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'Gifts From Amin': The Resettlement, Integration, and Identities of Ugandan Asian Refugees in Canada

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in History

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Abstract

Given the current climate of the global refugee crisis it is vital to investigate why and how Canada has admitted refugees in the past. Prior to the creation of formal refugee policy, several notable resettlement initiatives occurred within the country in the postwar period, including the arrival of Hungarian and Czechoslovakian refugees. This is the first academic study on the resettlement, integration, and identities of Ugandan Asian refugees who arrived in Canada between 1972 and 1974. They were the largest group of non-European and predominately Muslim refugees to arrive in Canada before the official creation of formal refugee policy in 1976.

The purpose of the dissertation is to humanize those who have and are being persecuted around the world for various reasons, including political belief, economic despair, natural disasters, sexual orientation, religious affiliations, and racial intolerance. By recapturing the life histories of Ugandan Asian refugees, the dissertation refutes the essentialization of refugees as subjects to be admitted based on a nation's political leanings, national security interests, and varying domestic concerns. Oral histories with Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada reinvigorate the broader Canadian historical narrative with the life stories of refugees that have been living in Canada for over 40 years. As refugees have transitioned to becoming active Canadian citizens, the project uses a direct case study to explore the motivations behind Canada's decision to admit Ugandan Asians while simultaneously highlighting how the collaboration between the federal government and numerous voluntary organizations facilitated the adaptation and integration processes for refugees. Extensive archival research conducted at Library and Archives Canada in conjunction with over fifty oral history participants inform the first historical study on Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada. Using an interdisciplinary framework, this dissertation explores the personal identity constructions of Ugandan Asian refugees. Their multiple affiliations to Uganda, South Asia, and Canada are discussed in various ways that embody the pluralistic nature of Canadian society. Their expressions of self demonstrate how individuals can be dedicated nationals of a country while maintaining cultural, ethnic, and religious ties.

Keywords

Ugandan Asians, Refugees, Canadian Immigration, Oral History, Identity, Canadian Refugee Policy, Canada, Uganda, South Asia, Idi Amin, Pierre Elliot Trudeau, Aga Khan IV

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continuously kept me uplifted and inspired throughout this project. My many roommates over the years, Adil, Omar, and Azhar, have all been pillars of strength and guidance. You have all shown me the meaning of living in the moment, the power of positivity and gratitude, and made sure I had endless nights of laughter and smiles during my graduate career. Each one of you have become my blood brothers.

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Introduction

On a brisk evening in late October 1972, my mother, grandmother, and two uncles arrived in Ottawa as refugees from Uganda. They were part of a larger movement of 7,550 Ugandan Asian refugees who were resettled across Canada between 1972 and 1974.¹ At the young age of 17, she was entrusted by the Canadian government to financially support her two younger brothers and her own mother as the only readily employable individual within the family. With a cheerful smile she recalled her first experiences of a true Canadian winter and her earliest interactions with Canadians. After being in Canada for only a three days, she remembered her first commute to work at the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (C.I.B.C.):

When we woke up it snowed that day, like everything was covered white. So everything looked different ... when I took a bus and went to the bank the day before things looked differently. Because of the snow, everything looked different to me and I didn't have winter boots, a winter coat ... so I got on the bus and I tried to follow and I got lost. So I was supposed to be at work at 8:30 or 9am and I didn't get there until 12 or 12:30pm, I finally found the place. And I froze because I didn't have the clothing. So finally, when I got to the bank because I only knew one person who interviewed me. So when I got there, I saw her sitting in her office so I just went to her and I was already blue and purple, like I was frozen. My hands were frozen, my toes were frozen, and I started to cry ... she asked me, what happened? Did you get lost? And I just started to cry and then she realized that I'm frozen so she took me downstairs ... she made me a cup of tea, she put a blanket on me and gave me a piece of toast. And I was just sobbing away because I was so frozen and I didn't make it to work on the first day and I missed, you know? And I was lost, and I didn't know how to get back to the hotel, I couldn't find this place, I didn't know who to call, so I was lost. I cried and cried and cried. And she gave me a piece of toast and tea and she asked me what happened. I told her I got lost, I took the same bus. And then she says why aren't you wearing your shoes? Why aren't you wearing your coat? Where is your scarf? And I told her that I didn't have any ... So around 4:30 or 5 o'clock I was supposed to finish work. She came to me and said we would like to see you downstairs before you go home. So when I went downstairs, the staff during the day, or lunch or whatever, they all went and bought me something warm. There was a scarf that somebody gave me, somebody gave me gloves. They gave me a kettle to make tea for myself. They bought a few little things. They gave me a map and so I was touched, I was touched that day.²

¹ Library and Archives Canada (referred to as LAC hereafter), Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-5-650, A.E. Gotlieb, "Ugandan Asians - Press Briefing by British Community Relations Commission," July 7, 1975, 2.

² Shamim Muhammedi, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 5, 2014.

Her first days in Canada embodied one of the numerous ways in which Ugandan Asian refugees experienced both the Canadian climate and spirit. They were welcomed to Canada under the Liberal government of Pierre Elliot Trudeau upon being expelled from their homes by the President and Military General of Uganda, Idi Amin. President Amin declared on August 4th, 1972 that Uganda had no room for “the over 80,000 Asians holding British passports who are sabotaging Uganda’s economy and encouraging corruption.”³ He argued that he wanted to see the power of Uganda’s economy restored into the “hands of Uganda citizens, especially ‘black Ugandans’.”⁴ The expulsion decree forced the exodus of nearly every Ugandan of South Asian descent within only ninety days.

³ “The Future of the Asians in Uganda,” *Uganda Argus*, August 5, 1972, 1. It is imperative to note that mass violence within Uganda during Idi Amin’s rule (1971-1979) was primarily directed at Ugandan Africans. This was implemented through various institutionalized bodies. Three terror units were created under President Idi Amin’s rule including the State Research Bureau (SRB), the Public Safety Unit (PSU), and the Military Police. The violent acts conducted by Amin’s regime served the simple purpose of terrorizing Uganda’s population as a whole. Through these three terror units Amin successfully created a framework that facilitated mass violence in Uganda. However, it was Ugandans themselves that abused this system to wantonly kill. The state apparatus provided the framework for private individuals to carry out personal vendettas or to get even with personal enemies. Another contributing factor to mass violence in Uganda is widespread *kondoism*. Kondos referred to bandits who arbitrarily confiscated goods or killed Ugandans through their association to the military. Various decrees were passed by the government administration in 1972 that made *kondoism* attractive to members of the military and the general public. Members of state security forces and soldiers were free to loot, smuggle, and blackmail Ugandans with little fear of being reprimanded by the state or be disciplined by the superiors in the military. However, this encouraged supporters of the Amin regime to kill for not only economic gains but also for any other reason they deemed fit. There are numerous and less publicized cases of individual soldiers, “executing a man behind the dancehall in order to ‘inherit’ his girlfriend for the night, or civilian criminals wearing army uniforms on loan from real soldiers as a strategy of extorting money” Jan Jelmert Jorgenson, *Uganda: A Modern History*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1981), 275. Thousands of Ugandans died from the decentralized violence that took place due to the promotion of *kondoism* during the 1971-1979 period. The guise of *kondoism* shielded the violence of government soldiers and effectively legalized the killing squads of Amin. *Kondoism* in particular, could be conducted by any Ugandan regardless of ethnicity, religion, political allegiance or economic situation. President Amin did not force Ugandans to commit murder on large scales but instead condoned it through legislation and the creation of his three killing squads. Estimates for those murdered under Amin’s regime span from two to five hundred thousand Ugandans. For more on mass violence in Uganda see: Dan Wooding and Ray Barnett, *Uganda Holocaust*, (London: Pickering and Inglis Limited, 1980); George Ivan Smith, *Ghosts of Kampala*, (London: George Weidenfeld and Nicolson Limited, 1980); Andrew Rice, *The Teeth May Smile but the Heart Does Not Forget: Murder and Memory in Uganda*, (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009); Thomas Patrick Melady and Margaret Badum Melady, *Idi Amin Dada: Hitler in Africa*, (Kansas City: Universal Press Syndicate, 1977); Ali Al’ Amin Mazrui, *Soldiers and Kinsmen in Uganda: The Making of a Military Ethnocracy*, (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1975); Henry Kyemba, *A State of Blood: The inside Story of Idi Amin*, (New York: Ace Books, 1977); Holger Bernt Hansen, *Ethnicity and Military Rule in Uganda*, (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1977); David Gwyn, *Idi Amin: Death-Light of Africa*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1977); Tony Avirgan and Martha Honey, *War in Uganda: The Legacy of Idi Amin*, (Westport: Lawrence Hill & Company Incorporated, 1982).

⁴ Ibid.

Under these circumstances, a partnership was created between the Canadian government represented by Pierre Elliot Trudeau and His Highness Prince Shah Karim al-Husayni Aga Khan IV, the spiritual leader of the Shia Ismaili Muslim community, to help resettle almost 8,000 Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada by the end of 1974.⁵ Trudeau and the Aga Khan shared a close personal friendship that is encapsulated in numerous letters exchanged between the two individuals who vacationed together, celebrated various holidays with each other's families, and culminated in the Aga Khan being an honorary pallbearer at the former prime minister's funeral.⁶ Britain had also called upon the Commonwealth community, including Canada, to respond to the plight of Ugandan Asians as they could not absorb the large numbers of Ugandan Asian refugees based on heightened levels of racial antagonism on the "already crowded island."⁷ These two requests for aid were echoed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Prince Sadruddin (the uncle of Aga Khan IV), who pleaded with the international community to resettle those who were transported to refugee camps following the expiration of the expulsion decree on November 8th, 1972.⁸ Canada's response represented the largest resettlement of non-European and non-white refugees in the nation's history by 1974.⁹ Additionally, the arrival of Ugandan Asians marked the first major resettlement of a predominantly Muslim group of refugees.¹⁰ This research study argues that based on the historical context of their resettlement in Canada, Ugandan Asian refugees have transitioned to become active Canadian citizens. Their reception in Canada serves as an excellent case study

⁵ John Geddes, "A Holy Man with an Eye for Connections," *Maclean's Magazine*, October 27, 2010. <http://www2.macleans.ca/2010/10/27/a-holy-man/> (accessed March 23, 2014). After the expulsion decree was issued the Aga Khan called Prime Minister Trudeau requesting the government of Canada to provide a safe haven for his followers. Given the extent of the situation and their close friendship, Prime Minister Trudeau obliged to accept roughly 10,000 Ismailis from the entire East African region within the coming years.

⁶ Letters between both individuals contained in LAC, Pierre Elliot Trudeau fond, MG 26 O20 "Personal Correspondence 1965-1985" demonstrate their cordial relations. They sent each other personal congratulations on the birth of their respective children, wished each other happy new year, and often signed off letters with "in friendship".

⁷ Joanna Herbert, "The British Ugandan Asian Diaspora: Multiple and Contested Belongings," *Global Networks* 12, no. 3 (2012): 16; LAC, Records of External Affairs, RG 25, volume 3146, file number 9-1973/1, Gerald Dirks, "Canada's Refugee Admissions Policy: Three Differing Responses," January 31, 1973, 12.

⁸ LAC, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-5-650, Gotlieb, "Ugandan Asians," 3.

⁹ Reginald Whitaker, *Double Standard: The Secret History of Canadian Immigration* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1987), 255. Although 1,250 Armenian refugees came to Canada between 1921 and 1930 during the Armenian genocide, it was gradual uptake that occurred over nine years. For more see: Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill, "Armenian Refugees and Their Entry into Canada, 1919-30," *Canadian Historical Review* 71, no. 1 (1990): 80-108.

¹⁰ There is a significant level of religious diversity including Hindu, Sikhs, Christians, and Muslims of various denominations within the group of refugees, however, over 60% of the refugee population were Muslims: Cecil Patrick Pereira, "A Study of the Effects of the Ethnic and Non-Ethnic Factors on the Resettlement of the Ugandan Asian Refugees in Canada" (Ph.D., The University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1981).

into the relationships between public policy, refugee resettlement, and integration in the 1970s. The dissertation investigates how these individuals transitioned from refugees to active members of Canadian society along with understanding their personal constructions of identity and senses of belonging.

The dissertation is the first full length historical and academic analysis of the Ugandan Asian refugee community in Canada. Prior to the arrival of Ugandan Asians, there were major resettlements of Hungarian and Czechoslovakian refugees in 1956 and 1968 respectively.¹¹ These resettlements informed Canada's policies and efforts in assisting the resettlement of Ugandan Asian refugees but were administered under varying historical contexts and led to the arrival of more European refugees. Both resettlements of these European refugees were framed within the Cold War geopolitical context as combatting the perils of communism and admitting fellow supporters of western capitalism. Most importantly, these major movements demonstrated the importance of sending Canadian visas officers abroad to screen refugees based on their skills and talents leading to disproportionate numbers of young, well educated, and highly skilled refugees being admitted to Canada.¹² These processes would be replicated in Uganda. However, the individual makeup of the Hungarian and Czechoslovakian refugee communities differed vastly to those who came from Uganda. This study is the first in-depth historical overview of non-European and predominantly non-Christian refugees preceding the implementation of formal refugee policy and ultimately contributes to works produced by Canadian immigration and refugee historians.¹³ These three resettlements are fundamental to understanding how refugees were admitted to Canada before the formal creation of refugee policy embodied in the *1976 Immigration Act*. Moreover, the dissertation complicates and enriches traditional interpretations of Canadian history that privilege the narratives of European settlers. As argued by Franca Iacovetta, these histories marginalize the voices of indigenous Canadians alongside

¹¹ Ninette Kelley and Michael J. Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 353-354.

¹² Howard Adelman, "An Immigration Dream: Hungarian Refugees Come to Canada – An Analysis" in *Breaking Ground: The 1956 Hungarian Refugee Movement to Canada*, ed. Robert H. Keyserlingk (Toronto: York Lanes Press, 1993), 38-40.

¹³ Morton Beiser, *Strangers at the Gate: The "Boat People's" First Ten Years in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 42.

those of immigrants and refugees.¹⁴ Using archival research in conjunction with an extensive oral history collection, this scholarly work carves a space within the Canadian historical narrative for Ugandan Asian refugees. With Canada's growing multicultural mosaic of cultures and communities, academic works that investigate the histories of these peoples in Canada reaffirm their contributions to and place within the broader Canadian historical narrative.

Central Arguments

The dissertation has four central arguments which are investigated within the five chapters of the project. First, I argue that Ugandan Asians challenged the rigidity of the three-tiered race and class hierarchy embedded in Uganda during colonial rule and hold strong senses of attachment to the region based on deep historical roots within East Africa. Despite being labelled as recent migrants by Idi Amin's military regime or indentured labourers who "forgot to go home," many Ugandan Asians viewed themselves as Ugandans.¹⁵ Upon understanding the establishment of the community within Uganda, the second central argument asserts that the Canadian government's decision to admit Ugandan Asian refugees was administered based on the duality of opportunism and humanitarianism. On the one hand, Canada responded to the expulsion decree based on appeals from the British government, the High Commissioner for Refugees, and His Highness the Aga Khan IV for assistance alongside prior knowledge that the vast majority of refugees were highly educated, skilled entrepreneurs, and professionals.¹⁶ On the other hand, accepting Ugandan Asian refugees, as stated by Prime Minister Trudeau, reinforced the nation's commitment to the "ideals of human dignity, social justice and the principle of multiracialism."¹⁷

The third central argument posits that the integration of Ugandan Asian refugees was facilitated by collaborative efforts from the Canadian government and public combined with the willingness of refugees to make Canada their permanent home. This reinforces scholarship within migration studies that consistently asserts the importance of integration being a two-way

¹⁴ Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Cold War Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006), x.

¹⁵ Cecil Patrick Pereira, "A Study of the Effects of the Ethnic and Non-Ethnic Factors on the Resettlement of the Ugandan Asian Refugees in Canada" (Ph.D., The University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1981), 12.

¹⁶ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 145, file 5850-3-650 "Memorandum to the Minister," August 22, 1972, 2-3.

¹⁷ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 948, file sf-c-1-1 "Memoranda to Cabinet on Immigration Policy", August 22, 1972, 4.

process that requires efforts from the host community as well as newcomers to create positive pathways to resettlement.¹⁸ My final argument is that Ugandan Asian refugees have become active Canadian citizens. Through numerous commitments to voluntarism, political participation, and assertions of their allegiance and ties to Canada, all forty-nine refugees interviewed expressed a strong sense of being Canadian. Although these identities were situated within a complex web of national, religious, and ethnic affiliations, participants consistently asserted that they were Canadians. They argued that they believed in the Canadian values of free speech, democracy, and respect for diversity and have established a formal archive at Carleton University to reaffirm their existence within the Canadian historical narrative. The archives were officially opened in June 2014 marking the concluding year for the dissertation's historical analysis. These central arguments and conclusions surrounding the resettlement, integration, and identities of Ugandan Asian refugees explores new ground within the historiography of Canadian immigration.

Historiography and Literature Review

The advent of immigration history began in the 1970s and grew out of the social history movement.¹⁹ Focusing on new labour history, women's history, ethnic history, and Marxist interpretations of the historical record, scholars focused on the "lives of ordinary, disadvantaged or otherwise marginalized people," and commenced "documenting the activities, accomplishments and challenges of these 'other' Canadians."²⁰ This transition enabled immigration history to emerge as a separate field within Canadian history. Prior to the creation of a distinct area of study, Iacovetta contends that initial works written from the 1930s to the 1960s explored the policy and settlement patterns of English, Scottish, and Irish immigrants reflecting the predominate nation-building school of thought within Canadian historiography.²¹ Earlier

¹⁸ See Rahsaan Maxwell, "Evaluating Migrant Integration: Political Attitudes Across Generations in Europe," *International Migration Review* 44, no. 1 (2010): 25–52; Irene Bloemraad, "Citizenship and Immigration a Current Review," *Journal of International Migration and Integration / Revue de L'integration et de La Migration Internationale* 1, no. 1 (2000): 9–37; Valerie Preston, Audrey Kobayashi, and Guida Man, "Transnationalism, Gender, and Civic Participation: Canadian Case Studies of Hong Kong Immigrants," *Environment and Planning A* 38, no. 9 (2006): 1633–1651; Zheng Wu, Christoph M. Schimmele, and Feng Hou, *Social Integration of Immigrants and Their Children in Canada's Urban Neighbourhoods* (Vancouver: Metropolis British Columbia, 2010).

¹⁹ Franca Iacovetta, *The Writing of English Canadian Immigrant History* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1997), 1.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

works reinforced the myths surrounding European settlers as the primary founders of Canada while simultaneously stereotyping various immigrant communities such as the Doukhobors and Mennonites.²² Additionally, earlier works glorified elite white men and are overly celebratory of certain migrant groups, as immigrants wrote biased accounts of their own communities.²³ However, new trends emerged in the 1970s to 1990s to address these shortcomings.

Beyond the inclusion of race, class, ethnic, and gendered perspectives on immigration in the 1970s, oral histories and the incorporation of migrant agency significantly contributed to how historians captured the experiences of newcomers. According to Iacovetta, this allowed academics to understand how migrants evaluated their own success in Canada and included their perspectives on relationships in the workplace, politics, homeownership, and the “the more vague but equally heartfelt notion of ‘a better future’ for oneself and one’s children.”²⁴ These themes are explored throughout the dissertation as a means of comprehending how Ugandan Asian refugees assessed their establishment in Canada. Innovations within the writing of Canadian immigration history inform the present study as they encourage an analysis and examination of personal measures of success and integration as articulated by Ugandan Asian refugees. Although these developments have improved the ways that academics interpret and discuss Canadian immigration, there are several pitfalls that need to be avoided.

Academic scholars must be wary of being overly zealous when discussing migrant agency. This may down play the importance of structural forces acting on individuals while simultaneously glorifying immigrants as heroes and promoting histories of ‘rags-to-riches’ immigrant groups.²⁵ Iacovetta also argues that most historians neglected the multiple relationships and power dynamics within the family unit.²⁶ The majority of works written from the 1970s to the 1990s focus on interactions of male immigrants within the public sphere upon arrival in Canada and failed to acknowledge and discuss the roles of women outside of the

²² See Helen Cowan, *British Immigration to British North America* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961); J.S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1909).

²³ See Norman McDonald, *Immigration and Colonization 1841-1903* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1966); Vera Lysenko, *Men in Sheepskin Coats: A Study of Assimilation* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1947).

²⁴ Iacovetta, *The Writing of English Canadian Immigrant History*, 7.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

household as well as within the family dynamic.²⁷ Ultimately, Iacovetta asserts that more studies must address the intersectionality of race, class, and gender in conjunction with acknowledging structural forces, migrant agency, and family dynamics. The dissertation takes up this call by utilizing an intersectional framework to understand the broader historical context surrounding the resettlement of Ugandan Asians in Canada. The study explores how structural forces of Canadian society in conjunction with the personal efforts of refugees defined their experiences of integration.

In the late 1990s and 2000s, several scholars embraced the postmodern and post-structural turn in historical writing to produce works that reviewed Canadian immigration history using innovative perspectives. Using the published ‘life-writings’ over 300 newcomers between 1840 and 1940, Dirk Hoerder illustrates how the personal recollections of immigrants in the form of private writing (journals, diaries, memoirs, etc.) reveal new information on the daily lives of Canadian immigrants.²⁸ Hoerder refutes the dominance of race and ethnicity within the writing of Canadian immigration history as the principle factor associated with integration. He argues that “boundaries between ethnic identities remained fluid and permeable,” providing a stark contrast to the intersectionality emphasized by Iacovetta.²⁹ According to Hoerder, academic literature from the 1990s overlooks how everyday casual interactions (between newcomers and Canadians at local community events, church gatherings, or in the work place), not race and ethnicity, defined inclusion and integration for immigrants. Conversely, Iacovetta utilizes the concept of ‘gatekeepers’ to refute how integration was a straightforward process of interaction between immigrants and Canadians. ‘Gatekeepers’ include a vast array of individuals who participated in formal areas of migration such as government officials, social workers, and family experts as well as others such as journalists and popular writers who provided pathways to belonging.³⁰ Both of these works inform the current study on Ugandan Asian refugees. Embracing the life-writings approach outlined by Hoerder and extending it to include oral histories, the dissertation interrogates the interactions between refugees and Canadians as a

²⁷ Iacovetta, *The Writing of English Canadian Immigrant History*, 15.

²⁸ Dirk Hoerder, *Creating Societies: Immigrant Lives in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999), ix.

²⁹ Hoerder, *Creating Societies*, xii.

³⁰ Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrants Lives in Cold War Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006), 14.

defining feature of senses of belonging. The study reveals that although ethnic identities remain fluid, the majority of Ugandan Asians did experience discrimination in Canada. This reaffirms Iacovetta's conception of gatekeepers, as refugees interacted with a multitude of individuals who either welcomed or hesitated to accept their participation in Canadian society. In conjunction with these developments several immigration scholars also seek to chart the ways in which Canadian immigration policy developed from the initial discovery of the 'New World' into the twenty-first century.

Major works by prominent immigration scholars such as Valerie Knowles, Ninette Kelly, Michael Trebilcock, and Freda Hawkins chart the evolution of Canadian immigration policy as well as the internal political motivations behind these developments.³¹ By categorizing years of migration within multiple eras, migration scholars articulate the influence of historical contexts on the shaping of policy by providing explanations behind the inclusion or exclusion of specific immigrant groups. For example, each of the studies argues that immediately after the Second World War immigration policy was directly motivated by the following elements: the postwar economic boom which required more labour to spur development, calls from the public for more humane immigration policy in order to resettle postwar European displaced persons and refugees fleeing oppressive left-wing regimes, and a preference for British and European migrants with limited acceptance of Asians, Africans, and West Indians.³² Their studies are succinct and rich reference works that document the social and political climate of Canadian immigration since the European discovery of the Americas. The dissertation embraces their profound levels of historical analysis that identify major global events along with those in Canada as factors that guided shifts in policy. Furthermore, the Ugandan Asian case study addresses various gaps within these major works as they contain passing references to the resettlement of this community. Continuing along similar lines of policy development, migration scholars turned their gaze towards transnationalism due to the growing impacts of globalization.

³¹ Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*; Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-2006* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2007); Freda Hawkins, *Canada and Immigration: Public Policy and Public Concern*, 2nd ed. (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988).

³² Ibid.

Advancements in technology increased interactions and facilitated communication for immigrants between their countries of origin and the countries of arrival.³³ Steven Vertovec argues that the shift towards transnationalism “has provided a new analytic optic which makes visible the increasing intensity and scope of circular flows of persons, goods, information, and symbols triggered by international labour migration.”³⁴ Building on the ‘transnational turn’ and contributions made by other scholars, the dissertation investigates how refugees interact with their potential affiliations to East Africa and South Asia. For example, transnational linkages are expressed by Ugandan Asian refugees through the creation of several philanthropic institutions. Three examples include: the Uganda Sustainable Clubfoot Care Project (USCCP) founded by Dr. Shafique Pirani in collaboration with the University of British Columbia which trains doctors in Uganda in the detection and management of clubfoot; REACH Empowering Girls Through Education created by Amin Visram, which provides underprivileged girls with housing, food, and access to health practitioners; and the Indo-Africa Charitable Society launched by Vasant Lakhani, which promotes public health in rural areas of Uganda through mobile medical and dental clinics.³⁵ This study draws attention to the dynamic ways in which transnationalism informs the historical process of integration for the resettlement of refugees in Canada alongside its role in the formulation of identities. Building on the above principles, this study aims to inform academic literature on the refugee experience in Canada.

Coinciding with the development of Canadian immigration history, refugee studies emerged in the 1970s to address the distinct difference between refugees and immigrants. Gerald E. Dirks contends that Canada viewed refugees as permanent settlers and their admission to Canada “depended upon prevailing political and economic conditions within this country.”³⁶ Although Canada did not have a separate admission policy for refugees until the 1976

³³ See Michael Samers, *Migration* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Stephen Castles, Hein de Haas, and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 5th ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2014); Steven Vertovec, *Transnationalism*, (New York: Routledge, 2009).

³⁴ Steven Vertovec, *Transnationalism*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), 13-14.

³⁵ For more on these organizations please see their respective websites: "Ugandan Sustainable Clubfoot Care Project," The University of British Columbia, accessed on December 1, 2016, <http://usccp.orthopaedics.med.ubc.ca/>; "Reach: Empowering Girls Through Education," The Visram Foundation, accessed on December 1, 2016, <http://www.visramfoundation.com/>; "Indo-Africa Charitable Society," The Indo-Africa Charitable Society, accessed on December 1, 2016, <http://www.indoafricacharity.com/about/>.

³⁶ Gerald E. Dirks, *Canada's Refugee Policy: Indifference or Opportunism?* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1977), xi.

Immigration Act, Dirks covered major refugee resettlements and their historical contexts before the creation of official legislation. His work firmly established the importance of refugee studies and differentiated their conditions for migration as well as motivations for integration from those of other newcomers. The central defining feature between the two groups is that immigrants choose to migrate whereas refugees are forced to flee their country of origin due to various forms of persecution. His study refutes the amalgamation of immigrants and refugees within the historical record.

In the years following the Second World War thousands of refugees were resettled in Canada.³⁷ The rise of authoritarian regimes along with Cold War proxy wars led to the global displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. From the mid-1950s to the 1980s roughly 40,000 Hungarians, 12,000 Czechoslovakians, 300 Tibetans, 8,000 Ugandan Asians, 7,000 Chileans, and 60,000 Indochinese refugees arrived in Canada.³⁸ The dissertation seeks to build on previous historical investigations of Hungarian, Chilean, and Indochinese refugees since they currently dominate the Canadian historical narrative on refugee resettlement in the postwar era.³⁹ Each of these resettlements set precedents for forthcoming initiatives but were individually shaped by the historical context. A consistent fluctuation between open and restrictive policies guided each response to these global crises that were influenced by the local and international geo-political contexts. The fundamental debate within these works surrounds Canada's motivations for resettling these specific groups of refugees. Robert Keyserlingk's edited volume on Hungarian refugees brilliantly articulates the debate between Canada's motivations for

³⁷ Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, 353-354

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 346, 366-368, 398.

³⁹ For individual studies on the Hungarians see: Andrew S. Thompson and Stephanie Bangarth, "Transnational Christian Charity: The Canadian Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches, and the Hungarian Refugee Crisis, 1956-1957," *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 38, no. 3 (2008): 295-316; Robert H. Keyserlingk, ed., *Breaking Ground: The 1956 Hungarian Refugee Movement to Canada* (Toronto: York Lanes Press, 1993). For the Chileans see: Suha Diab, "Between Fear and Vulnerability: The Emergence of the Humanitarian Security-Nexus in the Canadian Refugee Protection Regime" (Ph.D., Carleton University, 2014); Francis Peddie, *Young, Well-Educated, and Adaptable: Chilean Exiles in Ontario and Quebec, 1973-2010* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2014); Stephanie Bangarth, "Citizen Activism, Refugees, and the State: Two Case-Studies in Canadian Immigration History," in Catherine Briggs, ed., *Modern Canada: 1945 to the Present* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2014). For the Indochinese see: Morton Beiser, *Strangers at the Gate: The "Boat People's" First Ten Years in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Kwok B. Chan and Doreen Marie Indra, eds., *Uprooting, Loss and Adaptation: The Resettlement of Indochinese Refugees in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Public Health Association, 1987); Howard Adelman, *Canada and the Indochinese Refugees* (Regina: L.A. Weigl Educational Associates, 1982); Elliot Tepper eds., *Southeast Asian Exodus: From Tradition to Resettlement : Understanding Refugees from Laos, Kampuchea, and Vietnam in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Asian Studies Association, 1980).

admitting refugees by questioning its altruistic nature.⁴⁰ The dissertation interrogates Canada's decision to respond to the plight of Ugandan Asian refugees as it was dictated by a multitude of factors that waned from compassion to pragmatism.

On the one hand, humanitarianism is revered as the ultimate motivation for refugee resettlement in Canada. On the other, scholarly works on each of the resettlements between 1950 and 1980 described the ulterior motives of the Canadian government. Be it a reluctance to admit certain individuals based on Cold War rhetoric, or an overrepresentation of young, highly skilled, and highly educated refugees, Canadian refugee policy is not a clear act of altruistic legislation. Specialists on refugee policy argue that decisions to admit refugees are predicated on additional factors relating to international human rights and concerns over national security. Christopher G. Anderson argues that were two dominating ideologies that dictated the response of the Canadian government to refugee crisis from confederation until the formal deracialization of Canadian immigration policy in 1962.⁴¹ At times, concerns for international human rights championed those of nativist concerns based on unemployment and citizen rights enabling refugees to be admitted to Canada reflecting the liberal internationalist discourse, whereas, the opposite occurred during the Depression and Second World War reflecting the supremacy of the liberal nationalist rhetoric. Suha Diab argues that questions of national security and humanitarianism directed refugee policy during the Uganda crisis of 1972 and the 1973 overthrow of the communist government in Chile.⁴² Diab concludes that admission to Canada is positioned

⁴⁰ The authors within this edited volume contest the notion of Canada's refugee policy being based on the economic and political climate of the 1950s. Howard Adelman argued that Hungarian refugee policy was motivated by humanitarianism in addition to reinforcing Canada's identity as a European settler nation alongside favourable economic conditions and supporting the global fight against Communism. Conversely, within the same volume others, such as Gerald Dirks and Nandor Fred Driesziger, argued that there was a strict screening process during the resettlement initiative to ensure that none of the refugees were Nazi sympathizers or Communists. Additionally, a disproportionate number of Hungarians who came to Canada were young, well educated, and highly skilled. These debates between scholars highlight the various contested grounds of Canadian refugee studies. For more see: Howard Adelman, "An Immigration Dream: Hungarian Refugees Come to Canada – An Analysis" in *Breaking Ground: The 1956 Hungarian Refugee Movement to Canada*, ed. Robert H. Keyserlingk (Toronto: York Lanes Press, 1993); Gerald E. Dirks, "Canada and Immigration: International and Domestic Considerations in the Decade Preceding the 1956 Hungarian Exodus" in *Breaking Ground: The 1956 Hungarian Refugee Movement to Canada*, ed. Robert H. Keyserlingk, (Toronto: York Lanes Press, 1993); N. F. Driesziger, "The Refugee Experience in Canada and the Evolution of the Hungarian Canadian Community" in *Breaking Ground: The 1956 Hungarian Refugee Movement to Canada*, ed. Robert H. Keyserlingk, (Toronto: York Lanes Press, 1993).

⁴¹ Christopher G. Anderson, *Canadian Liberalism and the Politics of Border Control, 1867-1967* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013).

⁴² Suha Diab, "Between Fear and Vulnerability: The Emergence of the Humanitarian Security-Nexus in the Canadian Refugee Protection Regime" (Ph.D., Carleton University, 2014).

between the security and humanitarian impulses of government officials, leading to a rapid response to Ugandan Asian refugees based on humanitarianism and a significantly delayed admission of ‘Communist’ Chilean refugees based on security concerns. The securitization of Canadian refugee policy continues to assert itself today based on conceptions of global terrorism in a post 9/11 world.

These categories of analysis provide useful frameworks for interrogating allegations that the Canadian government was ‘skimming the cream of the crop’ with regards to the resettlement of Ugandan Asian refugees.⁴³ Furthermore, some scholars argued that Canada was not on a ‘mission of mercy’ and that they received a disproportionate number of young refugees and failed to accept more ‘hardcore’ refugee cases.⁴⁴ The dissertation concludes that these charges were accurate to some degree and reflect the intrinsic debate within Canadian refugee policy that is predicated on the duality of opportunism and humanitarianism. These conflicting elements of refugee and immigration policy along with the experiences of Ugandan Asian refugees are embraced throughout the dissertation to explore their resettlement, integration, and identities in Canada. To comprehend the personal identities of Ugandan Asians it is vital to explore their membership within three distinct diaspora groups.

Situating the Ugandan Asian Experience with the Diaspora

The ancestry of Ugandan Asian refugees links them to South Asia, while their religious background, for the majority of refugees, and their source country fosters potential bonds to the Muslim and East African diasporas in Canada. Due to their physical appearance and historical roots in the Indian sub-continent, Ugandan Asian refugees have typically been associated with the South Asian diaspora in Canada. Scholars place Ugandan Asian refugees within the third era of South Asian migration to Canada – the postwar era 1948-1984.⁴⁵ Many academics have distinctly noted the various countries of origin for other ‘twice migrant’ South Asians including those who migrated from other regions of Africa, Fiji, Trinidad, and other Caribbean islands.⁴⁶

⁴³ Whitaker, *Double Standard*, 255.

⁴⁴ Bert N. Adams and Victor Jesudason, “The Employment of Ugandan Asian Refugees in Britain, Canada, and India,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 7, no. 4 (1984): 464.

⁴⁵ Norman Buchignani, Doreen M. Indra, and Ram Srivastava, *Continous Journey: A Social History of South Asians in Canada* (Toronto, McClellan and Stewart Limited, 1985).

⁴⁶ Rabindra N. Kanungo, *South Asians in the Canadian Mosaic* (Montreal: Kala Bharati, 1984).

However, Ugandan Asian refugees who participated in the study problematize affiliations to the Indian sub-continent. Due to their deep historical roots in East Africa, this typical categorization of Ugandan Asians within the South Asian diaspora remains convoluted. Beyond these transnational linkages to East Africa and the Indian sub-continent, Ugandan Asians are also part of several religious communities.

The vast majority of those who arrived in Canada by the conclusion of the expulsion deadline were Muslims who belong to the Shia Imami Nizari Ismaili Muslim tradition.⁴⁷ There are passing mentions of the Ismaili sect in studies that explore the Muslim diaspora in Canada; however, these texts focused on the broader Muslim community. For example, Natasha Bakht articulates how Ismailis are caught “between the proverbial rock and a hard place. Outside of the Ummah [Arabic word for community often in reference to the entire Muslim community], they are a part of the monolithic Muslim Identity, yet inside they are often excluded – reinforcing old feelings of persecution and the subsequent reluctance to speak out.”⁴⁸ Beyond this quick assertion, the Ismaili community is not explicitly discussed in the rest of her book. Ismaili Muslims consist of a minority within a minority community of Shia Muslims. Other scholars have explored the realities of Muslim identity from a religious studies or sociological perspective due to the renewed interest in Islam after 9/11.⁴⁹ Ultimately, these works fail to address the

⁴⁷ Ultimately, of those who were issued visas in Kampala and had arrived in Canada by November 8 1972, 2,862 were Ismaili Muslims, 649 were Hindus, 466 were Christians, 382 belonged to other denominations of Islam, and 61 were Sikh. See LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-5-650, V.A. Latour, “Ugandan Expellees - Expenditures,” November 10, 1972, 2. Ismailis trace their history back to the main division in Islam between Shia and Sunni Muslims in the seventh century, which occurred upon the death of Prophet Muhammad. Shia Muslims believe the prophet chose Ali, his cousin and son-in-law, to be his successor and carry on the tradition of their faith; however, Sunni Muslims believed Abu Talib, his uncle, was destined to be the rightful heir but only as a secular leader of the community. Ismaili Muslims have followed the line of Ali’s progeny up until the present day. Each successive heir inherits the title of ‘Imam’, which establishes this individual as the “religiously authoritative guide” of the entire Ismaili community. The current Imam is His Highness Prince Karim al-Husayni Aga Khan IV. They are the only sect of Shia Islam that believes in a current living Imam. The Imam “is simultaneously a social, political, and spiritual leader to Ismailis, embodying in many ways the historical ideal of a Muslim imam or caliph”. The Aga Khan is a direct descendent of prophet Muhammad and Imam Ali. He has the authority to interpret the Qur’an in a progressive manner but he is not considered a deity and does not claim to be divine. The Aga Khan currently resides in Aiglemont, France and “is an honorary Canadian Citizen and an honorary companion of the Order of Canada”. He became the current imam after his grandfather Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan III passed away in 1957.

