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Dwaine Plaza
Oregon State University, dplaza@oregonstate.edu

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Transnational Identity Maintenance via the Internet

A Content Analysis of the Websites Constructed by Second Generation Caribbean-Origin Students in Post–Secondary Institutions

Dwaine Plaza

Oregon State University

dplaza@oregonstate.edu

Abstract: Using a methodology of content analysis of Internet Websites constructed by second generation Caribbeans in the United States, Canada and Great Britain (n=50), this article reveals how websites act as a symbolic bridge that connects familiar Creole cultural values and practices with the second generations' feelings of object loss and cultural mourning. The analysis also reveals that many second generation Caribbean-origin university and college students are living both "here" and "there" on a transnational "hyphen." For many, their ethnicity and cultural identity is fluid, situational and volitional. Their identity is often based on a dynamic process in which boundaries and cultures are negotiated, defined and produced though social interactions both inside and outside their community. The construction of Internet websites can be seen as a tool, which allows second generation Caribbeans in the international Diaspora to participate in an evolving transnational culture.

INTRODUCTION

In 2000 there were an estimated 451 million Internet users world-wide, which represented 7.4% of the world's population. By 2008 the number of users had jumped to one and a half billion or approximately 25% of the world's population. The growth in Internet use from 2000-2008 has been especially dramatic in certain parts of the world. In Latin America and the Caribbean there has been a dramatic 860% growth in the number of Internet users since 2000 while the rate of growth in North America has been more modest at just 133%.[1] It is in light of this increase of the Internet as a mainstream communication and information medium world-wide that this study endeavors to explore how second generation Caribbean-origin post secondary students living in the international diaspora construct and use Internet web pages as a symbolic bridge that connects familiar Creole cultural values and practices

[1] www.internetworldstats.com

Dwaine Plaza is associate professor of sociology at Oregon State University. His areas of interest include Caribbean Studies, Migration and Settlement, and Race and Ethnic Relations. Most recently, he is the author of "Transnational Return Migration to the English Speaking Caribbean" (*Revue Europeenne des Migrations Internationales* (2008). The author would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution of John Davidson at Oregon State University to this article. As an undergraduate student in Sociology, Mr. Davidson provided valuable assistance in the coding and the gathering of the data for this research.

with the feelings of object loss and cultural mourning. The constructed Websites also provide a therapeutic, social, and psychological means for maintaining a transnational identity in the international diaspora.

As social constructions, Internet Web pages capture more than a moment in time. Unlike a still photograph, a web page is a visual image that grows and changes as the Web master adds or deletes images, text, sound, or hot links. Web pages like photographs can denote a certain apparent truth, provide documentary evidence, or tell the Web surfer a little about the individual or group who constructed and maintains it (Becker 1995). The connotative meanings of the Web page emerge from the social and historical contexts under which it was constructed; particularly in situations where the conventions are like road signs. Just as we have learned to recognize the meaning of road sign symbols almost instantaneously, we have learned over a short period of time in which the Web has existed to decode the denotative and connotative content of Internet Web pages.

In the past two decades there has been much scholarship on ethnic and cultural identities. Scholars like Anzaldúa (1995), Hall (1996), Rosaldo (1989), and Nagel (1994), working within a postmodernist framework, theorize identity as hybrid, dynamic, fluid, and multi-layered. They argue against essentialist notions of identity as fixed and bounded.

The discussion of hybrid identities focuses on the cultural conflict between ancestral culture and dominant mainstream culture in many diasporic locations for second generation Caribbeans. The conflict can be something as simple as whether or not to listen to Western-musical genres like Rock or to listen to Soca or Reggae music. Whether or not to keep one's heritage distinct from that of the mainstream dominant culture is a complicated question of identity that many second generation Caribbeans face in their growing up experience. Deciding to stick to one's cultural heritage or deciding to assimilate and conform to the mainstream dominant culture can result in being ostracized from either group, when in reality the individual belongs to both cultures. Given that members of the Caribbean international diaspora live in a world of high modernity, they have created their own world as reflected in music, fusion of language, food choices, styles of dress, and other markers of authentic transnational identity. Scholars like Maira (1999) Vertovec (2001), and Waters (1990) have pointed out that although the work of postmodernists have contributed significantly to dismantling essentialist notions of identity, they run the risk of homogenizing the notion of hybridity and neglect to capture the complex view of the lived experiences of American, Canadian or British-Caribbeans.

