda generating policy fora in which Black persons from all backgrounds, cultures and languages would be able to discuss relevant topics, for example, might serve this purpose in Montreal.

There are other aspects of diversity and cohesion which suggest local strategies, such as neighbourhood based coalition building, and bridging language and cultural gaps. Neighbourhood advocacy centres which empower Black persons living in particular neighbourhoods to access their rights and entitlements, and to impact on the local, communal agenda may be important vehicles to promote these goals.. Lastly, there are strategies for supporting families and children, and for increasing the volunteer base in order that the Black community be able to look after more of its own needs, especially as the potential directions for addressing these needs tends to become apparent at the grassroots level.

This concludes the preliminary study: ***The Evolution of the Black Community of Montreal: Change and Challenge***. We hope that it is informative for both the Black community and the public at large. We urge you to consider its findings as well as contribute to the discussion and enhancement of the Black community in Montreal.

## V. Responses

### 1. Being Black in Montreal

Emerson Douyon, Ph.D.  
Psychologist

#### Preliminary Considerations

The Black people of Quebec do not constitute a homogeneous group: they have different origins, traditions and cultures. Trying to define the Montreal Black identity is therefore quite a challenge. There are various ways of being Black in Montreal, depending on which sub-group you belong to. So one must consider not only what members of the Montreal Black community have in common, but also what differentiates them.

To paraphrase a remark of Jean-Paul Sartre on being Jewish, our group identity may be structured by our relationship to others. But whether it is real or imagined, induced or constructed like an ethnic archetype, the collective image of Montreal Blacks can take on the appearance of an observable fact. So whether or not we agree with this representation of ourselves, we must either accept it or position ourselves in relation to it.

We could debate endlessly about who is Black and who is not. From a philosophical point of view, a Black person is perhaps a semantic fiction based on a category whose contours are hard to define. Being Black is a vague and ambiguous concept which requires clarification from the outset.

It is fairly easy to speak about a Black African identity or a Black West Indian identity, or even a Haitian, Jamaican, Barbadian, Dominican or Cuban identity. But to speak about a Montreal Black identity by amalgamating the identity of native Blacks with the identities of Black immigrant groups, and then attempting to put oneself in the shoes of all the sub-groups that compose the overall Black community, would be to offer a utopian vision of the Montreal Black ethnic reality. It would be to imply that the Montreal Black identity is simply a patchwork of disparate elements covered by a series of cultural layers. Yet even if we stripped away the layers one by one, there is a chance we would still have no clear vision of a Black Montrealer or of the Montreal Black community.

There was a time, not so long ago, when Black Montrealers were in the habit of designating themselves as Negroes. The name of a venerable Black Montreal institution, "The Negro Community Centre", harks back to that time. But because of its negative connotations, the term Negro was gradually replaced in everyday North American usage by the term "Black", or "Noir" in French. In the minds of many Black people, this new term carried a more positive suggestion of self-affirmation.

As they attempt, like so many other Quebecois, to forge an identity, young Montreal Blacks are turning to their roots and beginning to see themselves as Afro-Quebecois. They are using a biological fact to address a cultural question. Under the influence of the changing trends in Quebec society, Black Montrealers will have evolved from Negroes into Blacks, and from Blacks into Afro-Quebecois, before eventually becoming simply Quebecois.

Despite the practical repercussions of these theoretical debates, there actually is such a thing as a Black Montreal identity. Our challenge is to decipher it. We will not go so far as to speak about a Black way of thinking, Black subjectivity, Black sensitivity or Black reactivity, in the same way some people speak about White rationality. Such constructs are inconsistent with the cultural heterogeneousness of Montreal's Black community. However we do recognize that Black Montrealers



identify with certain values that are associated with their common referent, that is, with their more or less familiar African heritage.

Nothing is more effective than a collective crisis to help Black Montrealers overcome divisions, re-establish affiliations, recreate social bonds and rediscover their Black consciousness. We had a good example of this phenomenon recently when the Montreal Black community mobilized in reaction to the highly publicized Griffin-Gosset and Marcellus François affairs. All members of the Black community felt an obligation to position themselves as Black Montrealers.

In a very unfortunate historic decision, the Senate of Canada classified Blacks as a visible minority. This label confines Blacks to a cultural space from which it is difficult to escape. Their ethnicity is denied, and the emphasis is placed on their visibility or recognizability.

But visibility is experienced differently according to the context. In a crowd comprised largely of Black people, such as we see at Montreal's "Carifesta", White people become the visible minority. So it's obvious that "visible minority" is a relative concept which doesn't work and fails to reflect the experience of Black people. To be Black in Montreal means above all to position oneself in relation to a community shaped by common historical events, similar cultural traditions, and shared moments of distress or elation.

It really doesn't matter where others place us on the visibility scale. A Black person is someone who perceives himself or herself as being Black. In our opinion, self-designation is the only real basis for membership in Montreal's Black community.

#### Being Black in a Pluralistic Society

What does it mean to be Black in Montreal in the era of the Internet, in a culturally diverse society focused on the collective agenda of a global civic community? How can we carve out a one-dimensional group identity in a society which increasingly encourages us to aspire after a composite and variegated identity? These are meaningful questions which provide a larger and more comprehensive framework within which to consider the demographic realities and research data.

Statistics are essential. It is widely recognized that in order to have an effect on a phenomenon, one must begin by specifying its scope and examining it. Where do Black Montrealers live? How numerous are they? What do they do? How do they move around within the territory? Are they making better progress here, in this predominantly White and Francophone environment? How are they positioning themselves in relation to the other groups that share the same habitat?

For once, Black Montrealers have the opportunity to ask these questions of themselves, and to provide the right answers. The contribution of Blacks to the discourse on the Black identity is indicative of a new trend among minorities: to define themselves before others do it for them.

We know perfectly well that in the public imagination, the Black community has a long way to go. The media have contributed significantly to associating the image of Black persons with very negative problems:

- Blacks are caught up in the vicious circle of unemployment, poverty, discrimination, violence and deviance;
- Black youth participate in the highly visible unorganized crime of street gangs;
- Black youth are over-represented in the "special classes" established by the school boards, and in detention centres for minors and adults.

Because his image is made up of a blend of violence, culture and youth, a young Black person inspires fear in certain communities. If he moves about in a group, even Black communities find him fearsome.

We don't want to gloss over these realities, which help to explain why some communities mistrust and keep their distance from Black people. Alongside the myths and unfounded allegations, there is some hard data which cannot be ignored. However our fear is that this negative identity will end up being internalised by Blacks, and serving as an alibi for others to do nothing about the real needs of the Black communities.

Montreal's Black communities are very concerned about the approach to Black youth at the various levels of the justice and social protection system. The justice system is the only system in which Blacks and the other visible minorities are over-represented. That this should be so in the United States, where racial bias has been extensively documented and denounced, is not surprising. But that it should also be so in Canada and Quebec, which have a reputation for upholding human rights, is both surprising and disturbing.

Where does the problem originate? With the youth protection directorate? The courts? The detention centres? Should we blame the minorities which feed the system, or the system itself, which tends to flex its muscles when confronted with visible minorities? In Quebec, periodic surveys indicate that contextual racism is declining. However the growing tendency to take culture and ethnicity into account presents new challenges to the entire justice and social protection system.

#### Being Young, Haitian, Marginal and Black at the Same Time

Putting aside for a moment the issue of the justice and social protection system, what is the identity in Quebec society to which Blacks are claiming a right? A few years ago, we surveyed a sampling of marginal youth in the Haitian community. We especially wanted to know how the geographic map of Montreal corresponded to their mental map of the city. In other words, how did they see themselves, firstly as young people, secondly as Haitians, and thirdly as individual members of Montreal's great Afro-Quebec family? According to the results of our research (Douyon, E., 1996), their mental map of Montreal contrasted with our usual perception of the city.

These marginal Black youth reported that they perceived the territory of Greater Montreal as a "zone" comprising:

- (1) Attractive areas like Côte-des-Neiges, where one feels like a member of the family because it's full of friendly, easy-going Blacks.
- (2) Repulsive areas, which include both racist districts where you are identified on sight, and gang-infested areas where you have to circulate with a "good escort" and be "well equipped".
- (3) Safe areas, like Pointe-aux-Trembles, where you can sleep in peace -- these are "sheep" ranges rather than "wolf" ranges.
- (4) Dangerous areas, where trouble can strike spontaneously for no particular reason - the danger is not in any specific spot but rather everywhere in general.