⁴⁸ Natasha Bakht, *Belonging and Banishment: Being Muslim in Canada* (Toronto: Tsar Publications, 2008), 103.

⁴⁹ See Evelyn Leslie Hamdon, *Islamophobia and the Question of Muslim Identity: The Politics of Difference and Solidarity* (Halifax: Fernwood Pub, 2010); Haideh Moghissi, *Diaspora by Design: Muslims in Canada and Beyond* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); Ahmad F. Yousif, *Muslims in Canada: A Question of Identity*, 2nd ed.

arrival of a several thousand Muslim refugees in the 1970s. The dissertation reclaims the identities of Ugandan Asians who identify with the faith of Islam as well as acknowledging the religious plurality within the refugee community. Additionally, Ugandan Asian refugees are recent migrants from continental Africa.

Scholars who investigate the African diaspora in Canada describe the importance of racialization for immigrants and refugees in Canada.⁵⁰ Their studies aim to differentiate between new African immigrants who arrived after 1967, and African Canadians who have a significantly longer history in Canada. Conversely, Ugandan Asians are not considered to be members of the African diaspora in Canada as they are not mentioned in any of the central texts on the African community in Canada.⁵¹ This is because Ugandan Asians are typically associated with their South Asian ethnic background and dismissed as not being ‘authentically’ East African. Regardless of personal attachments to East Africa, Ugandan Asian refugees are subsumed within the literature on the South Asian community in Canada and excluded from scholarship on the African Diaspora. Building on previous studies conducted on the Ugandan Asian refugee community in the 1970s and early 1980s, the dissertation aims to provide a historical analysis of the community’s past forty years in Canada.

Scholarship on Ugandan Asian Refugees

Academic studies on Ugandan Asian refugees have focused on their resettlement in the United Kingdom, identities as British Ugandan Asians, digital expressions of memory, or initial adjustment within Canada up until 1974. Consequently, there is only one book length project dedicated to exploring the historical context and subsequent arrival of Ugandan Asian refugees in the U.K and is severely dated as it was written in 1975.⁵² There are several articles by historian Margret Frenz who interrogates the memories, identities, and multiple affiliations of refugees

(Ottawa: Legas, 2008); Paul Eid, *Being Arab: Ethnic and Religious Identity Building Among Second Generation Youth in Montreal* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007).

⁵⁰ Gillian Creese, *The New African Diaspora in Vancouver: Migration, Exclusion, and Belonging* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 15.

⁵¹ See Creese, *The New African Diaspora in Vancouver*, Matsuko Atsuko, and John Sorensen. *Ghosts and Shadows: Construction of Identity and Community in the African Diaspora* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001) and Wisdom Tettey J and Korbla P. Pupilampu eds. *The African Diaspora in Canada: Negotiating Identity and Belonging* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2005).

⁵² William G. Kuepper, G. Lynne Lackey, and E. Nelson Swinerton, *Ugandan Asians in Great Britain: Forced Migration and Social Absorption* (London: Croom Helm, 1975).

that trace their ancestry to Goa and includes those who reside in Toronto and England.⁵³ Other scholars investigate the complexities and fluidity of Ugandan Asian identities in the U.K. along with their attachments to material culture, which physically embody their attachments to East Africa.⁵⁴ Zehra Mawani explores the digital expressions of identities and memories of Ugandan Asian refugees by reviewing a Facebook group entitled, “*Ugandan Asians who were expelled and their descendants*.”⁵⁵ She argues that the online group provides an important site of memory that acts as a “*lieux de memoire* for Ugandan Asians as they seek to maintain their connections to their home country.”⁵⁶ These works provided insights on conceptions of memory as well as constructions of identity amongst those who settled in the U.K. and elsewhere.

The two works that addressed the experiences of Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada are significantly dated and do not provide an in-depth historical interrogation of their lives in both Uganda and Canada. The first is a Master’s thesis conducted by sociologist Benson Chukwuma Morah. His 1974 study concludes that Ugandan Asian refugees “are only being moderately assimilated into their new environment...it seems rather surprising that this group should already be assimilating at this rate.”⁵⁷ Morah’s work provides insight on the initial experiences of the refugee community in Calgary; however, the majority of the measures employed to assess integration are based on sociological levels of analysis pertaining to levels of employment and education. Furthermore, the study draws conclusions based on a sample size of thirty-three refugees who resettled in Calgary and does not include any oral interviews with refugees.⁵⁸ The second study is another thesis that focused on the sociological question of whether ethnic or non-

⁵³ Margret Frenz, “Transimperial Connections: East African Goan Perspectives on ‘Goa 1961’” *Contemporary South Asia* 22, no. 3 (2014): 240–54; Margret Frenz, “Migration, Identity and Post-Colonial Change in Uganda: A Goan Perspective” *Immigrants and Minorities* 31, no. 1 (2013): 48–73.

⁵⁴ Joanna Herbert, “Oral Histories of Ugandan Asians in Britain: Gendered Identities in the Diaspora,” *Contemporary South Asia* 17, no. 1 (2009): 21–32; Joanna Herbert, “The British Ugandan Asian Diaspora: Multiple and Contested Belongings,” *Global Networks* 12, no. 3 (2012): 296–313; Joanna Herbert, *Negotiating Boundaries in the City: Migration, Ethnicity, and Gender in Britain*, Studies in Migration and Diaspora (Aldershot, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008); Divya P. Tolia-Kelly, “Materializing Post-Colonial Geographies: Examining the Textural Landscapes of Migration in the South Asian Home,” *Geoforum* 35, no. 6 (2004): 675–88.

⁵⁵ Zehra Mawani, “Diasporic Citizens: Ugandan Asians and Identity Formation; Facebook Photographs as a Method of Creating and Sharing Identity” (M.A., Carleton University, 2014).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 40. The term *lieux de memoire* is coined by French Historian Pierre Nora, which describes a site of memory that is itself already embedded with a sense of historical significance and meaning.

⁵⁷ Benson Chukwuma Morah, “The Assimilation of Ugandan Asians in Calgary” (M.A., University of Calgary, 1974), 152.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 84.

ethnic factors are salient when understanding how migrants resettle using the specific case-study of non-voluntary migrants.⁵⁹ Cecil Pereira's study amalgamated the responses of survey participants and ultimately concludes that ethnicosity (measured by food, festivals celebrated, language spoken at home, etc.) did not affect resettlement. However, his thesis does identify that job discrimination, downward labour market integration, and job dissatisfaction were prevalent amongst Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada.⁶⁰ Moreover, the study outlines the significance of the Uganda Settlement Committees created across Canada to aid incoming refugees as a crucial service that eased the adjustment process for refugees.⁶¹ Although Pereira's study offered new perspectives on the lives of Ugandan Asian refugees, his work was published in 1981 and does not analyze how the historical context influenced both the integration and identities of refugees.

In addition to these academic works, there are several other works written by various members of the Ugandan Asian refugee community. Several novels explore their individual perceptions of the expulsion decree, the political context in Uganda, their upbringing and childhood experiences, and their subsequent resettlement in Canada and the United Kingdom.⁶² Others used alternative methods of describing their life histories through cookbooks that articulated their multiple identities through delicacies that are infused with their tastes of the past.⁶³ These works identify how "each continent influenced the ingredients, taste, appearance, aroma, and texture" of specific dishes.⁶⁴ These sources provide invariable insight on the life histories of Ugandan Asian refugees and are incorporated throughout the dissertation. Major developments within the writing of Canadian immigration history, migration studies, and works produced by the Ugandan Asian refugee community create an important point of departure for understanding the theory and methodologies used throughout this project.

⁵⁹ Pereira, "A Study of the Effects of the Ethnic and Non-Ethnic Factors on the Resettlement of the Ugandan Asian Refugees in Canada."

⁶⁰ Ibid., 196-197.

⁶¹ Ibid., 224.

⁶² M. G. Vassanji, *No New Land* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991); Jamal, *Where the Air Is Sweet*; Mamdani, *From Citizen to Refugee*; Nanji, *Child of Dandelions*; Nazareth, *In a Brown Mantle*.

⁶³ Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler's Cookbook: A Memoir of Love, Migration And Food: Tales of Love, Migration and Food* (London: Portobello Books, 2012); Leila Umedaly, *Mamajee's Kitchen: Indian Cooking From Three Continents* (Vancouver: UP Umedaly, 2006).

⁶⁴ Umedaly, *Mamjee's Kitchen*, 2.

Theoretical Framework

The dissertation utilizes a broad range of theories to investigate the life experiences of Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada. Scholars identify how traditional narratives of Canadian history focus on the experiences of European settlers. For example, Janine Brodie builds on John Raulston Saul's conception of the "triangular foundations" of the Canadian historical narrative.⁶⁵ First Nations and Aboriginal, Anglo-Canadian, and French Canadian interpretations and perspectives encapsulate the myths surrounding Canada's foundation. This study proposes a fourth category that interacts within these dynamics by underscoring the histories of immigrants and refugees. Furthermore, within these four categories of Canadian historical narratives there are numerous intersectional elements that engage with national myths that ultimately shape how we contextualize and interpret the past. As argued by Michel Foucault, the past is being continuously remoulded as its current representations are reflections of the "present power of groups to fashion its image" rather than being based on the "ability of historians to evoke its memory."⁶⁶ This dissertation is but one of many attempts to reinvigorate the historical record with alternative perspectives on Canadian history.

An intrinsic element for investigating these foundational narratives of Canadian history is to acknowledge how the Ugandan Asian refugee community was and is being continuously created and recreated. For example, Benedict Anderson's seminal work on national identity outlines the significance of individual interpretations of their collective and individual histories as a method for creating affiliations and emotional bonds between one another. Anderson argues that the origins of these 'imagined communities' need to be understood within their historical contexts.⁶⁷ Accordingly, communities should not be assessed about whether they are legitimate groups of people that are entitled to create their own body but instead we should understand them based on the way in which they are imagined.⁶⁸ Anderson's theory also applies directly to the proposed four categories of founding narratives within Canadian history. Since each narrative competes with the others, specific perspectives are purposefully forgotten or ignored to create a

⁶⁵ Janine Brodie, "An Elusive Search for Community: Globalization and the Canadian National Identity," *Review of Constitutional Studies* 7, no. 1 (2002): 163.

⁶⁶ Patrick H. Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory* (Burlington: University Press of New England, 1993), 6.

⁶⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Editions and NLB, 1983).

⁶⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

succinct and monolithic national narrative. The current study addresses the complexities of the Ugandan Asian refugee community and how membership within this community has “changed over time, and why, today they [imagined communities] command such profound emotional legitimacy.”⁶⁹ This will broaden our understanding of how integration is a multifaceted concept that incorporates interactions between Ugandan Asian refugees and Canadians. Furthermore, the dissertation emphasizes the role of transnationalism within the historic creations of imagined communities. This reiterates the numerous ways in which history informs present day ideals of belonging and senses of attachment to Canada. Dirk Hoerder and Franca Iacovetta provide two frameworks to comprehend the impacts of these interchanges between Canadians and Ugandan Asian refugees as mentioned earlier. Oral histories with refugees reveal contested, complex, and multifaceted aspects of resettlement in Canada that fundamentally inform their constructions of identity.

Stuart Hall argues that national cultures are “historical and political creations” and thus they provide important foundations for expressing ones identity.⁷⁰ Imagined communities represent several cultural, religious, and national affiliations which are further complicated by personal identity construction. Scholars who specialize in exploring these concepts articulate that identity itself is fluid, socially constructed, contested, and continuously reassembled.⁷¹ As Hall notes “identity becomes ‘a moveable feast’: formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems that surround us. *It is historically, not biologically defined* [my emphasis].”⁷² This framework of identity is essential for reclaiming the numerous affiliations and personal expressions of self for Ugandan Asian refugees. The dissertation reinvigorates the significance of history, as opposed to biology, as the fundamental element that informs how Ugandan Asian refugees express who they are. These are demonstrated throughout the oral history interviews with fifty Ugandan Asian refugees.

⁶⁹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 4.

⁷⁰ Brodie, “An Elusive Search for Community,” 160; Stuart Hall, David Morley, and Kuan-Hsing Chen, eds., *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, Comedia (London: Routledge, 1996).

⁷¹ See Maroussia Hajdukowski-Ahmed, Nazilla Khanlou, and Helene Moussa, eds., *Not Born a Refugee Woman: Contesting Identities, Rethinking Practices* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008); Stacey Zembrzycki, *According to Baba: A Collaborative Oral History of Sudbury's Ukrainian Community* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2014); Hall, Morley, and Chen, *Stuart Hall*.

⁷² Stuart Hall et al., eds., *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*, (Cambridge: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996), 598.

Oral history is described as the process of interviewing “eye-witness participants in the events of the past for the purposes of historical reconstruction.”⁷³ Initially, the advent of oral history was used to capture the experiences of those who were considered to be “hidden from history,” particularly in the 1970s as oral historians ventured out into the world in hopes of documenting the lives of marginalized communities and average individuals who were not present in national and local archives.⁷⁴ As Valerie Yow argues in her guidebook for recording oral history, this form of research enriches our traditional historical narratives since they inform scholars on the viewpoints of diverse individuals, ultimately creating a clearer picture of society.⁷⁵ Furthermore, she contends that oral interviewees facilitate the historians task by helping them navigate a plethora of written documents to identify what was a of significance to those who either composed these materials or lived through the particular historical period.⁷⁶ However, oral history methodology was rooted in ideologies that positioned the recordings as archival documents that portrayed history as it ‘really was’. This was purposefully enacted to portray the scientific elements of oral history to ground it as an alternative historical source beyond the traditional archive. Early practitioners did question the limits of memory, subjectivity, and multiple power dynamics within the interviewer and interviewee relationship; however, as Anna Sheftel, Stacey Zembrzycki, and Linda Shopes argue, this was constricted by the objectivist paradigm of historical study more broadly up until the subjective turn in the humanities and social sciences provided a nuanced critique of these positivist methods in the 1980s.⁷⁷

Subsequently, intellectual shifts in the 1980s and 1990s rooted in postmodernism, critical literary theory, and poststructuralism encouraged a return to theory amongst practitioners to interrogate positionality, intersectionality, and power dynamics within the process of collecting

⁷³ Robert Perks, and Alistair Thomson, “Introduction,” *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (New York: Routledge, 1998), ix.

⁷⁴ Ibid., Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki, “Who’s Afraid of Oral History? Fifty Years of Debates and Anxiety about Ethics,” *Oral History Review* 43, no. 2 (2016): 345.

⁷⁵ Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Science* (New York: Altamira Press, 2005), 11.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Sheftel and Zembrzycki, “Who’s Afraid of Oral History?”: 354; Linda Shopes, “‘Insights and Oversights’: Reflections on the Documentary Tradition and the Theoretical Turn in Oral History,” *Oral History Review* 41, no. 2 (2014): 258-260.

oral histories. As Shopes observes, there was far more that occurred within the process of conducting interviews. This included but is not limited to reasons behind a participant's decision to partake in an interview, the impact of the interviewer in shaping the outcomes of the recorded oral history, the subjectivity of both the interviewer and the interviewee, as well as the limits of memory.⁷⁸ In order to address these major issues, oral history practice transitioned to its current form and methodology that attempts to balance the importance of documenting lived experiences of those 'hidden from history' with the multiple layers of power dynamics, subjectivity, and memory. The outcome of this process according to Sheftel and Zembrzycki has been two-fold. First there has been a return to a positivist methodology as oral historians attempt to document marginalized voices within the historical record through survivor testimony and treating oral histories as archival documents. Second, another deeper discussion of collaboration has occurred where oral historians partner with interviewees to mutually reconstruct the past and celebrate the inherent subjectivity of history as a whole.⁷⁹ Michael Frisch and Steven High proposed two possible approaches to oral history research to combat these outcomes.

Michael Frisch promotes the use of shared authority which locates the interviewees as the prime observers and bearers of historical knowledge.⁸⁰ Frisch argues that oral histories enabled us to study "how experience, memory, and history become combined in and digested by people who are the bearers of their own history and that of their culture," and therefore, "opens up a powerful perspective."⁸¹ Steven High extended the concept to sharing authority which actively incorporated community members within the entire research project from conception to creation. He argues that sharing authority goes beyond the tradition oral history interview by emphasizing the importance of cultivating trust, collaboration, and involving participants within the decision making process.⁸² This includes how oral histories should be preserved and actively pushes these narratives beyond the traditional recording to various forms of public history from cultural

⁷⁸ Shopes, "Insights and Oversights": 262-263.

⁷⁹ Sheftel and Zembrzycki, "Who's Afraid of Oral History?": 351.

⁸⁰ Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁸² Steven C. High, *Oral History at the Crossroads: Sharing Life Stories of Survival and Displacement* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), 10.

dances and theatrical performances to art and poetry.⁸³ The mantra of sharing authority involves deep collaborations between interviewees and the interviewer which go far beyond the recording of an oral interview. Given the nature of this dissertation project, oral histories form the backbone of the study as they offer unique insights on the lives of Ugandan Asian refugees.

Interviews captured the intimate and personal narratives of Ugandan Asian refugees. These interviews advance our understandings of human agency alongside the relationship between the individual and social being.⁸⁴ The use of oral history within the dissertation project was deliberate for multiple reasons. Firstly, it created a shared authority between the interviewer and the interviewee, which bridged the divide between university academics and communities.⁸⁵ This approach is crucial for marginalized peoples who are not included within the historical record. Interviews provided an excellent avenue for participants to record their own historical experiences. Furthermore, interviews offered the potential to be used as a source of belonging as refugees recounted their experiences of expulsion and subsequent resettlement in Canada. Teresa Barnett and Chon A. Noriega contend that this type of research can champion colonialist or elitist historical accounts for members of marginalized communities by including endless voices into the past that address the intersectionality of race, sex, gender, and other categories of identity.⁸⁶

Secondly, the experiences of Ugandan Asians in Canada have not been recorded within national historiography. Oral histories also allow Ugandan Asian refugees to break down social barriers and facilitates the creation of a central place within our nation's historical narrative by empowering them to recount their own reformulations of the past.⁸⁷ This emancipated participants to record their own historical experiences within the interview process. Furthermore,

⁸³ Examples of these various forms of exhibits are seen in the Montreal Life Stories Project: <http://lifestoriesmontreal.ca/>; For more on the implementation of this project and its benefits and challenges see: Steven C. High, *Oral History at the Crossroads: Sharing Life Stories of Survival and Displacement* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2014).

⁸⁴ Mary Jo Maynes, Pierce, Jennifer L. Pierce, and Laslett Barbara, *Telling Stories: The Use of Personal Narratives in the Social Sciences and History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 12.

⁸⁵ Steven High, "Sharing Authority in the Writing of Canadian History: The Case of Oral History," in *Contesting Clio's Craft: New Directions and Debates in Canadian History*, eds. Christopher Dummitt and Michael Dawson, (London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2009), 23.

⁸⁶ Teresa Barnett and Chon A. Noriega, "Introduction," in *Oral History and Communities of Color*, eds. Teresa Barnett and Chon A. Noriega (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press, 2013), 17.

⁸⁷ Paul Thompson, "The Voice of the Past: Oral History," in *Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (New York: Routledge, 1998), 22.

by using a large collection of oral interviews, the study enriches the complexity of the broader Canadian historical narrative to reflect the “original multiplicity of standpoints” within the historical context.⁸⁸ A critical component within the process of providing agency to interviewees is utilizing a life histories approach that is embedded in oral history practice. Life histories deviate from the conventional oral history methodological practice by allowing and encouraging participants to detail their interpretations of the past in a sequence that makes sense to them. As Donald Ritchie argues, this allows interviewees to recount aspects of their life that they think are important as opposed to responding to the interviewer’s perception of what is consequential.⁸⁹ Additionally, life histories offer a window into the variety of ways in which Ugandan Asian refugees made sense of their roots in Uganda and subsequent resettlement in Canada as well as their experiences of being expelled from their homelands.

Due to the trauma experienced by those who were expelled from Uganda, oral histories can promote closure, peace, and offer the potential for a healing process to occur.⁹⁰ Mark Klemppner argues that allowing interviewees to discuss traumatic events in a safe atmosphere with an empathetic and engaged listener “maximizes the possibility that some degree of closure will emerge out of the fragmentation and dissociation that trauma inflicts upon the human psyche.”⁹¹ This approach within oral interviews was critical to ensuring that Ugandan Asian refugees felt comfortable at all times and were given ample time to reflect on their personal recollections. Several participants expressed moments of distress, fear, anxiety, uncertainty, and violence during the expulsion period in Uganda. Steven High articulates the importance of creating safe and empathetic spaces when interviewing those who have experienced mass violence. High contends that is critical to be aware of the possible emotional impacts of the interview process and to be sensitive to the narrator’s recollections.⁹² Participants were not forced to divulge any details in which they did not feel comfortable or necessary to recounting

⁸⁸ Thompson, “The Voice of the Past,” 24.

⁸⁹ Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995), 32.

⁹⁰ Mark Klemppner, “Navigating Life Review Interviews with Survivors of Trauma” *Oral History Reader* in eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (New York: Routledge, 1998); High, *Oral History at the Crossroads*; Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki, “Only Human: A Reflection on the Ethical and Methodological Challenges of Working with ‘Difficult’ Stories,” *Oral History Review* 37, no. 2 (2010): 191–214; Kim Lacy Rogers, Selma Leydesdorff, and Graham Dawson, *Trauma: Life Stories of Survivors* (Transaction Publishers, 2004).

⁹¹ Klemppner, “Navigating Life Review Interviews with Survivors of Trauma,” 208.

⁹² High, *Oral History at the Crossroads*, 268-269.

their personal histories. At times of discomfort the audio recording was halted and only resumed upon the interviewees consent to continue. This coincides with the ‘regenerative possibilities’ of sharing memories as “there is neither healing nor redemption in regeneration, only possibilities for improved living.”⁹³ Interviewees explored their historical experiences of trauma on their own terms reflecting the importance of using a life history approach when conducting interviews with survivors of trauma. Additionally, as Lorne Shirinian argues, to bear witness to trauma reinforces the acknowledgement of past injustice and sharing these testimonies invokes our fundamental obligation to “listen to one another.”⁹⁴ Enabling Ugandan Asian refugees to exert their agency within this setting was particularly significant in order to understand the resilient ways in which they have restructured their lives after the expulsion period.⁹⁵

A fundamental component of this process was to remind every participant at the beginning of the interview process that we could take breaks, pause the audio recording, and remove any portions of the tape that were uncomfortable. However, Alexander Freund explores how some professional historians are wary of this process, especially with regards to participants wishing to speak ‘off-the-record’ or long silences within interviews and argues that participants should be encouraged to continue.⁹⁶ Adhering to the practices of shared authority and particularly the call for interviewers to be sensitive to the requests of participants, I chose to embrace ‘off-the-record’ discussions and silences throughout the recording as they were contemplative, authoritative, or purposeful tools used by Ugandan Asian refugees to assert their agency over their own oral histories. At the outset of this project, I was prepared as a researcher to give complete authority to the narrators during the interview process. What they chose to keep on tape was up to them as I was not on a quest for the ‘perfect interview’ that is unobstructed by silences or details being shared ‘off-the-record’. Although oral history provides insight on the lived

⁹³ High, *Oral History at the Crossroads*, 121.

⁹⁴ Lorne Shirinian, “So Far from Home,” in *Remembering Mass Violence: Oral History, New Media, and Performance* eds. Steven High, Edward Little, Thi Ry Duong (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 52.

⁹⁵ Sean Field, “‘What Can I do When the Interviewee Cries?’: Oral History Strategies for Containment and Regeneration” in *Oral History in a Wounded Country: Interactive Interview in South Africa* eds. Philippe Denis and Radikobo Ntsimane (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008), 145.

⁹⁶ Alexander Freund, “Toward and Ethics of Silence? Negotiating Off-the-Record Events and Identity in Oral History,” in *Oral History Off The Record: Toward and Ethnography of Practice* eds. Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembycki (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 224.

experiences of Ugandan Asian refugees, it must be subjected to the same level of critical analysis and scrutiny of all other historical sources.

Criticisms of oral history fall into three general categories pertaining to interviews, adequate oral history training, and historical methodology.⁹⁷ Since interviews are conducted after an event, historians question the ambiguity of memory and personal bias as well as the reality that they are not constructed as traditional literary sources. Interviews are also constructed with the active intervention of a historian who undoubtedly influences the recording through their position as a researcher and categories of identity such as race, gender, and class. However, there is utility in interrogating the cultural context in which memories are discussed and their impacts on how participants interpret their life histories. Ronald J. Grele argues that the goal of the oral historian is to consciously interrogate the subjectivity of themselves and the interviewee as a means of providing insight on the cultural and historical context in which these recollections are formulated in to help historians to “more fully understand what happened in the past.”⁹⁸ Additionally, scholars are also aware of the inherent subjectivity within all forms of historical research as the researcher is ultimately responsible for the production of the final study that is riddled with their own assumptions.⁹⁹ Furthermore, historians Natalie Zemon Davis and Randolph Starn argue that in any instance where memory is used historians should be asking ourselves: by whom, where, in which context, against what?¹⁰⁰ This underscored the reasoning behind the use of a wide array of archival research. It serves as a method of verifying information that is gathered through the interview process.

Alessandro Portelli contends that oral histories should be scrutinized against archival material; but scholars must also acknowledge that the power of oral histories lies in the reality that perceived events or statements from interviewees may be factually incorrect but are true within the psyche of the participant. This ultimately reveals critical information on how the past

⁹⁷ Ronald J. Grele, “Movement without Aim: Methodological and Theoretical Problems in Oral History,” in *Oral History Reader* eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (New York: Routledge, 1998), 40.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁹⁹ Yow, *Recording Oral History*, 7.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 58.

is reconstructed and what elements are remembered.¹⁰¹ Therefore, oral histories within the dissertation derive their value from providing a diversity of voices that complicate the historical narrative. Written and oral sources in turn validate each other. In some instances, they complement on another, while in others they starkly contradict one another ultimately unveiling the inherent complexity of all historical contexts. Using archival sources to verify evidence from oral histories is not used as a means of demeaning the practice. As both Julie Cruikshank and Paul Thompson argue, interviews play a crucial role in identifying local knowledge which refutes and adds to government documents within the archive and purposefully challenge the hegemony of contemporary knowledge to create a more nuanced reconstruction of the past.¹⁰²

Life histories empower participants within an oral history project as they are given the agency to direct and lead the interview in any direction of their choosing. Ugandan Asian refugees were given the agency and liberty to explore any aspect of their own experiences. As High observes, the ability to tell one's own story reasserts their participation within particular communities and categories of identity in the public sphere as a means of confirming their membership within these various bodies.¹⁰³ Interviews enabled Ugandan Asian refugees to dictate the direction of interviews and are infused within their narratives of survival. Participants described historical events from their own vantage points and were empowered to reassert their lived experiences within the broader Canadian historical narrative and membership within the Canadian community.

Oral History

Ideally High's methodological framework is the most appropriate means of creating an inclusive approach to oral history and promotes the dissemination of knowledge throughout the refugee community and the broader Canadian public. Unfortunately, within a dissertation project of this nature it was not feasible to involve each participant within the writing process. Delays in adjusting transcripts, approvals for each chapter, and the use of visual recording equipment

¹⁰¹ Alessandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different," in *Oral History Reader* eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (New York: Routledge, 1998), 68.

¹⁰² Julie Cruikshank, *Do Glaciers Listen?: Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, and Social Imagination*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 9-10; Paul Thompson, "The Voice of the Past: Oral History," in *The Oral History Reader* eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (New York: Routledge, 1998), 24-25.

¹⁰³ Thompson, "The Voice of the Past: Oral History," 35.

prohibited the use of High's methodology. Sharing authority is a process that is negotiated by many oral historians, including Stacey Zembryzcki, who noted how her own study did was unable to incorporate the transparency and self-reflection that this process requires.¹⁰⁴ Fortunately, through a collaboration with Carleton University and their Ugandan Asian refugee archive, this study hopes to embrace the true values and merits of sharing authority as the collection of oral interviews will continue through the archive. Furthermore, twenty oral histories have been donated to the archives to be released upon completion of the dissertation project and will adhere to the principles of sharing authority. This will include allowing participants to freely amend any portions of the interviews, conduct follow up interviews to supply additional context, and provide them with complete authority to dictate public accessibility to their own life history. All those who wished to donate their oral histories to Carleton University signed separate consent forms agreeing to the permanent preservation of their interviews for subsequent generations.

Oral histories contested, complicated, and questioned established narratives on Ugandan Asians in both East Africa and Canada. Their recollections of the expulsion decree refuted President Amin's claims that Ugandan Asians had failed to integrate socially with Ugandan Africans as they recounted strong attachments and affiliations to East Africa. From family members refusing to leave Uganda or detailed descriptions of their devastation upon being forcibly removed from Uganda, interviewees expressed the Ugandan element of their identities. Oral histories also provided evidence of how in some instances friends and relatives were exploiting Ugandan Africans and sabotaging the economy whereas others engaged in rigorous philanthropy and contributed to the development of Uganda. Another significant discovery within oral history interviews were the varying degrees of antagonism levied against the Ugandan Asian community by government and military officials during the 90-day expulsion period. Previous studies dismissed reports in British newspapers of widespread physical and verbal harassment based on rumours and community gossip in conjunction with the purposeful distortion of events by the media as a means of garnering further support for resettling refugees in the UK. Interviewees recounted the realities of the 90-day expulsion period which recaptured

¹⁰⁴ Stacey Zembrzycki, *According to Baba: A Collaborative Oral History of Sudbury's Ukrainian Community* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2014), 8.

the plight of Ugandan Asians during expulsion period.

Oral histories with Ugandan Asian refugees also revealed particular insights into their resettlement and identities in Canada compared to various government reports. Several studies concluded that Ugandan Asians attained employment within Canada at a rapid pace however, oral histories problematized these conclusions by outlining various instances of employment discrimination. The lack of "Canadian experience" or western credentials disenfranchised many refugees who were underemployed based on their occupational expertise. These initial surveys of Ugandan Asians also failed to capture racialized actions between Canadians and Ugandan Asian refugees. With the prevalence of racial antagonism targeted towards South Asians, particularly in 1970s Canada, as argued by Hugh Johnston, Norman Buchignani, Doreen Marie Indra, and Ram Srivastava, oral history participants recounted numerous examples of verbal harassment.¹⁰⁵ In some rare cases, confrontations escalated into physical harassment. Conversely, interviewees also recounted how Canadians extended a helping hand to refugees when they first arrived. These grassroots efforts of Canadians to create inclusive pathways to Canadian society were not captured in LAC documents or other material sources.

Beyond contradicting these conclusions of successful economic and social integration, interviews uncovered the myriad of ways in which Ugandan Asians identify themselves in Canada today. Personal assertions of identity remained elusive from broader collections of materials as state bodies or other scholars failed to capture these expressions of self within the Canadian context. Oral histories revealed the multiple affiliations of Ugandan Asian refugees along with their descriptions of what being a Canadians meant to them. Without these in-depth oral histories the dissertation project would not have been able to critically engage with the established narratives of social exclusivity and harassment in Uganda, various forms of discrimination upon resettlement in Canada, and the complexities of identities amongst Ugandan Asian refugees.

¹⁰⁵ See Hugh Johnston, *The East Indians in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1982); Norman Buchignani, Doreen Marie Indra, and Ram Srivastava, *Continuous Journey: A Social History of South Asians in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985).

Oral interviews were conducted with fifty-one participants. Oral histories were collected between June 2014 and October 2015 with any Ugandan Asian refugee who was originally born in Uganda and who eventually resettled in Canada. Two interviews were also conducted with the leading immigration officials on the ground in Kampala. Roger St. Vincent was the head of the visa office in Beirut and was responsible for running operations in Uganda alongside and Michael Molloy who also worked in the Beirut office and served as St. Vincent's second in command. The methodology and sampling methods were approved by Western University's Research Ethics Board for the entire duration of my study period.¹⁰⁶ Interviews were held across Canada in the following cities: Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Kitchener, London, Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver. In-depth oral interviews ranged in length from forty-five minutes to three hours. Locations for the interviews varied from local religious institutions, coffee shops, restaurants, and personal residences of refugees. All participants reached out to the researcher through recommendations from other participants and through word of mouth by various community members. Individuals such as Mike Molloy reached out to refugees personally, who then contacted me to share their life stories.

Participants within the study included a broad range of individuals who were between the ages of six and forty-five upon arrival in Canada. They consisted of thirty-one male and eighteen female participants alongside a relative diversity of religious community members. Interviewees within the dissertation included thirty-five Ismaili Muslims, nine Christian Goans, four Hindus, and one member of the Ithnasheri Muslim community. Unfortunately, due to the limitations of the study there were no Sikh, Parsi, or other members of the Muslim community (Sunni Muslims, Bohras, Ahmadiyyas, etc.) within the research project. There is a slight overrepresentation of the Ismaili Muslim community in the study as they reflected seventy-one percent of the overall sample of those interviewed even though they composed just over sixty-five percent of Ugandan Asian refugee community in Canada based on the only reliable statistics of those who used chartered Canadian aircrafts.¹⁰⁷ There was also a lack of participants who

¹⁰⁶ See Appendix A for the ethics approval #105066.

¹⁰⁷ Library and Archives Canada, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-5-650, V.A. Latour, "Ugandan Expellees - Expenditures," November 10, 1972, 2. This document only captures data for the 4,420 Ugandan Asian refugees who flew into the Longue Pointe military base in Montreal up to November 8th, 1972. It does not include those who opted to pay for their own voyage from Uganda or the nearly 2,000 refugees who arrived between the end of 1972 and 1974.

were above the age of 35 upon arrival. This is in part due to medical considerations of those who are aging or have passed away. Furthermore, the concentration of interviewees between the ages of 16 and 25 upon arrival demonstrates the personal reasons why individuals chose to participate in the study as they were nearing retirement or had already retired. As they concluded their formal work lives, many refugees reflected on their time in Canada and wished to share their personal life histories. The dissertation does not aim to generalize the community as a whole based on the sample sized used. This oral history collection is but a first step towards recapturing the lived experiences of Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada and will continue through Carleton University's Ugandan Asian Archive.¹⁰⁸

I purposefully remained flexible and open to multiple directions taken by interviewees when narrating their life histories to fortify their agency within the process which aligned with methodology in oral history practice.¹⁰⁹ My position as a young, male, Ismaili Muslim, academic, and child of a Ugandan Asian refugee offered several benefits but also shaped the construction of interviews. Joan Sangster identifies how one's positionality as a researcher undoubtedly affects the manner in which participants recount their experiences.¹¹⁰ Since the expulsion occurred in 1972, all of the participants were well into the fifties and beyond and often interpreted this event as an opportunity to relay community based historical experiences on to the second generation. I purposefully addressed the vast majority of participants as 'aunty' and 'uncle' as sign of respect which in turn built trust but also blurred the lines between being an academic researcher and a curious youngster looking to hear stories from distant relatives that have recently reconnected. Additionally, many participants responded to this form of cultural respect by referring to me as 'beta' (son) of 'dickro' (son) which are common terms of endearment when used to refer to someone that is not technically your own biological child. These intergenerational discussions and transmissions of knowledge sparked important conversations within the interview similar to what was experienced by Zembryzcki when conducting interviews with older members of the Ukrainian community in Sudbury.¹¹¹ As a male

¹⁰⁸ See Appendix C for more information on the interview participants.

¹⁰⁹ Barnett and Noriega, "Introduction," 15.

¹¹⁰ Joan Sangster, "Politics and Praxis in Canadian Working-Class Oral History," *Oral History Off The Record: Toward and Ethnography of Practice* eds. Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembryzcki (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 61.

¹¹¹ Zembryzcki, *According to Baba*, 153.

researcher I expected to encounter differences in authority and power, as Radikobo Ntsimane argues, relating to the possible tendency for male participants to feel that they have greater freedom to recount their life histories whereas women may feel more inhibited especially when being addressed by a stranger.¹¹² However, throughout the process there was no appreciable difference between male and female participants who privileged my identity as a curious youth over my gender.