Furthermore, cultural critics often neglect to take into account the diverse experiences of the second generation, particularly in terms of social class or ethnicity. Second generation Indo-Caribbeans, for example, position themselves very differently from African Caribbeans in diaspora primarily because they are racialized in different ways. African origin Caribbeans tend to elicit negative images in the consciousness of the dominant population whereas Indian origin Caribbeans are regarded as closer to the model minority (Plaza 2006). It is these sorts of ethnic differences and cultural fusions that I hope to explore in the Web pages that are constructed by second generation Caribbeans living in the international diaspora.

Despite my desire to examine how all second generation Caribbean men and women in the international diaspora are constructing Internet Web pages, this article will focus attention only on the activities of Caribbean student organizations based at university and college campuses in North America and Great Britain.[2] Carib-

bean-origin university students—who are mainly second generation[3]—are used for this research because they are the generation most likely to be comfortable with sending emails, downloading music, doing research on the Internet, surfing in cyberspace, participating in blogs, or maintaining their own Facebook and Myspace Websites.

A note must also be made on the distinction between assimilation and acculturation. Within immigration history, there is a distinct separation made between these two terms, signifying as they do competing theories of immigrant responses to immigration. Within the history of the movement of Caribbean people to the United States, assimilation conforms to the idea that immigrants become integrated into their new homes by rejecting their former identity and adopting a set of American values and habits. This theory relies on the idea of a polar opposition between the former and the new places of residence, in all respects. In contrast, acculturation signifies the process by which first generation Caribbean immigrants to the United States construct a world for themselves, shaped both by their memories of their past lives and by the reality of their present situation. Within this narrative Caribbean immigrants to the United States formed a new identity, a synthesis of the experiences in the Caribbean and the United States that conformed to neither the poles of being "pure" Caribbean or American. The appeal of such a hyphenated model lies in its flexibility, in the agency it provides to individuals within a particular situation, viewing their responses to their environment and their past as unique and not prescribed solely by external forces. This model also allows one to better see the options available to the second generation. The Caribbean second generation is also likely to be living on the "hyphen"[4] and caught between two worlds growing up in the international diaspora (Waters 1999; Kasinitz et al. 2002; Levitt & Waters 2002).

By constructing their own Internet Websites, second generation Caribbean-origin men and women in post-secondary institutions have in effect given themselves a new voice to disseminate information about their Creole culture, history of migration and transnational lifestyles. Having "agency" over their circumstance in the in-

[2] A small proportion of Caribbean student organizations in the international diaspora have members who are classified as foreign visa students (officially resident in the Caribbean but temporarily attending school in the diaspora). It is impossible to determine how much influence these foreign visa students have on the administration or direction of Caribbean student organization Internet web pages worldwide. We do know with the decline in local Caribbean economies (due primarily to the implementation of structural adjustment policies), that the number of foreign visa students originating from the Caribbean has sharply declined in the last ten years. Most university students living in the Caribbean have little choice but to remain in the region when pursuing their degrees. Of those who are able to travel to North America and Europe for their post secondary training, many are likely to come from wealthy families or be the recipients of a government sponsored academic scholarship (Simmons & Plaza 1992).

[3] In this article immigrant generations within the Caribbean-origin diaspora are classified, the second generation (or later generations) includes those persons who are either born in the diaspora or born in the Caribbean but arrived in the diaspora at pre-school age (zero to four years). The first generation includes those who were born in the Caribbean but who arrived in the diaspora over the age of eighteen and went directly into the workforce in the period before 1980. The inclusion of Caribbean-origin children who arrived at very young ages into the second generation is based on the assumption that these children share many cultural and developmental experiences similar to the American, Canadian or British-born. Although scholars may vary in their ways of defining the new second generation, they have generally agreed that there are important differences between the first generation and children of the second generation, particularly in their psychological developmental stages, in their socialization processes in the family, in their schooling experience, and in their treatment in the society at large, as well as in their orientation toward their homeland (Zhou 1999).

ternational diaspora, the second generation who are attending college and university seem to derive a sense of relief from the cultural mourning and object loss they experienced while growing up in societies rife with radicalization and racism. These are societies where many second generation African Caribbeans in particular are often singled out by the authorities and elected officials as the urban problem which does not go away and causes a great deal of grief through their gang affiliations (Portes & Zhou 1993; Zhou, 1998).