On the basis of their experience as young Black Montrealers attempting to integrate into Quebec society, these youth painted the following sombre portrait of the Black community:

The Black People of Quebec (according to the marginal youth of the Montreal Haitian community)

There is no place for Black people in Quebec, because White people don't want to grant them one. In the face of this impasse, the whole Black community is in "deep shit". It is marginalized by a Quebec culture with which it doesn't identify, in contrast to the other ethnic groups which carve out a place for themselves -- for example, the Italians with their neighbourhoods, their banks and their institutions. Blacks have no "representation" and are the least socio-economically advanced minority group.

The public image of the Black community is deteriorating. Black people here imitate, and behave as badly as, certain Blacks south of the border. They make their mark in a negative way and reproduce the ghettos of New York. They haven't developed a sense of community - instead, they fight among themselves.

Black seniors have failed to pave the way for Black youth. Consequently, the latter are outside the loop with no well-connected "uncle" or "aunt" to help them integrate into an established network. Black youth who want to succeed receive no support from the community.

Growing up Black in Quebec is very hard. In the beginning, you try to forget your Black identity. But the hard reality of being Black soon catches up with you. At school, you have to be tough to survive. You have to struggle constantly against stereotyping and prejudice. If you're a boy, you become "macho" much faster than White boys, developing more resourcefulness and a greater sense of initiative. If you're a girl, you mature much faster than White girls because of the countless obstacles strewn in your path and the general lack of respect for you.

As for Black leaders, if you're a Black youth you don't know any. They're invisible, silent, isolated in the luxury of their suburban homes. Some of them are ashamed of Black youth. They are more likely to blame Black youth than to help them. Others exploit their ethnicity to get ahead, but they do not work very hard for the cause.

Black managers and professionals do not know how to communicate with Black youth. These so-called Black leaders work for the White community, and their message to Black youth is not getting through. Nowhere do we see a Bob Marley or Malcolm X urging Black youth to stand up and fight for their rights.

There is such a thing as Black solidarity in Quebec. But only among marginalized Blacks. The Black youth gangs, themselves victims of racism, are the ones who have defended Black youth. These street kids have filled the leadership vacuum in Quebec's Black community. They may be "bad boys", but they are also friendly, supportive and proud to be Black.

(Extracted from the Report entitled *Les Jeunes Haïtiens et les Gangs de rue*. Emerson Douyon, 1996).

### Collective Identity and a Look toward the Future

Do the other groups which make up the Montreal Black community share this perceptive but corrosive view of the reality of being Black in Quebec? We don't know, because no surveys have been conducted to identify the different ways of being Black in Montreal on the basis of identity referents specific to Montreal's Black community. But the mental map of Black Montrealers most probably conveys the new realities of Montreal in the 2000s.

Because of the abusive amount of media attention they receive, marginal Black youth of Haitian descent sometimes appear to embody the Black reality in Montreal. But they are far from being representative of Black youth in general. To offset the negative image they conjure up, we need only consider the many individual and collective contributions of Montreal Blacks to the creativity and development of Quebec society.

If we asked the same questions about self-image to the adults and seniors in the Montreal Black community, we do not know what they would answer. But their common sense would most probably balance the rhetoric which these marginal youth employ when speaking about their communities of origin and Quebec society. They would consider where we came from, what we have achieved as individuals, and what challenges await the Black community. They would be less negative and place less emphasis on our shortcomings. Instead, they would underline the positive, our strengths, our resources, and the desire of the majority of Black Canadians for more open-mindedness.

They would remind these youth that, despite certain persistent irritants to Blacks, Montreal is still a good place to live -- that it is becoming a great laboratory for multi-ethnic and multicultural living in which Blacks have an opportunity to flourish. Each year, during Black History month, we celebrate some of the emblematic figures of our emerging community. When are we going to celebrate the success of Montreal's Black community as a whole?

Not quite yet. First, we will have to surmount the obstacles to change, both external and internal. Above all, we will have to overcome our defeatism and bring a sense of urgency to:

- Developing a more comprehensive and more active community spirit in order to strengthen our social bonds;
- Encouraging a spirit of entrepreneurship among our youth by systematically supporting their efforts;
- Stimulating an interest in higher education and advanced technology among our youth, in order to raise their aspirations;
- Giving our community the necessary tools to increase its economic power;
- Promoting positive forms of leadership in order to inspire Black youth;
- Developing a strategy to ensure the participation and representation of Blacks in every aspect of the political life of Montreal and Quebec;
- Negotiating our collective Black identity within the framework of our common citizenship, without surrender, and without renouncing our roots and our originality.

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## 2. Improving the Profile of Black Communities in Montreal

Bergman Fleury

### A Collective Responsibility to Fight Injustice

#### Real and Unacceptable Injustice

The local committee formed to collaborate on this socio-demographic study of Black communities in Montreal deemed it very important to analyse the data of the 1996 census in order to better address the priority needs of families and individuals in these communities. Meetings were held with Black Francophone and Anglophone organizations for the purpose of jointly identifying their main concerns as well as the areas in which immediate action is required. The results of this consultation confirmed that plans based on scientific data could help to:

- 1) improve the circumstances of families, the training and qualifications of youth and women, and access to employment; and
- 2) fight poverty and injustice. These socio-demographic analyses of Montreal and the main districts in which Blacks reside can be used in conjunction with sociological studies in order to gain a better understanding of needs and to target actions more effectively.

This report, which concentrates on ten districts in the Montreal area, draws a profile which clearly indicates that the status of Black persons in Quebec's largest metropolis is abnormally underprivileged. The contribution of Blacks to Quebec society in Montreal earns them incomes that are unjustly low in relation to the incomes of other citizens.

Montreal's Black communities are an important element of the human, cultural and economic resources of Montreal society and Quebec society. In light of Quebec's democratic values, their socio-economic exclusion is unacceptable: they must be allowed to assume their rightful place in society within the framework of Quebec's development objectives.

The report describes Montreal Blacks as having the following **three groups of characteristics**, which demonstrate the contrast between their contribution to society and the benefits they derive from this contribution:

#### 1. Demographic and Cultural Potential

- **adaptability**, acquired through the experience of immigrating (a distant experience for some communities) or of persevering under difficult living conditions;
- wide geographical distribution over the metropolitan area and **absence of Black ghettos**, indicating a high level of social integration;
- **larger families** than the Montreal average (a positive demographic contribution, but one which places a too heavy social burden on **low-income families**);
- strong presence of **women** and **single mothers**;
- a **higher proportion of children and youth** than the Montreal community as a whole;
- half of all Black children and youth are **Francophone**, more than half are **bilingual** (French-English), and many are even **multilingual**.

**2. Level of education comparable to that of the general population, although lower among certain groups**

- **high rate of school attendance** with a view to obtaining a diploma or access to a career; **university attendance rate** comparable to that of the general population, but still below its full potential;
- **many Black women have a low-level of educational attainment.**

**3. Abnormally unfavourable position on the labour market**

- **higher labour market participation rate** than the general population;
- **higher unemployment rate** than the general population, **especially among youth**;
- **much lower average income** than the general population;
- **higher poverty rate** than the general population.

The last three characteristics unfortunately apply to Montreal's Black community as a whole. Even if they have been settled here for a very long time, are highly educated, live within a solid family structure, are highly integrated linguistically, are occupationally qualified, mobile and available, and have insufficient means at their disposal to immediately improve their living conditions, most Black Montrealers are still subjected to various degrees of injustice. This is a historical reality, and the situation is likely to deteriorate unless something is done about it.

In October 1999, the Conseil des relations interculturelles condemned this increasingly serious social exclusion: "Blacks constitute the largest visible minority group, with 131,970 members ... (page 17). A study by the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'immigration, using a mathematical regression model based on 1991 data, reveals that, in addition to the previously identified discrimination with respect to job qualification levels, there are other types of discriminatory mechanisms in place. As a result, members of visible minority groups have lower incomes than other citizens with equivalent characteristics. Although there is no formal proof, it is highly probable that discrimination toward members of visible minority groups with respect to employment and income is even greater today than in 1996." (page 24) (L'équité en emploi: De l'égalité de droit à l'égalité de fait. Conseil des relations interculturelles, Montreal, October 1999).

### **A Responsibility to Take Action**

Responsibility for developing and implementing plans and strategies aimed at rectifying this unjust situation rests with Quebec's political authorities and socio-economic players in both the public and private sectors, as well as with Montreal's citizens, families, businesses and communities. Nevertheless, the Black communities themselves have the greatest interest in getting involved to improve their socio-demographic profile.

In this undertaking to give Blacks an equitable place, public and community-based agencies can work together in order to:

- 1. Define priority needs and identify the appropriate resources by:**
  - making suitable use of the objective information on the injustices to which Blacks are subjected;
  - analysing the realities of unacceptable situations and the factors likely to bring about change;
  - identifying the strengths and problems of Blacks;
  - analysing the specific needs of Blacks in order to improve their circumstances with respect to

**family life, basic education, technical and occupational training, housing, employment,** and to promote their full participation as citizens in all areas of civic and political life.