At the beginning of each interview a significant portion of time was spent discussing the origins of the study along with personal interests and anecdotes about the participant's life. These were crucial to establishing a relaxed atmosphere and building trust between interviewees and the interviewer. Trust was gained rather quickly as the majority of interviewees felt a direct connection since I am the child of a Ugandan Asian refugee. Commonly before an interview formally began, participants would ask where in Uganda my mother was from and followed up to inquire what her maiden name was to see if they could place her in their network of Ugandan Asians. They openly pondered out loud if they could place the Rupani family from Mbarara within their memories and personal networks or would ask if by extension I knew some of their own relatives or connections in Mbarara. Only when interviewees completely understood the nature of the study and felt prepared to share their life stories did the recording begin. Interactions were made to be casual as each interview involved the cultural drinking of chai (tea). Many additions and other portions of life stories came after interviews had formally concluded as refugees offered meals or an additional cup of chai and snacks. These specific recollections are not included within the dissertation as they were not formally recorded and violates the sense of trust established between the interviewer and the interviewee. This is a common balance that several oral historians must navigate as poignantly stated by Sheftel and Zembryzcki. As the lines blurred between myself as a researcher towards a mutual friendship, critics suggest that this would ultimately create 'bad history'. However, fostering solidarity amongst participants balances our "impulse to do 'rigorous' research while also building ethical relationships with our

¹¹² Radikobo Ntsimane, "Why Should I Tell My Story": Culture and Gender in Oral History," in *Oral History in a Wounded Country: Interactive Interview in South Africa* eds. Philippe Denis and Radikobo Ntsimane (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008), 110.

narrators.”¹¹³ Including these discussions would also violate the formal obligations set forth within Western’s Research and Ethics Board.

An original list of questions outlined in Appendix A were used as a guide in case participants requested more assistance within the interview process. In reality, most of the interviews began with the question: “Can you tell me about your childhood or your family’s history in Uganda?” From this moment onwards, I followed the thoughts of interviewees who discussed various stages in their life from family matters and schooling to work, marriage, and a host of other topics. This presented the optimal situation for oral history methodology as the interviews diverged from a rigid structure that robbed participants of their agency to articulate what events were crucial to their life histories. Interviewees were encouraged to take the interview in any direction they saw fit – empowering them to reinvigorate the historical record with their own interpretations of the past. Although certain oral historians such as Joan Sangster argue that failing to challenge our participants can be condescending, especially if they lived their lives engaged activists, I avoided this in order to provide agency to interviewees to dictate history as they experienced and conceptualized it.¹¹⁴ How their memories reconstructed their life experiences to divulge what they believed were critical moments in their lives. Was it my place to challenge whether or not they experience racial discrimination in Canada? I opted to challenge certain notions ‘off the record’ as it was seen as more respectful culturally and I did not want to interrupt the flow of their narration. Most importantly, once we had built a stronger relationship during the interview, many participants began to critically examine particular aspects of the interview after it had formally concluded. Be it a shift to discuss the plight of refugees since the 1970s or admissions that although Canada was incredibly benevolent, Canadians were a mixed lot of anti-racists and direct perpetrators of racial intolerance. The only specific question beyond the first one pertained to how refugees identify themselves today. This was an integral question within the oral histories as a means of exploring their multifaceted and fluid constructions of self.

Participants were also given the option to have their real name or a pseudonym used within the study. The vast majority opted to use their proper names as they took pride and

¹¹³ Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki, “Who’s Afraid of Oral History?”: 354.

¹¹⁴ Sangster, “Politics and Praxis in Canadian Working-Class Oral History,” 64.

ownership over their life stories. This acts as a direct challenge to the marginalization of visible minority immigrant and refugee communities that are often ignored in the broader Canadian historical narrative. They purposefully sought to carve their place within the nation's history by ensuring that not only their experiences but their names were inscribed within the broader historical narrative. An important caveat within the oral histories was the context of the Syrian refugee crisis. All of the interviews with Ugandan Asian refugees were conducted before the unfortunate images of Alan Kurdi were circulated amongst the Canadian public, leading to renewed efforts to resettle refugees in Canada and Canada's subsequent commitment to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees by early 2016.¹¹⁵ Participants were aware of the civil war in Syria but it was not a prominent feature within recorded interviews or in post-interview conversations. The context in which the interviews took place mitigates possible prejudices or biases of research participants who may have altered their reflections or attitudes within their life histories to favour or disapprove of the Syrian refugee resettlement in Canada.

As a member of the Ugandan Asian refugee community, I was given privileged access to participants and a unique opportunity to directly connect with interviewees. As an in-group community member I am aware of my subjectivity within the dissertation project but, as Zembrzycki argues, being entirely objective in any oral history project is impossible and that ultimately it is "a good thing!"¹¹⁶ Using a hypercritical approach and embracing the principles outlined by Iacovetta, I have consciously addressed the issues surrounding cultural retentionist values throughout the research. For example, oral historians are forced to navigate a fine line between revealing details about what we have heard and 'airing dirty laundry'.¹¹⁷ As a member of the refugee community the fear is that I would purposefully refrain from exposing details that may tarnish the community's reputation or portray interviewees in a negative light. However, in several instances throughout the thesis I problematize specific negative attributes amongst Ugandan Asian refugees, especially with regards to charges of social exclusivity levied against

¹¹⁵ "The Boy Who Changed Everything." *Macleans.ca*, last modified: September 13, 2015. <http://www.macleans.ca/news/world/inside-the-tragedy-that-woke-up-the-world/>; Citizenship and Immigration Canada Government of Canada, "#WelcomeRefugees: Canada Resettles Syrian Refugees," *Cic.gc.ca*, November 24, 2015, <http://www.canada.ca/refugees>.

¹¹⁶ Zembrzycki, *According to Baba*, 15.

¹¹⁷ Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki, "Introduction," in *Oral History Off The Record: Toward and Ethnography of Practice* eds. Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 14-15.

Ugandan Asians while they were in Uganda by Idi Amin and other Ugandan Africans. It was not a matter of 'airing dirty laundry,' amongst participants. It was, however, a matter of discussing the realities of lived experiences amongst refugees. Openly acknowledging personal biases or prejudice levied against the black Ugandan population as some interviewees mention is not utilized as a means of slandering their personal character. It is included within the dissertation as an active measure of being honest to both the interviewee and the historical context in Uganda's race-class hierarchy. Stuart Hall reinforces the reality that regardless of one's connection to the subject of study, all researchers perform, speak, and write from a specific place, history, and culture.¹¹⁸ Interrogating the imposed race-class hierarchy alongside archival research and the implementation of several primary and secondary sources aim to balance these perspectives and situate them within the relevant historical context.

A variety of primary sources have been utilized within the dissertation as a means of gathering numerous forms of historical evidence. Materials used in the study include autobiographies composed by Ugandan Asian refugees, community magazines and newsletters, government records, and various local and international newspapers. A critical component of any historical study requires rigorous questioning of physical sources to avoid fallacies related to the objectivity of archival or primary sources. Similar to all historical sources, each of these documents have been influenced by the historical context in which they have been created and preserved.¹¹⁹ Records found at Library and Archives Canada (LAC) must also be acknowledged as biased by state policies that determine what is of national significance to the country's historical narrative. Furthermore, public servants who composed memorandums, reports, and studies relating to the resettlement of Ugandan Asian refugees were influenced by their own beliefs, perspectives, and historical consciousness. Archives themselves are incomplete and only partial representations of the past. They are "representations of representations" and are not innocent material collections as they are marked by "selections, omissions, and exclusions."¹²⁰ Ultimately, archival documents or other primary source materials are not created with the intent

¹¹⁸ Stuart Hall, David Morley, and Kuan-Hsing Chen, eds., *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1996), 447.

¹¹⁹ Keith C. Barton, "Primary Sources in History: Breaking through the Myths," *The Phi Delta Kappan* 86, no. 10 (2005): 750.

¹²⁰ Niamh Moore et al., *The Archive Project: Archival Research in the Social Sciences* (London: Routledge, 2017), 39; 43.

of objectivity nor are the archives that hold them.

Terminology

The term Ugandan Asian is historically rooted. Initially, the term ‘Asian’ was used throughout East Africa as a broad and simplistic term to address anyone from the Indian sub-continent. It was used by political leaders in East Africa as well as within various local media outlets prior to the partition of India in 1947.¹²¹ Subsequently, ‘Asian’ was used to describe anyone from India, Pakistan, Goa, and Bangladesh.¹²² Although it is a generalized label that erodes the cultural and religious plurality of individuals living in East Africa, ‘Asian’ was purposefully used to categorize all members of the minority Asian community in Uganda as simple means of getting around to referring to each individual’s regional background. Additionally, within Uganda and other parts of East Africa, those of South Asian descent were commonly referred to as *Muhindis*; a Swahili word for Indians. This was used both in a colloquial and pejorative manner and was subsequently replaced by the catchall term Asian in English.¹²³ As the community became increasingly rooted within Uganda, scholars and the international media began to refer to these individuals as ‘Ugandan Asians’ signifying their attachments and affiliations to the country while simultaneously noting their ancestral connections to the Indian sub-continent.¹²⁴

Ugandan Asians who resettled in Canada were not initially considered refugees based on the specific criteria outlined in the *UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*. As the

¹²¹ See Kuepper, Lackey, and Swinerton, *Ugandan Asians in Great Britain*; Michael Twaddle, ed., *Expulsion of a Minority: Essays on Ugandan Asians* (London: Athlone Press, 1975); Herbert, “Oral Histories of Ugandan Asians in Britain”; Herbert, “The British Ugandan Asian Diaspora”; Meir Amor, “Violent Ethnocentrism: Revisiting the Economic Interpretation of the Expulsion of Ugandan Asians,” *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research* 3, no. 1 (2003): 53–66. For local media outlets see *Uganda Argus*, *Daily Nation*, and *The Standard*.

¹²² Margret Frenz outlines how from the 1950s onwards colonial policy defined all individuals from the Indian subcontinent as “Asians” in Frenz, “Global Goans: Migration Movements and Identity in a Historical Perspective,” *Lusotopie* 15, no. 1 (2008), 193.

¹²³ See Peter Nazareth, *In a Brown Mantle* (East African Literature Bureau, 1972); M. G. Vassanji, *No New Land* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991); Shenaaz Nanji, *Child of Dandelions* (Toronto: Second Story Press, 2008); Mahmood Mamdani, *From Citizen to Refugee: Uganda Asians Come to Britain* (Cape Town: Fahamu/Pambazuka, 2011); Tasneem Jamal, *Where the Air Is Sweet* (Toronto: HarperCollins Canada, 2014).

¹²⁴ See Thomas Patrick Melady and Margaret Badum Melady, *Uganda: The Asian Exiles* (New York: Orbis Books, 1976); See the following for examples of how the international media labelled those of South Asian descent as ‘Asians’: Nathan Epenu, “On the Eve of Census Day, A Look at Uganda’s Asian Population,” *Uganda Argus*, October 1971; Peter Evans, “Calls to London Show the Desperation of Asians in Uganda,” *Times Newspaper Limited*, August 7, 1972; Frank Robertson, “Decision on Asians Final, Amin Says,” *Telegraph Group Limited*, August 7, 1972; and “200 Asian Ugandans expected here soon,” *Edmonton Journal*, October 27, 1972.

convention states Ugandan Asians possessed a “well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion” but they were not “outside the country of his [or her] nationality.”¹²⁵ This benefitted the Canadian government since it did not oblige officials to admit Ugandan Asians based on relaxed selection criteria.¹²⁶ Government documents instead use the terms ‘Ugandan expellees’, or ‘Ugandan Asian expellees’ to refer to the community.¹²⁷ However, Ugandan Asians were classed as refugees to reflect the reality of their displacement by the Canadian media and public before and after their arrival in Canada.¹²⁸ Eventually, government officials embraced the term and acknowledged their *de facto* status as refugees.¹²⁹ As the community resettled within Canada, they included the addition of the word ‘refugee’ to their own self descriptions.¹³⁰ Through various commemorative events, literature produced by members of the Ugandan Asian community, and the creation of the Ugandan Asian Refugee Archive at Carleton University, it is evident that the term refugee is an essential component of their identity.¹³¹ For example, four major authors - Peter Nazareth, Shaneez Nanji, Tasneem Jamal, and Mahmood Mamdani have produced several fiction and non-fiction pieces of literature that firmly entrench the linkages between Ugandan Asians and the term ‘refugee’.¹³²

¹²⁵ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees,” December 2010, 14.

¹²⁶ Since Canada had signed the convention in 1969, they possessed a legal international obligation to admit refugees under more lenient grounds but this was not required due to the fact that expellees were still residing in Uganda.

¹²⁷ See LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume, 990, files 5850-3-650, 5850-3-4-650, 5850-3-5-650, 5850-3-6-650, 5850-3-7-650, 5850-3-8-650, 5850-3-9-650.

¹²⁸ Major Canadian newspapers including: *The Globe and Mail*, *Toronto Star*, *Ottawa Citizen*, *Vancouver Sun*, etc. all used the term refugee after the expulsion decree in 1972.

¹²⁹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume, 990, file 5850-3-650 “Memorandum to the Minister - Meeting with the Aga Khan,” September 28, 1972.

¹³⁰ Interviewees continuously referred to themselves as Ugandan Asian refugees in each of the oral histories conducted. This will be explored at length in chapters two and five.

¹³¹ See: Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*; Umedaly, *Mamajee’s Kitchen*; Peter Nazareth, *In a Brown Mantle*, (Nairobi, East African Literature Bureau, 1972); Shanaaz Nanji, *Child of Dandelions* (Toronto: Second Story Press, 2008); Tasneem Jamal, *Where the Air Is Sweet* (Toronto: Harper Collins Canada, 2014); Mahmood Mamdani, *From Citizen to Refugee: Uganda Asians Come to Britain* (Cape Town: Pambazuka Press, 2011); “The Uganda Collection,” Carleton University Archives, accessed on February 22, 2016, <https://arc.library.carleton.ca/exhibits/uganda-collection>. Three major commemorative events were held in 1993, 1998, and 2002 titled, “Journey into Hope,” “Flight of Courage,” and “30th Anniversary Celebration,” respectively. Each of the events celebrated respective anniversary dates to commemorate resettlement of Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada.

¹³² Nazareth, *In a Brown Mantle*; Jamal, *Where the Air Is Sweet*; Nanji, *Child of Dandelions*; and Mamdani, *From Citizen to Refugee*.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter one charts the historical roots of South Asian migration to East Africa up until President Amin's expulsion order in 1972. It discusses the major contributions of South Asians to Uganda throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries including the initial presence of South Asian merchants and traders dating back to the second century of the common era.¹³³ Ugandan Asians made several contributions to the economic development of the country but also in the realms of philanthropy and education. Furthermore, the thesis interrogates the realities of a rigid race and class based hierarchy that was firmly entrenched in Ugandan society. Inherent within the divide and rule strategies of the colonial government, British imperialists enforced clear boundaries between each of the communities living in East Africa. It placed the white imperialists at the top, the brown South Asians in the middle, and the black Africans at the bottom.¹³⁴ The study refutes the impermeability of the colonial sandwich, providing a detailed analysis of the interactions between the Ugandan Asian and Ugandan African communities. As nationalism spread throughout East Africa, solutions to the 'Asian problem' were presented in both Kenya and Tanzania through rigorous nationalization programs. None were as severe or internationally criticized as Idi Amin's expulsion decree of 1972.

The following chapter reviews the international and local response to President Idi Amin's expulsion order. Ugandan Africans largely supported the decision of the president due to the prevailing government rhetoric that categorized Ugandan Asians as brown colonialists. Although there was resistance to the decree from the local population, Amin's regime capitalized on the instilment of fear amongst the population through his military officers as well as prevailing assumptions that Ugandan Asians were 'milking' Uganda's economy and investing their earnings abroad. East African governments responded to the decree in a variety of ways as some supported Amin's decision to oust 'colonial collaborators' while others deplored the president's decision as racially motivated. Conversely, no government in East Africa offered to accept expellees as they were overburdened by their own Asian populations. Moreover, President Amin considered the Ugandan Asian community to be Britain's problem. Considering the

¹³³ Thomas Patrick Melady and Margaret Badum Melady, *Uganda: The Asian Exiles* (New York: Orbis Books, 1976), 48.

¹³⁴ T. V. Sathyamurthy, *The Political Development of Uganda: 1900-1986* (Aldershot: Gower Publishing Company Limited, 1986), 513.

increase of migration from former colonies to the U.K., recent changes to U.K. immigration policy that limited migration from East Africa, and rising levels of racial antagonism, the British government was reluctant to admit the apparent 80,000 refugees. Although, the number of Ugandan Asians was grossly overestimated by the Ugandan government by almost 30,000, the U.K. appealed to the Commonwealth for assistance. The chapter concludes by exploring Canada's response to Britain's call for aid and analyzes the multiple motivations surrounding Canada's decision to admit Ugandan Asian refugees.

Chapter three details operations on the ground in Kampala. With the arrival of the Canadian immigration team, expellees were screened by visa officers, underwent medical examinations, and received permits for entry into Canada as landed immigrants. Canadian immigration officials utilized the 1967 points system to screen refugees which was applied on an *ad hoc basis*. Under amendments to the *1952 Immigration Act*, and a formal move to eliminate racial discrimination within Canadian immigration policy, immigrants to Canada were evaluated under the points system that ascribed values to various categories including an applicant's knowledge of official languages, level of education, work experience, and age. In certain cases, individuals were denied entry to Canada while others attained visas due to the leniency of immigration officials. During the ninety-day expulsion period Ugandan Asians experienced various levels of harassment that was enforced by military officials and 'Amin's goons'. As refugees attempted to flee the country they faced continuous hostility from the military at several checkpoints as well as at the airport. These historical experiences gravely impacted interviewees' expressions of identity in the final chapter as it signified the physical and emotional rupturing of identities for Ugandan Asian refugees. The second portion of the chapter identifies the historical context of Canada in the 1970s. With significant challenges to Canadian national identity and the formal announcement of multicultural policy to be adopted in Canada by Prime Minister Trudeau in October of 1971, Canadians reacted to the decision to admit Ugandan Asians in a myriad of ways. Some were influenced by local anxieties of high unemployment rates and nativist concerns while others, including several government officials, argued that responding to the plight of Ugandan Asians was simply the Canadian thing to do.¹³⁵ Refugees sought asylum in Canada under these prevailing circumstances and began the adaptation process.

¹³⁵ Canada, *House of Commons Debate* (October 8, 1971), VIII, 8545.

Chapter four examines the initial days of resettlement for Ugandan Asian refugees. Upon arrival in Canada, refugees interacted with various members of the Canadian community including government officials, classmates, neighbours, and volunteers. These day-to-day interactions were critical to informing initial attitudes regarding inclusion and exclusion amongst refugees. Twelve Ugandan Asia Settlement Committees were established across the country as a means of assisting the refugees to adjust to life in Canada. The collaboration between all levels of government and the public, private, and voluntary sectors through the committees encouraged the successful integration of Ugandan Asian refugees. This supports studies and theorists who firmly argue that integration is a two-way process.¹³⁶ This chapter also outlines the initial deskilling process for a large proportion of those interviewed along with various other forms of discrimination experienced by refugees. In several instances, the high rates of employment for female Ugandan Asian refugees reflects the increase in female labour within Canada in the 1970s. The chapter concludes by discussing early conceptions of life in Canada amongst refugees and attachments to their locales of permanent resettlement.

Once adjusting to the initial changes and becoming more acclimatized to Canadian society, refugees began to establish themselves and create firm roots in Canada. Chapter five traces their transitions from refugees to active Canadian citizens. They made conscious decisions to raise their children in Canada along with several other long term investments in the country. Their sense of attachment to Canada is captured by several major commemorative events that were held in the past forty years. These events firmly established their presence in Canada and articulated their integration within Canadian society. Works composed by Ugandan Asians in conjunction with oral histories accentuate their multiple affiliations while simultaneously reinforcing their attachments to Canada. The dissertation argues that given the historical background of this refugee community, they have all embraced a self-defined form of Canadian

¹³⁶ See Rahsaan Maxwell, "Evaluating Migrant Integration: Political Attitudes Across Generations in Europe," *International Migration Review* 44, no. 1 (2010): 25–52; Irene Bloemraad, "Citizenship and Immigration a Current Review," *Journal of International Migration and Integration / Revue de L'integration et de La Migration Internationale* 1, no. 1 (2000): 9–37; Valerie Preston, Audrey Kobayashi, and Guida Man, "Transnationalism, Gender, and Civic Participation: Canadian Case Studies of Hong Kong Immigrants," *Environment and Planning A* 38, no. 9 (2006): 1633–1651; Zheng Wu, Christoph M. Schimmele, and Feng Hou, *Social Integration of Immigrants and Their Children in Canada's Urban Neighbourhoods* (Vancouver: Metropolis British Columbia, 2010).

identity. Although the notion of what it means to be a Canadian is encompassed within a variety of national, religious, and cultural affiliations, Ugandan Asian refugees hold a significant sense of self and belonging that is fundamentally associated with Canada. This reinforces how history informs identity in a myriad of ways. Additionally, the final chapter outlines how refugees navigate their multiplicity of identities. This amplifies the significance of historical experiences when reviewing the life stories of any refugee community alongside providing strong evidence for the establishment of a firm Canadian identity.

These life histories highlight the involvement of government officials, Canadians, and others who were involved in the integration processes for Ugandan Asian refugees. This study explores the dynamic and fluid interactions between refugees and members of Canadian society to demonstrate how day-to-day interactions diachronically shape the identity perceptions and senses of belonging for Ugandan Asian refugees. Their stories of resiliency in the face of adversity in conjunction with their articulations of a firm Canadian identity illustrate the feasibility of associating with multiple identities. It demonstrates the ability of individuals, as argued by various scholars, to hold regional, cultural, and ethnic allegiances simultaneously.¹³⁷ Building on outdated studies and contributing to historical scholarship on refugees who arrived between 1965 and 1975, the dissertation provides an academic account of how refugees have embraced life in Canada. An in-depth study on Ugandan Asian refugees creates a pathway towards further historical research that engages with integration across generations for Canadian refugees and immigrants.

This research informs policy makers, academics, and Canadians on future refugee resettlement programs in Canada. Displaced people represent one of the most disenfranchised and marginalized individuals in the current geopolitical climate. With staggering increases in the numbers of refugees and recent laments of a global refugee crisis, revisiting past resettlements within our nation's history are critical to informing current policies, reception efforts, and public

¹³⁷ Alan B. Simmons, *Immigration and Canada: Global and Transnational Perspectives* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2010); Tara Gilkinson and Genevieve Sauve, *Recent Immigrants, Earlier Immigrants and the Canadian Born: Association with Collective Identities* (Ottawa: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2010); Vic Satzewich and Lloyd L. Wong, eds., *Transnational Identities and Practices in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006).

consciousness of those fleeing persecution.¹³⁸ I argue that situating the plight of refugees within political and security rights matrices essentializes their lived experiences to matters of state policy, border control, and public opinion. This process fundamentally disassociates the shared human connections between refugees and Canadian citizens. Consequently, life histories are used abundantly within the dissertation as a means of capturing the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of Ugandan Asian refugees alongside their fears, struggles, and traumas of displacement. Focusing on the “essence of human creativity and subjectivity” emphasizes the human element of historical subjects which “cannot quite be reduced to a scientific norm’.”¹³⁹ Ultimately, the thesis situates Ugandan Asian refugees within the Canadian historical record as Canadian citizens while accentuating the humanity of refugees. Nearly forty years after the expulsion decree, Canadians can begin to understand why former Governor General of Canada, Adrienne Clarkson, has described the Ugandan Asian refugee community in Canada as “a present from Idi Amin.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ The UNHCR’s latest figures document that there are currently 65.3 million displaced people around the world with 21.3 million being UN declared refugees. For more see: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Figures at a Glance,” *UNHCR*, accessed September 24, 2016, <http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>.

¹³⁹ Joanna Herbert, *Negotiating Boundaries in the City: Migration, Ethnicity, and Gender in Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 9.

¹⁴⁰ Adrienne Clarkson, *Room for All of Us: Surprising Stories of Loss and Transformation*, (Toronto: Penguin Group, 2011), 21.

Chapter 1:

Exploring The Historical Roots Behind the Expulsion Decree

It is the Indian trader who, penetrating and maintaining himself in all sorts of places to which no white man would go or in which no white man could earn a living, has more than anyone else developed that early beginnings of trade and opened up the first slender means of communication.

Winston Churchill, 1908¹

As Nyerere [president of Tanzania] once put it, if the people of Uganda thought they were in the frying pan during Obote's time, they knew they were in the fire proper during Amin's.

Tony Avirgan and Martha Honey, 1982²

South Asians have a prominent historical legacy within East Africa. This chapter explores their roots within the region that culminated in their eventual expulsion from Uganda. A comprehensive understanding of the links between the development of Uganda and the rising population of Ugandan Asians provides insight regarding the identities of expellees and interrogates President Idi Amin's allegations of economic sabotage and social exclusivity amongst the community. The historical roots of the South Asian community in Uganda accentuate dated connections between the Indian subcontinent and East Africa. Migration to East Africa increased significantly after the 1840s with three principle groups of migrants including merchants and traders, indentured labourers, and civil servants. As the community continued to grow within Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, South Asians sent word back home of the numerous opportunities available in East Africa encouraging further migration.

Inherent within the process of solidifying their roots within Uganda, South Asians began to fervently build schools, hospitals, prayer halls, and community centres. The majority of these various institutional structures were delineated based on religious and regional affiliations in South Asia. Due to British imperialism and divide and conquer strategies implemented by colonialists, South Asians were enticed to segregate themselves from the local Ugandan African

¹ Winston Churchill, *My African Journey* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), 32.

² Tony Avirgan and Martha Honey, *War in Uganda: The Legacy of Idi Amin* (Westport: Lawrence Hill & Company Incorporated, 1982), 4.

populations. The installment of the colonial sandwich placing white imperialists at the top, brown merchants in the middle, and labouring black Africans at the bottom legitimized racial segregation within all facets of Ugandan society. However, rigid race-class hierarchy within Uganda was not impermeable. Numerous oral histories and major philanthropic activities conducted by Ugandan Asians for the benefit of all Ugandans blurred the boundaries of the colonial sandwich. This chapter refutes the dominant discourse within the historiography of Ugandan Asians to reinforce how interaction between members of Ugandan society were not strictly limited to the colonial race-class hierarchy.

As East Africa prepared itself for decolonization after the Second World War, the fallout of the colonial sandwich left the Asians with central control over the economy. Due to their privileged position within the race and class hierarchy in Uganda, Uganda Asians replaced the Europeans as ‘brown colonialists’. Independence movements in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda within an atmosphere of rising pan-Africanism placed the Uganda Asian community in a precarious position. With efforts to Africanize local economies, Ugandan Asians faced various nationalization programs and trade licensing impediments that curtailed their dominance within the East African economy. Although there was an initial reluctance to limit European and Ugandan Asian control within the economy under President Obote, this ultimately increased general antagonism within the region towards Ugandan Asians who were viewed within society as principle exploiters of Ugandan Africans. Both Kenya and Tanzania addressed the ‘Asian problem’ within their respective countries through socialist or nationalist practices that aimed to return the control of the economy into the hands of their citizens. Although both programs effectively disenfranchised their respective Asian communities, President Amin contemplated his own solution to the ‘Asian problem’. This chapter provides an overview of the historical developments within Uganda that led to the 1972 expulsion decree and the ensuing international refugee crisis.

Historical Roots of the South Asian Community in Uganda

The earliest forms of migration to East Africa from the Indian sub-continent date as far back as the ninth century.³ Various Arab and Indian communities participated in a growing network of trade throughout the Indian Ocean and the Arabian peninsula.⁴ Some scholars even trace the roots of Indian trade with East Africa to the second century, describing accounts of a Greek pilot ship that engaged with both Arab and Indian merchants along the eastern coast of Africa.⁵ For centuries Indian merchants were “the principle suppliers of cotton cloth, beads, and sundry manufactured articles and as importers of ivory, gold, iron, gum copal, ambergris, incense and slaves.”⁶ The African slave trade, in particular, articulated the growth in commercial transactions between India and Africa. By the fifteenth century, the King of Bengal was in possession of 8,000 African slaves.⁷ Consequently, South Asians had already established themselves within Uganda as traders and shopkeepers well before British colonial rule and the greater ‘scramble for Africa’ in the 1880s. These trading networks became advantageous for the larger influxes of South Asians who migrated to East Africa in the latter half of the nineteenth century.⁸ Indeed, the origin of the word ‘swahili’ is derived from the Arabic word ‘sahil’ meaning boundary or coast. This reflected the vast Arab presence within the littoral cities of Mombasa and Zanzibar as the word swahili refers to the “people of the coast.”⁹ It is crucial to note that the diverse population of coastal towns, such as Mombasa, included those from the coastal community, the African interior, South Asia, and the Arabian Peninsula before the arrival of Europeans in the region. As noted by historical anthropologist Zulfikar Hirji, intermarriage and cooperation between these diverse groups of people for political, social, and economic reasons were practiced throughout the region for centuries prior to the arrival of European

³ Zulfikar Amir Hirji, *Between Empires: Sheikh-Sir Mbarak Al-Hinawy, 1896-1959* (London: Azimuth Editions, 2012), 95.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁵ Thomas Patrick Melady and Margaret Badum Melady, *Uganda: The Asian Exiles* (New York: Orbis Books, 1976), 48; Daniel D. C. Don Nanjira, *The Status of Aliens in East Africa: Asians and Europeans in Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya* (New York: Praeger, 1976), 3; J. S. Mangat, *A History of the Asians in East Africa, c.1886 to 1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 1; Peter G. Forster, Michael Hitchcock, and Francis F. Lyimo, *Race and Ethnicity in East Africa* (Hampshire: Macmillan Press Limited, 2000), 76.

⁶ Mangat, *A History of the Asians in East Africa*, 1.

⁷ Melady and Melady, *Uganda*, 48.

⁸ Benson Chukwuma Morah, “The Assimilation of Ugandan Asians in Calgary” (M.A., University of Calgary, 1974), 8.

⁹ Hirji, *Between Empires*, 32.

colonialists.¹⁰ The rich multiculturalism featured in these regions substantiates the deeper historical roots of the South Asian community in East Africa.

The principle waves of migration from the Indian subcontinent began in 1840 as migrants ventured to Zanzibar with the hopes of economic prosperity as commercial traders.¹¹ With the complete domination of Zanzibar by the Arabs and the creation of the Sultanate of Seyyid Said in 1841, South Asians were given preferential treatment within the newly created government.¹² Under his leadership, South Asians were placed in administrative positions relating to finance. This amplified the South Asian dominance within trade, shopkeeping, and moneylending.¹³ Additionally, the Sultanate's decision set a crucial precedent for who the British would entrust with administrative positions during the creation of imperial governments throughout East Africa. Moreover, the Sultanate granted religious freedoms to South Asians and thus promoted the migration of all religious groups from the Indian subcontinent. His liberal policies increased the South Asian population in Zanzibar from three to four hundred in the early 1800s to roughly 6,000 by 1866.¹⁴ With the success of these migrants, more South Asians – mostly those from Gujarat, Mumbai, Punjab, and Karachi – migrated to Zanzibar and further inland.¹⁵

However, there was also significant migration from the former Portuguese colony of Goa located in the Southwest region of the subcontinent. There were relatively few Goans who initially migrated within this merchant class, consisting of about 119 who were either shop owners, employers, or government officials in Zanzibar.¹⁶ These regions served as the principle sources of migration from South Asia to East Africa. Their migration patterns replicated those of the British imperialists. This is in part due to British protection that was

¹⁰ Hirji, *Between Empires*, 67.

¹¹ Farhad Daftary, *A Short History of the Ismailis: Traditions of a Muslim Community* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 200.

¹² Nanjira, *The Status of Aliens in East Africa*, 49.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 49-50; Forster, Hitchcock, and Lyimo, *Race and Ethnicity in East Africa*, 83.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁵ Stephanie Jones, "Merchant-Kings and Everymen: Narratives of the South Asian Diaspora of East Africa," *Journal of East African Studies* 1, no. 1 (2007): 18.

¹⁶ Margret Frenz, "Global Goans: Migration Movements and Identity in a Historical Perspective," *Lusotopie* 15, no. 1 (2008): 186-188.

extended to all Indian migrants as India was under colonial rule in the nineteenth century.¹⁷ Another motivating factor for migration from South Asia involved the deteriorating access to arable land, food, and employment opportunities. The geographical proximity of the two regions also served as an excellent buffer to promote migration to East Africa. Most importantly, the bulk of Indian immigration to Uganda was voluntary, selective, and spontaneous. Most individuals could only finance their journeys to Uganda by taking a loan or convincing a relative living in Uganda to finance their journey and provide assistance upon arrival.¹⁸ Although the merchants and traders consisted of the majority of migrants to Uganda, there were also two other notable groups that turned to Uganda as a land of opportunity.

The second major group of migrants consisted of indentured labourers known more colloquially as *coolies* (the term “coolie” comes from the Hindi word “quli” which means labourer). The *coolies* did not arrive until European colonization in 1840s, which required thousands of labourers to construct both Kenya and Uganda’s railway systems. South Asian immigration drastically increased within the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries for both of these groups. Within the five years it took to build the Ugandan Railway (1896-1901), 32,000 Indian workers had been recruited, of whom 6,724 decided to stay within East Africa. The *coolies* who opted to stay behind reflected the smaller group of Asian migrants in East Africa. The immigration of indentured labourers in conjunction with other groups of South Asians was purposefully encouraged by the British colonial government in India. The *Indian Emigration Act of 1883* permitted for the legal movement of South Asians throughout East Africa without any restrictions.¹⁹ This group of indentured labourers who chose to remain in East Africa form the basis of the central myth that all South Asians living in Uganda at the time of the expulsion were descendants of the railway workers “who forgot to go home.”²⁰ Those who did return home, however, provided a crucial source of knowledge for kinship networks in the Indian subcontinent. They brought stories of economic

¹⁷ Melady and Melady, *Uganda*, 50.

¹⁸ Morah, “The Assimilation of Ugandan Asians in Calgary,” 9.

¹⁹ Nanjira, *The Status of Aliens in East Africa*, 4-5.

²⁰ Cecil Patrick Pereira, “A Study of the Effects of the Ethnic and Non-Ethnic Factors on the Resettlement of the Ugandan Asian Refugees in Canada” (Ph.D., The University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1981), 12.

opportunities available in East Africa, especially considering the newly constructed railways.²¹

The final category of migrants consisted of government officials brought in by British imperialists to replicate the bureaucratic systems of colonial rule established in India. The vast majority of those who held public service positions hailed from Goa as the imperialists sought to create an inexpensive colonial administration.²² The British government's recruitment campaign facilitated the voluntary migration of Goans to East Africa. More than half of those recruited for the colonial government in Uganda were Goans.²³ Although the vast majority of Goans worked in the public sector, there were some who took up positions as shopkeepers, tailors, cooks, and stewards.²⁴ Ultimately, Goans were predominantly public service workers or specialized artisans. Margaret Frenz argues that it is difficult to articulate the specific numbers of Goans who migrated to Uganda in particular, since available census data is scattered and lists them as a separate category between 1911 and 1948 but were listed in the census in broad categories such as Asians, Portuguese, Indians, and Christians from the 1950s onwards. Estimates place the total Goan population in Uganda at 3,000 by the 1970s.²⁵

Those who worked for the Ugandan civil service were granted an additional benefit of a paid vacation for six months to return to Goa every four years.²⁶ However, it is imperative to note that the earlier generations of Goans who opted to take advantage of these perks ultimately hoped to retire in their respective villages back in Goa. This was a prominent practice amongst the initial migrants and elderly Goans.²⁷ These two facets of the Goan community regarding paid leave and the desire to retire in Goa reinforced ideologies

²¹ Pereira, "A Study of the Effects of the Ethnic and Non-Ethnic Factors on the Resettlement of the Ugandan Asian Refugees in Canada," 12.

²² Frenz, "Global Goans," 187.

²³ Jessica Kuper, "The Goan Community in Kampala," in *Expulsion of a Minority: Essays on Ugandan Asians*, ed. Michael Twaddle (London: Athlone Press, 1975), 54.

²⁴ In fact, Goans played a crucial role in the tailoring industry and were even responsible for creating one of Uganda's most popular forms of dress known as the *gomesi* or *busuti*.²⁴ It was designed by the Goan tailor, A.G. Gomes and was a cross between the Indian *sari* and the local Ugandan *pusuti*.²⁴

²⁵ Kuper, "The Goan Community in Kampala," 56.

²⁶ Frenz, "Global Goans," 190.