Historical and Theoretical Framework

Caribbean people have a long history of surviving economic adversity by moving to neighboring countries where jobs are more abundant. The contemporary Caribbean diaspora living in Britain, Canada and the United States is a product of a "culture of migration" that developed as a survival strategy in the context of a long secular decline in sugar production and plantation agriculture starting in the early 1800s (Marshall 1982). Despite circulation within the Caribbean region that later expanded over time to include longer distance movement, Caribbean people always brought with them aspects of their Creole cultural socialization[5] (Lowenthal 1972). This cultural baggage included a Caribbean diet, musical preferences, colorful language, superstitions, Caribbean myths and folklore, and unique living arrangements and family structures. Although each Caribbean territory had their own version of these cultural practices, there was a common Creole bond and a historical experience of being marginalized under the yoke of a white colonial master class which unified Caribbean migrants particularly as they faced racism and marginalization in the international diaspora (Henry 1994).

Since the 1960s a Caribbean international "diaspora" in some major cities in the eastern United States (New York, Boston, Baltimore), in the United Kingdom (London, Manchester, Birmingham), and in Canada (Toronto, Montreal and Winnipeg) emerged. The formation of large Caribbean-origin migrant communities in these metropolitan cities and the resources that such immigrant communities provided to new migrants strengthened and transformed the Caribbean culture of migration. Caribbean migrants began to see themselves as both "here" and "there" in the Caribbean although they were living abroad (Simmons & Plaza 2006). "Home" began to be viewed not just as the place where one was born or just where one lived, but more generally anywhere friends, relatives and members of the cultural community were found. In effect, what began as a Caribbean culture of migration expanded over time to become a Caribbean transnational cultural community.[6] Thus, the culture of migration was retained as one key element in this geographically dispersed transnational community. Within the maturing transnational Caribbean community came the emergence of the second generation, who either were born in the new country of res-

[4] Homi Bhabha's reading of the hybrid, as a second generation Caribbean who resists the Euro-centre and engages in a constant search for what he calls 'the third space,' a truly inter-hyphen national space, a new creative space in the border zone. Bhabha's research also suggests that Caribbean second generation men and women are creating a hyphenated space of trans-hyphen-nationalism in the international diaspora. These links exist between and across home countries and the international Diaspora.

[5] Creolization is best thought of as the product of cultural mixing which began within the tropical, colonial, plantation milieu and continues to the present. Initially it embraced the politico-economic realities of conquest, slavery and indentureship, and involved indigenous inhabitants of the Caribbean region, Africans, East Indians, Chinese, and all manner of Europeans. The cultural forms that resulted from these encounters are living, and hence continually evolving, realities which respond to the historical and material circumstances within each discrete country in the region (Allahar & Varadarjan 1998).

idence or who arrived young enough that their major socialization years were spent in the new "home" country.

The second generation, like their parents, straddled two different locations—"here" and "there." For many home became not necessarily the place where they were born or lived. Home could just as easily be the place where their parents were born or where they still had actual and fictive kin. Growing up in transnational households, it was not uncommon for the second generation to be exposed to the music, diet, superstitions, cultural values and family structures which were distinctly Creole. At the same time they would be deluged with the values, beliefs, and culture of the place where they were growing up. Many became caught in the position of the "marginal man"[7] while growing up on the hyphen. On the one hand, many were also pulled in the direction of the mainstream culture but drawn back by the cultures of their parents. By late adolescence however, some continued to follow the linear assimilation model and identify themselves with the host culture, whereas others began to experience segmented assimilation. Those who felt marginalized often began to re-establish a strong co-ethnic identity, which drew on traditional Caribbean Creolized cultural ideologies and practices while at the same time including cultural practices of the dominant society (Plaza 2006).

As a direct result of segmented assimilation many second generation Caribbeans over the years experienced a sense of cultural mourning. The idea of cultural mourning has its origins in the theories of object loss as conceptualized by Sigmund Freud (1939). In most cases of object loss individuals are able to mourn their loss in a way that prevents derangement. According to Volkan (1981) the mourner eventually finds "linking phenomena" that provide "a locus to externalize contact between aspects of the mourner's self representation and aspects of the representation of the deceased." Linking objects play a role in mourning in that they create "a symbolic bridge to allow the mourner to get over the situation (Frankiel 1994). Linking objects in the case of second generation Caribbeans might include eating authentic Caribbean food, listening to soca or reggae music, belief in the myths and folklore of Caribbean culture, or code switching in the use of language (Volkan 1981: 20).