**2. Develop methodical action plans by:**

- establishing action priorities that will yield significant and irreversible results;
- setting short, medium and long range objectives in various sectors;
- putting the resources of the communities to good use for the benefit of their members.

**3. Fight discrimination by:**

- developing plans and strategies by using these resources as well as public institutions and democratic instruments for fighting injustice;
- developing solidarity in the community and in society as a whole in order to fight systematically against all forms of discrimination.

The various elements of the socio-democratic profile of Blacks in Montreal suggest two major guidelines for actively opposing exclusion at all levels and in all fields of activity:

1. Act collectively and systematically with community, institutional and private programs that promote the full participation of Montreal's Black citizens in Quebec society;
2. Systematically refuse to accept all unjust situations until they are rectified, using all available democratic means.

### **Initiatives Involving the Black Communities and Society as a Whole**

#### **Developing Action Plans to Improve the Situation of Blacks in Montreal**

Agencies managed by Blacks have the responsibility of launching initiatives that have precise objectives.

**Take action on a sectorial basis by:**

1. **targeting high-risk groups**, especially **women** with little schooling, **single mothers, children, youth and lone individuals**;
2. searching for solutions to reduce the high rate of **family break-up**;
3. collaborating in **guiding youth** toward occupations that offer the **best prospects for long-term employment: education, new technologies, the professions**, etc.
4. developing technical and occupational **proficiency networks** to ensure a major Black presence in **fields of activity where Black families constitute a large portion of the clientele**: day-care facilities, early childhood centres, supervision services, homework assistance, organization of extra-curricular activities, youth recreation, food services, etc.;
5. **encouraging Blacks** who develop economic and professional activities in the communities.

**Create Jobs in Black Communities by:**

6. developing savings and credit for **investment in the Black communities**;
7. making use of the occupational skills of members of the Black communities by offering **contracts or on-the-job training to young students and graduates**;
8. developing **research projects** to address problems specific to certain Black groups.



**Propose structured solutions to public services and institutions by:**

9. setting **realistic objectives** that make it possible to **evaluate the results** of the programs proposed by Black organizations and to adjust them efficiently;
10. asking public institutions for the necessary **resources** to carry out these programs;
11. conducting programs in **collaboration** with various organizations both inside and outside the communities;
12. asking **public services to make changes** in order to better meet the needs of their Black clientele.

**Get involved in society as a whole by:**

13. encouraging Blacks to develop **multiple ties** in their communities and in Montreal society as a whole through participation in cultural, social and political activities;
14. supporting the **participation of Blacks** in political institutions, at every level where control of the decision-making process can lead to a better understanding of the various cultures of the Black communities and of the needs of Black citizens;
15. developing **strategic alliance networks** with social, economic and political partners for the purpose of promoting the equitable interests of Blacks and of society as a whole.

**Systematically Condemn all Discrimination**

The Province of Quebec has the necessary official legal institutions and instruments to fight discrimination, especially ethnic, cultural and racial discrimination. However, the Black communities themselves must fight systematically against the injustices to which they are subjected, because it would be unrealistic to count on other social players to assume sole responsibility for bringing about the necessary changes. Black Montrealers cannot improve their socio-demographic profile by adopting the attitude of helpless victims. Fighting injustice effectively involves objectively identifying situations which promote exclusion, and systematically condemning cases of individual and collective discrimination in every sector of society.

This legal facet of the fight against injustice toward Black Montrealers can be waged by organizing activities designed to:

**Help Blacks to exercise their rights by:**

1. **targeting sectors** where this injustice is most harmful, notably the job market, the professions, business and education;
2. persuading Black communities **not to tolerate** discrimination, using community media and the major media;
3. **documenting situations** which should be condemned;
4. submitting **formal complaints** to the human rights and youth rights commission, and to the human rights court;

**Turn the exclusion of Blacks into a major social issue by:**

5. **highly publicizing unjust situations**, as well as legal complaints lodged and redress or corrective action obtained;
6. **demanding the establishment and implementation of employment equity programs**, with the obligation to account for corrective action, in the **public and private sectors**;
7. **working in cooperation** with the different Black communities and other groups actively involved in the fight against discrimination and social exclusion;
8. collaborating with **institutions and agencies** whose mission includes working to eliminate discrimination and social exclusion.

The organizations that work to equitably improve the living conditions of Black Montrealers would do well to make this legal battle a priority. Within the framework of Quebec's democracy, the utilization of legal guarantees against injustice promotes a climate of security which benefits all citizens and social groups.

These organizations, as well as our public institutions and services, have a moral and social obligation to eliminate the injustice to which Blacks are subjected. The fulfilment of this obligation involves making full use of relevant information -- statistical and sociological data and analyses, quantitative and qualitative studies -- in order to organize effective interventions. Such action could prevent this injustice from getting worse.

The provincial and municipal governments, as well as certain corporations, recently began taking some positive action to reduce the unemployment rate of visible minority groups and Black communities, which is acknowledged to be abnormally high. This first step toward a solution should serve as a reference for Montreal society as a whole. However, organizations that serve the Black communities still have a responsibility to evaluate the results in order to determine whether this positive action is having a permanent and significant impact on the socio-demographic profile of Blacks in Montreal.

### 3. Agenda Building in the Quebec Context – A Community Development Perspective

Janis-Marika Smith

The census data referred to in this study has helped to trace an accurate and vivid profile of Black communities in Montreal. Defining Blacks in census terms has certainly clarified some of the challenges and inequities confronted by the Black communities in Montreal today. Equally, it has revealed some of the overall characteristics that distinguish the Black Montreal population as well as highlighted many areas of strength or in need of further development in relation to the Black community.

But does all of this information signal an emerging agenda? Moreover what indeed are the challenges faced by the Black Communities today in establishing policies, in structuring and in defining an emerging agenda? Are there areas around which a consensus can be built? Where lies the common goal, the unified voice or the plan for joint action? These are some questions that must be asked in order to give meaning and relevance to the data referred to in the report and in order to provide a real, tangible incentive for continued development of the Black communities in Montreal.

Perhaps there is a common ground, one that lies within the very potential for growth and development amongst and between the various communities; dormant, perhaps but very much attainable. However, in order to reach this potential, communities must begin to understand not only their makeup rather they must also begin to look beyond their shared historical, social and cultural experiences in order to become *outwardlooking* and *forward thinking*. Looking outward and beyond, exercising progressive thinking, means that the Black community can now see itself not solely in terms of how others define it rather within the context of a changing, contemporary society. It must position itself on the whole spectrum of change. Change is not defined by time, it is cyclical, often circumluntary, but more often it is progressive and evolving and for this reason the way in which the Black community perceives itself today must be in relation to the contemporary environmental, geographic, linguistic, political and social reality of Quebec; a society in evolution, transforming itself from day-to-day.

The ability to be *outwardlooking* is as equally conceivable as it is compelling for if it is true that Black communities are constantly evolving, the same can be said of society in general. There are many changes taking place in Quebec today that will, if not already, influence the way communities are organizing at the onset or creating their own agendas. In order to respond to these changes or to meet new challenges some consideration should be given as to what these changes imply and what kind of involvement is needed in order to address Black community concerns.

Back in 1996, at the same time Statistics Canada was compiling and making available its census results to the Montreal Steering Committee to undertake this study, The Ministry of Education Quebec, held numerous consultations and an Estates General on Education, that, consequently gave rise, to a major reform of preschool, elementary and secondary education in September of 2000. The resulting changes in the school system raised a host of questions for and concerns by parents and the general public at large. Given that the Black community is a younger community and that more Black children are enrolled in public highschools, given economic statistics, living arrangements and the structure of the Black family, what will need to be done in order to ensure the academic success of Black children who are also part of an ever evolving system that places higher

demands on parent involvement and participation? Will Black children be adequately prepared to meet the challenges ahead?

How can Black parents ensure that they are fairly represented (particularly in areas with high Black populations) on Governing Boards, whose main purpose is to empower schools, and parents and make collective decisions regarding a schools' priorities, orientation, programs and services?

This is one of several recent societal agendas that have completely redefined and restructured Quebecs' educational institutions. Just the same, in light of these and other ongoing or upcoming changes, in light of shifting geographic borders due to municipal mergers that are on the horizon and waiting to materialize (Bill 170, the merger legislation) in light of electoral boundaries that are currently being redefined and in light of numerous and continued reforms in the Health and Social Services sector, what kinds of policies and planning need to take place in order for the Black community to fully participate in Québec society?

Given what is known about the geographic distribution of Black communities on the island of Montreal, how will municipal mergers or changes in electoral boundaries affect these communities? How will they make their voices heard in the political arena? Will they be able to represent their interests in the same way or will they be further dispersed along the political divide?