²⁷ Kuper, "The Goan Community in Kampala," 56.

surrounding the impermanence of South Asian migration to Uganda. These elements of Goan life emphasized the vested interests of Asians abroad and was used as a means of justifying Idi Amin's impending expulsion decree. Although this did not reflect the aspirations of the entire Goan community living in Uganda, it was extended to embody the ideals which labelled Asians as either foreigners or indentured labourers who forgot to return home. These three main categories of post-1840 Asian migrants demonstrate the various motivations for voluntary decisions to relocate to East Africa. It is clear that there is a long history of trading networks between both regions of the world but only the recent merchants, traders, labourers, artisans, and civil servants would dominate popular conceptions of Asians living in Uganda.

Establishment of the Ugandan Asian Community

Once the railways were constructed, the merchants from the coastal towns of Mombasa and Zanzibar utilized their privileged economic positions to create several shops along the railway routes. They traveled further inland towards Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda while simultaneously motivating friends and relatives from the subcontinent to take advantage of the rising demands for trade and commerce. In reality, the vast majority of South Asians would not arrive in Uganda until after the railway reached Kisumu near Lake Victoria. It was under these circumstances that migrants would serve as middle-men between imperialists and the local population of Ugandan Africans. Their skills and expertise in economics, stemming from favoured positions in Zanzibar, facilitated trade and commerce in a pioneer society where the indigenous population was unable to do so.²⁸ The Asian entrepreneurs who had originally installed themselves as merchants would eventually come to dominate the Ugandan economy. Merchants who had established themselves along the coast capitalized on the newly constructed railways and ventured further inland.²⁹ By the First World War, Asians could be found in many East African urban centres including Mombasa, Dar-es-Salaam, Nairobi and Kampala.³⁰ The majority of these migrants came from Northern India or from Goa. Many Gujarati and Kutchi-speaking tradesmen chose to

²⁸ Morah, "The Assimilation of Ugandan Asians in Calgary," 9.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

³⁰ Daftary, *The Ismailis*, 200.

remain in East Africa and encouraged their family and friends to set up new businesses in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.³¹

Initially, Asian migrants set up small shops or *dukas* in which they sold small quantities of exotic consumer goods to farmers and in return purchased food items. They worked long hours and lived frugally in order to save as much money as possible.³² Maria described the reality of many *dukawallahs* (shop owners) being hard workers: “they would open at seven in the morning and they would work until ten at night. Like anytime the Africans wanted, they knew they could go and service.”³³ Many of these small shops were opened in remote areas of Uganda which created new markets for consumer goods. Asians became so prominent within trade and commerce through these *dukas* that in many regions of Uganda, currency was referred to as ‘arupia’ - a direct reflection of the Indian monetary denomination known as the rupee.³⁴ The typical *duka* featured the store at the front of the building and directly behind it there was either a small separation or the immediate commencement of living quarters for the Asian shop owner. Edmond’s oral history provided a succinct description of the standard *duka* setup: “my father had property and all in Jinja, he had shops in the front like a plaza or whatever you call it. Four or five shops and at the back we were staying, not part of the building but he had a separate... like a bungalow.”³⁵ Many Asians employed family members as a means of reducing costs and increasing savings particularly in the more remote regions of Uganda which lead to a difficult and often isolated life.³⁶ This lifestyle was considered the norm amongst the pioneers of the Asian community who set up shops within much smaller communities. Azim Sarangi’s description of his family’s business in a small town outside of Mbale outlined this reality:

³¹ Charles Westin, “The Ugandan Asians in Sweden - Twenty-five Years after the Expulsion,” in *Ethnicity and Economy: ‘Race and Class’ Revisited*, ed. Steve Fenton and Harriet Bradley (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 122.

³² Vali Jamal, “Asians in Uganda, 1880-1972: Inequality and Expulsion,” *The Economic History Review* 29, no. 4 (1976): 604.

³³ Edmond and Maria Rodriguez, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 11, 2015.

³⁴ Nathan Epenu, “On the Eve of Census Day, A Look at Uganda’s Asian Population,” *Uganda Argus*, October 1971.

³⁵ Edmond and Maria Rodriguez, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 11, 2015.

³⁶ Melady and Melady, *Uganda*, 69.

my parents had a gas station and ... a retail shop, more like a 7/11 and they also, also sold products to all the smaller little shops around, around I would say the community. So my dad would drive probably, 100 miles taking orders filled his truck his small truck and deliver and then he would replenish the order from a city called Mbale and we were actually in Majanji, we were right on the shores of Mbale.³⁷

As *dukawallahs* continued to prosper economically, many of them would refrain from building larger stores and instead would open a new store in another region. These were often run by a close friend or family member. Peter G. Forster, Michael Hitchcock, and F. Lyimo argue that these “kinship and business norms reinforced each other, and a breach in either would lead to ostracism with no escape route elsewhere.”³⁸ However, their economic success generated conflict amongst Ugandan Africans who criticized their practices and labeled them as self-interested, corrupt, obsessed with turning a profit, and unpatriotic.³⁹ Winston Churchill offers an apt description of what he described as the major contributions of Indians in East Africa who served as both the pioneers of commerce and crucial labourers to building the national railways:

It is the Indian trader who, penetrating and maintaining himself in all sorts of places to which no white man would go or in which no white man could earn a living, has more than anyone else developed the early beginnings of trade and opened up the first slender means of communication. It was by Indian labour that the one vital railway on which everything else depends was constructed. It is the Indian banker who supplies perhaps the larger part of the capital yet available for business and enterprise, and to whom the white settlers have not hesitated to recur for financial aid.⁴⁰

Over time their initial clustering within shop owning would diminish in the face of competition from local Ugandans. Although this is one of the main legacies of the post-1840s migration of Asians in Uganda, by 1952 the majority of retail traders throughout Uganda were Ugandan Africans as opposed to Ugandan Asians.⁴¹ As the door closed on the

³⁷ Azim Sarangi, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 15, 2015.

³⁸ Forster, Hitchcock, and Lyimo, *Race and Ethnicity in East Africa*, 84.

³⁹ Desh Gupta, “South Asians in East Africa: Achievement and Discrimination,” *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 21, no. 1 (1998): 105.

⁴⁰ Churchill, *My African Journey*, 32.

⁴¹ William G. Kuepper, G. Lynne Lackey, and E. Nelson Swinerton, *Ugandan Asians in Great Britain: Forced Migration and Social Absorption* (London: Croom Helm, 1975), 29.

prominence of *dukas* amongst the Asian community, there was a simultaneous development within the wholesale and manufacturing business sectors beginning in the early 1900s that counteracted the decline of *dukawallahs*.

Cotton became a major cash crop in Uganda in 1904 and Asians served as middlemen between the English cotton ginners and the Ugandan African cotton farmers. As the cotton industry expanded there was an increasing shortage of cotton ginners, which provided an ideal opportunity for Asians to become cotton ginners themselves. Eventually, due to their knowledge of the local market they were able to undercut European sales and dominate the cotton ginning industry by 1918. By 1931, Ugandan Asians owned 155 out of 194 cotton ginneries in the region.⁴² Asians also responded to modern demands in the market and became *fundis* (artisans), while handling import and exports demands as *dukawallahs*, and by becoming bookkeepers for other shops and ginneries. Beyond the *dukawallahs*, Asian wholesalers dominated the Ugandan economy from the turn of the century through to the post-independence era. It was estimated that Asians controlled eighty to ninety percent of Ugandan trade and in the early 1970s as well as owning nearly eighty percent of the commercial sector.⁴³ Furthermore, by the end of the Second World War, Ugandan Asian capital controlled retail and wholesale trade as well as and the manufacturing industry in Uganda.⁴⁴ Continued financial success encouraged immigration levels to continue to rise. For example, the number of Ugandan Asians rose from 5,604 in 1921 to 77,400 in 1961.⁴⁵

There are numerous examples of early Asian pioneers within various economic sectors that demonstrate their participation within different areas of the Ugandan economy. Each of these individuals also articulated the heterogeneity of the Ugandan Asian population. Allidina Visram is one of the most well-known Asian pioneers in Uganda during the early days of colonial rule. Arriving in Uganda just before the turn of the century, Visram quickly installed himself as a cotton ginner and began experimenting with a large variety of

⁴² Jamal, "Asians in Uganda," 603-604.

⁴³ Kuepper, Lackey, and Swinerton, *Ugandan Asians in Great Britain*, 29.

⁴⁴ T.V. Sathyamurthy, *The Political Development of Uganda: 1900-1986* (Aldershot: Gower Publishing Company Limited, 1986), 513.

⁴⁵ Don Nanjira, *The Status of Aliens in East Africa*, 11.

imported crops for plantations.⁴⁶ Using his early connections to a fellow Ismaili from Gujarat, Haji Paroo, Visram set the standard for other *dukawallahs* who replicated his strategy of partnering with the British to build several *dukas* along railway lines that also offered banking facilities.⁴⁷ By 1910, Visram had created successful coconut oil, sesame oil, jaggery, and even hardboard manufacturing plants in both Uganda and Mombasa.⁴⁸ By the year of his death in 1916, Visram had established a vast industrial, trading, and plantation empire which included over 170 stores stretching from Mombasa to various regions of Uganda.⁴⁹ Other pioneers also became active within the economies of mainland East Africa. Augustino de Fegueirido who migrated from Goa opened his own shop in the former capital of Uganda, Entebbe, in 1902. His shop initially sold a variety of goods but most importantly offered a tailoring section. Recognizing the demand for clothing within Uganda, he recruited forty other tailors and opened new shops in Kampala and Jinja. Similarly, Fazal Abdulla from the Shia Bohra Muslim community established the second major tailoring industry in Uganda by 1910. Many others from various religious and regional communities participated in the growing Ugandan economy to produce several manufactured goods including furniture, upholstery for vehicles, soap, ghee, and safari tents.⁵⁰

Two of the most famous Asian entrepreneurs were Nanji Kalidas Mehta and Muljibhai Prabhudas Madhvani. They both were Hindus belonging to the Lohana caste (primarily a merchant class) who immigrated from small villages in Saurashtra, a district of the Gujarat state.⁵¹ Both men established prominent empires that not only involved participation in industrial production and manufacturing but also expanded their influence into agriculture. Arriving just before the turn of the century, Mehta and Madhvani entered the agricultural sector of the Ugandan economy after they achieved initial success in cotton ginning. By 1926, Mehta built Uganda's first sugar factory located in Lugazi between Jinja and

⁴⁶ Gardner Thompson, "The Ismailis in Uganda" in *Expulsion of a Minority: Essays on Uganda Asians* edited by Michael Twaddle (London, Athlone Press 1975), 32; Robert G. Gregory, *South Asians in East Africa: An Economic and Social History, 1890-1980* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1993), 273.

⁴⁷ Christine E. Dobbin, *Asian Entrepreneurial Minorities: Conjoint Communities in the Making of the World-Economy, 1570-1940* (Vancouver: Curzon Press Limited, 1996), 120.

⁴⁸ Gregory, *South Asians in East Africa*, 273.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*; Jones, "Merchant-kings and Everymen," 23.

⁵⁰ Gregory, *South Asians in East Africa*, 273-274.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 248.

Kampala. Madhvani's empire paralleled the success of Metha. Madhvani established another sugar empire based in Kakira just six miles from Jinja. By the time of Madhvani's death in 1958, he had not only created his own company, Miljibhai Madhvani & Co. Ltd, but also diversified his economic interests to produce jaggery, refined sugar, oil, soap, maize, and many other products. As each of these pioneers demonstrate, there were numerous religious and regional groups from the Indian subcontinent who were essential to Uganda's economic development. Industries were not particularly dominated by a specific religious community but as a whole the Asians prospered in Uganda. As the numbers of migrants continued to grow along with this initial success, Asians began to enter the secondary professions.⁵²

As the initial migrant populations of Asians who arrived in the post-1840s era moved into their second and third generations in East Africa, they transitioned towards obtaining specialized training and university degrees primarily in the fields of economics, business, law, medicine, and engineering. Robert G. Gregory argues, "this enhanced the Asians' capacity for venturing into an enterprise that required a complex combination of capital formation, technology, management skills, and in many instances, collaboration with foreign associates."⁵³ It is important to note that Asians were not only present within the major industries but also within crucial occupations including law, medicine, and teaching.⁵⁴ For example, it was a Ugandan Asian lawyer, Anil Clerk, who defended the first President of Uganda, Milton Obote and later President Idi Amin in court. The presidents sought to clear their names from any associations that linked them to manipulating post-independence politics.⁵⁵ Asians were also some of the first medical professionals including dentists and pharmacists throughout East Africa. They served all members of Ugandan society regardless of their private or public employment status.⁵⁶ With respect to teaching, Uganda followed the predominant trend throughout East Africa that saw an increased demand for teachers to coincide with the rapid construction of several schools throughout the region in the 1920s

⁵² Gregory, *South Asians in East Africa*, 249.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 287.

⁵⁴ Nicholas Van Hear, *New Diasporas: The Mass Exodus, Dispersal and Regrouping of Migrant Communities* (London: University Colleges London Press Limited, 1998), 66.

⁵⁵ Baganchwera Barungi, *Parliamentary Democracy in Uganda: The Experiment That Failed* (Indiana: Author House, 2011), 144.

⁵⁶ Gregory, *South Asians in East Africa*, 217.

onwards.⁵⁷ For example, some Ugandan Asians such as Delphine Francis studied abroad in the United Kingdom and returned to become a school teacher in Uganda:

Fortunately, they were thrilled to have me back in Uganda to teach and I did start off in an elementary school, that's what I was trained for, to be an elementary school teacher. But they thought I was over qualified so I started teaching at the Shimoni Teacher Training College, so really I was teaching students to become teachers, they didn't call us quite professors because I wasn't a professor, but they called us tutors.⁵⁸

Ugandan Asians established themselves throughout Uganda not only within various urban and rural communities but also within a wide array of occupations. Their dominance within the business sector along with their infiltration into the secondary professions secured their status within the middle to upper classes of Ugandan society. This was encouraged and deeply rooted in their privileged position due to British imperialism that actively sought to establish the Asian community as a buffer between the imperialists and local Ugandans.

The Colonial Sandwich

The three-tiered race and class hierarchy implemented by the British imperialists traces its origins to the very beginnings of colonial expansion in East Africa. With the creation of the British East Indian Company, and the eventual establishment of East Africa Protectorate in 1894, the British imperialists held a firm presence in the region.⁵⁹ As noted earlier, Zanzibar served as an early example of the preferences of colonialists for Asians as civil servants and merchants. The racialized tier system of colonial Uganda divided society into three distinct groups. Upper-class British colonials were at the top, middle to upper-class commercial Asians were in the middle and the remaining Ugandans were at the bottom.⁶⁰ This created a racial hierarchy of white, brown, and black. An African Asian immigrant to Canada in the 1970s, N. Rahemtulla, described the racialized colonial atmosphere as follows: “the black man was ignorant and lazy, the white man the master and a superior being as he would have

⁵⁷ Frenz, “Global Goans,” 190.

⁵⁸ Errol and Delphine Francis, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 17, 2015.

⁵⁹ Donald Denoon, “The Historical Setting to 1900,” in *Uganda: The Dilemma of Nationhood*, ed. G.N. Uzoigwe (New York: NOK Publishers International, 1982), 48.

⁶⁰ Sathyamurthy, *The Political Development of Uganda*, 513.

us believe. I the Asian, was neither. I had no choice but to work like crazy or face starvation.”⁶¹ This systematic division of society by the imperialists is also known as the ‘colonial sandwich’ with “Europeans at the top, Asians in the middle, and Africans at the bottom.”⁶² The tiered system was predicated on European notions of race, class, ethnicity, and religion and was utilized as a means of maintaining British hegemony and white supremacy throughout the East African protectorate.⁶³ Divide-and-rule tactics imparted by the colonial system reinforced the middle class position of Ugandan Asians which not only intensified their visible minority status but also amplified their position as a mercantile class.⁶⁴ Due to the privileged position initially extended to the Asians in Zanzibar, they continued to be preferred as the primary merchants and traders throughout Uganda.

This policy purposefully repressed the ability of Ugandan Africans to participate within import-export trade as a means of solidifying class divisions within society.⁶⁵ Ultimately, this gave rise to a process in which local Ugandans consistently interacted with Asians in all commercial relations. Kiwanuka Semakula argues that “the only real and significant contacts between the races were those in the market place: between seller and buyer, between trader and customer and between master and servant.”⁶⁶ This was further exacerbated within the civil service sector as a means of frustrating local Ugandans and promoting ethnic conflict between Asians and Africans. For example, the colonial administration forced Ugandan Africans to go through Ugandan Asian clerks in order to gain access to European officers. This meant that any grievances faced by Ugandan Africans, in relation to poor treatment from Ugandan Asian employers in the manufacturing industries or their limited employability within the government as designed by the imperialists, forced them to go through the Ugandan Asian clerks first. Inevitably, this placed Ugandan Asians in an uncomfortable position within the Ugandan bureaucracy.⁶⁷ The

⁶¹ N. Rahemtulla, “Three Cheers! – Kenya Asian,” *Vancouver Sun*, September 2, 1972, 5.

⁶² Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (London: Routledge, 1996), 2.

⁶³ Hirji, *Between Empires*, 67-68.

⁶⁴ James H. Mittelman, *Ideology and Politics in Uganda: From Obote to Amin* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1975), 229; Tony Kushner and Katharine Knox, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide: Global, National, and Local Perspectives during the Twentieth Century* (New York: Frank Cass, 1999), 226.

⁶⁵ Sathyamurthy, *The Political Development of Uganda*, 512.

⁶⁶ Semakula Kiwanuka, *Amin and the Tragedy of Uganda* (Munich: Weltforum Verlag, 1979), 102.

⁶⁷ Nizar Motani, “The Ugandan Civil Service and the Asian Problem 1894-1972,” in *Expulsion of a Minority: Essays on Ugandan Asians*, ed. Michael Twaddle (London: Athlone Press 1975), 103.

race-class hierarchy was a means of protecting European imperialists from any form of antagonism within Uganda. By manipulating the economic and social system to their advantage, colonialists devised a societal structure where the minority Ugandan Asian population were viewed as the perpetrators of exploitative policies as opposed to themselves. Since Asians were considered a buffer between the British and indigenous population, animosity was directed toward the Asian community as opposed to the true perpetrators of exploitation.⁶⁸ This was extended throughout East Africa and was utilized by various newly independent governments as a means of justifying discriminatory policies directed towards the Asian community. Within Uganda in particular, these tensions led to the popular ideology that “he is rich because he is an Asian and I am poor because I am an African.”⁶⁹ This would serve as one of the most convincing justifications for Idi Amin’s expulsion decree in 1972. The colonial sandwich played a crucial role within the economic structures in Uganda and was embodied within society in numerous ways.

Segregation manifested itself between the three groups with separate bathrooms for each racial group in the civil service sector progressing to separate schools, hospitals, and residential neighbourhoods.⁷⁰ They spread throughout society within every aspect of life to the extent that when a Ugandan Asian chose to donate blood they “were taken to the Red Cross’ Indian Blood Bank.”⁷¹ Racial divisions went as far as sporting competitions where Europeans played field hockey against South Asian and African teams.⁷² The Lowis Cup or the later Pentagonal games are indicative examples of how sporting teams were further subdivided not only based on national origin but various religious and regional affiliations. As an annual cricket tournament initiated by the Goan community in Uganda, the Lowis Cup was awarded to the winning team of a five team tournament based on various community affiliations and was further extended to include other sports such as field hockey

⁶⁸ Dent Ocaya-Lakidi, “Black Attitudes to the Brown and White Colonizers of East Africa”, in *Expulsion of a Minority: Essays on Ugandan Asians*, ed. Michael Twaddle (London: Athlone Press 1975), 85.

⁶⁹ Kiwanuka, *Amin and the Tragedy of Uganda*, 103.

⁷⁰ Margret Frenz, “Migration, Identity and Post-Colonial Change in Uganda: A Goan Perspective,” *Immigrants and Minorities* 31, no. 1 (2013): 52.

⁷¹ Mahmood Mamdani, *From Citizen to Refugee: Uganda Asians Come to Britain* (Cape Town: Pambazuka Press, 2011), 16.

⁷² Frenz, “Migration, Identity and Post-Colonial Change in Uganda,” 53.

and badminton. Interviewee Jalal Jaffer described the realities of the playing in the tournament as a member of the Uganda Muslims team:

I was selected to play cricket for Uganda Muslims, it used to be what they called pentangular games, Indians or Hindus, Muslims, Goans, Africans, and Europeans. Now because Indians were so powerful they broke it up into Muslims, Goans and Indians, meaning Hindus. So the five ethnic groups we would play cricket ... as a tournament and I happened to get selected to play cricket for the Uganda Muslims.⁷³

These five teams recruited other players from various regions throughout Uganda who also played in local leagues divided by region and religion in areas such as Mbarara, Mbale, Masaka, and Jinja.⁷⁴ According to some scholars these subdivisions were further amplified by notions self-segregation and beliefs of cultural superiority amongst Ugandan Asians.

Certain academics argued that social exclusion was self-imposed by Asians living throughout East Africa which coincided with their privileged treatment from the colonial system.⁷⁵ Benson Chukwama Morah offers the most detailed account regarding Asian beliefs of cultural superiority. He argues that the lack of rich cultural traditions in Uganda from the Asian perspective along with the reluctance of Africans to embrace and appreciate the practices brought by Asians which troubled the community as they believed they were the bearers of a “great cultural tradition.”⁷⁶ To build on this critique, Morah identifies how Ugandan Africans did not observe any dietary restrictions associated with religion and thus lacked any form of ritualistic purity. Furthermore, other scholars articulate how Asians wanted to be left to their own communities as a means of pursuing their own traditional ways. Michael Twaddle points to the institutionalization of various Asian communities as a source of self-imposed segregation as they constructed their own cemeteries, schools, and recreation centres along with places of community care and worship.⁷⁷ Furthermore, Morah extends his argument of cultural superiority to include ideologies of racial superiority

⁷³ Jalal Jaffer, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 7, 2015.

⁷⁴ “History of the KGI - Founding to Today,” 13.

⁷⁵ Sathyamurthy, *The Political Development of Uganda*, 175.

⁷⁶ Morah, “The Assimilation of Ugandan Asians in Calgary,” 10.

⁷⁷ M.A. Tribe, “Economic Aspects from the Expulsion of Asians from Uganda,” in *Expulsion of a Minority: Essays on Ugandan Asians*, ed. Michael Twaddle (London: Athlone Press 1975), 154-155.

asserting that Asians “did not hide their disdain for the African physiognomy and person; coming from a cultural tradition where everything ‘fair’ is synonymous with ‘handsome’, ‘good looking’, and everything dark synonymous with ‘ugliness’, ‘low caste’, ‘not fit for contact’, loose morals and ‘excellence in sexual dalliance’.”⁷⁸ As these scholars argue, Asians viewed themselves above Africans as evidenced by the growing presence of separate institutions and perceptions of superior cultural and religious customs. Given these beliefs, many local Ugandans began to hold negative views towards the Asian community that dominated commercial relations in addition to looking down upon Ugandan society.

Tensions heightened between the two communities throughout the mid-twentieth century to the point that it became common for Ugandan Africans to express their frustrations in local media. For example, editorials during the expulsion period would depict Asians as “those parasites who suckle at Uganda, our mother” or “you bloody Indian.”⁷⁹ General animosity towards the Asians in East Africa dates back to the beginning of imperialism in the region. The British purposefully positioned the Asians as a scapegoat regarding the growth and expansion of the African slave trade. Although both parties were heavily involved in the human trafficking of African slaves, as noted in the earlier portion of this chapter, Sir Bartle Frere’s inquiry into the East African slave trade pinned the Asians as the primary precipitators of the slave trade. Building on this form of rhetoric, the imperialists described the Asian community as “crafty, money-making, cunning ... the local Jew; unscrupulous and single-minded in the pursuit of gain; a user of false weights and measures, a receiver of stolen goods, and a ‘Banyan’ contemplating his account book.”⁸⁰ Ugandan historian Dent Ocaya-Lakidi argues that these ideologies would inevitably be internalized by East Africans socialized through the British education system in the East Africa Protectorate. Furthermore, as Ugandan Africans lacked initial political power during the colonial period they did not refrain from identifying the ‘Asian problem’ in Uganda. An editorial from the early 1920s foreshadows the growing discontent and eventual expulsion

⁷⁸ Morah, “The Assimilation of Ugandan Asians in Calgary, 10-11.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 13. Several editorials in the *Uganda Argus* demonstrate these opinions which will be explored in chapter two. Some immediate examples include: “Asian Question Answered,” *Uganda Argus*, August 4, 1972 and “An Asian Dream is Ended,” *Uganda Argus*, August 18, 1972.

⁸⁰ Ocaya-Lakidi, “Black Attitudes to the Brown and White Colonizers of East Africa,” 85.

decree stating: “as we have no power to command Indians to get out of our country, we must protest and dispute every inch of the way so that they shall not get what they want in our country.”⁸¹ This would form the basis for rising tensions between the Asian and African communities in Uganda which did not arise overnight.

Another critical moment regarding pre-independence relations amongst both groups was the boycott of Asian goods in 1959. This stemmed from a deeper historical plight amongst the people of Baganda, one of Uganda’s five traditional kingdoms who were given a privileged position by the colonial administration with respect to the other kingdoms, who launched an earlier campaign against the Asians in the mid-1930s. The Young Baganda Association, composed of young Baganda radicals, charged the Asian community of inhibiting the upward mobility of Ugandan Africans and argued that “Indians of this type are the very people who...occupy positions which should have afforded outlets to Africans.”⁸² By 1959, the Uganda National Movement (UNM) - comprised largely of the rising middle class in Baganda - successfully removed approximately half of the Asian businessmen from Baganda using violence and intimidation. In response, the colonial government arrested several leading officials in the UNM, banned the party, and threatened to sanction Baganda until their king, the Kabaka Mutesa II, issued a formal apology condemning the UNM’s acts.⁸³ The position of Asians in Uganda was evidently becoming increasingly more precarious in the time leading up to Uganda’s independence.

Once independence was achieved in 1962, the grievances of Ugandan traders subject to Asian monopolies in commercial industry, continued under the rule of President Obote. This was embodied in the creation of the Produce Marketing Board (PMB) in 1966, which appointed Ugandan Africans in the bureaucracy to control the purchasing and selling of agricultural goods.⁸⁴ In an attempt to circumvent the dominance of Asian sellers, the PMB’s role was to establish fair prices and returns for the urban working class and peasantry in

⁸¹ *Uganda Herald*, August 19, 1921 in Ocaya-Lakidi, “Black Attitudes to the Brown and White Colonizers of East Africa,” 89.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Thomas P. Ofcansky, *Uganda: Tarnished Pearl of Africa* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1996), 28.

⁸⁴ Sathyamurthy, *The Political Development of Uganda*, 527.

Uganda. However, due to the limited assets of the PMB they were unable to hold on to their stock for long periods of time and were forced to resale their acquired goods back to the Asians at a modest profit. In turn, enterprising Asian businessmen would continue purchasing all the agricultural products from the PMB and maximized monopoly profits. This led to the triple burden of exploitation for Ugandan growers who were subject to poor returns on their initial produce bought by co-operatives, the PMB who sought quick returns on their purchases, and inflated prices created by the Asian monopolies.⁸⁵ The failure of the newly independent government to provide any tangible solution to the ‘Asian problem’ during the initial years of independence would later serve as a motivating factor behind President Obote’s aggressive socialist campaign in the late 1960s. However, these main conflicts did not deter Ugandan Asians from attempting to participate in local politics, both before and after independence, to foster more positive relations between Ugandan Asians and Ugandan Africans.

Given these major historical events that demonstrated the tensions between these two communities there were, however, several attempts made by the Ugandan Asian community to participate in the political development of Uganda. In the years following the conclusion of the First World War, Ugandan Asians made a direct attempt to seek more representative appointments within the Legislative Council of Uganda. As a means of maintaining the colonial system of divide and conquer, the governor appointed only one Asian for every two European members, regardless of the fact that the Asians far outnumbered the Europeans in Uganda. In response to this discriminatory policy, the Asian community boycotted the Legislative Council for five years.⁸⁶ Clashes between the colonial government and the Asian community continued beyond the interwar period as Asians fought for proportional representation.

Inherent within these struggles was the failure to create a unified South Asian political organization. Since the communities were further subdivided along religious and regional lines, as demonstrated earlier, the same divisions persisted in their political efforts. This led

⁸⁵ Sathyamurthy, *The Political Development of Uganda*, 527-528.

⁸⁶ Ofcansky, *Uganda*, 27.

to the creation of several distinct political groups with various vested interests within Uganda. The first was the Kampala Indian Association (KIA) founded in 1908 by a group of local businessmen to serve as a rallying point for all Asians living in the major city. The second was the Central Council of Indian Associations (CCIA) founded in 1921 with the intent of being the premier representative body for all Asians living throughout Uganda and as a lobbying group for Asian social, economic, political, and educational interests. The final example, the Indian Merchants' Chamber created in 1924, aimed to influence colonial policies on economic practices and major business deals.⁸⁷ As each of the newly created groups possessed various special interests, they were unable to effectively lobby the colonial government to implement effective pressure to enable representative political control. These organizations also competed with the rising political consciousness of local Ugandan Africans. Their ability to present a united front was also hindered after the partition of India in 1947, as now political groups were starkly divided by Muslim and non-Muslim groups.⁸⁸ These political divisions continued in the postwar period and during the rise of African nationalism in the 1950s and 1960s.

On the eve of independence throughout East Africa, many Asian leaders sought to reaffirm their privileged position within their newly independent countries. After the 1959 boycott of Asian goods in Buganda, many Asian business leaders felt threatened by the increase in African nationalism. Under these conditions, the CCIA demanded for constitutional safeguards as a means of maintaining a specific South Asian voice within the political sphere.⁸⁹ However, their conservative views ran counter the majority of Asians who strongly sympathized with African nationalists fighting for self-determination.⁹⁰ Considering the recent establishment of self-rule within the Indian sub-continent, the sentiments of the CCIA were viewed as hypocritical by many Asians within the community. These sentiments were articulated by the creation of Uganda Action Group (UAG) in 1959, formed by a group of young radical Asians.⁹¹ Their primary motive was to dispel the

⁸⁷ Ofcansky, *Uganda*, 27.

⁸⁸ Mangat, *A History of Asians in East Africa*, 175.

⁸⁹ Ofcansky, *Uganda*, 28.

⁹⁰ Yash Tondon, "A Political Survey," in *A Portrait of a Minority: Asians in East Africa*, ed. Dharam P. Ghai and Yash P. Ghai Ghai (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1970), 96; Mangat, *A History of Asians in East Africa*, 176

⁹¹ Mangat, *A History of Asians in East Africa*, 176.

ideologies of who they considered to be the ‘old guard’ of South Asian leadership within Uganda and lobby for the admittance of Asians within African political parties. The UAG vehemently opposed ideas of reserved minority seats for Asians within the National Assembly, and opted for a more inclusive approach to politics that was devoid of racially based representation. Ultimately, the UAG successfully persuaded the Legislative Council and others in the Asian community that indeed the CCIA was “opposed to any such special representation” and that “adequate representation on the Legislative Council for non-Africans should be secured by their full participation in common roll arrangements.”⁹²

Unfortunately, these early attempts at supporting African nationalism did not persist throughout Uganda’s first years as a newly independent country. The UAG was unable to garner significant support from the Asian and African communities in Uganda and subsequently fizzled out. It is evident that South Asians did attempt to support African nationalism; however, their status as ‘colonial collaborators’ and advantaged economic positions alongside their perceived self-imposed social exclusion, diminished these efforts. This proved the failure of these initiatives to alter the perceptions of economic exploitation and traditional scapegoating of the Asian community in Uganda. The remnants of colonial rule embedded a racialized discourse throughout East Africa which barred the ability of Asians and Africans to unite politically. Given the unsuccessful attempts of the Asian community to participate politically within Uganda they did, however, make several major contributions to Ugandan society by improving the livelihoods of all Ugandans.

The vast majority of the philanthropy amongst the Asian community came in the form of schooling or the extension of social services for all people living in East Africa. The rapid construction of numerous schools took place within each of the racial communities in Uganda but were also segregated between the various religious and regional affiliations within the Asian community. The majority of the early Asian schools in Uganda offered curricula that focused on religious instruction, language retention (primarily Gujarati or Kokani for the Goan community), and incorporated material that focused on the Indian

⁹² Tondon, “A Political Survey,” 88.

subcontinent in the subjects of history and geography.⁹³ Initially these schools were privately funded initiatives started by the Asian community and eventually received government funding. In the pre-independence era, the vast majority of the seventy-seven primary schools in Uganda by 1959 were technically open to all but were largely attended by Asian students.⁹⁴ By the early years of independence however, these schools accepted all students. For example, the Allidina Visram High School accepted students of all backgrounds in the early 1960s, hired their first African faculty member in 1965 and subsequently their first African headmaster in 1970.⁹⁵ The growth of diversity within many Asian schools within East Africa cannot be entirely accounted to Asian conceptions of inclusivity. Many Ugandan Asians were aware that with the coming of independence one of the first elements within East African society to be changed would be racially segregated schools. Conversely, not all institutions throughout Uganda remained rigidly segregated along racial lines; there were exceptions to the rule. Based on the principles of brotherhood amongst all believers, Muslim religious institutions tended to be open to all Muslim students. For instance, the Bohra Muslim community opened their first school in Kisumu, Uganda in 1929 for Africans, Arabs, and Asians and by 1937, ninety per cent of their students were Ugandan Africans.⁹⁶ Undoubtedly, two Ugandan Asian business families of Uganda, the Madhvanis and the Mehtas, made significant contributions to the schooling of both Asian and African children.

Both families established schools for their employees' families from nursery to secondary schools. Furthermore, the Madhvani family also opened the Muljibhai College of Commerce in Kampala in 1950 as a means of educating and training Ugandan Africans in business management and other technical skills. Beyond these contributions, the leader of the Ismaili Muslim community, Aga Khan III, founded the East African Muslim Welfare Society in an attempt to breakdown racial barriers between Muslims and to reinforce a pan-Islamic identity. Ismailis remained the key contributors to the organization, which was

⁹³ P.M. Rattansi and M. Abdulla, "An Educational Survey," in *A Portrait of a Minority: Asians in East Africa*, ed. Dharam P. Ghai and Yash P. Ghai (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1970), 129.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 132.

⁹⁵ Robert G. Gregory, *The Rise and Fall of Philanthropy in East Africa: The Asian Contribution* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1992), 190.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 190-191.

ultimately responsible for building seventy-five schools, sixty-three mosques, a training college and a technical school between 1945 and 1957.⁹⁷ Furthermore, many members of the Asian community conducted a significant portion of philanthropic and humanitarian efforts on a micro-scale between them and their African labourers. Phillip Gregory argues that those who developed close relationships with Ugandan Africans often subsidized their school fees. These efforts mirrored the overall sentiments of philanthropy amongst the Asian communities throughout East Africa, as Gregory mentions, it was common duty amongst many Asians to be charitable within their means.⁹⁸ Ugandan Asians substantially contributed to the Ugandan economy and also created institutions that benefitted all those who resided within. The political involvement of the Asian community and their philanthropic works in Uganda alongside, evidence from oral histories contest the reality of a rigid race and class hierarchy in Uganda.

Although there remained a stark divide between the two communities due to the establishment of the colonial sandwich it did not create an impermeable structure. Several scholars debate the impacts of the racial hierarchy instilled within Ugandan society and its rigid race and class structure. For example, Desh Gupta argues that a significant proportion of Ugandan Asians transitioned to view Uganda as their permanent home as demonstrated by the increased percentage of spouses who lived with their partners in Uganda which increased to upwards of fifty per cent by 1931 from just twenty per cent in 1911.⁹⁹ Furthermore, Asians did not reside only in the major urban areas of Uganda. Communities like the Ismailis in conjunction with many other Hindu, Sikh, Christian, and other Muslim communities inhabited various regions within Uganda. For example, Noordin Somji outlined that he visited numerous Ismaili religious schools throughout Uganda including: Jinja, Mbale, Soroti, Lira, Kaberamaido, Gulu, Masaka, Mbarara, Fort Portal, Kisumu and smaller towns such as Mubende, Mityana, Naglama, Kikandwa, Wobulenzi, Masindi Port, Murchinson Falls.¹⁰⁰ As subsequent generations of Asians were raised in East Africa there was a significant loss of attachment to the Indian subcontinent.

⁹⁷ Thompson, "The Ismailis in Uganda," 45.

⁹⁸ Gregory, *The Rise and Fall of Philanthropy in East Africa*, 190 and 206.

⁹⁹ Gupta, "South Asians in East Africa," 122.