Using the theory of cultural morning Ainslie (1998) elaborates on the theory to help explain the transition that often times takes place with immigrants groups who find themselves living in a hostile foreign land. He notes:

> When an immigrant leaves loved ones at home, he or she also leaves the cultural enclosures that have organized and sustained experience. The immigrant simultaneously must come to terms with the loss of family and friends on the one hand, and cultural forms (food, music, art, for example) that have given the immigrant's native world a distinct and highly personal character on the other hand. It is not only the people who are mourned but the culture itself, which is inseparable from the

[6] Transnationalism is defined as the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement through the creation of cross-border, and inter-continental networks (Glick-Shiller 1998; Portes 1999; Vertovec 1999; & Basch et al. 1994). Although transnationalism is not a new phenomenon, it has been facilitated more recently by space and time compressing technologies which include telephone, email, and relatively easy low cost long-distance travel across borders.

[7] Initially conceptualized by Robert Park and later formalized by Stonequist (1961), the "marginal-man" situation is one in which the individual—who through migration, education, marriage, or some other influence leaves one social group or culture making a satisfactory adjustment to another—finds himself on the margin of each but a member of neither.

> loved ones whom it holds. (Ainslie 1998, 287)

Ainslie draws on Winnicott's theory of the potential space to note that immigrants living abroad often find a space to engage in activities, that bridge the emotional gaps" created by their feelings of dislocation and loss (Ainslie 1998, 289). This space allows first generation immigrants and their children to restore the "object loss" they feel. This might include the engagement in activities that create the "illusion of restoration of what was lost" (Ainslie 1998, 289). For Caribbeans in the diaspora this might include attending a Carnival cultural show, reading a Caribbean newspaper online, joining a home-town or alumni association, attending a disaster relief dance, or developing a Website with Caribbean content. Ainslie further notes that immigrants tend to fill this potential "empty" space with activities, objects or artifacts that keep alive the illusion of continuity with the homeland. In this regard, the potential space serves as a platform where immigrants can begin to negotiate their adaptation to the new environment.

It is with the theory of cultural mourning, segmented assimilation and transnational lifestyles in mind that we set out to examine how second generation Caribbean-origin university students are building Internet Websites as a way to alleviate their feelings of cultural mourning and to help bridge the emotional gaps of marginalization they experience in the locations in which they now live.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Sample

This study is based on a non-random quantitative content analysis. The sample is a convenience and judgmental one in that we looked at (n=50) Websites constructed and maintained by Caribbean student organizations at universities and colleges across the United States, Canada and Great Britain. A Google search for Caribbean student organizations on June 7, 2008, yielded 606,000 hits. To be selected as part of the sample, three main criteria were used. First, the Caribbean student organization had to be based at a college or university in the international diaspora. Second, the Caribbean student organization had to have a Website that was active within the last year. Finally, there had to be evidence that the Website was being managed by students. As a result of this sampling criteria fifty schools were selected, thirty-one (62%) of the schools are in the United States, seven (14%) are in Canada, and twelve (24%) are in Great Britain. The 50 schools in the study are listed in table 1.

The unit of analysis for this study is Caribbean student organizations individual Website, the frames created within each site, text, sound files, active hot links, and any visual images found at the site.

Procedure

Since there was no existing coding scheme available to examine the Web pages constructed by Caribbean-origin university and college students, one was developed by adapting several content categories found in previous Internet and transnational research. This included: Donelan (2004) who examined Internet Websites maintained by hate groups and militia groups; Allard and Vandenberghe (2003) whose research examined the personal Web pages of ordinary users who were seeking to express their interests, passions, and hobbies; Hine (2001) who examined how Web page production has become a socially meaningful act for the individual Web page developer and the institution concerned; Horsfall (2000) who examined the ways in which five religious groups use Internet Web pages to disseminate their doctrines;

Table 1. Sample of Schools by Country with Caribbean Student Organizations (n=50)

United States		Great Britain	Canada
Fisk University	City College of New York	Bristol University	York University
University of Florida Tampa	University of Buffalo	Lancaster University	McGill University
Stanford	Georgia Tech University	Reeding University	University of Waterloo
MIT	Drexel University	University of Cambridge	Queens University
University of Maryland	Swarthmore College	Strathclyde University	University of Toronto
North eastern University	Old Dominion	Durham University	University of Western Ontario
Virginia Tech	Pennsylvania State University	Cambridge University	Trent University
College Park	Notre Dame	Imperial College London	
University of Albany	Tufts University	Loughbourgh University	
Florida Atlantic University	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University	City University	
University of Central Florida	Syracuse University	East London University	
Columbia University	Big Hampton University	Oxford University	
SUNY New Platz	Rochester Institute of Technology		
Rensselaer Poly-Tech Institute	University of Michigan		
University of Pennsylvania	Southern Illinois at Carbondale		
Vanderbilt University			

Adams-Parnham (2004) who examined the Internet as a tool for Haitians in the diaspora to engage in civic deliberations and networkin; and Horst and Miller (2006) who studied cell phone records to examine the "link up" transnational networking strategies employed by Jamaicans.