What kinds of mechanisms could be implemented in order that the Black community may continue to be viable and in order to assist this community to maintain and to revitalize its community structures? How can community leaders work and reach out to their constituents in order to ensure equal access to programs and services? Do not leaders themselves have the ability, the power or the prerogative to be more than mere recipients but also initiators of change?

Will communities, institutions and organizations reading this study recognize or find the links between policy changes and the overall individual growth, vitality and development of community that should ensue.

What are the roles, responsibilities and challenges of community practitioners, policy makers and planners in building an agenda around contemporary issues? Who are there partners in change?

Right now, many institutions, government and otherwise are embracing change throughout their ranks in order to address employment inequities, for example or to transform their workforce. Are contemporary societal gains such as the Provincial Governments' law 143 **«la Loi sur l'accès à l'égalité en emploi dans des organismes publics et modifiant la Charte des droits et libertés de la personne»** (Law instituted by Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration, adopted by the National Assembly, December 1, 2000 and in effect since April 1, 2001. Law 143 targets 700 public organisations and 500 000 jobs in its attempts to correct the under-representation of women, aboriginals, members of visible minorities and people whose mother tongue is neither French nor English in public organizations) enough of a redress and will these measures give rise to equal access and adequate representation of visible minorities in the workforce? Will poorer families have equal access to the labour market when there are a lack of programs or supplementary measures to support labour market participation?

Are community organizations and community leaders getting involved and working with *La Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse*; the institution in charge of applying this measure, in order to influence the outcome of the employment equity program and, more importantly, to ensure that the Black community, youth in particular, benefits and prospers

from this and many other societal gains? What strategies will be put into place and how will community leaders ensure emerging agendas are not limited to the agendas of the day?

Apart from legislative measures, what kinds of additional supplementary measures are being put in place in order to increase the chances of success of this and additional newfound policies? Should the Black community be making demands in relation to the application of new legislation or are members of the Black community part of supplementary measures put into place to survey, monitor and critique various aspects of implementation of new legislative measures, particularly in the education, health and social services sector.

If Bill 36 (projet de loi 36 sur la santé publique «Une loi moderne adaptée au nouveau contexte québécois, pour une meilleure santé publique», presented to the National Assembly on June 19, 2001) is adopted, the Black community may want to be particularly vigilant as to what this law would entail and its significance for say, six out of every ten Black women in Montreal currently living below the poverty line and the impact of this poverty on their health and that of their children.

Although it is not the aim of this report to put forth a *blueprint* for action, it must be emphasized that contemporary emerging agendas in the Health and Social Service sector dictates that Black organizations and service workers that intervene on behalf of women or work with families providing health care, take a closer look at these changes.

A realization as to the scope of these changes, may, in turn, lead them to want to begin contemplating how Bill 36 would impact on the lives of their clients. Some may even wish to go so far as to plan or build community and service agendas around a number of areas, more specifically in regards to the following: The state of health of Black women in Québec, health problems and factors influencing their health and well-being, health promotion and prevention of health risks and social problems, protection of health and social well-being, ethics surrounding public health and access to information in high risk situations. What kind of health consortium could emerge to survey and document health issues affecting Black women, to collectively address these issues, to represent Black community experiences and concerns or to participate in monitoring and reporting on the impact of these reforms?

In attempting to provide an overall, general perspective of what an emerging agenda could look like within the context of present day reforms and public policy in place in Québec society it would seem that the needs of family, women and children in particular are most pressing. The Black community needs strategies to ensure the healthy development of children, the employment of youth as well as the social and economic well-being of families. Undeniably, too many Black women and children are living in poverty which makes a children and family agenda all the more necessary.

If investing in children and youth is key to developing a strong economy and a healthy society then why not devise a childrens agenda that would focus on building a broad public commitment and public information campaign around issues of health, family economic well being and youth employment.

When all is said and done, however, one cannot but reiterate that community consultation and involvement as well as the development of partnerships with government, and public institutions are an integral part of the agenda building process.

Here is a final thought for those who are currently engaged in community service, and in the design and implementation of community strategies: In spite of the fact that the questions raised in this

section cannot be answered within the confines of this report, it is imperative to analyze and question the data provided as surely it is in the process of asking that one may begin to move forward in the search for answers.

At the very least, the data provided in this report can and must be analyzed within the context of contemporary societal issues, present day program policies and emerging priorities that are continuously shifting and evolving as it these current trends that will have an undeniable impact on the structure, development, progression and very nature of the Black communities now and into the future.

## **VI Analysis of Residential Patterns Among Blacks in Montreal**

### **Jim Torczyner and Sharon Springer**

Ten groupings of neighbourhoods were selected for further study in order to identify salient characteristics at a local level which highlight the Black experience; Bordeaux, Cote-des-Neiges, LaSalle, Laval, Little Burgundy/St. Henri, Montreal North, N.D.G.- Montreal West, Park Extension, Rivière des Prairies, St. Michel

These neighbourhoods accounted for 57% of all Blacks living in Montreal in 1996. As discussed earlier in the study, the distribution of Blacks in Montreal relate to language and homeland. Thus, 36.7% of all Blacks in Montreal lived in the primarily French speaking neighbourhoods of Montreal North, St. Michel, Laval, Rivières des Prairies and Bordeaux. In more English speaking neighbourhoods such as Notre Dame de Grace, Cote-des-Neiges, LaSalle and Little Burgundy an additional 18% of the Black population lived. Table 2 demonstrates the residential patterns of Blacks in Montreal.

On a neighbourhood level, data was collected about the following variables: gender ratios, age patterns, immigration status, period of immigration and place of birth, mother tongue and knowledge of official languages, heads of households in husband-wife families and single parent families, family size,\* incidence of low income,\* levels of education, and labour force activity and unemployment levels.

\*Please note that data was available only regarding the heads of households and could not be aggregated to include the total number of family members in each category. Thus, we cannot report the overall percentage of low income persons in neighbourhoods. Rather, we can only provide data about the percentage of persons in each family grouping who are poor.

### **Bordeaux**

Bordeaux Population	126,350	As Percentage of Area	6.7%
Bordeaux Black Population	8,430	As Percentage of All Montreal Blacks	6.9%

If other neighbourhoods of Montreal represent the distinctive flavors of the Francophone and Anglophone Caribbean experience, Bordeaux has a uniquely African texture. Although still not the majority of Blacks in the area, African born Blacks account for 28.3% of Blacks in Bordeaux, three times the city-wide Black percentage of 9.7%. African immigration to Canada is more recent than Caribbean immigration and tends to have a gender balance which slightly favors men over women. Thus, it is not surprising to note that Bordeaux has the highest percentage of Black immigrants who arrived in Canada after 1991 (42.4% vs. a city-wide Black average of 26.8%). Men constitute 50.1% of Blacks in Bordeaux, the only neighbourhood studied in which men form the majority.

About two out of three (63.8%) of Blacks in Bordeaux are immigrants, a much higher figure than the 56.9% figure overall for Blacks in Montreal. Three of ten (30.8%) are Canadian born, again substantially lower than the 38.3% Black city-wide average.

Bordeaux Blacks are more likely to speak English only at home (32.5%) or a language other than English and French (37.4%) than Blacks generally in the city (27.3% and 29% respectively). Fluency in English and French form a different pattern for Black residents of Bordeaux than for the neighbourhood generally. About one in three (32.4%) were only fluent in English and this compares with 18.3% of Blacks in Montreal as a whole and 19.7% of non-Black Bordeaux residents. 28.4% were fluent in French only compared with 44.2% of all Blacks in Montreal and 19.4% of non-Black residents of Bordeaux. Blacks in Bordeaux were slightly more bilingual than the city-wide average for Blacks (37.5% vs. 35.8%), but were much less likely to be bilingual than their non-Black neighbours whose bilingualism rate was 55.3%.

Blacks in Bordeaux have a somewhat smaller percentage of young persons and older persons than Blacks generally in Montreal. 45.8% were under 25 (compared with 47.4% for Blacks city-wide), and 4.1% were over 65 (compared with 5.4%). Blacks in Bordeaux also tend to have smaller families and a larger percentage of people who live alone. Twenty two percent of Black husband-wife families and 13.4% of Black single parent families in Bordeaux have three or more children (compared with 27.1% and 20.2% respectively for Blacks generally in Montreal). Blacks living alone constitute 23% of Blacks in Bordeaux and 20% of Blacks in the city as a whole.