¹⁰⁰ Noordin Somji, *Memoirs and Autobiography of Noordin Somji* (Vancouver, 2006), 27

Many had lost their affinity towards their ancestral homeland and began to associate more strongly with Uganda. This is demonstrated in the greater levels of fluency in both English and Swahili amongst the younger generations of Ugandan Asians.¹⁰¹ J.S. Mangat maintains that the exposure to an urbanized environment, western-modelled school systems, improved standards of living led to shifts in dietary habits, dress, and language amongst Ugandan Asians.¹⁰² These ties to Uganda were clearly becoming entrenched within the various South Asian communities living in Uganda. A study conducted just before the expulsion decree in Uganda documented that approximately seventy-four per cent of respondents argued that they would prefer to remain in Uganda as opposed to returning to India.¹⁰³ The conceptions of distinct boundaries between the Asian and African communities as argued by several scholars is challenged by these notions where Asians transitioned to viewing themselves as East Africans. In a direct attempt to perpetuate the ideals of the colonial sandwich, the imperialists cultivated a myth that all Asians aspired to eventually retire to the subcontinent. However, in reality very few Asians retired in India and a significant majority of them considered themselves to be permanent residents of East Africa.¹⁰⁴ Additionally, several Ugandan Asian authors articulated deep senses of attachment to Uganda in their novels which contest the rigidity of the race-class hierarchy.

Three authors, Bahdur Tejani, Peter Nazareth, and Shenaaz Nanji complicate the realities of the colonial sandwich. In Tejani's 1971 novel, *Day After Tomorrow*, he questions the sense of belonging of South Asian migrants living in East Africa by denouncing their in-group exclusivity.¹⁰⁵ His novel falls in line with those scholars who are critical of the South Asian community who appeared to have opted for self-imposed segregation. The book provides a counter argument to claims of East African identity by criticizing the Asian community for only partially integrating themselves within society and continuing to

¹⁰¹ Mangat, *A History of Asians in East Africa*, 175.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Bert N. Adams, "The Kin Network and the Adjustment of the Ugandan Asians," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 36, no. 1 (1974), 193.

¹⁰⁴ Dharam P. Ghai and Yash P. Ghai, "Historical Introduction," in *A Portrait of a Minority: Asians in East Africa*, ed. Dharam P. Ghai and Yash P. Ghai (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1970), 5-6.

¹⁰⁵ Dan Ojwang, "Exile and Estrangement in East Indian Fiction," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 32, no. 3 (2012): 524.

propagate separate South Asian cultural and religious affiliations. However, the emotional pain for many Ugandan Asian expellees is articulated in Peter Nazareth's 1972 novel, *In a Brown Mantle*, as the protagonist bids farewell to Uganda while on a plane to London he exclaims "Goodbye, Mother Africa ... your bastard son loved you."¹⁰⁶ Both Tejani and Nazareth demonstrate how identity is contested for Ugandan Asians. On the one hand, feelings of exclusion from Ugandan society are emphasized by their in-group solidarity that Tejani believes indicated the purposeful failure of Ugandan Asians to integrate socially with Ugandan Africans. Conversely, Nazareth's protagonist truly felt a sense of belonging to Africa and felt betrayed upon expulsion.

Nanji's *Child of the Dandelions* firmly expresses the deep attachments to Uganda held by some members of the Asian community. The grandfather of the main character in the novel explained that he cannot leave Uganda arguing that: "Beta [term of endearment for children], the Kasenda earth is soaked with my blood, my sweat, and my tears. My farms, the coffee beans, they're part of who I am. This is home. Halima and I cannot leave our home."¹⁰⁷ These authors reaffirmed the ambiguity surrounding the reality of imperial race relations in Uganda. These authors summarized the multifaceted connections between Ugandan Asians and Ugandan Africans. Their fictional works demonstrated both major arguments presented by scholars regarding interactions between both communities. Ugandan Asians either firmly adhered to the racial and class based divides or cultivated relationships with Ugandan Africans and truly identified with Uganda as their homeland. Beyond these works of literature by Ugandan Asians that solidified their affinity towards Uganda, oral histories with Ugandan Asian refugees also problematized the lived realities of the colonial sandwich.

Oral histories provide an additional level of complexity when exploring the race and class based hierarchy in Uganda. As a formal civil servant, John Nazareth argued:

you know there was very little discrimination against Asians at that time. So you know if you were a Ugandan, whatever colour you were, you got

¹⁰⁶ Ojwang, "Exile and Estrangement in East Indian Fiction": 529.

¹⁰⁷ Shenaaz Nanji, *Child of the Dandelions* (Toronto: Second Story Press, 2008), 184.

treatment. I went to university, the country paid for my whole education. They even gave us some money for books and so on, we never had to pay a thing. They even gave us pocket money, they were equal. They didn't say oh you were an Asian you can afford more... When it comes to jobs they never discriminated against us. So in the government there was loads of people of Indian origin and Goans were very big in the civil service.¹⁰⁸

His oral testimony identified how there were instances in which Ugandan Asians and Ugandan Africans were cordial in their relations before the expulsion decree. This reaffirmed attachment to Uganda while simultaneously challenging the conception of a divisive race and class based hierarchy. Other interviewees explained how this reality differed amongst Ugandan Asians even within the same family who partly adhered to the colonial sandwich or strongly identified with Uganda as their homeland:

But he [Karim's father] was such a die hard, and I think one of the things that I would say to you, what has even been more painful in my life is to watch my dad suffer uh through the fact that this country really let him down. He invested in this country heart, soul, everything, ok? To the point where, there were other Asians who were sending money, into other countries my dad never did. He came here with \$23 and that's all, there's no sort of...

Shezan: Offshore bank account

Karim: No, there's nothing. You know his own brothers you know had offshore money. He believed in this country and he believed this country would never do this to him. But it did.¹⁰⁹

Karim Nanji's remarks demarcated the intricacies of race relations in Uganda. Although there were some who felt tied directly to the country and consciously integrated into Ugandan society, others remained cautious or reluctant to embrace Uganda. The imperialist structure of divide and rule did hold true to a certain extent, as evidenced by relatives of Karim, however it was by no means a universal opinion amongst all Ugandan Asians. Conversely, other oral testimonies supplement the scholarly views of self-segregation and prejudiced views towards Ugandan Africans. Sikandar Omar's oral history showcased some of the injustices extended to Uganda Africans:

¹⁰⁸ John Nazareth, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, March 21, 2015.

¹⁰⁹ Karim Nanji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 24, 2015.

Some of the things we did there was wrong, we treated them very bad. I've seen people finish eating food and what is leftover they were giving to their houseboys. Everybody did that and everybody is denying it! My brother once told me, he said, 'how can we do this. We make the guy sign for 5 shillings 40 cents and you pay him 3 shillings?' I said, 'that's slavery'. You know what was the answer? If he doesn't want a job, his brother will take it. What an attitude! How did I feel when I was treated in Canada working 8 to 8 and getting paid for 8 hours, don't they realize that? But part of it was, lots of us were exploiting the country.¹¹⁰

Sikandar's testimony provided direct insight into the exploitation of the local population reinforcing criticisms of the Asian community acting as a replacement for the British as brown imperialists. These personal criticisms were reflected amongst other participants who identified prejudiced attitudes towards Ugandan Africans. Considering the various aspects of the initial migration of South Asians to Uganda, their economic dominance within the economy, and the contested reality of the colonial sandwich, the context surrounding Ugandan independence, especially with regards to citizenship, would present Ugandan Asians with an intricate dilemma.

Independence

The issue of Ugandan citizenship arose in October 1962 when section seven of the newly formed constitution declared that, "all persons born in Uganda who were citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies, or British protected persons, should become citizens of Uganda on October 9th, 1962."¹¹¹ Central to the rise of Ugandan independence in 1962 was the question of where to situate the Asian minority. Would Asians who were born in Uganda automatically become Ugandan citizens? Beyond this political question it was also a personal one. What were the expectations of a Ugandan citizen with regards to their loyalty and allegiance? Were they to put their South Asian identity before or after their Ugandan identity? These were tough questions many Ugandan Asians faced during Ugandan independence.¹¹² The majority of Ugandan Asians held passports belonging to the United

¹¹⁰ Anonymous, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Edmonton, August 4, 2015.

¹¹¹ Vishnu D. Sharma, and F. Wooldridge, "Some Legal Questions Arising from the Expulsion of the Ugandan Asians," *The International Comparative Law Quarterly* 23, no. 2 (1974): 398.

¹¹² Meir Amor, "Violent Ethnocentrism: Revisiting the Economic Interpretation of the Expulsion of Ugandan Asians," *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research* 3, no. 1 (2003): 60.

Kingdom due to the previous British Protectorate status of Uganda or India, and Pakistan if they were recent migrants. However, Asians in all of East Africa were caught between the proverbial rock and a hard place.

Those who sided with independence movements were seen as opportunistic and simply taking advantage of independence in order to gain social and economic benefits. On the other hand, those who collaborated with the Europeans were accused of disloyalty and hindering African aspirations for self-government. Regardless of one's position, legal scholars Vishnu Sharma and F. Wooldridge, argue that all Asians were still discriminated against on racial grounds.¹¹³ Nonetheless, it was clear that for the newly independent East African governments discrimination was based on citizenship rather than race as a legitimate means of dealing with the Asian minority.¹¹⁴ To make matters worse for the Asian community on the eve of independence, it was apparent that East African governments would push towards Africanization policies which sought to promote black African national identity and return economic and political control into the hands of black Ugandan citizens.¹¹⁵ J.S. Mangat argued that this move towards Africanization in both the public and private sector, choosing between local East African or their previous citizenship, and the continuous scapegoating of the Asian community created a major dilemma for Asians living in East Africa.¹¹⁶

Additional provisions supplemented within the 1962 constitution outlined four major concepts regarding citizenship. The first was that those who were second and third generation British Asians automatically became Ugandan citizens as they had one parent or grandparent who was born in Uganda. The second addressed that all those born after October 9th, 1962 were considered citizens. Thirdly, individuals were only eligible for citizenship if they were British protected persons or naturalized British citizens. Those who held Indian or Pakistani citizenship were ineligible to apply for Ugandan citizenship. The final element of this legislation required that those who were eligible for citizenship must

¹¹³ Amor, "Violent Ethnocentrism," 61.

¹¹⁴ Forster, Hitchcock, and Lyimo, *Race and Ethnicity in East Africa*, 87.

¹¹⁵ Kushner and Knox, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide*, 267.

¹¹⁶ Mangat, *A History of Asians in East Africa*, 178.

apply within two years.¹¹⁷ The most pertinent feature of the new citizenship regulation was that it required documentation to be received by the Ugandan government within three months of receiving Ugandan citizenship proving that Ugandan Asians had renounced their British citizenship. Those who failed to produce sufficient evidence were not considered legal Ugandan citizens and were subsequently labelled as non-citizens.¹¹⁸

Beyond this additional requirement, U.K. citizenship could not be effectively revoked unless British authorities received proof of a newly acquired passport.¹¹⁹ Although this provision was meant as a means of protecting U.K. citizens abroad it made the acquisition of a valid Ugandan passport far more difficult. It subsequently encouraged Asians to conditionally opt for Ugandan citizenship as they could reacquire U.K. citizenship upon successfully proving that a parent or grandparent was a naturalized British citizen. Ultimately, those who wanted to become Ugandan citizens needed to indicate to Ugandan authorities that they had renounced their British citizenship with three months of receiving a passport while also proving to the United Kingdom that they have received a Ugandan passport within six months. Given the precarious position of the Asian community alongside the legal requirements, there were varying responses to the newly founded constitution.

Asian sub-communities responded differently to the new legislation. Ismaili Muslims were presumed to have overwhelmingly adopted Ugandan citizenship based on the advice they received from their spiritual leader. The Aga Khan IV is the spiritual, social, and political leaders of the Ismaili community akin to the historical ideals of a Muslim caliph or imam.¹²⁰ The Aga Khan advised the Ismaili community in Uganda to acquire Ugandan citizenship during independence in 1962 in order to reduce tensions between the community and local Ugandans.¹²¹ Other sub-communities were placed in a rather difficult position such as the Goans who were predominantly civil servants. Due to their status as employees of the colonial government, it was

¹¹⁷ James S. Reid, "Some Legal Aspects of the Expulsion," in *A Portrait of a Minority: Asians in East Africa*, ed. Dharam P. Ghai and Yash P. Ghai (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1970), 194.

¹¹⁸ Sharma and Wooldridge, "Some Legal Questions Arising from the Expulsion of the Ugandan Asians," 398-399.

¹¹⁹ Reid, "Some Legal Aspects of the Expulsion," 201.

¹²⁰ Jonah Steinberg, *Isma'ili Modern: Globalization and Identity in a Muslim Community*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 10.

¹²¹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume, 990, file 5850-3-650 "Memorandum to the Minister - Meeting with the Aga Khan," September 28 1972, 1.

a clear conflict of interest for them to partake in any formal and public endorsements of Ugandan nationalism.¹²² Additionally, as the more aggressive Africanization policies were implemented throughout Uganda, many business owners opted for attaining citizenship. For example, with the creation of 1969 *Trade Licensing Act*, companies or firms within Uganda would only be considered locally owned if at least fifty per cent of the capital or property was owned by a citizen.¹²³ Pressures mounted upon the business class of the Ugandan Asian community as President Milton Obote and eventually President Idi Amin attempted to solve the issues surrounding the minority community. Reviewing the historical context of both presidents provides the necessary context for understanding the myriad of ways in which each president interacted with the Ugandan Asian community.

By the 1962 election, ethnicity began to play a more pivotal role in Ugandan politics than religion.¹²⁴ The colonial method of divide and conquer left many Ugandans more attuned to local rulers. This effectively usurped the power of the central government as Ugandans continued to pledge allegiance to their previous rulers and local councils.¹²⁵ Although elections became a prominent event in the daily lives of Ugandans, political parties sought to capitalize on existing social cleavages to rally support.¹²⁶ Religious affiliation within the political sphere took a backseat to the social issues primarily after 1962 when Dr. Milton Obote had effectively seized power from Prime Minister Benedicto Kiwanuka.¹²⁷ The emphasis and exploitation of ethnic cleavages reinforced by Uganda's second government, run by Dr. Milton Obote, brought ethnicity to the fore of Ugandan society.

Obote quickly won over the Ugandan population and replaced Uganda's first Prime Minister, Kiwanuka, within the same year of independence. However, Obote was presented

¹²² Margret Frenz, "Transimperial Connections: East African Goan Perspectives on 'Goa 1961,'" *Contemporary South Asia* 22, no. 3 (2014): 243.

¹²³ Reid, "Some Legal Aspects of the Expulsion," 199.

¹²⁴ Benoni Turyanhikayo-Rugyema, "The Development of Mass Nationalism, 1952-1962," in *Uganda: The Dilemma of Nationhood*, ed. G.N. Uzoigwe (New York: NOK Publishers International, 1982), 246.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 253.

¹²⁶ Martin R. Doornbos, "Ugandan Society and Politics: A Background," in *Uganda: The Dilemma of Nationhood*, ed. G.N. Uzoigwe (New York: NOK Publishers International, 1982), 12-13.

¹²⁷ Noel King, Abdu Kasozi, and Arye Oded, *Islam and the Confluence of Religions in Uganda, 1840-1966*, (Tallahassee: American Academy of Religion, 1973), 50.

with a particularly difficult situation. In order to run Uganda as a unitary state, he was forced to collude with Uganda's first constitutional president, Mutesa II. It was essentially a coalition government between the Uganda Peoples Congress (UPC) and the Kabaka Yekka (the people's party of the King/Kabaka of Buganda).¹²⁸ Buganda had maintained its privileged status as a state within a state after Ugandan independence. To make matters worse for Obote the Kabaka of Buganda (Mutesa II) was also Uganda's president. From 1962 to 1966, the first four years of independence, there was a silent struggle for power between Obote and Mutesa II.¹²⁹ The basis of the 'Buganda problem' pertained to their economic dominance; however, Obote would radically change the entire country by suppressing the people of Buganda.

In 1966, Obote provoked Mutesa II into expelling the central government out of Buganda. Subsequently, Obote retaliated by declaring a state of emergency in Buganda and sending the army, along with its military general, Idi Amin, to occupy the state.¹³⁰ The state of emergency lasted until 1971, which gave Obote and the central government the ability to directly control Buganda. In 1967, Obote created a unitary constitution, which abolished the five kingdoms and established the Second Republic of Uganda. He also removed any members of the UPC who were no longer loyal to him. The first Executive President of the Second Republic was, unsurprisingly, Dr. Milton Obote.¹³¹ To further consolidate power, Obote banned all other political parties except for the UPC, killed those who opposed him, nationalized the economy and began to rely heavily on his own tribe the Langi and the closely related Acholi tribes for political and military support.¹³² In an attempt to solve the economic woes of the country, President Obote created the Common Man's Charter on December 19th, 1969 along with the 'Move to the Left' program that promoted the nationalization of various industries.¹³³ The sixty percent socialism program was enshrined in the 1970 Nakivubo Pronouncements, which enabled the government to control at least

¹²⁸ Ofcansky, *Uganda*, 39.

¹²⁹ G.N. Uzoigwe, "Introduction," in *Uganda: The Dilemma of Nationhood*, ed. G.N. Uzoigwe (New York: NOK Publishers International, 1982), xv.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, xvi.

¹³¹ Ofcansky, *Uganda: Tarnished pearl of Africa*, 41.

¹³² Tony Avirgan, and Martha Honey, *War in Uganda: The Legacy of Idi Amin*, (Westport: Lawrence Hill & Company Incorporated, 1982), 4.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 503.

sixty percent of all companies, industries, financial institutions and mining operations.¹³⁴ This was an attempt to return economic control to Ugandan citizens.

President Obote made several attempts to shift the control of the economy into the hands of Ugandans. An example is the *Trade and Licensing Act* of 1969. This act made it obligatory for all non-citizens – mainly the Asians who had opted for British citizenship during Ugandan independence – to acquire a valid license and demonstrate their possession of £4,000 in liquid capital.¹³⁵ This was a direct attack on the small-scale Asian *dukawallahs* who did not possess such a significant amount of stock. The Asian response to the act was to allow levels of essential supplies to deteriorate, causing an immediate rise in pricing. At a higher cost per item, they would then increase marginal profits and deposit their funds abroad. Asians also took advantage of corrupt government officials with bribes, which allowed them to continue to do business without a license. Moreover, Asian businesses hired local Ugandans to act as ‘front men’ so that their shops appeared to be owned by the local population. In some instances, Asians inhibited the aspirations of Ugandans who sought to become urban entrepreneurs. Asian control over real estate in towns made this particularly easy.¹³⁶

During Obote’s rule, the first Ugandan government let the Asians remain in control of the economy despite their sixty percent socialism program. Instead of redistributing wealth towards Ugandan business class and encouraging the development of a black Ugandan commercial class, Obote allowed Europeans and Asians to further penetrate the agricultural and industrial markets.¹³⁷ Obote’s primary motive for promoting non-Ugandan businesses pertained to his preferential treatment of the Langi and Acholi peoples. Obote was against the ‘Africanization’ of the Ugandan economy because it would place the majority of businesses in the hands of the people of Buganda also known as the Baganda. Since the Baganda consisted of the most educated Ugandans and were the best-suited

¹³⁴ A.B.K. Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda, 1964-1985*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994), 90.

¹³⁵ Sathyamurthy, *The Political Development of Uganda*, 533.

¹³⁶ Mittelman, *Ideology and Politics in Uganda*, 159-160.

¹³⁷ Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda, 1964-1985*, 92.

candidates for controlling the economy, Obote refrained from removing the Europeans and Asians from economic control.¹³⁸ The incoming President of Uganda, Major General Idi Amin would seek to rectify the grievances of the people and return the economic control of Uganda back into the hands of Ugandan Africans. It would be under the premises of social exclusion and economic dominance that Amin sought to solve the ‘Asian problem’.

Major-General Idi Amin overthrew Dr. Milton Obote on Monday January 25th, 1971.¹³⁹ Amin announced on Radio Uganda an eighteen-point memorandum justifying his military coup.¹⁴⁰ By the time of Amin’s coup, Obote had effectively limited any Ugandan group from possessing sufficient ethnic and economic unity. His poor economic policies along with his prejudiced recruitment of the Acholi and Langi peoples in the army, civil service, and in the government made it extremely difficult for Ugandans to form an alternative source of power.¹⁴¹ Initially, the coup was welcomed by many, especially by the Baganda who had experienced extreme hardships under the rule of Obote. Asians also favoured Amin as they hoped for a restoration of previous economic conditions. Ugandan Asian refugee Amin Visram recalled the Asian community’s response to the coup: “the Asian community was flabbergasted that things are going to happen now, they are going to be in our favour but I guess for a year it was and then everything went haywire ... that first year when Idi Amin was there I don’t think anybody had any problems.”¹⁴² However, as Julius Nyerere – president of Tanzania from 1964 to 1985 – once said, “if the people of Uganda thought they were in the frying pan during Obote’s time, they knew they were in the fire proper during Amin’s.”¹⁴³

Immediately after the coup, Amin began to gain popular support by righting the many wrongs of former President Obote. He lifted the state of emergency in Buganda, released more than 1,500 political prisoners, and returned the body of Mutesa II from

¹³⁸ Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda, 1964-1985*, 91.

¹³⁹ “Uganda’s New Military Ruler: Idi Amin,” *New York Times*, January 28, 1971, 2.

¹⁴⁰ Amii Omara-Otunnu, *Politics and the Military in Uganda, 1890-1985* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1987), 100.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁴² Amin Visram, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Kitchener, March 2nd 2015.

¹⁴³ Tony and Honey, *War in Uganda*, 4.

London for a proper burial at the Kasubi tombs in Uganda. In addition to appeasing the people of Buganda, Amin also reduced Obote's sixty percent socialism down to forty-nine percent state participation. Idi Amin was able to successfully portray himself as the common Ugandan man unlike Obote, who was British-educated and required a translator wherever he went in Uganda. Amin spoke Bantu languages (Luganda and broken Kiswahili), Sudanic languages (Kakwa, Lugbara, Lendu, Logo, and Madi), as well as Lwo (Alur) and Kinubi. Amin was extremely popular in his first in year office as he was able to relate to many Ugandans both linguistically and culturally. During his first year in power he used to drive his Land Rover to several public events including sports matches and would interact with local Ugandans.¹⁴⁴

The new president of Uganda also exploited the religious wrongdoings of Obote in order to increase popular support. Amin attempted to create an atmosphere in Uganda that reflected complete religious tolerance. For example, Amin established a department of Religious Affairs, united the various Muslim groups to collaborate under the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council, and organized two religious conferences in Kabale and Kampala in 1971 and 1972 respectively. He also encouraged various Protestant branches of Christianity to unite in order to avoid schism in the Church and left the Catholics to their own devices since their institutions were strong. This was a direct political move in order to entice religious authorities to remain politically neutral. He would then gain their allegiance and political support through government sponsored donations. For example, in December of 1971 the government donated 100,000 shillings to the heads of the Muslim, Catholic and Protestant faiths.¹⁴⁵ Amin hoped that with the backing of various religious groups he could manipulate their allegiance to mould public opinion and strengthen his political support.¹⁴⁶ However, Amin would remain similar to Obote with his preferential treatment of the army as well as ethnically based soldier recruitment policies.

Unsurprisingly, Amin favoured his army, as they were responsible for bringing him to power. Much in the same way that Obote favoured his own tribe the Langi along with

¹⁴⁴ Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda, 1964-1985*, 106.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 107-108.

¹⁴⁶ Omara-Otunnu, *Politics and the Military in Uganda, 1890-1985*, 111.

their closest ally the Acholi, Amin favoured his own tribe the Kakwa of West Nile district along with the people from South Sudan and northwest Zaire.¹⁴⁷ In order to protect himself from those who were loyal to Obote, Amin began to systematically ethnically cleanse the Ugandan army of recruits from Lango and Acholi. Two examples of these atrocities include the purposeful explosion of the Makindye Barracks in March 1971, killing thirty Acholi and Langi soldiers and the killing of 150 to 500 Acholi and Langi soldiers from the Simba Battalion in July 1971.¹⁴⁸ Amin attempted to mask his favouritism by promoting a sense of black nationalism throughout Uganda. Against the backdrop of anti-imperial sentiments, Amin made Swahili the official language of the country and sought more fervently than ever to ensure that black Ugandans controlled the economy.¹⁴⁹ Once President Idi Amin had secured his political base he would then set his sights on dealing with ‘Asian problem’ taking cues from other East African countries including Kenya and Tanzania.

The ‘Asian Problem’ in East Africa

The newly independent regions of East Africa individually sought to address the issues surrounding their local minority Asian communities. Kenya and Tanzania provided a precedent for how Idi Amin would contextualize his motivations and action to expel the Asians in Uganda. Additionally, these nationalization programs caused international repercussions as the U.K. fundamentally altered their citizenship requirements due to the actions of Presidents Jomo Kenyatta and Julius Nyerere. Similar to Uganda, both countries strongly utilized the rhetoric of Africanization policies as a means of removing the economic controls of the Asian community. Tanzania, in particular, rallied behind the socialist cause embodied in President Nyerere’s *Arusha Declaration* of February 5th, 1967.¹⁵⁰ The goal of this socialist program was to return the means of production into the hands of Tanzanians and led to the immediate nationalization of several industries within a few days of the declaration including all banks, insurance companies, several import-export organizations, and majority ownership of all industrial companies.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda, 1964-1985*, 104.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 111 and John Darnton, “Idi Amin: A Savior Who Became The Creator of 8 Years of Horror,” *New York Times*, April 30, 1979, A1.

¹⁴⁹ Mittleman, *Ideology and Politics in Uganda*, 245.

¹⁵⁰ W. E. F. Ward and L. W. White, *East Africa: a Century of Change, 1870-1970* (New York: Africana Publishing Corporation, 1972), 268.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

Tanzania opted to avoid the perilous realm of racial politics and firmly established their nationalization program as a socialist measure. Their citizenship practices at the time of independence replicated those of Uganda by providing the Asian community with an opportunity to choose either a local citizenship or reaffirm their British citizenship. This led to approximately 80,000 Asians becoming citizens of Tanzania.¹⁵² However, they did not force those who applied for citizenship to show proof of renunciation, ultimately making it easier for Asians to opt for citizenship. President Nyerere reiterated the importance of the socialist agenda of the government and argued that socialism could not be carried out on a policy of racialism: “like water and oil, they never mix... I am absolutely certain that if we distinguish between the Indians who are exploiters and those who are exploited, and if we resolve to treat the exploited the same way as other workers they will help us to implement our policies of socialism and self-reliance.”¹⁵³ Although it was made evidently clear that nationalization policies were targeted at those who were deemed ‘exploiters’ it inherently affected the entire Asian community. Furthermore, the Tanzanian government granted immigration officials with the ability to expel any non-citizens from the country, leading to the deportation of 300 Asians in 1967.¹⁵⁴ The resulting nationalization program led to large numbers of the Asian community leaving Tanzania but it was not overtly rooted in any overt form of racial discrimination unlike the policy enacted in Kenya.

On December 1st, 1967 a new immigration act in Kenya forced all European and Asian residents who had not become Kenyan citizens to apply for work permits in order to live within the country.¹⁵⁵ Although they could be renewed on an annual basis, non-citizens needed to sufficiently prove that no Kenyan citizen was qualified to carry out the specified mode of labour.¹⁵⁶ This again was not considered to be a racial law as it targeted those who were not Kenyan citizens much in the same way that President Obote’s ‘Move to the Left’ program was only targeted at non-Ugandan citizens. This was a systemic way for the Kenyan government to

¹⁵² Yash P. Ghai, “The Future Prospects,” in *A Portrait of a Minority: Asians in East Africa*, ed. Dharam P. Ghai and Yash P. Ghai (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1970), 187.

¹⁵³ *The Nationalist*, December 10, 1968.

¹⁵⁴ Ghai, “The Future Prospects,” 192.

¹⁵⁵ Ward and White, *East Africa*, 259.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

deal with the ‘Asian problem’ without creating a form of obvious discrimination which Uganda subsequently replicated in their 1969 *Trade Licensing Act*. For Kenya’s resident population of 190,000 Asians, of which only 70,000 had accepted Kenyan citizenship, this led to mass exodus of the Asian community to Britain, India, and Pakistan.¹⁵⁷ Racial tensions were considerably higher in Kenya as opposed to Tanzania. Editorial comments in the Kenyan newspapers articulated the general feelings of animosity towards the Asian community: “one way or the other, Asians in Kenya must be made to modify their unscrupulous trade attitudes at once. We cannot brag about building a harmonious multi-racial state amidst trade turbulence [sic] ... Whatever the future will be, the Asian community has nothing to grumble about; the present trend, whether good or bad, is the harvest of seeds sown by themselves.”¹⁵⁸ The heightened racial tensions in Kenya, revealed the true sentiments surrounding the newly created nationalization policies. Both major forms of legislation implemented in Kenya and Tanzania consequently had adverse effects on the ability of Commonwealth citizens to freely immigrate to Britain.

Due to the large influx of Commonwealth immigrants, by the end of February 1968, the British government had made a significant amendment to their most recently established *Commonwealth Immigration Act* of 1962.¹⁵⁹ The updated legislation prevented immigrants whose parents and grandparents were not naturalized British citizens from migrating to the U.K., ironically mirroring the same amendments made to Ugandan citizenship in 1964.¹⁶⁰ Numbers of migrants from East Africa increased dramatically in the early months of 1968 as residents from all three major East African countries dealt with their respective Asian populations by implementing socialist or Africanization policies. Typically, Britain received 3,000 East African immigrants per year but was faced with an influx of 6,000 within the first two months of 1968.¹⁶¹ Nativist sentiments in Britain were considerably high as decolonization led to increasing numbers of migrants arriving in the U.K. Furthermore, politicians openly expressed unapologetically racist sentiments such as conservative members of parliament Sir Cyril Osborne and Enoch Powell. Osborne attacked those who supported increased levels of Commonwealth

¹⁵⁷ Ward and White, *East Africa*, 259; Nanjira, *The Status of Aliens in East Africa*, 163.

¹⁵⁸ *Daily Nation*, February 13, 1967.

¹⁵⁹ Joanna Herbert, “The British Ugandan Asian Diaspora: Multiple and Contested Belongings,” *Global Networks* 12, no. 3 (2012): 16.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ Ghai, “Future Prospects,” 194.

migration in a 1964 newspaper and argued that “those who oppose the slogan ‘Keep Britain White’ should answer the question, do they want to turn it black? If unlimited immigration were allowed, we should ultimately become a chocolate-coloured, Afro-Asian mixed society. That I do not want.”¹⁶² The position of the British in conjunction with the policies enacted in other areas of East Africa would serve as potential methods to be used when dealing with the Asian minority population in the region. However, President Idi Amin of Uganda found his own way to deal with the ‘Asian problem’ that was far more discriminatory.

The first signs of Amin’s expulsion decree came in October of his second year as president of Uganda. Amin ordered a verification of the official census data on the Asian community in October 1971.¹⁶³ According to the 1969 census figures there were 74,308 Asians in the country, of whom 25,657 were citizens and 48,651 were non-citizens.¹⁶⁴ From that point onwards, all Ugandan Asians were required to carry census receipts with them at all times. Those who did not present themselves forfeited their rights to live in Uganda in what was referred to by Ugandan Asian historian Hasu H. Patel as the ‘cattle count’.¹⁶⁵ No official numbers were ever released after the verification, and the Ugandan government continued to operate using the 1969 census numbers.¹⁶⁶ There was some early indication during the verification of census data that drastic measures would be taken towards the Asian community. According local media outlets, this process would clearly demarcate “who is a citizen and who is not,” and “the declared Asian citizen of Uganda might have to start taking a hard look at the practical aspects of what is really meant by being integrated into the greater population.”¹⁶⁷ Towards the end of Amin’s first year in power he began to curtail the effects of an Asian dominated market.

¹⁶² *Spectator*, December 4, 1964 quoted in Kevin C. Wilson, “And Stay Out! The Dangers of Using Anti-Immigrant Sentiment as a Basis for Social Policy: America Should Take Heed of Disturbing Lessons from Great Britain’s Past,” *Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law* 24, no. 3 (1995): 570.

¹⁶³ Mittelman, *Ideology and Politics in Uganda*, 228.

¹⁶⁴ 1971 Statistical Abstract (Entebbe: Government Printer, 1971) in Mittelman, *Ideology and Politics in Uganda*, 228.

¹⁶⁵ Hasu H. Patel, “General Amin and the Indian Exodus from Uganda,” *Issue: A Journal of Opinion* 2, no. 4 (1972): 12.

¹⁶⁶ Mike Bristow, Bert N. Adam and Cecil Pereira, “Ugandan Asians in Britain, Canada, and India: Some Characteristics and Resources” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 4, no. 2 (1975): 155.

¹⁶⁷ Epenu, “On the Eve of Census Day, A Look at Uganda’s Asian Population,” October 1971.

On December 7th, 1971 President Amin called for a meeting of the leaders of the Asian community, known as the India Conference, to articulate his government's grievances towards the Ugandan Asian community.¹⁶⁸ There were three distinct issues that Amin brought to the fore that underscored his major claims of economic sabotage and social exclusion amongst the Ugandan Asian community. First, he criticized Ugandan Asians who attained a professional degree with state funds but chose to work outside of the public service.¹⁶⁹ Citing several statistical reports, Amin argued that of the 417 Ugandan Asian engineers who received state scholarships between 1962 and 1968, only twenty currently worked for the government.¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, during the same period 217 Ugandan Asian doctors and ninety-six Ugandan Asian lawyers received similar funding and only fifteen and eighteen were working for the government respectively.¹⁷¹ His speech deplored this exploitation of state offered benefits and amplified the disloyalty of the Asian community. This tied in with the specific critiques of the "commercial and tax malpractices of the Asian traders and businessmen."¹⁷² Amin's language presented in the speech clearly articulated the openly chastising tone of the military general and president towards the business practices of the Ugandan Asians:

We are, for instance, aware of the fact that some Asians are the most notorious people in the abuse of our exchange and control regulations. Some of you are known to export goods and not to bring the foreign exchange back into Uganda. On the other hand, some of you are known to undervalue exports and overvalue imports in order to keep the difference in values in your overseas accounts. Another malpractice for which many of you are notorious is that of smuggling commodities like sugar, maize, hoes etc. from Uganda to the neighbouring territories.¹⁷³

Amin remained steadfast on his accusations of Ugandan Asians hoarding not only goods and products but also profits in international markets or banks. For Amin and the Ugandan

¹⁶⁸ Sathyamurthy, *The Political Development of Uganda*, 618.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Idi Amin, "Speech at Meeting of Asian Leaders in Uganda," in *Case Studies on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms: A World Survey*, vol. 4, Willem Adriaan Veenhoven and Winifred Crum Ewing, eds., (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1975), 297.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Sathyamurthy, *The Political Development of Uganda*, 619.

¹⁷³ Amin, "Speech at Meeting of Asian Leaders in Uganda," 299.

government these actions clearly embodied the disloyalty of Ugandan Asians who have “no interest in this country beyond the aim of making as much of a profit as possible and at all costs.” His reprimands were not empty threats as Amin promised that “if any businessman is found smuggling or hoarding goods in this country, such businessman should not expect any mercy and he will permanently lose his trading license whether he is a citizen of this country or not.” A crucial element within this portion of his speech is the reference to loose principles of citizenship.

Amin’s government was not afraid to remove any individual’s trading license regardless of their status. He extended his theme of malpractice to include a charge of nepotism amongst Asian business owners and how when prompted by officials to employ Ugandan Africans in higher positions they were considered “mere window-dressing, and that those Africans whom you have employed, although they earn fat salaries, know next to nothing as far as the secrets of your enterprises are concerned.”¹⁷⁴ Amin argued that this demonstrated the failure of Ugandan Asians to trust their fellow Ugandans as they lacked any real authority or ability to conduct any form of business. To add to Amin’s rebuke of the Ugandan Asian community, he also attacked their failure to integrate socially with Ugandan Africans primarily in terms of a reluctance to intermarry.

Although there were some instances of intermarriage, there still remained a unwillingness towards it.¹⁷⁵ As Gardner Thompson argues “Ismaili girls reacted in horror at the suggestion for accelerated intermarriage made at the Asian Conference convened by President Amin in December 1971 – while for the community, not only racial but religious integrity would be have been lost.”¹⁷⁶ Amin extolled the community for it has “continued to live in a world of its own; for example, African males have hardly been able to marry Asian females. The facts reveal that there are only six. And even then, all the six married these women when they were abroad, and not here in Uganda.”¹⁷⁷ It is clear that Amin focused specifically on the ideals of intermarriage as a direct measure of good faith amongst the Ugandan Asian

¹⁷⁴ Amin, “Speech at Meeting of Asian Leaders in Uganda,” 299-301.