The categories were refined for the analysis by reviewing previous studies which included content analysis of sport photographs, Internet pornography images, magazines, videos and cartoons (Stanley & Plaza 2002; Mehta & Plaza 1997; Garcia & Milano, 1990; Palys, 1986; Winick, 1985; Palmer, 1979). I devised a three-part coding procedure was devised. In the initial stage, I went through all of the Caribbean student Websites in the sample in order to generate specific coding categories and operational definitions. From the ini-

Table 2. Content Categories, Variables Coded, Data Analyzed, and Theorized Indicators

Content Categories	Variables Coded For	Data Analyzed	Theorized Indicators
Membership	Gender, Ethnicity, Age, "Race" Size of Organization, Statements re: Organization, Rituals	Photographs, Text	Segmented Assimilation, Creole cultural socialization, Transnational Identity, Linking Objects
Social Activities	Religious, Fetes, Fashion Shows, Cultural Show, Banquet, Semi-formal, Inter-School cultural exchanges, Sports: cricket, soccer, basketball, dominos, cards	Photographs, Text, Hot links	Segmented Assimilation, Transnational Connections, Cultural Mourning, Object Loss, Symbolic Bridge, Linking Objects
Political Activities	Political mobilization, Invited International speakers, Sponsorship of Caribbean Symposiums, Conferences, Caribbean Community Outreach, Mentorship program	Photographs, Text	Transnational Connection, Object Loss, Symbolic Bridge, Cultural Mourning, Object Loss Symbolic Bridge, Linking Objects
Website Content	Language--Patois, Images- palm trees, Caribbean maps, beaches, coral reefs waterfalls, rainforests, Caribbean flags, Rastafarian colors	Photographs, Text, Hot Links, Images	Segmented Assimilation, Transnational Connections, Cultural Mourning, Object Loss, Symbolic Bridge, Linking Objects
Photographs	Fetes, formal attire, attractive females, white students, sports events, cultural events, liming (informal get together)	Photographs, Text, Images	Segmented Assimilation, Cultural Mourning, Object Loss, Linking Objects
Hot Links	Other Caribbean Organizations, Caribbean based: newspapers, radio stations, tourist boards, parties	Hot Links	Transnational Connections, Cultural Mourning, Object Loss, Symbolic Bridge, Linking Objects
Ethnic Control	Themes of events, types of music listened to, political ideology, language used, social events	Photographs, Text, Images	Segmented Assimilation, Transnational Connections, Symbolic Bridge, Linking Objects
Transnational Activities	Projects done internationally, exchange programs, fund raising	Photographs, Text, Hot Links	Transnational Connections, Symbolic Bridge

tial eyeballing of the data I devised seventy-five categories that became the foundation for the analysis.

In order to develop a base-line that ensured inter-coder reliability, I employed a senior under-graduate student to work independently to code the Websites from within the sample. By initially working together and then apart we were able to iron out any questions about content categories and definitions. The content categories were dichotomously coded for either their presence or their absence of prescribed criteria. Concern about inter-coder reliability

led to a statistical testing for reliability between the two coders. Since the variables were dichotomously coded and nominally scaled, it was necessary to use kappa as a measure of agreement between the pair of coders. This particular measure was calculated using the cross-tabulation function in SPSS PC for Windows (Version 14.0). The inter-coder reliability test takes into account the amount of agreement expected by chance. According to Landis and Koch (1977), kappa values greater than .75 indicate excellent agreement beyond chance, values between .40 and .75 indicate fair to good agreement beyond chance, and values less than .40 indicate poor agreement beyond chance. I calculated mean kappas for each variable and for each of the coders. I dropped variables with mean kappas below .40 from subsequent analysis. Fifty of the seventy-five variables originally constructed for analysis were usable because they showed very strong agreement between the two coders (above .65). These fifty variables are the ones reported and theorized about in this article.