Poverty rates in Bordeaux are substantially higher than they are in Montreal generally, and this pattern is evident among both Blacks and non-Blacks. Fifty eight percent of all Black husband-wife families and 25% of all non-Black husband-wife families in Bordeaux lived below the poverty line. The corresponding figures for Montreal as a whole are 42% and 17% respectively. Among single-parent families, almost eight in ten (79.3%) of Blacks in Bordeaux lived below the poverty line compared with 72.4% of Blacks in Montreal as a whole.

Blacks in Bordeaux have comparable levels of educational attainment as Blacks generally in Montreal. Slightly fewer have less than a high school degree (31.9% vs. 34.5%) and slightly fewer have a university degree (10.4% vs. 10.8%). Unemployment rates were significantly higher as 32.1% of Blacks in the labour force in Bordeaux were unemployed in 1996 and this compares with 26.5% for Montreal Blacks as a whole.



The distinctive African texture of the Bordeaux Black community is evident from the data. They are more recently arrived, more likely to be male, have fewer children and are fairly evenly divided in language abilities, which, despite the proportion of African immigrants, can lead to issues in community cohesion.

### Cote-des-Neiges

Cote-des-Neiges Population	84,730	As Percentage of Area	8.8%
Cote-des-Neiges Black Population	7,445	As Percentage of all Montreal Blacks	6.1%

Cote-des-Neiges is a diverse, multi-ethnic community which is home to 6% of all Blacks in Montreal and where Blacks constitute close to 9% of all its residents. The gender ratio of females to males in the Black community is identical in Cote-des-Neiges to the overall figures for Montreal Blacks. That is, 53.6% of Blacks in Cote-des-Neiges were women, while 46.4% were men. On average, Blacks in Cote-des-Neiges were somewhat older than their counterparts throughout the city. Forty percent were under the age of 25. For the city as a whole, 47.5% of Blacks were under the age of 25.

The relatively higher proportion of Blacks aged 25 and over can be partially explained by the finding that despite impressions to the contrary, Black immigrants form a somewhat smaller part of the Black community in Cote-des-Neiges than they do in Montreal generally. Fifty-seven percent of Blacks in Montreal were immigrants in 1996. In Cote-des-Neiges, 55% of Blacks were immigrants. Cote-des-Neiges, however, is increasingly becoming a neighbourhood of choice for Black immigrants. Thirty four percent of all Blacks living in Cote-des-Neiges came to Canada after 1991, while only 27% of all Blacks living in Montreal arrived in Canada after 1991.

Cote-des-Neiges contains the highest percentage of Black African immigrants in the city (24% vs. 10%), and it is African immigration, as reported earlier, which has increased the most since 1991. An additional 40% were born in the Caribbean, while 32% were Canadian born.

Almost half of all Blacks in Cote-des-Neiges (46%) had English as their mother tongue, while slightly more than one in four spoke French at home (26.5%). Three in ten blacks in Cote-des-Neiges spoke languages other than English and French at home. One in three (35%) Blacks spoke English only, one in five (21%) spoke French only, and more than four in ten (43%) were bilingual. These rates of bilingualism were higher in Cote-des-Neiges than in all the other neighbourhoods studied.

Blacks in Cote-des-Neiges living in husband-wife families have fewer children than the Montreal average for the Black community. Eighteen percent had three or more children while 27% of Black families in Montreal had three or more children. Sixty five percent of Black families in this neighbourhood had no children or only one child compared with 46% of all Black families in Montreal. The same pattern persists in single parent families. One in ten Black single parent families had three or more children in Cote-des-Neiges compared with one in five for Black single parent families in Montreal.

Poverty rates for Black husband-wife families were significantly higher in Cotes-des-Neiges than they were for Montreal Blacks as a whole (51% vs. 42%). For single parent families, poverty rates were identical and stood at 72%.

Blacks in Cotes-des-Neiges had substantially higher rates of university completion and substantially lower percentages of persons who have not completed high school than the city-wide average for Blacks. Eighteen percent have completed university (compared to 11%), and 30% had not completed high school (compared with 35%). Notwithstanding higher levels of education, unemployment rates for Blacks in Cote-des-Neiges were significantly higher than for Blacks generally (31% vs. 27%).

### LaSalle

LaSalle Population	71,420	As Percentage of Area	8.3%
LaSalle Black Population	5,945	As Percentage of all Montreal Blacks	4.9%

One in twenty Blacks in Montreal live in this largely working class suburb of Montreal, where Blacks constitute 8.3% of all LaSalle residents. The predominance of Black women to Black men is evident to the same degree in LaSalle as elsewhere in the city (54% women vs. 46% men). Forty four percent of all Blacks in LaSalle were under the age of 25 compared to 28% of the entire LaSalle population who were in this age range. More than half of all Black residents (54%) were immigrants. Although slightly lower than the Montreal Black average (57%), in LaSalle itself only 20% of all resident were born outside of Canada.

The majority of Black immigrants living in LaSalle, however, have lived in Canada much longer than their city-wide counterparts. Two out of three (63.2%) Black immigrants living in LaSalle, arrived in Canada prior to 1980, and this compares to 43% of Black immigrants in the city as a whole. Eighteen percent arrived after 1991, and this compares with 27% of the Black immigrant population in Montreal who arrived in Canada since 1991. Almost half of all Black residents were Caribbean born (44.2%), while an equal proportion were born in Canada (44.5%).

Of all the neighbourhoods studied, LaSalle contains the highest percentage of Blacks whose mother tongue is English. Eighty seven percent of all Blacks spoke English in the home, and this compares with 27% for Montreal Blacks as a whole. For LaSalle generally, one in 54 (23%) spoke English at home. Fifty percent of all residents mother tongue was French, and this compares with 6% of the LaSalle Black population. Only 38% of the Black LaSalle population is bilingual and an additional 4% are unilingual Francophone. At the same time, more than one in four (24.5%) LaSalle residents spoke no English thus identifying potential communication difficulties between the majority of Blacks who speak no French (57%), and the one in four LaSalle residents who speak no English.

Blacks living in husband-wife families have fewer children than the city-wide Montreal average for Blacks (23% vs. 27% have 3 or more children). Twenty eight percent of Black husband-wife families had no children, substantially higher than the 24% average for all Black husband-wife families in the city. Similarly, 15% of all Black single parent families consisted of three or more children, and this compares with 20% for Black single parents city-wide.

Poverty rates for Black husband-wife families were substantially lower than the Black city-wide average (31% vs. 42%), and this was also true with regard to single parent families (61% for LaSalle vs. 73% for the city as a whole). Fewer Blacks in LaSalle had a less than high school education when compared to the city-wide Black average (28% for LaSalle vs. 35% for the city as a whole). Notwithstanding, levels of university completion were also lower as only 8% of all Blacks in LaSalle had a university degree (compared with 11% for Montreal Blacks as a whole). Unemployment rates were the lowest of all the neighbourhoods studied. (20% vs. 27%).

The data then portrays a primarily English speaking, Caribbean and Canadian born community where a larger percentage work, poverty rates are lower, and fewer have not completed high school. Though substantially worse off than their non-Black neighbours, LaSalle represents more of a working class, upwardly mobile community than in many other neighbourhoods in the city.

### Laval

Laval Population	326,605	As Percentage of Area	2.8%
Laval Black Population	9,305	As Percentage of all Montreal Blacks	7.6%

The Black community of Laval has the lowest rates of poverty and unemployment and among the highest levels of educational attainment of all the neighbourhoods studied.

A much higher percentage of Laval Blacks are Canadian born (46%) than are Blacks generally in Montreal (39%). Among Black immigrants living in Laval, most arrived in Canada prior to 1980 (57%) a rate 30% higher than the average (43%) for Montreal Blacks generally. Still, half of all Blacks in Laval are Caribbean born. The gender ratio is also more balanced in Laval as 52.8% were women (compared to 53.6% for Black Montrealers generally).

One indicator of the longer period of adaptation which Blacks in Laval have had compared to other communities, is the language spoken at home. In Laval, 56% of Blacks spoke French only at home, and this figure was the highest of all the neighbourhoods studied and considerably higher than the Black Montreal average (which was 36%). In addition to the 56% of the Black population in Laval which is unilingual French, another 37% were bilingual. Thus, almost all Blacks in Laval were able to work in French (95%) considerably higher than the 44% rate for unilingual Blacks and the 36% rate of bilingualism among Blacks in the city as a whole.

The Black community in Laval is considerably younger than Blacks generally in Montreal. More than half (52.8%) were under the age of 25 (compared with 47.4% for Blacks generally in Montreal), and only four in one hundred (4.2%) were over the age of 65 (compared with 5.4% for Blacks generally in Montreal). Single parent families constitute a smaller percentage of Black families in Laval than they do in any other neighbourhood studied (20% of all Black families in Laval vs. 29% of all Black families in Montreal).