¹⁷⁵ Thompson, “The Ismailis in Uganda,” 45.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid

¹⁷⁷ Amin, “Speech at Meeting of Asian Leaders in Uganda,” 298.

community. Amin emphatically placed the blame on the Asian community for this failure, along with their economic malpractices, which embodied how it “is you yourselves, through your refusal to integrate with Africans in this country, who have created this feeling towards you by the Africans.”¹⁷⁸ This would also lead Amin to discuss citizenship as the final barrier to integration. His primary motive was to address the concerns over the outstanding applications that were submitted under Obote’s government.

He articulated clearly in his speech that anyone who obtained citizenship before the coup under lawful measures could rest assured that their passports would be recognized. However, he did make specific reference to those who may have forged documents, or have obtained them through illegal measures. This would again outline the precarious status of citizenship as it was within the purview of government officials to arbitrarily decide whether any form of documentation was acquired legitimately. The president took this opportunity to lament those within the Ugandan Asian community who did not opt for citizenship and argued that “my Government is disturbed because it is clear that many of you have not shown sufficient faith in Uganda citizenship... Therefore I will remind you that, if there is any blame which you might later on wish to bring against my Government about your citizenship, the persons responsible for any confusion were yourselves.”¹⁷⁹ Again, the blame was placed on the Ugandan Asian community who were deemed responsible for the negative stereotypes held against them amongst fellow Ugandans. At no point in Idi Amin’s speech did he mention the impacts of the colonial government’s favouritism towards the Ugandan Asian community as a source of tarnished relations between both communities. Furthermore, the Ugandan Asian leaders in attendance at the meeting responded openly to Amin’s grievances.

The Indian Conference had three major outcomes for the Ugandan Asian community. First, it was evident that this was going to be a racialized issue of black Ugandans making a claim for the Africanization of the Ugandan economy. Second, there was no differentiation between citizen and non-citizen Ugandan Asians, identifying for the first time that formal citizenship in Uganda was a loose concept. Lastly, the conference unintentionally united all

¹⁷⁸ Amin, “Speech at Meeting of Asian Leaders in Uganda,” 298.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 302.

Ugandan Asians regardless of their citizenship status, social position, ethnicity, or religious background. Ugandan Asians did not stand idly by as Amin criticized the community and fueled animosity towards them. During the conference, they appealed to the government that Amin's regime was spreading "false, malicious, and inflammatory and racial propaganda levelled against the Asians in the new media."¹⁸⁰ The same memorandum also justified their opposition to intermarriage stating that "opposition to inter-caste, inter-tribal, inter-communal, and inter-racial marriage is a familiar phenomenon to be encountered in any society in any country in the world."¹⁸¹

Furthermore, the Ugandan Asian community responded to the claims of economic sabotage as being illegitimate. They argued that the 1969 *Trade Licensing Act* and the *Immigration Act* worked in favour of Ugandan Africans and created a near virtual monopoly "for black Ugandans in cotton, coffee and tea processing, and marketing industries."¹⁸² Scholars argued that Amin's charges of economic sabotage were a self-fulfilling prophecy as the community only opted to begin sending money abroad when they feared the loss of their economic position based on Obote's sixty per cent socialist program and Amin's subsequent tightening of Asian commercial practices.¹⁸³ As pressure mounted against the Ugandan Asian community, they sought to protect themselves by transferring their wealth abroad. However, only a few select members of the elite Ugandan Asian community possessed the means and ability to invest or save money abroad.¹⁸⁴ Ultimately, the meeting of leaders within the Ugandan Asian community foreshadowed the eventual expulsion decree as Amin laid the foundations for his accusations and ignored the responses presented by the leaders of the Asian community in Uganda.

A host of factors contributed to the historical context surrounding the expulsion decree in 1972. The deep historical roots of the Asian community were not acknowledged in any way, shape, or form by the newly independent government in Uganda. They had made significant

¹⁸⁰ Patel, "General Amin and the Indian Exodus from Uganda," 13.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid., 14.

¹⁸³ Melady and Melady, *Uganda*, 74-75; and Van Hear, *New Diasporas*, 72.

¹⁸⁴ Melady and Melady, *Uganda*, 75.

contributions leading to the development of several regions of Uganda from urban centres to various rural areas. The three major groups of immigrants diversified their forms of employment ranging from early indentured labour, civil service workers, and shopkeepers to eventually entering the secondary professions and expanding their industrial enterprises. Most importantly, Ugandan Asians were unable to escape the racial stereotypes initiated by the colonial government and as some scholars argued was self-imposed. The social exclusivity and privileged economic position perpetuated by the race-class hierarchy, instigated by the imperialists, held devastating consequences for the Ugandan Asian community.

As mentioned throughout this chapter, there are many instances where Ugandan Asians attempted to counter the rigid race and class structures within society. Through political initiatives, philanthropy, personal relations, literature produced by Ugandan Asian authors, and attachments to Uganda, many Asians did not fit within the mould of stereotypical 'brown colonialists'. Oral histories with Ugandan Asian refugees complicated the realities of Ugandan society throughout the twentieth century. On the one hand, there were some instances where the Asian community adhered to the charges of economic sabotage and a failure to integrate socially with black Ugandans. On the other hand, there were direct examples which counteracted these principles as Ugandan Asians invested their livelihoods and were 'die hard' citizens of Uganda.

During independence attaining Ugandan citizenship became entrenched in an intricate process which left many Ugandan Asians in a difficult position. Their attempts to become citizens were also fraught with speculation from the Ugandan African position as they were categorized as colonial collaborators or those solely wishing to take advantage of the benefits of citizenship. Furthermore, the requirements of becoming a citizen were convoluted. Proof of revoking British citizenship was required by the Ugandan government. The effective renunciation of a British passport was only considered legitimate after proof of Ugandan citizenship was presented to the British government. During the push for emancipation from colonial rule throughout East Africa, each of the newly independent countries sought their own solutions to the 'Asian problem'. Tanzania embraced socialism similar to Obote's 'Move to the Left' campaign which vigorously nationalized several industries. Kenya would opt for nationalization but under the guise of Africanization as a means of restoring control of the

economy into the hands of black Kenyans. Initially, Uganda would combine these methodologies until Idi Amin staged a military coup and opted for his own solution.

Upon carrying out an updated census report on Asians living in Uganda and deploring the Asian community for their exploitation of Ugandan Africans and social exclusivity, Amin issued a decree that fundamentally altered Ugandan society. The solution was announced on August 4th, 1972 when President and Military General of Uganda, Idi Amin declared that Uganda had no place “for the over 80,000 Asians holding British passports who were sabotaging Uganda’s economy and encouraging corruption.”¹⁸⁵ The President ordered every person of South Asian descent to leave the country within ninety days. To further justify his decision, Amin claimed that it was divine intervention which prompted him to expel the Asians: “I ... had a dream that the Asian problem was becoming extremely explosive and that God was directing me to act immediately to save the situation.”¹⁸⁶ The solution to the ‘Asian problem’ in Uganda came through the apparent prophetic words of President Idi Amin that subsequently created an international humanitarian crisis.

¹⁸⁵ “The Future of the Asians in Uganda,” *Uganda Argus*, August 5, 1972, 1.

¹⁸⁶ Mittelman, *Ideology and Politics in Uganda*, 229.

Chapter 2:

Dreams and Reality: Amin's Expulsion Decree and Canada's Response

When the expulsion was announced in August of that year – the same year '72 – I think that everybody laughed because you know, they thought this is a joke. How can you expel your own citizens?... So anyways we thought, this is nonsense.

Errol Francis, 2015¹

None of us took it seriously at all. We thought this is a joke, how can you throw away eighty thousand plus Asians who had been second or third generation Africans? They have no connection with India, no connection with any other country. So nobody took it seriously. We ourselves were completely mocking it, Idi [Amin] is crazy.

Jalal Jaffer, 2015²

The expulsion of Ugandan Asians by President Idi Amin sent shock waves throughout the international community. It was imperative for the Ugandan government to establish a legal framework to enforce the decree and limit the ability of expellees to export their assets out of the country. Legislation was built upon prejudices and stereotypes that categorized Ugandan Asians as 'brown colonialists' as outlined in the previous chapter. Propaganda from the Ugandan government reinforced the president's accusations of economic sabotage and social exclusion amongst Ugandan Asians. The Ugandan government's rhetoric in 1972 identified that those who were considered to be 'true' Ugandans were the president's black brothers and sisters.³ The subsequent international responses from numerous global leaders adhered to the geopolitical historical context of decolonization and Cold War rhetoric. Political leaders largely condemned the expulsion decree as racially motivated while others argued that the colonial race and class hierarchy was the root cause of the expulsion decree. At the local level, indigenous Ugandans both applauded the decree and the Ugandanization of the economy or despised the president's decision and defended Ugandan Asians. Expellees initially dismissed the declaration as a crude joke and were reluctant to leave their homes.

¹ Errol and Delphine Francis, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, April 17, 2015.

² Jalal Jaffer, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 7, 2015.

³ Meir Amor, "Violent Ethnocentrism: Revisiting the Economic Interpretation of the Expulsion of Ugandan Asians," *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research* 3, no. 1 (2003): 62.

Canada's response to resettle Ugandan Asians was motivated by a multitude of domestic and global considerations including appeasing both Britain and the Aga Khan, adherence to international commitments towards the United Nations, a shift in resettlement discourse through humanitarian policies and international liberalism, and the opportunity to resettle a large group of highly educated, business savvy, and entrepreneurial individuals. This chapter explores the legal framework surrounding the expulsion decree as a means of discerning the historical moment when the identities of Ugandan Asians were challenged by the Ugandan government. The impending international crisis led several global leaders to denounce the decree but did not encourage their respective governments to provide asylum for Ugandan Asians.

With increased racial tensions within the U.K., the British government called upon Canada and other Commonwealth countries for aid. This section of the dissertation engages with internal debates surrounding the Canadian government's motivations to admit particular groups of refugees prior to the creation of formal refugee policy. Understanding Canada's decision to admit Ugandan Asians highlights the multifaceted elements of refugee resettlement and identifies how the government balanced competing issues of humanitarianism and opportunism. The Canadian government was aware of the highly skilled, well educated, and enterprising characteristics of the Ugandan Asian community but was also cognizant of their plight considering President Amin's expulsion decree. Although refugees were resettled after the recent announcement of multiculturalism policy in 1971 by Prime Minister Trudeau, it was not used as a means to justify Canada's decision to admit Ugandan Asians. President Amin's declaration in early August 1972 set in motion a series of events that fundamentally reshaped the history of Canadian refugee resettlement. The expulsion decree ultimately ushered in the largest resettlement of non-European and predominantly non-Christian refugees before the official creation of refugee policy in Canada.

The Expulsion Decree

President and Major General of Uganda, Idi Amin, asserted that it was British passport holders who were responsible for the social, economic, and political issues in Uganda. From the original announcement on August 4th, 1972 the Ugandan government specified that only those who were non-citizens would be forced to leave the country. It is also imperative to note that this was not the president's first major expulsion order. Before the decree was announced regarding the Ugandan Asians, President Idi Amin had previously expelled all Israelis from Uganda on March 30th 1972. While in Libya, in early 1972, President Amin and Colonel Gaddafi signed an official document supporting the Palestinian claim to return to their former lands and homes. Although Israel and Uganda shared good political relations, especially in terms of close ties between both armies since 1964, President Amin alleged that the Israeli government was planning against him. Initially, he ordered for the Israeli military training personnel to be removed and then subsequently all 700 Israelis were expelled. This would serve as the only possible precursor to the expulsion of the Ugandan Asians. Both groups were clearly discriminated against but the motivations behind the removal of the Israelis and the significantly smaller numbers of those affected by the order does not appear to foreshadow the Ugandan Asian expulsion decree.⁴ The expulsion decree officially became effective as of August 9th, 1972 marking the deadline for the departure of all Ugandan Asians to be midnight on November 8th, 1972.⁵ There was significant ambiguity regarding the realities of being a Ugandan citizen which left Ugandan Asians in a state of disarray. On the eve of Ugandan independence in 1962, a multifarious approach to obtaining Ugandan citizenship was created, leaving many Ugandan Asians in a state of confusion regarding their citizenship status. These circumstances along with changes in British immigration policies led to one in twenty-five Ugandan Asians migrating to Britain between 1962 and 1969.⁶ Those affected by the decree would have ninety days to leave the country or else they would be "sitting on fire."⁷

⁴ For more on the expulsion of Israelis see: Charles Harrison, "Uganda: The Expulsion of the Asians, in *Case Studies on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms: A World Survey*," vol. 4, Willem Adriaan Veenhoven and Winifred Crum Ewing, eds., (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1975).

⁵ James S. Reid, "Some Legal Aspects of the Expulsion" in *Expulsion of a Minority: Essays on Ugandan Asians*, ed. Michael Twaddle (London: Athlone Press 1975), 201; Willy Mukasa, "Some will Stay Some will Go," *Uganda Argus*, August 10, 1972, 1.

⁶ Tony Kushner and Katharine Knox, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide: Global, National, and Local Perspectives during the Twentieth Century* (New York: Frank Cass, 1999), 267.

⁷ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 990, file 5850-3-650, "Uganda: Expulsion of Asians," August 10, 1972.

On August 9th, 1972 the government of Uganda amended the *Immigration Act* of 1969 and canceled every entry permit and certificate of residency issued under the Act for “any person who is of Asian origin, extraction or descent and who is a subject or citizen” of India, Pakistan, or Bangladesh.⁸ This was later amended on October 25th, 1972 in order to account for those who were stateless since their citizenship was revoked and added the following provision to cancel all entry permits of “any other person who is of Indian, Pakistani or Bangladesh *origin, extraction or descent* [my emphasis].”⁹ The feature of making specific amendments to limit the rights of Ugandan Asians became commonplace throughout the ninety-day expulsion period. This became increasingly evident through both the numerous exemptions extended to specified individuals and restrictions put in place regarding limitations on what Ugandan Asians could possess when leaving the country.

To further complicate the eligibility of remaining a legal Ugandan, the number of 80,000 Asians who apparently held British passports was incorrect. Thousands of Ugandan Asians emigrated from Uganda prior to the expulsion decree, distorting the 1969 census data which placed the number of non-citizen Ugandan Asians in the country at roughly 74,000.¹⁰ As argued by several scholars, the anti-Asian measures put in place by the former president Milton Obote led to more than 24,000 Asians leaving the country between 1969 and 1971.¹¹ According to a community based Goan magazine, twenty percent of the Goan community had already left Uganda by 1970.¹² Examples of previous migration are also articulated among oral history participants. For example, Nimira Charania outlined how some Asian families migrated to India especially if they held assets outside of the country under Obote’s presidency: “So a lot of these Hindus from our little village, eight families out of fourteen families, when eight [Ugandan Asian families] leave you know, haha. So eight families had to leave because they didn’t, because they couldn’t hold dual citizenship so they wanted their Indian or Pakistani rights so they couldn’t

⁸ Reid, “Some Legal Aspects of the Expulsion,” 201.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Nicholas Van Hear, *New Diasporas: The Mass Exodus, Dispersal and Regrouping of Migrant Communities* (London: University Colleges London Press Limited, 1998), 71.

¹¹ Ibid; Kushner and Knox, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide*, 267.

¹² John Carnerio, “History of the KGI: Founding to Today,” *Kampala Goan Institute 100th Anniversary*, June 2010, 15.

give those up to adopt the Ugandan ones.”¹³ Although Amin had ordered his officials to confirm the exact number of Ugandan Asians in the country in 1971, these numbers were never formally registered. According to Nicholas Van Hear, there were 36,000 Ugandan Asians who held British passports, 9,000 with Indian citizenship, 250 with Pakistani passports, and 1,750 Kenyan citizens. The remaining 26,650 Ugandan Asians were Ugandan citizens; however, this included 12,000 individuals who were still waiting to have their applications for citizenship to be confirmed at the time of the expulsion order.¹⁴ Idi Amin’s initial order excluded those Asians who were Ugandan citizens but this would be reversed on August 21st, 1972 when the president declared that he had “decided that even Asians who hold Uganda citizenship will have to leave the country.”¹⁵ This created an international crisis as those who were stateless did not fall under the responsibility of any national government. By revoking the citizenship of Ugandan citizens the Ugandan government initiated a humanitarian crisis which forced the international community to address the plight of Ugandan Asians.

With the expulsion decree coming into full affect as of August 9th, 1972 the Ugandan government realized that it may be forcing Asians who were crucial to the public service and professions to leave the country. This would leave significant gaps in the fields of education, medicine, and civil service. Thus, Idi Amin signed a new statutory law exempting specific categories of Asians from the decree including “all employees of government and governmental bodies, teachers, lawyers, doctors, dentists, technical experts in industry, agriculture and commerce and certain other specialized categories.”¹⁶ He subsequently granted his Minister of Internal Affairs with the ability to extend exemptions to any individual who the department deemed to be of vital important to Ugandan society.¹⁷ Although the President Amin made this initial announcement regarding exemptions on the same day that the decree came into effect, his announcement on August 21st, 1972 outlined that “I have taken a decision that there is to be no exemption of professional, technicians, etc, as was earlier announced.”¹⁸ This continued to raise

¹³ Nimira Charania, interviewed by S. Muhammedi Ottawa, August 6, 2014.

¹⁴ Van Hear, *New Diasporas*, 65.

¹⁵ “All Asians Must Go,” *Uganda Argus*, August 21, 1972, 1.

¹⁶ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 990, file 5850-3-650, “Uganda: Asian Expulsion,” August 8, 1972, 1.

¹⁷ Reid, “Some Legal Aspects of the Expulsion,” 202.

¹⁸ “All Asians Must Go,” *Uganda Argus*, August 21, 1972, 1.

confusion amongst the Ugandan Asian community who were continuously worried about their precarious citizenship status. Furthermore, this marked a decisive moment for the community as it became clear that no one would be eligible to stay. A front page headline exclaiming that “All Asians Must Go” was even more clear.¹⁹

To add to the confusion surrounding citizenship, on August 23rd, 1972 Uganda’s representative to the United Nations, Elidad K. Wapenyi, assured the General Assembly that all citizens of Uganda would be permitted to stay: “regardless of color [sic], provided their papers were not forged.”²⁰ Moreover, President Amin informed the Sudanese Foreign Minister, Dr. Manseur Khalid, that “Asians who are Ugandan citizens will not be required to leave the country,” but he will “carefully check the citizenship of those claiming to be Ugandan Asians.”²¹ Not only was it unclear as to who would be able to remain in Uganda, it was also extremely difficult to prove that one possessed valid documentation. Ugandan Asians were required to produce original copies of birth certificates, which was particularly difficult for the elderly since an official birth registry program in Uganda was not created until 1930, and photocopies were deemed to be forged or invalid for proving citizenship.²² The Ugandan government also required all Ugandan Asians to verify their citizenship by September 10th, 1972 or else “automatically lose their claims for Uganda citizenship and will henceforth be regarded as non-citizens of Uganda.”²³ This arbitrary process of verifying citizenship is articulated by Mr. Patel, a Ugandan Asian who had applied for citizenship after Ugandan independence, whose letter explained how he was “registered as a citizen of Uganda on the 7th day of January, 1963, I was informed by you only on the 1st day of October, 1963, to renounce my British nationality within three months.”²⁴ Thus he did not meet the required deadline of renouncing his U.K. citizenship within three months of applying for Ugandan citizenship on January 7th, 1963. His subsequent appeals to the

¹⁹ “All Asians Must Go,” *Uganda Argus*, August 21, 1972, 1.

²⁰ K.C. Kotecha, “The Short Changed: Uganda Citizenship Laws and How They Were Applied to Its Asian Minority,” *International Lawyer* 8, no. 1 (1975): 3.

²¹ “There Will be a Careful Check on Citizenship the President Says these Asians can Stay,” *Uganda Argus*, August 23, 1972, 1.

²² Kotecha, “The Short Changed,” 5.

²³ “Naburri on Why Asians Must Go,” *Uganda Argus* August 15, 1972, 1.

²⁴ Kotecha, “The Short Changed,” 10.

minister and President Amin, were of no avail and he was expelled from Uganda as a non-citizen in November of 1972.²⁵

John Nazareth described another common tactic used by government officials at this time:

So here I'm verifying and all I had was this photocopy. And the guy was telling me that we can only take the original and ... I said I can't find it. He says, 'ok, I'm gonna rip this'. I said, 'no no give me some time'. So from the corner of my eye I notice that one of the guys verifying citizenship was one of my old school friends from Kisube. So I immediately went to him, I left this guy and went to him, his name was Katabola. And he says, 'hey Nazareth how are things?' And he pulls the things and stamp stamp and I was through.²⁶

John was an exception to all those who were interviewed as he was able to circumvent the arbitrary verification process since an old classmate was responsible for authenticating citizenship documents. This haphazard procedure was also confirmed in testimonials from newspaper articles in 1972. The London *Times Newspaper* journalist, Phillip Short, noted how Ugandan Asians expressed to him that "immigration officers refused to accept duplicates of their renunciation certificates, even though they bore the official Home Office seal and were certified as authentic copies. Under President Amin's directive, no duplicates or photostats were admissible because of the danger of forgery."²⁷ Although Ugandan Asians made clear attempts to provide valid proof of their citizenship status it was often rejected under false pretenses. Many of those interviewed expressed how the verification process was haphazard as their documents were destroyed, confiscated, or were considered forgeries.

The arbitrary method of verifying one's citizenship was articulated by many of the oral history participants. This provides insight beyond existing scholarship, which does not engage with the question of how many Ugandan Asians either believed they were citizens (in the case of Mr. Patel) or how those who were legally considered Ugandans were stripped of their citizenship. For example, Edmond Rodriguez recalled how his file was 'misplaced':

²⁵ Kotecha, "The Short Changed," 10.

²⁶ John Nazareth, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, March 21, 2015.

²⁷ Phillip Short, "Plight of the 23,000 Ugandans Made Stateless," *Times Newspapers*, August 20, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 26.

so when I got there and I gave my things in, they told me they couldn't find my file. I said, 'What?' And I know I did it legally, I could imagine if I didn't there would be nothing there, it would just be somebody issuing a passport, but mine was all legal. I had given my papers and everything, they said that that room had caught fire [laughter] the cabinet or something, you know? So they made me stateless.²⁸

For others, their passports were disposed of or seized as in the cases of Amin Visram and Vasant Lakhani. For Amin and his family, the immigration officer turned them down and "said, 'give me your passports,' and while we were watching him he threw them in the garbage. At that moment we walked out of the immigration office and we asked what do we do next?"²⁹ Vasant's passport was confiscated as he recalled when he "went for verification and the officer said, 'Well you are not a citizen.' So I took out my birth certificate or my passport... I said, 'Here is my passport'. He said, 'You are not a citizen'. So now he took my passport and chucked it with the others so I became stateless."³⁰ Oral testimonies distinguished the various excuses that were made by Ugandan officials regarding the 'misplacement' of files or how documents were simply thrown in the trash. These methods were used as a principle means of robbing Ugandan Asians of their citizenship status and reinforced racial prejudice imposed by government officials. As argued by Meir Amor, the expulsion decree embodied the institutionalized public robbery of Ugandan Asians and the extent in which anti-Asian policies were applied demonstrated the overall acceptance of these measures within Ugandan society.³¹ Numerous legislative acts were put in place to limit the rights of Ugandan Asians who were forced to leave the country including the loss of property, approved tax clearances, and restrictions on the amount of money each individual could possess when leaving Uganda.

Reinforcing Perceptions of 'Brown Colonialists'

Within a week of the initial announcement of the expulsion decree, President Amin and the Ugandan government launched a coordinated effort to publicly antagonize the Ugandan Asian community. One of the first measures put in place encouraged government officials to begin

²⁸ Edmond and Maria Rodriguez, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 11, 2015.

²⁹ Amin and Farida Sunderji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, June 22, 2015.

³⁰ Vasant and Sudra Lakhani, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 13, 2015.

³¹ Amor, "Violent Ethnocentrism, 64.

selling shops that were owned by those who had been expelled.³² Amin argued that “our weakness in Africa is that we consider that the imperialists must continue to teach us, forgetting that they will never tell you that you are able to run your own affairs.”³³ President Amin’s rhetoric reflected the notions of an economic war being waged in Uganda. Ordering the expulsion of Ugandan Asians was a central component of Amin’s ‘Ugandanization’ program which aimed to restore the control of Uganda’s economy into the hands of those who he considered to be Ugandans. For Amin, a Ugandan citizen was a black African. It was not a white European or a brown Asian. Amin made this evidently clear when he responded to rumours that he would extend the expulsion deadline: “I want the whole country completely black.”³⁴ He reinforced his desire for a nation of black Ugandans by referring to black citizens as “his brothers and sisters.”³⁵ Amin used the ideal of an economic war as a guise for the racial underpinnings of the expulsion decree. The president capitalized on and reinforced the ideology that Ugandan Asians continuously manipulated the local market and kept large sums of money abroad in offshore bank accounts.

The notion that Ugandan Asians held foreign reserves of capital justified both the relatively short timeline of the expulsion decree as well as the major restrictions on what expellees could possess when departing from Uganda. All Ugandan Asians were required to obtain a tax clearance form to be presented at the airport before they were allowed to board any aircraft.³⁶ This served as an important mechanism for ensuring that no debts were owed to the Ugandan government in addition to confirming which assets could now be seized by the government. Subsequently, properties and businesses were acquired by the Ugandan government through this process. On October 4th, 1972 President Amin signed *The Declaration of Assets (Non-Citizen Asians) Decree* to legislate the process of restricting Ugandan Asians from taking assets out of the country.³⁷ This decree prohibited any departing Asian from mortgaging or transferring “any immovable property, bus company, farm, including livestock, or business to any other person,”

³² “All Shops Owned by Aliens to be Sold,” *Uganda Argus*, August 12, 1972, 1.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ “Amin Plans Check of Asians Left in Uganda,” *Toronto Star*, August 31, 1972, 3.

³⁵ Amor, “Violent Ethnocentrism,” 62.

³⁶ Roger St. Vincent, *Seven Crested Cranes: Asian Exodus from Uganda: The Role of Canada’s Mission to Kampala*, (Canadian Immigration and Historical Society, 1993), 28.

³⁷ “The Declaration of Assets (Non-Citizen Asians) Decree, 1972” in Jean-Marie Henckaerts, *Mass Expulsion in Modern International Law and Practice* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1995), 216.

and for those who owned a company they were prohibited from “issuing new shares; changing the salaries or terms of employment of staff including terminal benefits; or appoint new directors or in any way vary the conditions, terms of service or remuneration payable to directors.”³⁸ Those who violated the decree would face a fine of up to 50,000 shillings, and a maximum sentence of two years in jail.³⁹

This newly created piece of legislation was to be applied retroactively dating to the official start date of the expulsion order. This served as the principle means of collecting information on all of the assets within the Ugandan Asian community which would subsequently come under the ownership of the Ugandan government to be redistributed amongst Ugandan Africans. The clearance forms were also used as a tool to prompt Ugandan Asians to leave Uganda quickly once they had received a visa for another country. Members of the Ugandan Security Forces were advised by the government that all those who had attained clearance from the Bank of Uganda could not remain in the country for longer than forty-eight hours.⁴⁰ The Ugandan government was unhappy with the relatively slow pace in which the Asian community was quitting the country and argued that it held the institutional capacity to “clear at least 1,500 outgoing Asians per day...only a few of these people are coming forward for clearance.”⁴¹ Pressure on the community was continuously exerted by Amin’s regime through various legislative decrees and was extended to include exactly what items each Ugandan Asian family could possess when boarding their respective flights out of Uganda.

Ugandan Asians were restricted to twenty kilograms of personal luggage and 50 British pounds worth of foreign currency or roughly 143 Canadian dollars per head of household.⁴² The Ugandan government wanted assurance that Ugandan Asians were not able to circumvent the system or attempting to smuggle goods out of the country. A notice at Entebbe airport clearly demarcated the restrictions placed on those leaving warning passengers that “not a single Ugandan shilling” should be taken out of the country and that departing Asians could only

³⁸ “The Declaration of Assets (Non-Citizen Asians) Decree, 1972,” 216.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 217.

⁴⁰ “Government Directs on Cleared Asians Not More than Two Days,” *Uganda Argus*, September 23, 1972, 1.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² “No Need for Money,” *Uganda Argus*, October 19, 1972, 1; “Ugandans Seeking Bargains from Exiled Asians,” *Toronto Star*, August 31, 1972, 3.

possess “one ring, two bangles, one necklace and one pair of earrings.”⁴³ The Ugandan representative to the United Nations, J. Peter Okia, argued in the UN General Assembly that non-citizen Asians did not need to take money with them “because they have already put their money in British banks.”⁴⁴ This reinforced the rhetoric presented by government officials that charged Ugandan Asians of illegitimate economic practices. By stripping Ugandan Asians of their physical possessions, Amin’s regime reinforced prejudiced attitudes towards the community while simultaneously reiterating that the government would return those goods to the rightful owners vis-à-vis the black Ugandan population.

Two major incidents during the ninety-day expulsion period were featured prominently in local media outlets as a means of further exacerbating the malpractices of Ugandan Asians who were vilified as economic saboteurs. The first major scandal reported by the *Uganda Argus* involved a raid that took place at the main prayer hall of the Ismaili community in Kampala. Security forces seized roughly 1.8 million shillings in hard cash in what they called ‘Asian Sandwiches’ on September 25th, 1972.⁴⁵ Upon investigating the local prayer hall, officers found what initially appeared to be packages of biscuits. They discovered that sandwiched in between the packages were five, twenty, and one hundred shilling bills. This led to the imprisonment of an Ismaili Ugandan Asian, Kassim Damji, in the dreaded Makindye prison, one of the leading torture and killing facilities under Amin’s regime.⁴⁶ Not only did the entire event make front page news in bold print but the article also quoted an army officer who embodied the public’s attitudes towards the Asian community. When pointing to the confiscated bills the officer noted that “this is one of the many tricks the Asians are employing in exporting our money.”⁴⁷ Ugandan Asians were thus labelled as conspirators against the Ugandanization program. Local media perpetuated these stereotypes as a means of garnering further support amongst indigenous Ugandans. This

⁴³ Michael Knipe, “Not a Single Ugandan Shilling to Leave, Airport Notice Says,” *Times Newspapers*, September 1, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 43.

⁴⁴ “No Need for Money,” *Uganda Argus*, October 19, 1972, 1.

⁴⁵ Willy Mukasa, “Raid Uncovers 1.8m/- Asian ‘Sandwiches’,” *Uganda Argus*, September 25, 1972, 1.

⁴⁶ Andrew Rice, *The Teeth May Smile but the Heart Does Not Forget: Murder and Memory in Uganda* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009); Dan Wooding and Ray Barnett, *Uganda Holocaust* (London: Pickering and Inglis Limited, 1980).

⁴⁷ Mukasa, “Raid Uncovers 1.8m/- Asian ‘Sandwiches’,” 8.

incident would also send shock waves throughout the Ismaili community as will be explored in the subsequent chapter.

The other major incident involved an attempt by a Ugandan Asian to smuggle money out of the country at a border crossing by hiding them in water pipes on October 19th, 1972.⁴⁸ Building on the same rhetoric presented by the government, Idi Amin argued that his regime would not refrain from exposing corrupt Ugandan Asians to the public alongside their “dirty tricks” to smuggle money out of the country.⁴⁹ The apparent ‘trickery’ of the Ugandan Asian community was continuously emphasized within both articles featured on the front page of the country’s premier national newspaper, the *Uganda Argus*. These articles played a prominent role in reinforcing the stereotypes of the ‘exploitative Asian’ and increased support for Amin’s expulsion decree. The pressure placed on the Ugandan Asians in the form of legislation, anti-Asian propaganda, and the arbitrary citizenship process outlined a coordinated system of disenfranchising the community. This would lead to a multitude of responses from international political leaders as they attempted to comprehend the expulsion decree.

International Responses to the Expulsion Decree

Responses from the international community varied greatly based on the geopolitical historical context. Some leaders within the African continent applauded Amin’s decision to remove those hindering the promotion of African economic development. Several East African countries including Tanzania, Kenya, and Zambia had sizeable Asian minorities and were all under the same pressure to ‘Africanize’ their economies.⁵⁰ Conversely, the international press criticized the British government for its outcry surrounding the expulsion decree as they reiterated Britain’s responsibility to the Ugandan Asians. The *Zambia Daily Mail* argued that the protest was “uncalled for” since “it was the British government that had encouraged these unfortunate people of Asian origin living in East Africa to take British citizenship.”⁵¹

⁴⁸ “Kenya, Tanzania, and Zambia Asians to Quit” *Uganda Argus*, October 10, 1972, 1.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵⁰ Ali Mazrui, “Soldiers as Traditionalizers,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 12, no. 1 (1977): 242-243; Peter G. Forster, Michael Hitchcock, and F. F. Lyimo, *Race and Ethnicity in East Africa* (Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 2000), 88-89.

⁵¹ “Press Reactions,” *News Compilation*, August 10, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 7.

Other international media sources argued that “the British have morally, if not legally promised the Asians a right to settle in Britain.”⁵² Extending these criticisms of the British government, Ugandan officials returned charges of racial discrimination towards the accuser.

The Foreign Minister for Uganda, Wanume Kibedi openly criticized the British government for their charges of racial discrimination. Kibedi accused the British government of “callousness to bar the door to its citizens because they are not white and then have the impudence to turn around and point an accusing finger at Uganda, a state which is doing no more than asking Britain to take care of her citizens.”⁵³ He also criticized the “massive propaganda and smear campaign against Uganda” in the U.K. after the announcement of the expulsion decree.⁵⁴ As voiced by the foreign minister, the Ugandan government was vehemently opposed to the allegations surrounding racism and publicly retaliated against the British government. Mr. Kibedi clearly articulated the Ugandan government’s contempt for these criticisms and argued that “it is Britain who is being racist...Britain is refusing entry because they are not white. They are not kith and kin. That’s the only test. Had they been white people, they would have not the slightest difficulty in getting in.”⁵⁵ The tactic of countering charges of racial discrimination from the U.K. by attacking their reluctance to admit Ugandan Asians underscored the hypocrisy of the British government. It also garnered further support amongst the local population who would later voice their approval of the government’s decision to expel all those of South Asian descent. Furthermore, by disputing British arguments in various media outlets, Ugandan Asians became aware of the increasingly precarious status of their resettlement. Ugandan Asians realized that Britain was not entirely innocent and did have an obligation to accept all those who were U.K. citizens. However, this did not prevent the British government from trying to force President Amin to repeal the expulsion decree.

⁵² “Press Reactions,” in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion*, 7.

⁵³ “Kibedi Defends Move on Asians,” *Uganda Argus*, September 1, 1972, 1.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ “London Threat to Uganda,” *Uganda Argus*, August 8, 1972, 1.

In an attempt to reverse the expulsion decree, the British government threatened to remove all foreign aid and investment in Uganda. Mr. Kibedi again declared his opposition to this form of political aggression and stated that “whether it is 4.5 million, 40 million or 400 million sterling ... the Ugandan government is not going to sell the interests of the Ugandan people for a pittance from the British.”⁵⁶ The Ugandan government remained firm on their decision to remove all Asians from the country. Several international leaders both within the continent and elsewhere charged the president of Uganda with employing a policy that overtly discriminated against the Ugandan Asian community based on race.

President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania responded to Amin’s policy stating that “every racist in the world is an animal of some kind or another, and all are kinds which have no future. Eventually, they will all become extinct.”⁵⁷ The leader of Tanzania also took issue with Britain for their poor extraction policy claiming that “citizens must be accepted without discrimination.”⁵⁸ However, this did not lead to Tanzania offering refuge to those affected by the expulsion decree. The minister for Home Affairs in Tanzania, Saidi Maswanya, publicly stated only six days after the initial announcement that “Uganda Asians are not our responsibility, and therefore allowing them to settle or giving them refuge was far from thought.”⁵⁹ It was clear that other East African governments deplored Uganda’s decision; however, that did not oblige them to accept Ugandan Asians within their own borders. Each of the countries in the region were experiencing the fallout of decolonization and subsequently created their own answers to the ‘Asian problem’. Both Zambia and Kenya also condemned the expulsion decree but refrained from providing a safe haven for expellees.

The President of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda, described the decree as “terrible, horrible, abominable and shameful.”⁶⁰ He also stressed that the “seeds of trouble had been sown

⁵⁶ “London Threat to Uganda,” *Uganda Argus*, August 8, 1972, 1.

⁵⁷ William G. Kuepper, G. Lynne Lackey, and E. Nelson Swinerton, *Ugandan Asians in Great Britain: Forced Migration and Social Absorption* (London: Croom Helm, 1975), 7.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ “Tanzania Says No!” *News Compilation*, August 10, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 7.