A brief explanation of the fifty variables used for carrying out the content analysis is outlined in Table 2. The table shows the content categories, the variables coded for, the data analyzed in each Web page, and the theorized indicators for the variables coded for.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 3 tells us a great deal about the Caribbean student organizations and how they tend to function. An interesting trend is that women dominate most of them, particularly in the executive administration. We found that (36%) of the sample had a woman president and a female dominance of virtually all executive positions. Another (20%) of the sample had a female dominance with very little male presence in the organization. We found only (14%) of the sample had a male president and male dominance of the executive positions. Also interesting is the fact that (10%) of the organizations with a male president had all of the other executive duties being carried out by women. For the rest of the schools it was unclear as to the gender make up of the executive.

What we seem to be witnessing in the Caribbean international diaspora is the feminization of the student leadership roles at universities. Historically, women in the Caribbean have had to bear an equal burden to men in terms of working in the fields and being independent. Migrating from the Caribbean meant that women continued to bear an equal responsibility for maintaining the family and working outside the home. It is no surprise therefore that in our sample this trend continues as the next generation of women continue to take charge of the student leadership roles on campus. This pattern may also be a result of fewer Caribbean-origin men attending university or college. In Canada, Simmons & Plaza (1998) note the significant trend of fewer Caribbean-origin men undertaking university studies compared to Caribbean-origin women.

Ethnic control of these student organizations was another interesting trend that seemed to be fairly consistent in the international diaspora. Individuals of Jamaican and Trinidadian ethnic origin seemed to be in leadership positions. These two ethnic groups are among the two largest contributors of migrants from the English speaking Caribbean to the international diaspora but this should not explain their dominance of the student organizations. We speculate that these two countries are currently the major contributors to the musical and cultural tastes of the second generation and as a result anyone who can trace their linage to Trinidad or Jamaica might receive a "halo effect" of more social capital from the membership when election time comes around. See Table 3 for a more detailed look

Table 3. Caribbean Student Organization Web Pages Showing Organizational Structure, Executive Membership and Ethnic Control

Organization and Structure of the Organization	
Roberts Rules of Order	92%
Constitution	40%
Detailed Specialization of Duties	56%
Hierarchical	92%
Mission Statement	88%
Meetings Monthly	48%
Meetings Weekly	22%
Organization Executive Administration	
Male President - Male Dominance	14%
Female President - Female Dominance	36%
Male President - Females doing Work in Organization	10%
Females Dominate - Few Males	20%
Website has no information about Administration	20%
Ethnic Leadership of the Organization	
Jamaican	30%
Trinidadian	20%
Barbadian	5%
Guyanese	5%
Haitian	15%
Unknown Control	25%
Total	N=50

at these trends from the Websites sampled.

Table 4 informs us about the Caribbean student organizations activities in the international diaspora. These activities provide evidence of the degree to which the membership experiences feelings of object loss or cultural mourning. Cultural mourning is demonstrated by the kinds of activities that the members participate in. Fifty percent of the sample had an annual cultural show that involved the student members putting on a public display of their "authentic" Caribbean cultural origins before the university community. Eighty percent of the organizations had Caribbean theme dances that featured Soca and Reggae music. In the larger schools, on the East Coast of the United States and in Central Canada, internationally recognized Caribbean reggae and soca artists were in-

vited to perform live concerts on campus. Coupled with this, 60% of the schools had an annual semi-formal banquet, which was advertised as having an "authentic" Caribbean menu and ambiance. The reproduction of "authentic" Caribbean food, music, dancing and cultural shows on campus all seemed to reduce feelings of object loss and cultural mourning for the second-generation students. These events also suggest a continued transnational connection to "home" for the second generation.

Other activities that also suggest a continued desire for a transnational connection to the Caribbean region are evidenced by the fact that 54% of the sample engaged in social events which included Caribbean students from other universities. In a few cases (like Montreal's McGill University or London's University of Western Ontario) this went further in the sense that university students from the United States were encouraged to attend the annual Caribbean cultural show and sports events put on at these Canadian universities. This cross-border movement demonstrates that the second generation is participating and perpetuating a fluid transnational culture where the elements of being both "here" and "there" are somewhat blurry.

Being involved and abreast of politics in the Caribbean region was also very important to (48%) of the student organizations in the sample. Related to this, (44%) of the schools invited expert speakers to visit their campus to talk about culture, underdevelopment or political issues unfolding in the Caribbean region. Also interesting was the fact that 40% of the sample sponsored an annual symposium or conference that had a Caribbean theme. This was particularly the case for universities on the eastern seaboard of the United States where large pockets of Caribbean migrants live.