The more suburban character of Laval has attracted Blacks with larger families. Close to four of ten (37%) Black husband-wife families contained three or more children (compared with 27% for Black Montrealers generally). More than one in four (26%) Black single parent families had three or more children in Laval (compared with 20% for Black single parent families in Montreal overall). Blacks in Laval had the lowest poverty rates of all the neighbourhoods studied. Twenty eight percent of all husband wife families, 51% of all single parent families, and 49% of all Blacks living alone, lived below the poverty line in Laval. These figures are substantially lower than the 42%, 72%, and 65% rates of poverty for these groups among Black Montrealers generally.

Levels of educational attainment of Blacks in Laval matched that of non-Blacks and was considerably higher than the Montreal average for Blacks generally. 32.5% of Blacks in Laval have not completed high school. For non-Blacks in Laval, 31.5% have not completed high school, and for Black Montrealers generally, 34.5% did not have a high school degree. Eleven percent of all Blacks in Laval have a university degree, and this compares with 11.8% of non-Blacks in Laval and 10.8% for Blacks in Montreal overall. A higher percentage of Blacks in Laval have a graduate degree (2.3%) than non-Blacks (1.8%). Unemployment rates of Blacks in the labour force in Laval was substantially lower than the Black city-wide average (22% vs. 26.5%).

The data then reveals a Black community in Laval whose members have longer roots in Canada, higher rates of French and bilingualism, lower poverty rates and less unemployment. Laval appears to be a neighbourhood of choice for upwardly mobile Black families

### Little Burgundy/St. Henri

Little Burgundy Population	24,755	As Percentage of Area	10.8%
Little Burgundy Black Population	2,665	As Percentage of All Montreal Blacks	2.2%

Little Burgundy, the historical cultural and neighbourhood center of the Black community of Quebec, today houses about 2% of all Blacks in Montreal, while more than one in ten of its current day residents are Black.

Little Burgundy has the largest gender imbalance of all the Black communities studied, as 57.2% are women. In terms of its age structure, the Black community in Little Burgundy contains the highest percentage of elderly (7.3%) of all the neighbourhoods studied, and, the predominance of women among the elderly help to explain the gender imbalance there. Little Burgundy, however, also contains a larger percentage of young Black persons (52%) when compared with the Black city-wide average of 47%. Particularly noticeable is the relative absence of Black persons between the ages of 25-64 who constitute only 41% of all Blacks in the area (compared with a city-wide average of 47%).

Little Burgundy contains the highest percentage of Canadian born Blacks than all the other neighbourhoods studied (52.3%). Only 36% of all Blacks in Little Burgundy are Caribbean born, and this represents the lowest percentage of all the neighbourhoods studied. One in ten Blacks in Little Burgundy were born in Africa.

More than two out of three Blacks in Little Burgundy spoke English only at home, and slightly more than half of all Black residents (51.8%) cannot carry on a conversation in French, unable to communicate with the more than one in three (35.4%) of Little Burgundy residents who are unilingual French. Both husband-wife families and single parent families have fewer children than the Black city-wide average.

On a percentage basis, the highest rates of poverty among Black families and Blacks who live alone are found in the Little Burgundy neighbourhood. This is particularly so because more than half (55.8%) of all Black families in Little Burgundy are headed by a single parent (compared with 28.7% as the Black city-wide average). Sixty-eight percent of all husband-wife Black families live in poverty and this compares with a Black city-wide average of 42%. Almost all Black single parent families live below the poverty line (93.4%), and more than eight in ten (82%) of Blacks who live alone in Little Burgundy are poor (compared with a city-wide Black average of 65%).

Almost half of all Blacks in Little Burgundy have not completed high school (45%), and only 6.6% have a university degree (compared with 10.8% for Blacks in the city as a whole). More than three out of ten (30.6%) Blacks in the labour force were unemployed. Taken together, the higher percentage of women and the elderly, the lower rates of bilingualism, lower levels of educational attainment and high unemployment paint a stark picture of a poor and struggling community, where Blacks who are in the most economically viable age ranges (25-64) form a smaller percentage of the community than they do elsewhere

### Montreal North

Montreal North Population	80,220	As Percentage of Area	11.9%
Montreal North Black Population	9,555	As Percentage of All Montreal Blacks	7.8%

Close to 10,000 Blacks live in Montreal North, and they constitute almost 8% of all Blacks in Montreal. Almost one in eight residents of Montreal North is Black (11.9%), three times higher than the percentage of Blacks in the Montreal population as a whole.

Montreal North contains the highest gender imbalance in what is generally considered to be Black Francophone Montreal, as 56.7% are women. The age structure of the Black community of Montreal North is identical with the overall patterns for the Black community as a whole. Forty-seven point three percent were under the age of 25, and 5.0% were aged 65 and over, compared to the city-wide rates of 47.4% and 5.4%, respectively).

Two out of every three Black residents of Montreal North were immigrants (65.3%), and this percentage is significantly higher than the Black city-wide average of 56.9%. More than six in ten Montreal North Blacks are Caribbean born, the overwhelming majority being of Haitian origins. Almost three in four (71.6%) Black immigrants living in Montreal North came to Canada after 1980, and approximately one in three (31.8%) immigrated between 1991 and 1996. Thus, Montreal North is increasingly becoming a home for Francophone, primarily Haitian born, Blacks who have only recently put down roots in Canada.

French is the mother tongue for about half of Montreal North Blacks (46.5%). Only 1.4% spoke English at home, and 40% spoke neither English nor French. Three out of four Blacks in Montreal North are fluent in French only, and an additional one in five were bilingual. These linguistic characteristics parallel neighbourhood life where 95% of all residents are either unilingual French speaking or bilingual. The difference emerges in rates of bilingualism. Here, twice the percentage of all Montreal North residents are bilingual when compared with the Black population in the area (43.2% vs. 21.2%).

Similar to other communities with high rates of recent immigration, Black families in Montreal North tend to have more children than the Black city-wide average. One out of three Black husband-wife families had three or more children in Montreal North (compared with 27% for the Black city-wide average). For single parent families the rate in Montreal North was somewhat higher when compared with the Black city-wide average, as 22.4% of Montreal North Black single parent families contained three or more children, compared to 20.2% for the Black city-wide average.

Poverty rates for Blacks in Montreal North are higher than the Black city-wide average. Fifty-six point four percent of all Black husband-wife families in Montreal North lived below the poverty line as did 77.6% of Black single-parent families, compared to 42.1% and 72.4% respectively for Montreal Blacks as a whole.

Educational attainment rates for Blacks in Montreal North are one of the lowest in the city. Almost half (47.7%) had not completed high school (compared with 34.5% for Blacks city-wide). Only 3.8% have a university degree a percentage which is about one third of the Black city-wide average of 10.8%. These lower rates of educational attainment parallel the trend in Montreal North generally. 45.7% of all Montreal North residents have not completed high school compared with a city-wide

average of 31.8%. Only 6% had a university degree, and this compares with a rate of 15.6% of university completion for the city as a whole.

One in three (32.3%) Blacks in the labour force in Montreal North were unemployed in 1996--substantially higher than the 26.5% unemployment rate for Blacks city-wide and 2 1/2 times higher than the unemployment rates for all labour force participants in Montreal North.

In summary, this by and large, recently arrived, Caribbean born Black community has a larger gender imbalance than most Black communities, is predominantly Francophone, with larger families than the Black city-wide norm, higher rates of poverty and unemployment and lower rates of educational attainment.

### **N.D.G. - Montreal West**

N.D.G. - Mtl West Population	67,355	As Percentage of Area	8.9%
N.D.G. - Mtl West Black Population	5,970	As Percentage of All Montreal Blacks	4.9%

One in twenty Black residents of Montreal live in N.D.G. -Montreal West, and they comprise close to 9% of the N.D.G. population. The gender imbalance in N.D.G. -Montreal West Black community, as well as in Little Burgundy/St. Henri is the largest in the city. Fifty seven percent of all Black residents are women, and this compares with a city-wide average of 53.6%. While having a much higher percentage of young people under the age of 25 than the N.D.G. -Montreal West average for all residents (41% vs. 28%), N.D.G. Blacks contain a smaller percentage of young persons than the Black city-wide average of 48%).

More than half of all Blacks in N.D.G. - Montreal West are immigrants (55%). One in four Black immigrants living in N.D.G. arrived before 1970, and this compares with a city-wide figure for Blacks of 11%. Thus, Black immigrants in N.D.G. tend to be residents of longer standing. At the same time, however, N.D.G. has seen a larger percentage increase in Blacks since 1991 than the city-wide average (30% vs. 27%).