⁶⁰ Kuepper, Lackey, and Swinerton, *Ugandan Asians in Great Britain*, 7.

before Uganda's independence when the Asians were encouraged to become British citizens, but it is not right to commit another wrong because of Britain's treatment many years ago."⁶¹ President Kaunda's response highlights the importance of understanding the historical context surrounding the expulsion decree. He attributed blame to both the British and Ugandan governments for their prejudiced actions towards the Asian community. However, Zambia did not offer to aid Ugandan Asians in any way. The President of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta, remained silent throughout the affair. Conversely, his Vice President and Minister of Home Affairs, Daniel Arap Moi, announced that Kenya would be closing its borders to expelled migrants and argued that "Kenya is not a dumping ground for citizens of other countries."⁶² Vice President Moi deterred Ugandan Asians from attempting to illegally enter Kenya; he contended that those who sought to sneak into the country "had done so illegally and his or her presence in the country is undesirable."⁶³ Since both Tanzania and Kenya had opted for their own individual responses to their Asian minority populations in the late 1960s and early 1970s, neither government was willing to accept another influx of Asians to replace those who they had successfully pressured to emigrate. This would significantly limit the abilities of any Ugandan Asian to remain in East Africa and ultimately led to their international resettlement.

Other media sources in the continent also condemned President Amin's expulsion decree. The Nigerian newspaper *Renaissance* commented that the president should rescind his decision in the "interest of the Black race."⁶⁴ Additionally, international press criticized India for their failure to provide assistance for some people who had originally migrated from the sub-continent.⁶⁵ Although Amin denied the charges of racism and claimed that expelling the Asians was a part of the scheme to 'Africanize' the Ugandan economy, the racial underpinnings of his decree were clear. As previously discussed, Amin sought to restore the economy into the hands of black Ugandan citizens. Perhaps the most ironic

⁶¹ Kuepper, Lackey, and Swinerton, *Ugandan Asians in Great Britain*, 7.

⁶² "Kenya Shuts the Door to Uganda Asians," *Daily Nation*, August 9, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 5.

⁶³ "New Warning by Moi," *Daily Nation*, August 16, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 17.

⁶⁴ Kuepper, Lackey, and Swinerton, *Ugandan Asians in Great Britain*, 8.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

critique of Amin's expulsion decree came from the Prime Minister of apartheid South Africa, John Vorster. He argued that the removal of all Ugandans of South Asian descent was "the most immoral of acts."⁶⁶ Although the government of South Africa did not offer refuge to Ugandan Asians, Vorster clearly identified the hypocrisy behind Amin's order. Uganda was one of the loudest critics of apartheid and continuously condemned South Africa's racialized policies but was now enacting their own piece of discriminatory legislation.⁶⁷ Responses within the continent diverged between open support for Amin's critique of the British government and firm disapproval from others who interpreted Uganda's decision to be racially motivated. Unsurprisingly, Britain fiercely objected to Amin's decree but was forced to offer a diplomatic response due to the complexities of the geo-political context.

Predictably, the British government was the first major international body to denounce Idi Amin's expulsion decree. Only two days after the announcement, Britain contested Amin's claim of 80,000 British passport holders and argued that the number was between 25 and 40,000.⁶⁸ Furthermore, by August 7th, 1972 the British Under-Secretary of State for the Home Office, David Lane, publicly announced that Britain would hold firm to their traditional admittance of 3,500 immigrants from East Africa per year even if individuals held British passports.⁶⁹ Lane argued that Britain was already "a crowded island and immigration must and will remain strictly controlled."⁷⁰ Although Britain accepted that they were ultimately responsible for those who held British passports, they requested that Uganda extend the deadline beyond ninety days in order to facilitate a more gradual uptake of Ugandan Asians. By August 10th, 1972 the British

⁶⁶ "Amin is More Racist - Vorster," *News Compilation*, September 4, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 49.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Colin Legum, "Britain will reject Amin's Ultimatum on Asians," *The Observer*, August 6, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 1.

⁶⁹ Peter Evans, "Calls to London Show Desperation of Asians in Uganda," *Times Newspaper*, August 7, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 3.

⁷⁰ Frank Robertson, "Decision on Asians Final, Says Amin," *The Daily Telegraph*, August 7, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 3.

government formally created a contingency plan to resettle roughly 25,000 potential Ugandan Asians refugees in case President Amin stuck to his decision.⁷¹

Geoffrey Rippon, the Foreign Minister for Britain, flew to Uganda to negotiate the terms of Amin's decree and to reason with president to extend the deadline, provide compensation for the lost properties and businesses of Ugandan Asians, and to enlarge the number of people eligible for exemptions from the decree.⁷² Ultimately, Mr. Rippon announced that the U.K. would admit all those who held British passports during his negotiations with President Amin.⁷³ Mr. Rippon was unsuccessful in convincing the president to change the conditions of the expulsion order and thus Britain would be forced to resort to enacting their contingency plan. Although they did appeal to other Commonwealth countries for assistance, the British government ultimately resettled roughly 29,000 Ugandan Asians.⁷⁴

Britain was undoubtedly concerned over the potential influx of Ugandan Asians since the Prime Minister of England, Sir Edward Richard George Heath, was elected on the premise that no further large-scale permanent migration would occur under his administration.⁷⁵ Ronald Bell, the MP for Buckinghamshire South argued that "these so-called British Asiatics are no more and no less British than any Indian in the bazaars of Bombay. They were either born in India or have retained close connections with India. They have no connection with Britain either by blood or residence."⁷⁶ Bell's statement ignored the historical roots of British imperialism both within the Indian subcontinent and East Africa, and effectively encapsulated British fears of impending migrations from either region. Other members of parliament in Britain, such as Harold Soref of Ormskirk, Lancashire, were more aggressive in their opposition and argued that "Britain is under no obligation to accept these people."⁷⁷ Since migration from former colonies grew significantly

⁷¹ John Kemp, "Preparation Begins for Asian Influx," *The Daily Telegraph*, August 10, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 10.

⁷² Colin Legum, "Britain will let Amin's Asians in," *The Observer*, August 13, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 14.

⁷³ Legum, "Britain will let Amin's Asians in," in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion*, 14.

⁷⁴ Judith M. Brown, *Global South Asians: Introducing Modern Diasporas*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 48.

⁷⁵ Evans, "Calls to London Show Desperation of Asians," in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion*, 3.

⁷⁶ Legum, "Britain will reject Amin's Ultimatum on Asians," in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion*, 2.

⁷⁷ Robertson, "Decision on Asians Final, Says Amin," in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion*, 4

in the postwar period culminating in the creation of the 1968 *Commonwealth Immigration Act*, which placed significant restrictions on migration from former British colonies to the UK, Prime Minister Heath was obliged by nativist concerns to curtail immigration policy. Some public officials, however, felt that the treatment of Ugandan Asians was unjust including Lady Tweedsmuir, the former viceregal consort of Canada and prolific writer, who expressed how “we do feel it is inhumane to those concerned to suggest that people who have spent their lives in Uganda should suddenly be asked to uproot themselves.”⁷⁸ Prime Minister Heath’s Conservative party was evidently divided on the issue since many of those who openly protested the government’s response to aid Ugandan Asians came were members of the governing party including Bell and Soref.

Furthermore, the politics of race relations in the U.K. needed to be delicately balanced since immigrant communities had grown in both numeric terms and in political strength.⁷⁹ In opposition to the rhetoric surrounding the limitation of coloured migrants, others argued that by failing to honour British passports they were devaluing their reputation within the international community.⁸⁰ Beyond the international and local political contexts, Britain was also wary of the economic conditions in Uganda. President Amin announced within two days of the expulsion order that he would nationalize the British American Tobacco Company’s processing factory as it was the physical embodiment of how the British were also sabotaging Uganda’s economy.⁸¹ This hindered the British government’s ability to openly reprimand President Amin as they navigated the complex geo-political context. Being overtly aggressive in denouncing the President’s expulsion order or threatening to withdraw all foreign aid from the country would only lead Uganda towards harsher treatment of Ugandan Asian expellees or a shorter expulsion period. Although this posed a significant issue in terms of resettlement, the British government was aware that the vast majority of those being resettled in the U.K. were “middle-class traders, business or professional people.”⁸² These diverse issues demonstrated the complexity

⁷⁸ Peter Thornton, “Amin Snubs Rippon on Asians,” *Daily Telegraph*, August 12, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 13.

⁷⁹ Evans, “Calls to London Show Desperation of Asians,” in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion*, 3.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸¹ Legum, “Britain will reject Amin’s Ultimatum on Asians,” in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion*, 2.

⁸² Robertson, “Decision on Asians Final, Says Amin,” in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion*, 4

surrounding the expulsion decree for Britain along with the failure of other governments in Africa to provide asylum to Ugandan Asians. Ultimately, these criticisms were ignored by the vast majority of Ugandan Africans who believed that ousting the brown colonialists would usher in an era of economic prosperity for black Ugandans.

The Local Response

The expulsion decree was largely applauded amongst those who submitted their opinions to Uganda's central newspaper the *Uganda Argus*. Several editorials endorsed President Amin's decree, and encouraged him to remain firm on the ninety-day deadline. For example, the Ugandan African sales manager of Simba Motors articulated how he fully supported "the President's move, which I think is timely and, if not, overdue."⁸³ This represented a moderate critique of the Asian community as opposed to many others who were more aggressive in their denunciations of Ugandan Asians. Other Ugandan Africans argued that "we [Ugandans] don't hate Asians, but [despise] their selfish attitude and unbecoming attitude in trade with Africans."⁸⁴ This coincided with the rhetoric of the economic war being waged in Uganda. The expulsion decree aimed to restore economic autonomy back into the hands of indigenous Ugandans. Another editorial aptly embodied the sentiments of Amin's major critiques of the Ugandan Asian community:

Are there any critics this morning of President Amin's statement on the Asians? No, at least not in the minds of all fair-minded people - in Africa, Asia and Europe. The invective that poured forth, particularly from Britain and India, is now seen to be so much hot air. And why? Because General Amin has shown in his typical humane way that he is only sorting the chaff from the wheat in ordering British Asians, Indian, Pakistanis and Bangladesh nationals from Uganda's borders in three months from now. He is merely pruning the very tree of life of the nation. Away with the dead and rotting fruit...Many Asians have devoted their lives to this country. They have helped it prosper by serving the Government, commerce and industry selflessly. But there are others who have sheltered under a foreign passport, working for their own ends, picking the richest fruit and living in a cocoon; in a world alien to Uganda and its culture.⁸⁵

⁸³ Chris Serunjogi, "Ugandans Hail move on Asians," *Uganda Argus*, August 9, 1972, 1.

⁸⁴ Serunjogi, "Ugandans Hail move on Asians," 8.

⁸⁵ "Asian Question Answered," *Uganda Argus*, August 10, 1972, 4.

Although the editorial mentioned the major contributions of the Asian community in Uganda, it lamented their economic self-interest and social exclusivity. The article compared the Ugandan Asian community to the rotting and dying fruit of Uganda's newly independent tree of life. By removing these spoiled sections of the tree, Ugandans could enjoy the fruits of their own independence regardless of how sweet the dead fruits once were.

Other editorial comments acknowledged the roots of the South Asian community in Uganda but expressed the historical oppression of black Ugandans by Ugandan Asians. Ugandan African Omugisha-Bukabbeha's letter to the editor argued that upon "looking back 70 years, one does not forget to realize how enduring the period has been for both the Africans and Asian alike, for Asians because they knew they were robbing people of their own right, for Africans because they had never been thought to exist."⁸⁶ This demonstrated the deeply embedded resentment of Ugandan Africans towards Ugandan Asians. Due to the colonial administration and the stratification of Ugandan society, the Asian community was vilified to represent the economic and social oppression of indigenous Ugandans. Although many Ugandan Asians held strong affiliations to Uganda and contributed in many ways to the country's development, they were routinely labelled as colonial collaborators within the media. This became common place during the expulsion period as many more editorials, even from those holding religious positions, continued to show support for the decree. For example, Reverend Peter Ben Ocban expressed that "our Asian friends have been in a deep sleep ever since they were shipped to East Africa as coolies for the Mombasa to Kampala railway line. During this sleep, they have had sweet dreams of East Africa being an Asian paradise, I am glad that they are now having nightmares for a change."⁸⁷ Reverend Ocban ended his editorial bidding farewell to those returning to Britain wishing them a "long and very cold winter."⁸⁸ These attacks on Ugandan Asians were not solely reserved for those living in Kampala.

For example, Dr. Mohan Kamarchand, the headmaster of a high school in Soroti instructed the expellees "to be calm and patient and realize within their hearts that it was part of their disloyalty and dishonesty when not all, but many of them in trade, commerce and industry

⁸⁶ Omugish-Bukabbeha, "An Asian Dream is Ended," *Uganda Argus*, August 18, 1972, 4.

⁸⁷ Reverend Peter Ben Ocban, "An Asian Dream is Ended," *Uganda Argus*, August 18, 1972, 4.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

always concentrated upon oiling their wealth and exporting that to other lands. Today when they are facing the results and fearing their own safety should very well know that this day could come.”⁸⁹ The notion that Ugandan Asians kept their accumulated wealth, acquired through exploitation, in offshore bank accounts matched the rhetoric presented by the government. Ugandan Asians were blamed for their own malicious practices and according to these reviews should have foreseen their eventual expulsion. This became strikingly apparent when reviewing other editorial comments that encouraged the President to reduce the expulsion period from ninety to thirty days.⁹⁰ From the perspective of some Ugandans, not only was President Amin justified in removing all those of South Asian descent from the country but his three-month limit was too lenient.

However, a significant factor to be addressed when reviewing the numerous editorial comments in the national newspaper is to acknowledge that the paper received state funding. If anyone openly criticized Amin and his administration these letters would likely not be featured in the *Uganda Argus*. Furthermore, anyone who dared to challenge the Ugandan government was undoubtedly endangering themselves and their families. The paper was eventually nationalized in December 1972 and renamed the *Voice of Uganda* after Amin had charged the paper of publishing a false report of a sugar shortage in Uganda.⁹¹ Idi Amin and his administration closely monitored all forms of mass media as a means of ensuring that only positive reviews of his government’s activities were published. Although these editorials coincided with the broader attacks levied against the Ugandan Asian community by the government, there were instances of Ugandan Asians accepting the decree and of Ugandan Africans opposing the decree.

Four days after the expulsion decree was announced an article in the national paper quoted two Ugandan Asians who expressed their reactions. The first individual wished African businessmen success while the other wholeheartedly accepted the expulsion decree as a reflection of the desire of Ugandan citizens: “We have given our service with a clean heart, and

⁸⁹ Dr. Mohan Kamarchand, “An Asian Dream is Ended,” *Uganda Argus*, August 18, 1972, 4.

⁹⁰ E. Nampijja, “An Asian Dream is Ended,” *Uganda Argus*, August 18, 1972, 4.

⁹¹ “Kampala Takes Over ‘Uganda Argus’,” *East Africa Standard*, December 2, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 145.

we think Ugandans will accept this. We have no quarrel with anybody and if it is the wish of the Government and the people of Uganda to see us leave, we are prepared to do so.”⁹² These Ugandan Asians were aware that they would not be able to counteract the expulsion decree and realized that they would all be forced to leave regardless of their citizenship status. Government rhetoric surrounding the expulsion decree in conjunction with large scale support from many indigenous Ugandans promoted the notion that all Ugandan Africans were in favour of the decree. However, there were those who resisted Amin’s declaration as well as several instances, at the grassroots level, where black Ugandans aided the Asian community. For example, US ambassador to Uganda, Thomas Melady, and his wife Margaret argued that there were “stories of loyalty and unusual courage of some African friends, workers, and servants of Asians. Some Africans took great risks to protect their Asian friends and to help them to save some of their property. Several instances are known where Africans arranged to slip valuables across the border for the departing Asians.”⁹³

Although the authors provide little evidence to support this claim, there were several examples from oral history participants that demonstrated how Ugandan Africans aided Ugandan Asians. Mobina Jaffer recalled how her husband was abducted by Amin’s security forces but thankfully was sent to the local police station as opposed to the army barracks:

But happily because of my father and those with influence they didn’t take him to the army barracks because just the day before we lost one Ismaili and we never heard from him again, from Fort Portal. And if they had taken him to the army barracks [pause in the interview] I know I would have never seen him again. So thankfully they took him to the police station because this police officer had been educated by my father and absolutely insisted that they go to the police station.⁹⁴

Although the officer felt a sense of responsibility to aid Mobina’s husband it is still crucial to note how he risked his own personal well-being in an attempt to avoid sending the interviewee’s husband to the army barracks. A similar instance occurred for Nellie and Sadru Ahmed who were

⁹² Serunjogi, “Ugandans Hail move on Asians,” *Uganda Argus*, August 9, 1972, 1.

⁹³ Thomas Patrick Melady and Margaret Badum Melady, *Uganda: The Asian Exiles* (New York: Orbis Books, 1976), 79.

⁹⁴ Mobina Jaffer, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 13, 2015.

warned of an incoming raid by an indigenous African who had received financial aid from the Ugandan Asian couple to attend high school. Nellie recalls how “he came to me and I said, ‘where have you been?’ He said, ‘I got a good job with Amin’s office. I’m his personal secretary’. He said, ‘are you Ismaili?’ I said, ‘yeah’. He said, ‘you know we are going to raid your *jamat khane* [Ismaili prayer hall], we know there’s money in your *jamat khane*’.”⁹⁵ Delivering this key message aided the Ismaili community to prepare for an impending visit from Idi Amin’s troops.

Additionally, Zain Alarakiya explained how her father was protected by Ugandan Africans on two separate occasions: “the army came for my father twice and each time his friends, black Ugandans, themselves appalled by what was happening in the country, helped him evade the army or used their influence to protect him.”⁹⁶ These examples demonstrated how Ugandan Africans offered warnings and advice to Ugandan Asians to avoid further hardship. Furthermore, others openly protested against the unfair treatment of Ugandan Asians. John Nazareth explained an encounter between his brother-in-law and a Ugandan African:

he was at the taxi stop and someone started needling him, saying ‘oh *muhindi*’ [derogatory swahili term for Ugandan Asians], so my brother said to him in Swahili, ‘you wait you are calling me *muhindi*, you wait when I become your Kambola chief [President Amin had threatened Ugandan Asians that they would be removed to rural regions of the country to become leaders in remote villages known as Kambola chiefs], I’ll show you’. So all the Africans there said, ‘yeah that’s telling him, who does he think he is speaking to you like that’. You know the people, I’m sure there were some who were pleased ... a lot of people knew they were next and in fact many months later after the expulsion when we went fishing somewhere. All the Africans were so happy to see us. They said oh my God we thought all the Asians had left, so they were happy to see us.⁹⁷

John’s testimony revealed the multitude of responses amongst the local community surrounding the expulsion decree. Although there was well publicized support for the expulsion decree, this did not reflect the attitudes of all Ugandan Africans. This contradicted the rhetoric presented by the government and reveals the biases portrayed in local media during 1972. These testimonies

⁹⁵ Nellie and Sadru Ahmed, interview S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, June 24, 2015.

⁹⁶ Richard Saunders, *Journey Into Hope*, directed by Richard Saunders (Ottawa, 1994).

⁹⁷ John Nazareth, interview S. Muhammedi, Toronto, March 21, 2015.

question the accepted claim that all Ugandans favoured the removal of the Asian population in Uganda. Additionally, students at the leading university in Uganda protested against the president's expulsion decree.

The National Union of Students of Uganda (NUSU) at Makerere University in Kampala Uganda openly rallied against Idi Amin's expulsion decree within a few weeks of the announcement.⁹⁸ They declared that Amin's decree was rooted in racism as his initial rhetoric surrounding the Ugandanization of the economy was targeted solely at the Asian businesses. Furthermore, once the Ugandan government made it clear that all Ugandans of South Asian descent, regardless of their citizenship status, would be expelled from the country, the NUSU solidified their accusations of racialism. The President's reaction was to attend a student rally at the university in an attempt to refute their accusations. He argued that the government was pursuing a policy that would create African capitalists however, the students criticized his motives and referred to these capitalists as "a class of black Asians."⁹⁹ This led to the immediate outlawing of the NUSU as the president sent armed paratroopers to the university to arrest all those who supported the NUSU. Under the guise of providing security from the Tanzania's latest coup attempt in September, Amin rationalized the infiltration of Makerere University's campus as a means of capturing supporters of the Tanzanian government.¹⁰⁰ These forms of resistance, both within the university and at the grassroots level, challenged the predominating view that the expulsion decree represented the desire of all Ugandan Africans for the removal of all Ugandan Asians. Building on these responses amongst the indigenous population it is also imperative to comprehend how Ugandan Asians reacted to the expulsion decree.

Ugandan Asian Responses to the Decree

The vast majority of oral history participants recalled how the expulsion decree was not anticipated by the Ugandan Asian community. For example, Amin Visram illustrated how the expulsion decree shocked many members of the community: "When he announced, people thought it was a joke, nobody really anticipated that this is serious. And for the first few days

⁹⁸ T. V. Sathyamurthy, *The Political Development of Uganda: 1900-1986* (Aldershot: Gower Publishing Company Limited, 1986), 622.

⁹⁹ Sathyamurthy, *The Political Development of Uganda*, 622.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

nobody really paid attention.”¹⁰¹ Many others remembered how they considered Idi Amin’s order to be a misinformed joke that would likely be withdrawn. Errol Francis described the reaction of the community as follows: “when the expulsion was announced in August of that year – the same year ‘72 – I think that everybody laughed because you know, they thought this is a joke. How can you expel your own citizens?... So anyways we thought, this is nonsense.”¹⁰² These sentiments were echoed by all the other interview participants in a variety of ways. Both Mobina Jaffer and Jalal Jaffer mentioned how the Ugandan Asian community continued to view Amin’s expulsion decree as a farce which could not stand as a piece of legitimate legislation in Uganda. Mobina recalled attending her sister’s wedding when they were all made aware of the president’s latest decision: “You know, we all laughed, we didn’t take it seriously. We were at the wedding in the evening and we all laughed, ‘Ha ha ha, he wants us out, what next? Ha ha.’ Honestly we were laughing, truthfully.”¹⁰³ Jalal reinforced how “none of us took it seriously at all. We thought this is a joke, how can you throw away eighty thousand plus Asians who had been second or third generation Africans? They have no connection with India, no connection with any other country. So nobody took it seriously. We ourselves were completely mocking it, Idi [Amin] is crazy.”¹⁰⁴ Ugandan Asians were stunned by the initial decree since it negated the deep historical roots of South Asians in Uganda. Furthermore, it could not stand as a legitimate policy since they thought it simply would not be feasible to expel 80,000 individuals from the country. Since President Amin justified his pronouncement based on ‘divine premonition’, as God had instructed him to remove all Ugandans of South Asian descent from the country, many Ugandan Asians questioned the mental state of Uganda’s leader.¹⁰⁵

Others relegated the decree to be an aspect of Amin’s mental instability arguing that “we didn’t take it seriously you know; at that time, he was already going off his head or something. Making all kinds of commands, talking about Asians milking the economy and you know making use of us as scapegoats, you know.”¹⁰⁶ Many interviewees expressed similar sentiments regarding how they truly believed the decree was ludicrous. Although most interviewees

¹⁰¹ Amin Visram, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Kitchener, March 2, 2015.

¹⁰² Errol and Delphine Francis, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, April 17, 2015.

¹⁰³ Mobina Jaffer, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 13, 2015.

¹⁰⁴ Jalal Jaffer, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 7, 2015.

¹⁰⁵ “The Future of the Asians in Uganda,” *Uganda Argus*, August 5, 1972, 1.

¹⁰⁶ Edmond and Maria Rodriguez, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 11, 2015.

identified the decree as unfathomable and unpredictable, one participant noted how he had foreseen the events of the expulsion decree and moved to Canada in 1971. Mossadiq Umedaly articulated how the race and class hierarchy established by the British imperialists created tensions that would cause racial and class antagonism: “when you have a small population that comes from a different background i.e. Indian, and controls a significant part of the wealth of the country while the indigenous population constituting a majority (important in a democracy) as well as power in terms of the control of the military and its weapons, this sets up an almost inevitable problem, especially if you have a mad man in power.”¹⁰⁷ None of the other oral history participants noted how there were any previous indications of the expulsion decree being issued by the Ugandan government. Beyond oral history participants, two Ugandan Asians couples that arrived in Canada during the expulsion period recounted their foresight to leave Uganda before the expulsion decree in the *Calgary Herald*. Zul and Yasmin Rupani, alongside an anonymous couple argued that they “had already made plans to leave the country before the expulsion order came.”¹⁰⁸

Alternatively, many of the interviewees identified a transition period of two to four weeks as the community came to terms with the reality of the expulsion decree. Jalal remembered that “it wasn’t until two or four weeks in it that people started galvanizing and then different people had very different experiences.”¹⁰⁹ As the media continued to report on the expulsion decree and Amin made further announcements regarding his plans to follow through on the order, Ugandan Asians became increasingly aware of their precarious position within Uganda. Amin Visram recalled that “as time developed and you started seeing more, more situations where people started saying this is very serious and then on top of that ... two, three weeks after, he announced ... anybody who is of non-black origin and who’s got a Ugandan passport is stateless, I’m forfeiting them. That’s when I think paranoia came about.”¹¹⁰ Edmond and Maria also reiterated the realities of the transition period as the Ugandan government outlined the details of the expulsion decree:

¹⁰⁷ Mossadiq Umedaly, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, June 30, 2015.

¹⁰⁸ Dennis Trudeau, “Ugandan Couple Like Canada Because she ‘Really Wants to Help’,” *Calgary Herald*, September 29, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 87.

¹⁰⁹ Jalal Jaffer, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 7, 2015.

¹¹⁰ Amin Visram, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Kitchener, March 2, 2015.

Edmond: Then three days later this guy says, ‘by the Qur’an,’ he says, ‘Asians have to get out of this country within three months.’

Maria: Or they will be locked up.

Edmond: They’ll be locked up. People panicked when he made that announcement. We knew that he was serious about it. Then people had to make an effort to get out.¹¹¹

This would be the principle issue that all Ugandan Asians faced. Where were they to go? Britain had accepted the burden of taking all of their own citizens. However, they were already facing issues regarding the high levels of non-white immigration throughout the country and requested assistance from other Commonwealth countries.¹¹² Canada would answer the call to help in the resettlement initiative but not solely for the purpose of keeping the Commonwealth connection alive. Based on various memorandums to Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau’s cabinet and other government documents, Canada came to the aid of Ugandan Asians for a multitude of reasons.

Humanitarianism or Opportunism: Canada’s Decision to Admit Ugandan Asians

From the 1960s leading into the 1970s, Canada’s immigration policy went from a racialized and discriminatory piece of legislation to the points system. Canada was trying to forge a new national identity to combat historical challenges within this period. From a declining British connection to Quebec nationalism, Canada was in need of a new nation-building program that appealed the diversity of Canadian peoples. It was the perfect way for the federal government to make everyone happy without going so far as extending any actual benefits to specific groups (notably Francophones and First Nations). As a part of the new program Christopher G. Anderson and Jerome H. Black argued that a “unity through diversity approach, legitimized by multiculturalism, provided the basis for turning immigrants into Canadians.”¹¹³ Leading into the 1960s, most post-war immigrants had

¹¹¹ Edmond and Maria Rodriguez, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 11, 2015.

¹¹² Kuepper, Lackey, and Swinerton, *Ugandan Asians in Great Britain*, 7.

¹¹³ Christopher G. Anderson, and Jerome H. Black, “The Political Integration of Newcomers, Minorities, and the Canadian Born: Perspectives on Naturalization, Participation, and Representation,” *Immigration and Integration in Canada in the Twenty-first Century*, ed. John Biles, Meyer Burstein, and James Frideres (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2008), 45-46.

created sizeable ethnic communities in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver.¹¹⁴ Employer and business interests advocated for a liberal immigration policy in the post-war years, as Canada's economy was in need of labourers to continue the post-war economic boom. This became evident as the Department of Manpower and Immigration was created in 1966 by the Liberal government.¹¹⁵ The department would be responsible for "immigration ... and will take over placement and employment services, technical and vocational training and civilian rehabilitation."¹¹⁶ The creation of the department highlighted the importance of employment when accepting potential migrants. This same policy would be applied to Ugandan Asian expellees. Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson announced that "immigration policy must be administered in the interests of the country and of the immigrants themselves in a context that takes into account the entire position of employment, training and placement in Canada."¹¹⁷ It was imperative that migrants be prepared to enter the Canadian labour force upon arrival or at the very least be equipped with enough skills to be trained in Canada.

Before the introduction of the points system in 1967, immigration officers, who were specifically looking for at least eleven years of schooling, reviewed the applications of potential migrants. Eleven years of formal education did not guarantee entry into the country; the immigration officer was given final discretion to judge the candidate's personality and work experience in relation to the current demand for workers in Canada.¹¹⁸ The new points system assigned prospective immigrants a score based on the following categories: "age; education; training; occupational skills in demand; knowledge of English or French; a personal assessment made by an immigration officer; relatives in Canada; arranged employment; and employment opportunities in area of destination."¹¹⁹ If an immigrant received a passing grade he or she was permitted entrance into the country. What

¹¹⁴ Ninette Kelley and M. J. Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 350.

¹¹⁵ Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration Policy, 1540-1997*, (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2007), 192.

¹¹⁶ Freda Hawkins, *Canada and Immigration: Public Policy and Public Concern*, (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), 151.

¹¹⁷ Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates*, 192.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 195.

¹¹⁹ Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, 395.

is particularly significant is that there was no quota to the points system; if a candidate passed he or she was guaranteed entrance into Canada. Unfortunately, the points system appeared to discriminate against applicants from the developing world based on the emphasis on skills and education.¹²⁰ Ultimately, the new points system enabled the migration of 2.25 million people between 1963 and 1976.¹²¹ These changes in Canadian immigration policy led to a diversified range of source countries for immigrants. By 1973, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Jamaica, Trinidad, and India appeared among the top ten source countries for Canadian immigrants.¹²² Since official Canadian refugee policy was not created until 1976, Ugandan Asians would be resettled under normal selection criteria with an additional provision to address their plight.¹²³

On August 9th, 1972 External Affairs Minister for Canada, Mitchell Sharp, outlined that Canada “would consider taking ‘positive action’” regarding Amin’s expulsion decree.¹²⁴ Within four days Amin’s announcement of the expulsion decree, the Canadian government expressed their intent to provide some form of assistance to Ugandan Asians. An important caveat to this decision was that Canada would cooperate in resettling Ugandan Asians only “if Britain made a formal request.”¹²⁵ Although there were other significant factors behind Canada’s decision to get involved, the government framed part of their response on adhering to a sense of brotherhood amongst Commonwealth countries. Furthermore, based on Minister Sharp’s interview, Canada was reluctant to immediately state their official stance. He noted that “We [the Canadian government] are hoping, indeed, that the government of Uganda will have second thoughts about this kind of operation. So this is one of the reasons why I don’t think we should do anything until we are absolutely sure that the Government of Uganda is serious in wanting to throw out of their country people who have lived there for such a long time.”¹²⁶

¹²⁰ Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, 351.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 347.

¹²² J. M. Bumsted, *A History of the Canadian Peoples*, 4th ed (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2011), 485.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 348.

¹²⁴ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 948, file sf-c-1-1 “Memoranda to Cabinet on Immigration Policy,” August 22, 1972, 2.

¹²⁵ Frank Jones, “Britain Appeals to Canada to take some Asians Expelled by Uganda,” *Toronto Star*, August 10, 1972, 1.

¹²⁶ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 990, file 5850-3-650 “Press Conference by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp,” August 9, 1972, 1.

Prime Minister Trudeau also denounced Amin's expulsion decree in his official statement and argued:

that it remains the hope of the Canadian Government that General Amin will consider the effects of his decrees not only on these longtime residents of his country but on the economy of Uganda and its development, to which Canada has made a contribution. I must also observe that General Amin's regrettable expulsion decisions, if implemented, would be contrary to his country's obligations under the United Nations Charter and Declaration of Human Rights as well as against the principles of the Commonwealth Declaration of 1971 in which member states reiterated their belief in human dignity and non-racialism.¹²⁷

The Prime Minister echoed charges of racialism put forth by the leaders of several African countries and received written support from Tanzanian Prime Minister Julius Nyerere who expressed his appreciation for Canada's rapid response.¹²⁸ Trudeau also noted the economic impacts of Amin's decision alongside numerous human rights violations embodied within the decree. Unlike the British government, Trudeau had the liberty to take an aggressive position when condemning the expulsion decree since the Canadian government was not faced with any legal obligation to admit a large influx of Ugandan Asian expellees. Britain feared further angering the Ugandan government since President Amin confirmed that the Ugandan Asian community was 'Britain's problem'. Sharp also cautioned against open criticism of the Ugandan government and argued that "if we [the Canadian government] hope to get the cooperation of the Ugandan government on the issuance of exit visas and otherwise helping in the transfer to Canada of those people who are being expelled, it would be well not to exacerbate relations between our two governments."¹²⁹ This encouraged both the Prime Minister and Minister Sharp to scale back reprimands on President Amin's decision and their requests for the president to rescind his decision.

On August 24th, 1972 Trudeau announced that a team of external affairs and immigration officials would be sent to Kampala to begin the necessary screening process prior to distributing

¹²⁷ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 948, file sf-c-1-1 "Memoranda to Cabinet on Immigration Policy," August 22, 1972, 1-2.

¹²⁸ LAC, Pierre Elliot Trudeau fond, MG 26 O7, "PMO Priority Correspondence" series, file 481 840/U26, "Letter from Prime Minister to Nyerere," September 7, 1972, 1.

¹²⁹ Canada, *House of Commons Debates* (September 1, 1972), IV, 3937-3938.

entry visas.¹³⁰ Trudeau explained that “this step will enable us to form a clearer impression of the numbers involved and of the extent to which exceptional measures may have to be taken to deal urgently with those who would not normally qualify for admission.”¹³¹ The Minister for Manpower and Immigration, Bryce Mackasey, was also confident that the Asians would “make very good citizens once they are here.”¹³² This was the rationale behind sending the team to Uganda; it was a means of verifying their ability to become integrated members of the Canadian community. Furthermore, on the day of Liberal government’s announcement to send a team to Kampala the Prime Minister justified his action stating that “Asian immigrants have already added to the cultural richness and variety of our country, and I am sure that those from Uganda will, by their abilities and industry make an equally important contribution to Canadian society.”¹³³ Major headlines in the U.K. the following day expressed Britain’s gratitude for Canada’s decision reading: “Thank you, Pierre.”¹³⁴ Furthermore, a Foreign Office spokesman in Britain described Trudeau’s response as “genuinely humane and said he hoped the Canadian example would be followed by other Commonwealth governments.”¹³⁵

Once the Canadian government made their official announcement to assist Ugandan Asians, the next major issue pertained to how many individuals would be admitted to Canada. The Prime Minister initially avoided specifying exactly how many Ugandan Asians would be resettled in Canada since the government did not possess any official reports from Canadian officers in Kampala. When questioned about the numbers by reporters, Trudeau explained that “we know how much money we want to spend on it [the resettlement of Ugandan Asians], but I don’t see any advantage in playing the numbers game...It’s the kind of answer that we have to find out before knowing numbers and involvement.”¹³⁶ Unfortunately for Trudeau, Mackasey was far more vocal in his description on how many Ugandan Asian refugees could potentially be resettled in Canada. One day after the formal announcement, Mackasey speculated that Canada

¹³⁰ Gerald E. Dirks, *Canada’s Refugee Policy: Indifference or Opportunism?* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1977), 241.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Canada, *House of Commons Debates* (September 1, 1972), IV, 3938.

¹³³ Paul Jackson, “No Decision Yet on ‘Ceiling’ Here,” *Vancouver Sun*, August 25, 1972, 2.

¹³⁴ “British Laud Canada on Offer to Asians: ‘Thank you, Pierre,’” *Globe and Mail*, August 26, 1972, 1.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Terrance Wills, “Ottawa may be Prodding others in Commonwealth to admit Ugandan Asians,” *Globe and Mail*, August 26, 1972, 1.

could admit up to 5,000 expellees and expressed that he “hoped all applicants would qualify under the immigration points system, but if necessary the system would be relaxed.”¹³⁷

The importance of adhering to the points system was emphasized by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Manpower and Immigration as a means of reassuring the public that those who were admitted to Canada would not become public charges. However, Mackasey highlighted how the lives of Ugandan Asians were under considerable threat based on the unpredictability of Idi Amin’s regime. In his formal announcement he argued that “if a bunch of fanatics start a genocidal war against the Asians we’d have it on our consciences. We are very concerned that the situation in Uganda could rapidly deteriorate.”¹³⁸ The Canadian government wanted to emphasize the severity of the expulsion decree in order to garner support from the public. By framing the expulsion decree as a means of demonstrating Canada’s humanitarian impulse alongside our commitment to assist a significant group of individuals who would largely qualify under normal immigration criteria and appeasing the British request for assistance, the government effectively marketed their response to resettle Ugandan Asian refugees to the Canadian public as a worthwhile endeavour. As the Prime Minister aptly stated “we would not have been Canadians if we had turned our backs on them.”¹³⁹

Before the public announcement was made several memorandums and reports to the Prime Minister’s office specifically articulated the benefits of responding to the expulsion decree. The August 22nd, 1972 memorandum to cabinet clearly stated that the main objective of the document was to gain approval from the Prime Minister for the immigration of Ugandan Asians in order to:

demonstrate Canada’s humanitarian concern for the expellees; provide orderly and timely processing and evacuation of those expelled; demonstrate to other countries, especially Britain, Canada’s concern and sympathy for the very difficult position in which they have been placed by the Ugandan decision and to the degree possible

¹³⁷ Guy Demarino, “Canada will take up to 5,000 Uganda Asians,” *Southam News Service*, August 25, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 33.