Evidence of the membership sticking with their "own kind" comes from the photographs posted on various Websites. Having undertaken a content analysis of the photographs, it became evident that the membership in the schools sampled were mainly people of African Caribbean ethnicity (70%). Only 30% of the members appeared to be Indo-Caribbean, white European, or other mixed ethnicity. The posting of these photographs undoubtedly sends a latent message to outsiders visiting the Website that although these organizations are open to anyone, in fact the membership is overwhelmingly for people who are of African ethnic origin. People of African ethnicity are often the only group that is seen as being authentically Caribbean (Plaza 2006).

Not surprising, a large number of the photographs posted on the Website (64%) featured attractive Caribbean origin females in individual or group poses. This might be expected since 70% of the organizations had a significant imbalance in the number of female compared to male members. We speculate that the various Webmaster(s) who manage the sites might be exercising an unconscious form of sexism whereby they post more photographs of women than men because these images are a tool for attracting Caribbean-origin men to attend future school events. See Table 4 below for an indication of these trends from the schools sampled.

Table 5 sheds light on the fluid transnational lifestyles of second-generation Caribbean-origin university students. Choice of music was without doubt the most significant and consistent indicator of individuals seeking out a symbolic bridge to reconnect them with familiar Creole values. Soca and reggae musical references could be found on (80%) of the Websites. The primary language used at the Websites was overwhelmingly English (95%), but within the English text we found 58% code-switched using Patois as part of the posted messages to the membership[8]. The ability to code switch between two distinct cultures and languages seems to allow second generation Caribbeans to feel like they are

Table 4. Caribbean Student Organization Activities and Images

Activities/ Events	
Religious Themed Events	16%
Dances Soca / Reggae Theme	80%
Fashion Show	40%
Fund Raising	42%
Culture Show	50%
Banquet Semi-Formal	60%
Inter-Organization Events	54%
Sports Events	35%
Political Meetings	48%
Poetry Readings	24%
International Speakers	44%
Symposiums / Conferences	40%
Community Outreach Mentorship Programs	28%
Images on the Website	
Parties / Dancing Socializing	46%
Photos Showing Attractive Females	64%
Photos Showing Whites and non-Africans at Events	30%
Total	N=50

still very much connected to the multiple worlds they live in.

The scenic images posted on the Websites provide more evidence that second generation Caribbean-origin students experience a sense of cultural mourning and object loss. The symbols and objects that are selected to represent what it means for the organization to be "authentically" Caribbean are a clear indicator of this. Sixty percent of the Websites had palm trees; 54% had the image of an idyllic sandy beach scene; 25% had a coral reef; 22% had a rainforest or waterfall scene; while 44% had the flags of various Caribbean countries displayed. The choice of scenic images, symbols or objects used in the construction of the Web page suggests the desire by the second generation to create a symbolic bridge back to what they value as idyllic representations of what it means to be authentically Caribbean.

In terms of fluid transnational linkages, we find strong evidence from the Websites that the second generation continues to

[8] Segmented identities are commonly manifested in language code switching: being able to converse in proper English when talking to teachers and authority figures while at the same time being able to slip into patois or other Caribbean dialect when among family, kin or close friends. Code switching is an integral part of segmented social capital.

Table 5. Caribbean Student Organization Cultural Mourning and Transnational Indicators

Cultural Mourning Indicators	
Patois at Website	58%
Music Choice Reggae / Soca	80%
Caribbean Food Reference	68%
Map of Caribbean	28%
Beach Image	54%
Flags of Caribbean	44%
Palm Trees	60%
Rain Forest	22%
Coral Reefs	25%
Transnational Links	
Caribbean Newspapers	42%
Caribbean Radio Stations	40%
Caribbean Tourist Boards	32%
Projects Done in Home Country	28%
Total	N=50

maintain an active Caribbean connection. Forty-two percent of the Websites had hot links to newspapers that are produced daily in the Caribbean. These electronic newspapers contain the most recent political, social and economic news about the countries in which they are produced. Forty percent of the Websites had hot links to Caribbean-based radio stations doing real-time program streaming. This means that an individual can be tuned in real-time to a popular Jamaican or Trinidadian based radio station while living anywhere. The twenty-four hour a day music, news or popular culture they listen to can in an instant become part of their own consciousness. Hence, the ability to be simultaneously living in the Caribbean or the international diaspora tends to reinforce the notion for the second generation that they are living fluid transnational lifestyles. They have the "agency" to decide for themselves when to cross back and forth over an invisible cultural bridge.