Almost half of all Blacks in N.D.G. - Montreal West immigrated from the Caribbean (44%), while 37% were born in Canada. The mother tongue of three out of every four Black residents was English, and this was the second highest Black neighbourhood average. N.D.G. Blacks had the highest rates of bilingualism of all the neighbourhoods studied as four of ten Black residents spoke English and French. More than half (53%), however, spoke no French at all, and after LaSalle, this neighbourhood had the highest percentages of Blacks unable to communicate in French.

Black husband-wife families in N.D.G. had far fewer children than in any other neighbourhoods. Only one in eight (12.5%) Black husband-wife families had three or more children (compared with a city-wide Black average of 27%), and 31% had no children (compared with 24% for Black husband wife families city-wide). Similarly, Black single parent families were also smaller than in any other neighbourhood in the city. Less than one in ten (9.6%) Black single parents had three or more children, and this compares with a Black city-wide average of one in five (20.2%).

Poverty rates, however, were higher for Black families in N.D.G. than for the city-wide Black average. Forty-seven percent of all Black husband-wife families lived below the poverty line, and this compares with 19% of all N.D.G. husband wife families, and 42% for all husband-wife Black families in Montreal. For Black single parent families, poverty rates equaled the Black city-wide average (72%), but was 50% higher than for all N.D.G. single parent families (41%).

Blacks in N.D.G. had higher levels of educational attainment than the Black city-wide average. One in four had not completed high school, and this was the lowest rate of all the neighbourhoods studied. A somewhat higher percentage had a university degree (12.6% vs 10.8%). Unemployment rates were also significantly lower. Twenty-one percent of all Blacks in the labour force in N.D.G. were unemployed, and this compares with 26.5% of all Blacks in the city and 11.3% of all N.D.G. residents.



### Park Extension

Park Extension Population	28,665	As Percentage of Area	10%
Park Extension Black Population	2,865	As Percentage of all Montreal Blacks	2.3%

Park Extension residents generally tend to be older and have a smaller percentage of persons under 25 than the average for Montreal. This is equally true when comparing Park Extension Black residents to their city-wide counterparts. Almost one in six Park Extension residents was over the age of 65 (16.9%), 50% higher than the city-wide average of 11.5%. Among Black residents of Park Extension, 6.1% were aged 65 and over, 15% higher than the Black city-wide average of 5.4%. Young people under 25 comprise 47.4% of the Black population in Montreal. In Park Extension, they represent 45.8%. For the neighbourhood generally, less than three in ten (28.9%) are under the age of 25.

The gender ratio is much more balanced among Blacks in Park Extension than it is elsewhere in the city. Here, 51.5% of Black residents were women, and this compares with the Black city-wide average of 53.6%.

Two out of three Blacks in Park Extension were immigrants, and eight out of ten arrived in Canada after 1981 (substantially higher than the 57% rate for all Blacks who are immigrants in Montreal). Almost half of all Black immigrants living in Park Extension arrived after 1991 (44.6%).

African born Blacks comprise almost twice the percentage of the Park Extension Black community than it does of all Black Montrealers. Almost one in five (18.5%) of all Blacks in Park Extension is African born and this compares with a city-wide average for all Blacks of 9.7%. African immigration is more recent and these constitute many of the recent arrivals. Still, Caribbean born Blacks make up the majority of the Park Extension Black community. More than half (51.5%) were born there. Only about one in four (27.7%) are Canadian born compared to almost four in ten (38.3%) Blacks in the city as a whole.

Neither English nor French is the mother tongue for most Park Extension residents. Almost half of all Black residents (46.2%) spoke a language other than English or French at home. For Park Extension residents generally, this percentage was substantially higher as two out of three spoke a language other than English or French at home. Slightly more than one in five (23%) spoke English only at home, while slightly less than one in five (18%) spoke French only. These linguistic divisions are heightened in the Black community of Park Extension as only three in ten (31%) are bilingual. More than four in ten Black Park Extension residents speak only French, and one in four speak only English.

Black families in Park Extension are somewhat larger than the average for Blacks in Montreal, and this is so for both husband-wife and single parent families. Three out of ten Black families in Park Extension were headed by a single parent (compared with 29% for Blacks in the city as a whole). Three out of ten Black husband-wife families in Park Extension had three or more children (compared with 27% for Blacks in the city as a whole). More than one in five (21%) of Black families in Park Extension were headed by a single parent (compared with 20% for Blacks in Montreal as a whole).

Poverty rates are dramatically higher for Blacks and non-Blacks in Park Extension. Among Black husband-wife families, almost six in ten (59%) were poor compared with slightly more than four out of ten (42%) of Black husband-wife families in Montreal. For Non-Black Park Extension residents, poverty in husband-wife families was 42% compared with 17% for Non-Black husband-wife families in Montreal generally.

Almost nine in ten (88%) Black single parent families in Park Extension lived in poverty (compared with 72% for Blacks generally), while almost two in three (65%) Non-Black, Park Extension single parents were poor. Among persons living alone, 77% of Blacks in Park Extension and 65% of non-Blacks lived below the poverty line.

Levels of educational attainment as reflected in rates of high school and university completion are among the lowest in Park Extension for both Black and non-Black residents. Slightly less than half of Black and non-Black residents have not completed high school (47% for Blacks and 48% for non-Blacks). Only three in one hundred Black residents of Park Extension have a university degree (compared with 10.8% for Blacks in the city as a whole). Similarly, only 8.9% of non-Black Park Extension residents have a university degree (compared with 15.6% for non-Blacks in the city as a whole)

Four in ten Blacks in the labour force and living in Park Extension were unemployed in 1996- substantially higher than the 26.5% rate for all Blacks in the city. Among non-Blacks in Park Extension, one in four (24.1%) were unemployed compared with 10.7% for the city as a whole.

The data suggests a portrait of a community with high rates of poverty and unemployment, and low rates of educational achievement. A large percentage of the Black community of Park Extension are very recent immigrants many from Africa, and most from the Caribbean. Levels of bilingualism are low and there are almost equal percentages of unilingual French and unilingual English speaking Blacks in Park Extension who cannot communicate with each other in the same language.

### Rivière-des-Prairies

Riviere-des-Prairies Population	49,600	As Percentage of Area	14.3%
Riviere-des-Prairies Black Population	7,080	As Percentage of All Montreal Blacks	5.8%

One in seven residents of Rivière-des-Prairies is Black, and, next to St. Michel, this represents the highest percentage of Blacks in all the neighbourhoods studied. More than half of all Blacks in RDP (57.6%) are immigrants approximately the same percentage as for Blacks generally in Montreal (56.9%). There are somewhat more women to men among Blacks in RDP (55.4%) when compared with the Black city-wide average of 53.6%.

Most Black immigrants living in RDP have been in Canada longer than the Montreal Black average. 52% arrived prior to 1981, and only one in nine (10.9%) immigrated after 1981. For Blacks in Montreal as a whole, 43% arrived prior to 1981, and more than one in four (26.8%) immigrated since 1991. Slightly more RDP Blacks are Canadian born (40.9%) than among Black Montrealers generally (38.3%) and almost all immigrants arrived from the Caribbean who represented 57% of all Blacks in RDP.

The RDP Black community is primarily Francophone. More than half (53.4%) spoke French only at home and this was the highest rate with the exception of Laval of all the neighbourhoods studied and substantially higher than the city-wide rate of 36.2%. Less than one in a hundred Blacks in RDP (0.6%) spoke English at home. More than two out of three (67.4%) Blacks in RDP were fluent in French only and another three in ten (30.6%) were bilingual. In RDP, we find the reverse phenomena from most other neighbourhoods studied. Here, a much higher percentage of Blacks than non-Blacks are fluent in French (67.4% vs. 35.8%). A larger percentage of non-Blacks were bilingual (56%). Taken together, the percentage of unilingual Francophone and bilingual Blacks in RDP was greater than that of non-Blacks (98% vs. 91.2%). Given the linguistic similarity among Blacks in RDP, one would expect greater community cohesion than in other neighbourhoods.

Blacks in RDP have a higher percentage of younger people and older people than Blacks generally in Montreal. More than half (53.3%) were under the age of 25 and seven out of a hundred were over the age of 65 (compared with 47.4% and 5.4% generally for Blacks in Montreal). Blacks in RDP have larger families than all other neighbourhoods studied. Half of all Black husband-wife families had more than three children, and this compares with 27% for Black husband-wife families generally in Montreal. Three in ten (29.1%) Black single parent families had three or more children, and this compares with one in five (20.2%) Black single parent families generally in Montreal which have three or more children.

Poverty rates in RDP are generally lower among Blacks than they are overall for Blacks in Montreal. Although a slightly higher percentage of Black husband- wife families in RDP were poor than were Black husband-wife families generally in Montreal (45.4% vs. 42.1%), a much smaller percentage of Black single parent families and Blacks living alone were poor: 63% of Black single parent families and 53% of Blacks living alone in RDP were poor. The comparative percentages for Blacks generally in Montreal are 72% and 65% respectively.

Notwithstanding, levels of education are lower and unemployment rates higher among Blacks in RDP when compared with Blacks generally in Montreal. Almost 4 out of 10 (39.1%) Blacks in RDP have not completed high school, and only 6.6% have a university degree. The corresponding

figures for Blacks generally are 34.5% and 10.8% respectively. For non-Blacks in RDP, 38.7% had less than a high school education and 8% had obtained a university degree. Unemployment rates among Blacks in the labour force in RDP stood at 28.6% in 1996 compared with 26.5% for Blacks generally in Montreal.

A portrait emerges of a largely Francophone, Haitian born Caribbean population which has been in Canada longer than the Black city-wide average. The high proportion of young people along with the high percentage of Blacks in the overall RDP community and along with their greater likelihood to speak French than their non-Black neighbors adds a distinctive visibility to the Black community of RDP.

### St. Michel

St. Michel Population	53,340	As Percentage of Area	19.7%
St. Michel Black Population	10,530	As Percentage of All Montreal Blacks	8.6%

St. Michel is home to the largest concentration of Blacks in Montreal both in actual numbers as well as the percentage Blacks comprise of the neighbourhood in which they live. Almost, one in five residents of St. Michel is Black creating a unique, focused dimension to the Black experience in Montreal.

Women outnumber men by more than 1,000 in St. Michel and they constitute 55.7% of all Black residents there (compared with a city-wide Black percentage of 53.6%). More than half of the Black residents in St. Michel are under the age of 25 (compared with 47.4% for Blacks in Montreal as a whole). Among non-Blacks in St. Michel, the under 25 population comprised 30% of the population. Taken together, there is a unique texture to St. Michel of a very visible, large Black population of young people.

Two out of three (63.9%) Blacks in St. Michel are immigrants, and this compares with 56.9% for Blacks in the city as a whole and 35.5% of the total immigrant population of St. Michel. Three out of four (72.3%) Black immigrants in St. Michel arrived since 1981 (compared with a Black city-wide average of 57%). Almost all are Caribbean born from Haiti. The mother tongue of the majority of Black residents (52%) in St. Michel was neither English nor French (probably Creole) and this represents the largest percentage and concentration of Blacks in the city who speak neither English nor French at home.

An additional 37% of St. Michel Blacks speak French at home. More than three out of four (75.3%) are able to work and converse in French while only one in five (21.2%) are bilingual (compared to 35.8% for Blacks in Montreal as a whole).

Black families in St. Michel are larger than the Montreal average, and are more likely to be headed by a single parent. More than one out of three (34.5%) Black families in St. Michel is headed by a single parent, and this compares with 28.7% for Black Montrealers as a whole. The rate of single parent families in St. Michel is three times higher for Blacks than it is for other St. Michel residents (12.5%).

More than one out of three (35.2%) Black husband-wife families have three or more children, and this compares with 27.1% for all Black Montrealers and 10.4% of other St. Michel residents. Among single parent families, three out of ten (29.1) had three or more children. For Black Montreal single parent families generally, one out of five (20.2%) contained three or more children, and for St. Michel residents generally, it was one in twelve (8.7%).

Poverty rates are among the highest in St. Michel, and this is equally true for Blacks and non-Blacks who reside there. For Blacks in particular, St. Michel represents the single largest concentration of poor people in Montreal as a whole. Almost two out of three (62.5%) Black husband-wife families lived below the poverty line in 1996 and this compares with 42% of all Black husband-wife families in Montreal. The rates of poverty among non-Black St. Michel residents was half the percentage (30.8%) of that of Blacks.

Among single parent families in St. Michel, eight out of ten Black families were poor as were almost two out of three (63.4%) non-Black single parent families. For Montreal as a whole, 72% of Black and 45% of non-Black single parent families were poor.

These high levels of poverty are related to low levels of educational attainment. More than half of Black (51.2%) and non-Black (52.6%) St. Michel residents have less than a high school education. The comparable rates among Blacks generally was 34.5% and among all Montrealers it was 31.8%.

Less than three of one hundred (2.9%) Black St. Michel residents has a university degree which is less than one third of the university completion rates for Blacks generally in Montreal (10.8%). Similarly, the rate of university completion was about three times higher for Montrealers generally when compared to all St. Michel residents (15.6% vs. 5.6%). One out of three Black St. Michel residents in the labour force was unemployed (32.3%), and this rate was twice as high as that of non-Black St. Michel residents (15.6%), as well as being significantly higher than the Black city-wide average (26.5%).

Thus a portrait emerges of a dynamic, young, recently arrived Black Haitian population with a distinctive cultural flavor connected by language to their homeland. Large families, many of whom are headed by single parents along with low levels of educational attainment and high levels of unemployment, combine to create very high levels of poverty.

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## APPENDIX B Graph and Table Index

Graph 1	Montreal: Age Structure	Pg 23
Graph 2	Canada: Age Structure	Pg 24
Graph 3	Montreal and Canada: Gender Ratios	Pg 26
Graph 4	Montreal: Mother Tongue	Pg 27
Graph 5	Montreal: Knowledge of Official Language	Pg 28
Graph 6	Outside Quebec: Knowledge of Official Language	Pg 29
Graph 7	Montreal: Period of Immigration	Pg 31
Graph 8	Canada: Period of Immigration	Pg 32
Graph 9	Montreal and Canada: Percent of Population Attributable to Immigration and Birthrates 1971-1996	Pg 33
Graph 10	Montreal Black Immigrant Population: Period of Immigration	Pg 34
Graph 11	Montreal: Levels of Educational Attainment	Pg 41
Graph 12	Montreal: Levels of Educational Attainment for 25-44 Age Group	Pg 42
Graph 13	Canada: Levels of Educational Attainment	Pg 43
Graph 14	Canada: Levels of Educational Attainment for 25-44 Age Group	Pg 44
Graph 15	Canada: Black Population: Immigration Status and Educational Attainment	Pg 45
Graph 16	Montreal and Canada: Labour Force Participation Rates	Pg 50
Graph 17	Montreal and Canada: Unemployment Rates	Pg 51
Graph 18	Montreal: Age Group Differences in Unemployment Rates	Pg 52
Graph 19	Canada: Age Group Differences in Unemployment Rates	Pg 53
Graph 20	Mtl Black and Non-Black Population: Unemployment Rates & Level of Educational Attainment	Pg 54
Graph 21	Montreal Full-time and Part-time Workers: Average Employment Income	Pg 55
Graph 22	Canada Full-time and Part-time Workers: Average Employment Income	Pg 56
Graph 23	Montreal Black Population: Representation Across Employment Equity Occupation Groups	Pg 57
Graph 24	Canada Black Population: Representation Across Employment Equity Occupation Groups	Pg 58
Graph 25	Montreal: Composition of Total Income	Pg 59
Graph 26	Canada: Composition of Total Income	Pg 60
Graph 27	Montreal and Canada: Incidence of Low Income	Pg 61
Graph 28	Montreal Population 15+: Gender Difference in Incidence of Low Income	Pg 62
Graph 29	Montreal: Age Group Differences in Incidence of Low Income	Pg 63
Graph 30	Montreal: Census Family Status	Pg 65
Graph 31	Montreal Spouses: Number of Children	Pg 68
Graph 32	Montreal Spouses: Census Family Income	Pg 69
Graph 33	Montreal Spouses: Incidence of Low Income	Pg 69
Graph 34	Montreal Black Population: Intra- and Inter-racial Husband-Wife Families	Pg 70
Graph 35	Montreal Single Parents: Census Family Income	Pg 71
Graph 36	Montreal Single Parents: Incidence of Low Income	Pg 72
Graph 37	Montreal Single Parents: Age Distribution	Pg 73
Table 1	Geographic Distribution of Black Population Across Canada	Pg 19
Table 2	Montreal CMA and Neighbourhoods: Population Distribution	Pg 21
Table 3	Montreal Black Immigrant Population: Caribbean Origins	Pg 35
Table 4	Montreal Black Immigrant Population: Place of Birth by Period of Immigration	Pg 36
Table 5	Montreal: Gender Ratios by Period of Immigration	Pg 37
Table 6	Canada: Gender Ratios by Period of Immigration	Pg 38
Table 7	Montreal Black Population Ages 15+: School Attendance	Pg 40
Table 8	Montreal Black and Total Population Ages 15+: Total Income	Pg 48
Table 9	Canada Black Population Ages 15+: Legal Marital Status	Pg 49
Table 10	Montreal Black Population Age 15+: Legal Marital Status	Pg 66
Table 11	Montreal Non-Black Population Ages 15+: Legal Marital Status	Pg 67