Thirty-two percent of the schools sampled had established hot links to tourist board Websites in the Caribbean. These sites had mainly historic, geographic, meteorological, topographic and cultural information about each country. These links appear to be an attempt by the second generation to pass on practical information about the region to anyone who visits their Website. Ironically, the vari-

ous Caribbean tourist board Websites tend to give a Westerners viewpoint of what awaits the foreign visitor to the "exotic" territories. The realities of a poor educational system, abject poverty, a dilapidated infrastructure, and a lack of good public health care are neglected by the tourism-board Websites. What is shown are the ideals of an island beach paradise where life is carefree and not regulated by time. We speculate that this neglect of reality puts the second generation in collusion with the Western gaze about their "home" countries as being idyllic playgrounds of white sand, coconut trees, and waterfalls.

The final indicator of the second generation participating in transnational activities is the fact that 28% of the schools sampled are involved in international aid projects that are designed to improve social conditions in the Caribbean. These projects involve fundraising to help local schools, assistance for the infirm, or disaster relief initiatives. In a few cases, second generation Caribbean students traveled back to the region on development aid projects. We found this transnational charity work-taking place most frequently in schools that had a strong second-generation Haitian or Jamaican presence. Both Jamaican and Haitian second-generation university students seem to feel a special sense of responsibility for helping out family and fictive kin left behind because as many Websites noted: "they are the unfortunate victims of circumstances beyond their own control." See Table 5 for an indication of these trends.

CONCLUSION

Using Internet Web pages as spaces to alleviate the pain of personal and cultural loss seems to be the practice taking place for second-generation Caribbean-origin university and college students in this sample. The Web pages constructed seem to act as a symbolic bridge that connects familiar Creole cultural values and practices with the second generations' feelings of object loss and cultural mourning. This is particularly so in a racialized international milieu where many second generation Caribbeans must combat systemic and institutionalized practices by the dominant group to make them feel marginalized and stigmatized.

From the content of the Websites examined, it is also apparent that despite the fact that the many second generation Caribbean-origin university students are living both "here" and "there" on a transnational "hyphen," most seemed fairly comfortable navigating between both worlds. Unlike their parents who are often stuck feeling like marginalized and radicalized outsiders in the countries they migrated to, the second generation in this study seem to have the intellectual, social and cultural capital to take advantage of both worlds. They can use their Caribbean cultural background and values as an anchor for maintaining a sense of pride and high self-esteem while at the same time they can use their American, Canadian or British cultural capital to be successful in terms of settlement and future employment. This is particularly sanguine in situations where having the right accent can be the difference between being asked back for a second interview or not.

For many second-generation Caribbean-origin university students their ethnicity and cultural identity seems to be fluid, situational and volitional. They are based on a dynamic process in which boundaries, identities and cultures are negotiated, defined and produced though social interactions inside and outside their community. The construction of Internet Websites can be seen as the newest tool, that allows these young people to participate in an evolving Caribbean transnational culture. The Internet has come to fit directly into the transnational orientation for many second-generation Caribbean-origin people because it provides them with a

voice to express who they are, where they have come from and what their cultural values are. Internet Websites have also given this cohort a feeling of "agency" that helps them to avoid feelings of object loss. This acquisition of "agency" is particularly important for Caribbean immigrants who have been traditionally powerless to have a voice in the global public sphere. The Internet allows them to have a loud voice and an image which can be heard virtually around the world with the push of a button.

Undoubtedly, the cyberspace world of the Internet and the construction of Web pages have given Caribbean-origin university and college students a secure and safe place where the in-group discourse can include issues that might not be uttered in other public spaces. The Websites also seem to provide a therapeutic, social and psychological means for these young people to be able to maintain their Creole culture and continue to have a transnational identity in the international diaspora.

As the future unfolds and social networking sites like Twitter, Facebook and Myspace become more in use by second generation Caribbeans, it will be very interesting to study these sites as locations where the second generation are voicing and redefining their "Caribbeanness" in real time. Second generation Caribbeans will be using these social networking sites to connect with family, kin and fictive kin scattered around the international diaspora so that they can maintain a sense of belonging. Knowing about one another's activities in real time will further add to the in-group discourse about what it means to be a second generation Caribbean male or female in the international diaspora.

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