¹³⁸ “Mackasey Fears Genocidal War,” *South Ham News Service*, August 25, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 33

¹³⁹ Trudeau Defends Admission of Uganda’s Expelled Asians,” *Toronto Star*, September 25, 1972, 1.

within humanitarian requirements ensure that those expelled Asians who might best contribute positively to the Canadian economy and culture are admitted to Canada.¹⁴⁰

Based on the cabinet document there were several motivations for Canada's involvement with the expulsion decree. The wording within the memorandum specifically highlights the importance of humanitarian concerns as well as aiding the Commonwealth. However, the final motive delineated the preference for those who would successfully integrate in Canada both economically and socially.

Moreover, an additional memorandum to the Prime Minister's office from the Deputy Minister for Manpower and Immigration, J.M. Desroches, also submitted on August 22nd, 1972, outlined that the Canadian government should get involved because it would "satisfy Canadian public interest without going so far as to invite a backlash because of employment problems, race relations, etc.," and to "capitalize on [the] supply of entrepreneurs and professionals."¹⁴¹ The cabinet, as well as other government officials, were well aware that the Ugandan Asian expellees were predominately well educated, highly skilled, and savvy businesspersons. Desroches' report articulated this awareness and detailed that "less than one percent of Uganda's population is comprised of Asians, but this small proportion virtually controls finance, commerce and the professions in the country."¹⁴² Another report was submitted to the Canadian government that revealed pertinent statistics about the high levels of education amongst Ugandan Asians as well as their concentration in the fields of commerce, manufacturing, education, and medicine. According to the report, fifty percent of the Asian population was enrolled in primary and secondary school in 1967.¹⁴³ Furthermore, 20,000 to 25,000 Asians were employed in Uganda by 1970 with 27.6 percent of the working population in manufacturing; 27.5 percent in commerce; and 16.5 percent in educational and medical services. The report argued that the "high occupational and skill composition of Asians is reflected in their wages" since they earned an average wage of £EA 925 (East African shilling) in the private sector and £EA 1093 in the public

¹⁴⁰ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 948, file sf-c-1-1 "Memoranda to Cabinet on Immigration Policy," August 22, 1972, 1.

¹⁴¹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 145, file 5850-3-650 "Memorandum to the Minister," August 22, 1972, 2-3.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁴³ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 990, file 5850-3-650 "Manpower Planning Unit Background Brief," September 1, 1972, 1-2.

sector compared to the Ugandan Africans who earned on average £EA 152 and £EA 199 respectively.”¹⁴⁴

To build on these two reports that described the potential benefits of resettling Ugandan Asians, another document received from the United Kingdom outlined the successful settlement of Kenyan Asian immigrants who had arrived in 1968. The report highlighted rapid labour market integration and stated that “the majority of those seeking jobs were placed in employment within a six-week period. In no case did the period of unemployment extend beyond six months.”¹⁴⁵ This reinforced the Canadian government’s understanding that Ugandan Asians would fare relatively well in Canada in terms of achieving high levels of employment. Desroches’ report alongside the concrete data that was sent to External Affairs substantiated the Canadian government’s prior knowledge of Ugandan Asians being highly educated, highly skilled, and proficient entrepreneurs who spoke English. Utilizing the points system as a means of screening Ugandan Asian refugees ensured that Canada received a significant proportion of individuals who would successfully contribute to the economy.

Under the requirements outlined within the August 22nd, 1972 memorandum, it was estimated that Canada would accept 3,000 Ugandan Asian expellees.¹⁴⁶ Using past immigration statistics from Uganda, with an acceptance rate of forty percent, it was expected that only about 1,000 to 1,200 Ugandan Asians would be admissible to Canada without any special assistance.¹⁴⁷ The rest would be provided additional aid in the form of “special transportation arrangements, including unrestricted Assisted Passage loans, and the provision of additional adjustment assistance in Canada,” which would cost the government an estimated total of five million dollars for all 3,000 Ugandan Asian expellees.¹⁴⁸ Both memorandums do mention the possibility of accepting more refugees if they met normal requirements within the immigration points

¹⁴⁴ LAC, RG 76, volume 990, file 5850-3-650 “Manpower Planning Unit Background Brief,” 1-2.

¹⁴⁵ LAC, Records of the Health Department, RG 29 volume 3090, file 843-3-36 “East African Asians in the United Kingdom,” September 15, 1972, 2.

¹⁴⁶ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 948, file sf-c-1-1 “Memoranda to Cabinet on Immigration Policy,” August 22, 1972, 2.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 2-3.

system.¹⁴⁹ This formed the basis for how chief immigration officer in Uganda Roger St. Vincent and his team evaluated Ugandan Asians expellees.

Following Trudeau's public announcement on August 24th, 1972 Roger St. Vincent received a telegram on the same day from G.M. Mitchell, the Director General of the Foreign Branch, to "proceed to Kampala and by whatever means undertake to process without numerical limitation those Asians who meet the immigration selection criteria bearing in mind their particular plight and facilitate their departure for Canada."¹⁵⁰ The immigration team in Kampala was expected to adhere to the current points system of immigration and apply it to Ugandan Asian expellees. However, given the situation there was a specific provision within immigration policy that would enable a more relaxed selection criterion. Ugandan Asians were considered an oppressed minority as opposed to refugees under the 1951 *United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*.¹⁵¹ Since Ugandans of South Asian descent were being targeted within their country of residence, as they made up only one percent of the population, they were justly considered to be an oppressed minority. They were not considered *de facto* refugees since according to the Canadian government "they will be citizens of other countries and could legally go to Britain, India, Pakistan, or Bangladesh."¹⁵² Moreover, as stipulated by the *UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, an individual must be "outside of the country of his [or her] nationality" to be qualified as a refugee.¹⁵³ Since Ugandan Asians continued to reside within Uganda during the expulsion period, they were not considered to be refugees.

Labelling Ugandan Asians as expellees reflected the opinion of James Cross, the Acting Assistant Deputy Minister for the Department of Manpower and Immigration, who recommended caution against using the term refugees. He argued that he "would recommend against treating these persons as refugees, or we may place ourselves in a position of having to react similarly in every country where government wants to get rid of unpopular minorities by

¹⁴⁹ LAC, RG 76, volume 948, file sf-c-1-1 "Memoranda to Cabinet on Immigration Policy," 4; LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 145, file 5850-3-650 "Memorandum to the minister," August 22, 1972, 5.

¹⁵⁰ St. Vincent, *Seven Crested Cranes*, viii.

¹⁵¹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 948, file sf-c-1-1 "Memoranda to Cabinet on Immigration Policy," August 22, 1972, 2.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees," December 2010, 14.

forcing them to migrate.”¹⁵⁴ Consequently, the terms ‘stateless’ and ‘Uganda expellees’ were used to describe Ugandan Asians during the period. These identifiers served as a means of mitigating the use of severely relaxed selection criteria, reflected that they did not fit within the convention definition, and prevented the Canadian government from being responsible for any further minority expulsions globally. By adhering to the oppressed minorities clause, Canadian officials effectively issued a one-time response to the crisis while simultaneously screening applicants for the best qualified Ugandan Asians.

The oppressed minorities clause within Canadian immigration policy came into effect on September 29th, 1970 and outlined that under extreme circumstances the “inability to meet selection requirements notwithstanding, examining officers have discretion to admit such (members of oppressed minorities) when the information available indicates that there is sufficient private and/or government assistance available to ensure the applicants’ successful establishment in Canada.”¹⁵⁵ There was some leeway for officials to admit expellees on compassionate grounds, which coincided with the submissions to cabinet. There was a clear humanitarian angle to the clause but an imperative component within the legislation was the requirement of “sufficient private and/or government assistance ...to ensure the applicants’ successful establishment in Canada.”¹⁵⁶ Canada’s humanitarian effort still needed to factor in financial considerations within the resettlement initiative. However, based on the initial feedback from St. Vincent’s team within the first week of running the initiative in Uganda, a new memorandum to cabinet from the Department of Manpower and Immigration significantly altered the operations in Kampala.

The primary issue within the September 13th, 1972 submission to cabinet is that more than the originally estimated 1,000 to 1,200 expellees met selection requirements. The memorandum stated that “early processing results from Kampala now indicate that more than 3,000 applicants will meet *normal requirements* [my emphasis] by the end of this month.”¹⁵⁷ Immigration officials

¹⁵⁴ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 990, file 5850-3-650 “East Indians in Uganda,” August 8, 1972, 1.

¹⁵⁵ LAC, RG 76, volume 948, file sf-c-1-1 “Memoranda to Cabinet on Immigration Policy,” 2.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ LAC, RG 76, volume 948, file sf-c-1-1 “Memoranda to Cabinet on Immigration Policy,” 1.

in Kampala were well aware that the vast majority of those who have already applied to Canada within the first week were more than qualified under standard immigration policy. Furthermore, the memorandum provides four possible recommendations for the government to respond to the developments in Kampala. The minister for Manpower and Immigration, suggested that the Canadian government should adhere to recommendation number four which advocated for an “unlimited number of unassisted applicants plus a limited number of fully assisted applicants.”¹⁵⁸ Mackasey’s suggestion involved removing the initial limit of 3,000 expellees who would normally be able to come to Canada and allow for the acceptance of a maximum of 1,000 under special circumstances (those who would not qualify under the conventional points system).¹⁵⁹ This appeased all parties involved. It demonstrated Canada’s commitment to a humanitarian effort both nationally and internationally, pacified Britain’s request to aid in the resettlement of Ugandan Asian expellees, and enabled the arrival of a highly skilled group of individuals who could easily integrate into Canada both socially and economically. However, there is one fundamental element that influenced Canada’s involvement in the initiative that was hidden from the public.

The Liberal government’s decision to accept Ugandan Asian expellees was also due to the intervention of His Highness Prince Karim al-Husayni Aga Khan IV. As the spiritual leader of Shia Imami Nizari Ismaili Muslims, the second largest Shia Muslim group in the world, he was deeply concerned with the expulsion decree since it affected a large number of Ismailis living in Uganda. Upon hearing of the expulsion decree, the leader of the Ismaili community called Trudeau asking if Canada could provide a safe haven for those who had been expelled.¹⁶⁰ The Aga Khan advised the Ismaili community in Uganda to take out Ugandan citizenship during

¹⁵⁸ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 948, file sf-c-1-1 “Immigration to Canada of Asian Expellees from Uganda, September 15, 1972, 3.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 1.

¹⁶⁰ John Geddes, “A Holy Man with an Eye for Connections.” *Maclean’s Magazine*, October 27, 2010. <http://www2.macleans.ca/2010/10/27/a-holy-man/> (date accessed: June 25, 2012) and Adrienne Clarkson, *Room for All of Us: Surprising Stories of Loss and Transformation*, (Toronto: Penguin Group, 2011), 23. Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau and the Aga Khan shared a very close friendship which is not recorded in any major biographies of Trudeau. Letters between both individuals contained in LAC, Pierre Elliot Trudeau fond, MG 26 O20 “Personal Correspondence 1965-1985” demonstrate their cordial relations. They sent each other personal congratulations on the birth of their respective children, wished each other happy new year, and often signed off letters with “in friendship”. Furthermore, the Aga Khan was an honorary pallbearer at the Pierre Elliot Trudeau’s funeral solidifying their close personal relationship.

independence in 1962 in order to reduce tensions between the community and local Ugandans.¹⁶¹ Unfortunately, this meant that Ismailis revoked their British or Indian passports. Furthermore, when attempting to attain Ugandan citizenship some were refused and others had their citizenship taken away from them.¹⁶² In conjunction with this circumstance and Idi Amin's decision to revoke the citizenship rights of all those of South Asian descent, this rendered stateless a significant number of Ismaili Muslims living in Uganda.

While vacationing on the Aga Khan's private island, Costa Smeralda off the coast of Sardinia, Trudeau and the Aga Khan discussed the Imam's anxiety regarding the future of his community in East Africa.¹⁶³ The Canadian government had previously accepted almost 1,500 Ismaili immigrants during the major nationalization programs that took place in both Kenya and Tanzania in 1969 and 1967 respectively.¹⁶⁴ Under these circumstances, the Prime Minister and the Aga Khan worked closely to ensure their successful establishment in Canada. Furthermore, a background paper on Ismaili migration to Canada speculated that Ismaili Ugandan Asians would be readily accepted "into the mainstream of Canadian life" and a "large number of them are professionals and entrepreneurs with available, often substantial, amounts of capital."¹⁶⁵ This coincided with the importance of adaptability to the Canadian labour market and Canada's preference for highly skilled migrants under the points system. The paper also outlined that the past success of the Tanzanian Ismailis was due to the personal ingenuity of the community who coordinated their migration by collaborating with the Canadian government.¹⁶⁶

Building on the favourable review of Ismaili immigrants from Tanzania, the report specifically mentioned that "well-qualified Ismaili candidates applied during the early stages to ensure the community started off on a stable basis, and there are credible reports that the Aga

¹⁶¹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 990, file 5850-3-650 "Memorandum to the Minister - Meeting with the Aga Khan," September 28, 1972, 1.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1214, file 5750-11 "Letter to Prime Minister Trudeau from the Aga Khan," August 23, 1972, 1-3.

¹⁶⁴ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1214, file 5750-11 "Settlement of Ismailis from East Africa," September 18, 1972, 1-2.

¹⁶⁵ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 990, file 5850-3-650 "Background Paper," September 25, 1972, 2.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

Khan established a special fund to assist in financing the resettlement.”¹⁶⁷ Not only did the report outline the proficiencies of the Ismaili community as suitable immigrants but it also detailed the financial and social support extended by the Aga Khan to aid in the resettlement process. The Aga Khan reassured the Canadian government that those settling in Canada would “do so in a methodical and orderly way” and that they would not “become a burden economically or a problem socially for Canada.”¹⁶⁸ Given the context of these previous discussions, the Aga Khan met with Canadian officials to coordinate a specific effort to aid the Ismaili community in Uganda.

In a secret meeting the Aga Khan, his representative in Uganda and President of the Ismaili Council for East Africa, Sir Eboo Pirbhai, and various Canadian government officials on October 4th, 1972 discussed the plight of the Ismaili Ugandan Asians.¹⁶⁹ The main issue at hand for the Aga Khan was what would happen to the Ismaili community after the November expulsion deadline. According to the meeting minutes, the Aga Khan stressed that after the deadline “no government would be responsible; Britain will not recognize them and will instead be concerned with her own nationals. There will be no shield to provide some security.”¹⁷⁰ To assist the Canadian government in addressing the resettlement of Ismailis, the Aga Khan offered to provide significant resources.¹⁷¹ He even offered to provide funding to support their flights to Canada and guaranteed that they “would not take advantage of the situation.”¹⁷² In order to provide a more relaxed selection criterion, the Aga Khan reminded the attendees that “in practice, Uganda does not recognize them [Ugandan Asian Ismailis] and, as a result, they are *de facto* refugees.”¹⁷³ The majority of the meeting members agreed, however, James Cross replied, “that once out of the country, the stateless people definitely would be classified as such, but there is also a flexible policy for oppressed minorities which could be applied.”¹⁷⁴ Given the situation at hand, it was

¹⁶⁷ LAC, RG 76, volume 990, file 5850-3-650 “Background Paper,” 2-3.

¹⁶⁸ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1214, file 5750-11 “Letter to Prime Minister Trudeau from the Aga Khan,” August 23, 1972, 1-3.

¹⁶⁹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 990, file 5850-3-650, part 4 “Aga Khan Meeting,” October 4, 1972, 1.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁷¹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume, 990, file 5850-3-650 “Memorandum to the Minister - Meeting with the Aga Khan,” September 28, 1972, 1.

¹⁷² LAC, RG 76, volume 990, file 5850-3-650, “Aga Khan Meeting,” 3.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

clear that the Canadian government was willing to assist the Ismaili community in Uganda. Another critical element regarding Canada's decision pertains to the alleged 'hockey story'.

A legend has circulated throughout the Ugandan Asian refugee community due to the presentations of members of Kampala's immigration team, namely Michael Molloy and Roger St. Vincent. As the government refrained from specifically identifying the exact number of Ugandan Asians that would be admitted into Canada, the legend asserts that the final number of 6,000 refugees is linked to the 1972 Summit Series. The Aga Khan's visit coincided with game seven of the Summit Series match between Canada and the Soviet Union.¹⁷⁵ As the Aga Khan merits head of state treatment, it was required that an honorary lunch be hosted by the Canadian Government at the Governor General's estate.¹⁷⁶ Since the vast majority of higher level government officials including the Prime Minister, the Minister for the Department of Manpower and Immigration, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs had already met with the Aga Khan and held seniority to skip the lunch, it fell on James Cross to attend. Upon hosting the Aga Khan at the lunch with four colleagues, they inquired from the *maître d'hôtel* if they could subtly communicate the score to the Canadian representatives during the lunch. As Michael Molloy recalled, once the Canadians had tied the game at three the Aga Khan asked a very pertinent question:

So at a certain stage, with the score, the cumulative score the Russians comes up to six points, and Joe [Mike's spouse] and I have gone through the game and we've got it written down at what point that is when you've got a combined score that comes to 6 ... it was only there for a few minutes and ... it's at that very minute that the Aga Khan says, who's a big exasperator, 'so tell me Mr. Cross how many are you going to admit?' And it's at that minute that the maître d flashes 6 fingers from the door. And Cross as far as I can tell puts 6 fingers down on the, he's very excited and puts 6 fingers at that table and looks at his friends. And the Aga Khan looks at the fingers and he said, 'you mean 6,000? That's splendid, well of course'.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ John Nazareth, "How Hockey Determined the Number of Asian Refugees Accepted by Canada," *Kampala Goan Institute 100th Anniversary*, June 2010, 38-39; Mike Molloy interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 13, 2014.

¹⁷⁶ "Michael Molloy - Uganda Asian Refugee Movement 1972," YouTube Video, 1:31:49, 40th anniversary lecture on October 18, 2012, posted by Western University Migration and Ethnic Relations, May 2, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtQPKNhxymY>.

¹⁷⁷ Mike Molloy interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 13, 2014.

The events described in the ‘hockey story’ coincided with the change in cabinet documents in early October which specified the numerical limit being increased to 6,000. Furthermore, Roger St. Vincent verified a similar account of events at York University during the twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations of the Ugandan Asian refugee resettlement in Canada.¹⁷⁸ There are no government documents or testimonies that verify the exact details of the lunch and the confirmation of 6,000 Ugandan Asians being admitted to Canada within the expulsion period. Since the story has been repeated on several occasions by immigration officials and has evolved as a fundamental narrative within the Ugandan Asian refugee community it is strongly associated with the resettlement initiative. However, the need to create a method to potentially curb admission policies for Ismaili Muslims persisted.

Government officials were concerned over the possibility of being criticized for giving priority in their processing to “this particular group over the other applicants who represent the Hindu, Sikh, Christian religions as well as other Moslem elements.”¹⁷⁹ However, within the meeting with the Aga Khan the officials present agreed to keep the entire operation discreet. As was the case in previous initiatives “a confidential list was passed to the government and as people [members of the Ismaili community] turned up they were checked off.”¹⁸⁰ It was agreed that the Aga Khan would not tell his community on the ground and have Sir Eboo Pirbhai provide the immigration officials with a confidential list via the High Commission office in Nairobi.¹⁸¹ To prevent any further potential backlash from the Canadian public or any other international body and to avoid allegations of favouritism, officials proposed that they “instruct our team in Kampala to give priority in processing to all applicants who are stateless.”¹⁸² The term ‘stateless’ served as a panacea for the Canadian government’s resettlement initiative. Using the specific terminology of stateless enabled Canada to: appease the public and demonstrate their international standing by showcasing their humanitarian efforts in regards to the plight of Ugandan Asians, answer Britain’s call to the Commonwealth to respond to the situation, avoid using an overtly relaxed selection criteria if they were labeled as refugees, honour the secret

¹⁷⁸ John Nazareth, “How Hockey Determined the Number of Asian Refugees Accepted by Canada,” *Kampala Goan Institute 100th Anniversary*, June 2010, 38-39.

¹⁷⁹ LAC, RG 76, volume, 990, file 5850-3-650 “Memorandum to the Minister - Meeting with the Aga Khan,” 1.

¹⁸⁰ LAC, RG 76, volume 990, file 5850-3-650 “Aga Khan Meeting,” 3.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

¹⁸² LAC, RG 76, volume, 990, file 5850-3-650 “Memorandum to the Minister - Meeting with the Aga Khan,” 2.

agreement with the Aga Khan and admit a large number of Ismaili Muslims, and dismiss allegations that the Canadian government was “skimming the cream off the total Ugandan movement.”¹⁸³

For Ismailis, in particular, using the term stateless was beneficial for their admission to Canada. Officials justified the decision internally as they agreed that it was the “Ismailis who have been hardest hit by the expulsion and citizenship measures.”¹⁸⁴ Ultimately, the Canadian government outlined that Ismailis were to be “given favourable treatment by virtue of our readiness to treat stateless persons on a priority basis.”¹⁸⁵ This created a perplexing situation for St. Vincent and his team in Kampala. Since they were directly instructed to accept anyone that was legitimately stateless, immigration officials in Uganda were puzzled by the consistent requests of Ismaili community leaders to accept more Ismailis. On October 13th, representatives of the Ismaili community requested to see Roger St. Vincent. They handed him a list of 133 Ismailis who had not been called for an interview and demanded an explanation.¹⁸⁶ St. Vincent responded that he would review the request over the weekend but he was subject to admit any eligible Ugandan Asian and was unable to provide preferential treatment to the Ismaili community. When St. Vincent had turned down the leaders they responded with a threat that they would turn to a higher power. This was undoubtedly Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, the uncle of Aga Khan IV, who was the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.¹⁸⁷

Furthermore, St. Vincent recalled how he was requested to meet with Sir Eboo in Nairobi to discuss the need to admit more Ismaili Ugandan Asians. According to St. Vincent the President of the Ismaili Council for East Africa

was not happy, he was not pleased, he wished us to make a difference and see to the examination on exceptional basis of all the Ismaili citizens. And I said, ‘I cannot do that, there is no, it is a universal immigration, it’s based on universality and universality means that the treatment is equal for all people. Already we are doing something different in selecting the stateless person, so the Ismailis, we cannot do

¹⁸³ LAC, RG 76, volume 948, file sf-c-1-1 “Memoranda to Cabinet on Immigration Policy”, 3.

¹⁸⁴ LAC, Records from the Department of External Affairs, RG 25, volume 8794, file 20-1-2-UGDA “Uganda Situation Report,” October 5, 1972, 4.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ St. Vincent, *Seven Crested Cranes*, 82.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 102.

more than that'. He left me very unhappy but I was not unhappy. I felt that I was doing what I was supposed to do. Look after, if my government told me to select all the Asians, stateless regardless of the others, I would have done so but I never received such information, any such directive.¹⁸⁸

Although St. Vincent was purposely kept in the dark of the private agreement between the Aga Khan and the Canadian government, it is clear that the decision to resettle Ugandan Asians was also motivated by the Aga Khan's appeal to aid the Ismaili community in Uganda. The importance of reviewing the application for all those who were stateless was reiterated by the Canadian government when Roger St. Vincent received specific orders from Ottawa on October 31st, 1972 to reassess all the applications of those who claimed to be stateless before closing the Canadian immigration office. Those who had a legitimate claim were invited to be interviewed by the immigration team.¹⁸⁹ Overall, the motivations surrounding Canada's response to the expulsion decree issued by President Idi Amin encompassed a variety of private interests which were embodied in the specific terminology of accepting all stateless individuals.

Canada's response to admit Ugandan Asian refugees reflected the dominance of the liberal internationalist approach regarding refugees and immigrants in the 1970s. With both the formal removal of discriminatory measures and the reintegration of the courts within immigration policy, resettling a significant number of Ugandan Asians occurred within the emergence of human rights discourse in Canada.¹⁹⁰ As Canada affirmed their commitment to the United Nations by signing the 1951 Refugee Convention in 1969, the government clearly articulated their humanitarian impulses on the global political scene.¹⁹¹ Although the Liberal government announced the creation of multiculturalism policy in October 1971 there are no official records that justified Canada's decision to admit Ugandan Asians based on commitments to diversity.¹⁹² Immigration historians including, Dirks, Knowles, and Kelley and Trebilcock have also refrained from attributing Canada's mission in Kampala to promoting multiracialism in Canada.

¹⁸⁸ Roger St. Vincent, interview S. Muhammedi, Montreal, October 30, 2015.

¹⁸⁹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 3424, file 854-3-36 "Phasing Out Operations, Kampala," October 27, 1972, 2.

¹⁹⁰ Christopher G. Anderson, *Canadian Liberalism and the Politics of Border Control, 1867-1967* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013), 188.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Canada, *House of Commons Debate* (October 8, 1971), VIII, 8545.

This chapter also complicated the conclusions of Suha Diab who argued that “Canada’s swift humanitarian response to the Ugandan Asian crisis sought to affirm its loyalty and responsibility to Britain and the Commonwealth and secure the migration of a highly desirable group, especially given the financial assurances provided by Aga Khan.”¹⁹³ The push towards human rights, the Commonwealth connection, and prior knowledge of Ugandan Asians being highly educated, highly skilled, and proficient entrepreneurs played a critical role in the country’s decision to admit Ugandan Asian refugees. As will be explored in the ensuing chapter, the team in Kampala implemented a universalist admission policy that was both humanitarian and self-serving. Ultimately, the arrival of Ugandan Asians marked the first major group of non-European refugees to be resettled in Canada, demonstrating the shift in political discourse to extend rights to non-citizens.¹⁹⁴ This case study set a precedent for how other major resettlements in the 1970s would be carried out including the arrival of Chilean, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian refugees. Given the background of Canada’s resettlement initiative, the immigration team sent to Kampala began processing Ugandan Asian expellees.

¹⁹³ Suha Diab, “Between Fear and Vulnerability: The Emergence of the Humanitarian Security-Nexus in the Canadian Refugee Protection Regime” (Ph.D., Carleton University, 2014), 19-20.

¹⁹⁴ Anderson, *Canadian Liberalism and the Politics of Border Control*, 191.

Chapter 3:

‘His Dream Became my Nightmare’: Experiences of Ugandan Asians during the 90-Day Expulsion Period and the Canadian Immigration Team in Kampala

His dream became the nightmare of 80,000 Ugandan Asians who were subsequently forced to leave the country.

Azim Motani, 1994¹

He said, ‘I’m not going to leave this country, this is my home ... if I will die, I will die here’.

Mumtaz Mamdani, 2015²

Initially what had happened was when the planes and stuff was coming into Uganda nobody wanted to leave, people wanted to wait.

Errol Francis, 2015³

The 90-day expulsion period was devastating for Ugandan Asian expellees. They were forced to flee their homes with limited personal possessions often leaving behind not only businesses and properties but close friends and fond memories. Many endured varying forms of harassment as ‘Amin’s goons’ continued to terrorize expellees in an effort to expedite their departure from Uganda. Under these circumstances, visa and immigration officers landed in Kampala and began processing as many stateless Ugandan Asian refugees as possible. Selection criteria was guided by both the points system and the personal discretion of immigration officers stationed in Uganda. This chapter explores the admission procedures on the ground and discusses how not all those who were given visas to Canada were genuinely stateless. Immigration officers initially accepted anyone who qualified and disregarded their citizenship status. Additionally, some Ugandan Asians purposefully refrained from disclosing their nationality to gain entry to Canada. Ultimately, international organizations arrived in Uganda during the later stages of the expulsion period to accept responsibility for all those who were not eligible to be resettled elsewhere. They were

¹ Richard Saunders, *Journey Into Hope*, directed by Richard Saunders (Ottawa, 1994).

² Anonymous, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Calgary, July 29, 2015.

³ Errol and Delphine Francis, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 17, 2015.

largely sent to temporary transit centres throughout Europe while smaller numbers were accepted by the United States, Australia, Argentina, Brazil, and Columbia.⁴

This section of the dissertation recaptures the lived experiences of Ugandan Asian expellees during the ninety-day expulsion period. By understanding how the immigration team in Kampala screened applicants and the harrowing experiences of refugees as they fled the country this chapter sheds light on the balance between humanitarianism and opportunism in conjunction with exploring the precise historical moment when the identities of Ugandan Asians faced direct confrontation with the Ugandan government. Additionally, this chapter challenges arguments made by Bert N. Adams and Mike Bristow who assert that the prevalence of harassment amongst expellees was over represented due to rumours within the community and the British media attempting to attract sympathy amongst U.K. citizens.⁵ As operations concluded in Uganda, Canadians expressed their support or disdain for the federal government's decision to admit Ugandan Asian expellees into Canada. Amidst varying concerns over domestic issues and a humanitarian impulse to aid those in need, Ugandan Asian refugees were ultimately received with the support of the majority of Canadians in the early 1970s.

Canadian Immigration Team in Kampala

Roger St. Vincent did not arrive in Kampala until August 31st, 1972, where he was introduced to the rest of the team and began the necessary operations to establish a temporary Canadian immigration office.⁶ Upon his arrival in Kampala, one of his chief contacts was Mr. A. Mevdghi, an Ismaili Ugandan Asian and manager of the Jubilee Insurance Company. Mevdghi was happy to lend a helping hand offering two typing desks, chairs and the services of his secretary to help with the purchase of supplies from local shops.⁷ Prior to opening the Canadian office, St. Vincent consulted with British immigration

⁴ "4,000 Stateless Asians to Fly out to Europe," Daily Nation, November 1, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 117.

⁵ Bert Adams and Mike Bristow, "Ugandan Asian Expulsion Experiences: Rumour and Reality," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 14, no. 3 (1979): 191–203.

⁶ Roger St. Vincent, *Seven Crested Cranes: Asian Exodus from Uganda: The Role of Canada's Mission to Kampala*, (Ottawa: Canadian Immigration and Historical Society, 1993), 12.

⁷ St. Vincent, *Seven Crested Cranes*, 14.

officials who had already begun their application process. St. Vincent noticed rather quickly that there were numerous differences within their procedures for issuing visas. According to St. Vincent, the British immigration officers had no “selection criteria, no medical section examination, x-ray, blood or ‘stool’ tests, no stage ‘b’, no assisted passage, and no charter aircrafts.”⁸ Furthermore, it was a largely paper process, where British officials asked few questions and their primary objective was to identify if applicants were British subjects.⁹

St. Vincent recalled that passports of those applying to Britain were often returned to Ugandan Asians with an entry visa “within fifteen minutes!”¹⁰ The lead of the immigration team in Kampala argued that Canadian immigration officials followed a strict procedure for granting visas to the Ugandan Asians in comparison to British authorities. One of St. Vincent’s greatest frustrations at the time was the mandatory medical examination sanctioned by the federal government’s Health Department. He argued that:

the Ugandans were to have a blood test, urine test, stool test, which was incredible because they were healthy people that didn’t require. I was never asked my opinion otherwise I would’ve said they didn’t require any of those. Possibly the only thing I would’ve condoned was the x-ray which was universal ... we had been going to East Africa for years and during the years we were going there we selected people who were Asians, never requiring such documentation, such tests from them because it was not required. They were healthy people and they only required an x-ray and a medical examination would suffice.¹¹

St. Vincent believed the tests were absolutely unnecessary especially since no other Asian immigrant from East Africa had been required to complete a medical examination in the past. Implementing a medical screening process undoubtedly decreased the efficiency of immigration officials to distribute visas in Kampala. Additionally, during the resettlement of Hungarian refugees, medical examinations were conducted in Canada.¹² Documents from

⁸ St. Vincent, *Seven Crested Cranes*, 15.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Roger St. Vincent, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Montreal, October 30, 2015.

¹² St. Vincent, *Seven Crested Cranes*, 63.

the Health Department provide insight as to why the government sought to implement these tests.

Since Ugandan Asians were screened under regular selection criteria, the Health Department reasoned that standard procedures regarding medical examinations were necessary. According to the department “persons found inadmissible under the Immigration Act on health grounds are not being accepted.”¹³ Health Department officials argued that Ugandan Asians needed to be screened for the following illnesses: smallpox, cholera, yellow fever, tuberculosis, malaria, parasites, typhoid and syphilis.¹⁴ There was discussion within the department surrounding the ability of the Canadian government to conduct medical exams once Ugandan Asians reached Canada but this was “considered a very undesirable alternative” according to Dr. R.W. Robertson, the Regional Overseas Director for Department of Health.¹⁵ Dr. Piché was the lead military doctor on site in Kampala and was responsible for overseeing the entire Canadian medical team. According to Dr. Piché, approximately ninety-five percent of the Ugandan Asians being screened had malaria at one point in their lives.¹⁶ However, this would be the only major health concern amongst those who applied to Canada. Other medical officials on the ground were reported to have documented that almost 200 Asians were being screened daily in Kampala, all of whom were healthy.¹⁷ This coincided with the sentiments of St. Vincent who argued that these tests only slowed down the efforts of the immigration team in Kampala and were not necessary since the Ugandan Asians were ‘healthy people’. Beyond these medical concerns regarding the movement, Canadian officials requested reassurance that expellees were not going to pose a major threat to Canada’s national security.

¹³ LAC, Records of the Health Department, RG 29, volume 3090, file 854-2-36, “Letter to Dr. Jacques Brunet from Dr. Maurice Leclaire,” September 27, 1972, 1.

¹⁴ LAC, Records of the Health Department, RG 29, volume 3424, file 854-3-36, “Uganda Immigration Team,” September 5, 1972, 1; LAC, Records of the Health Department, RG 29, volume 3090, file 854-3-36, “Memorandum to the Assistant Deputy Minister of Medical Services,” August 25, 1972, 1; LAC, Records of the Health Department, RG 29, volume 3090, file 854-3-36, “Ugandan Asian Program - Meeting with Commodore Roberts,” August 30, 1972, 1.

¹⁵ LAC, RG 29, volume 3090, file 854-3-36, “Ugandan Asian Program - Meeting with Commodore Roberts,” 1.

¹⁶ LAC, Records of the Health Department, RG 29, volume 3090, file 854-3-36, “Public Health Aspects of Ugandan Immigrant Program,” October 12, 1972, 1.

¹⁷ LAC, Records of the Health Department, RG 29, volume 3090, file 854-3-36, “200 Asians Screened Daily,” October 16, 1972, 1.

Similar to the resettlement of Hungarian refugees, there was little security screening amongst Ugandan Asian refugees. There was only one member of the Royal Canadian Military Police in Uganda who accompanied the immigration team in Kampala and they subsequently returned to Canada after only seven days.¹⁸ Government officials flirted with the idea of potentially screening individuals once they arrived in Canada given that President Amin had dismissed seventeen of his top security men, effectively rendering it impossible for RCMP officers to reliably screen expellees.¹⁹ However, intelligence reports conducted by the RCMP officer in Kampala concluded that it was unlikely that Canada “will encounter any appreciable number of security problems with the Ugandans.”²⁰ The RCMP did provide the immigration team in Kampala with a list of known ‘undesirables’ based on information they had received from Britain in an attempt to negate the minimal security risks of admitting Ugandan Asians to Canada.²¹ Furthermore, the security report from the RCMP argued that it was doubtful that any major protests would occur within Canada once the Ugandan Asians arrived.²² Since Ugandan Asian refugees were fleeing the instalment of an authoritarian regime and there was no overt link to communism, they were considered to be a low security risk. Given the Cold War context of the 1970s, Ugandan Asians did not seem to pose a threat to Canadian society of being communist sympathizers. Given the recent migration of other East African Asians to Canada, particularly those from Kenya, it was clear that all East African Asians were the victims of authoritarian governments as opposed to being supporters of the communist cause. Beyond the medical and security concerns of the Canadian government, the final major element to be addressed was transportation and the administration of Assisted Passage loans.

Originally, the Canadian government’s intention was to provide Assisted Passage loans at six percent interest to Ugandan Asians refugees to cover the costs of their flights from

¹⁸ LAC, RG 29, volume 3090, file 854-3-36, “200 Asians Screened Daily,” 1.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 990, file 5850-3-650, “Uganda Meeting,” September 18, 1972, 1.

²¹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 990, file 5850-3-650, “Uganda Meeting,” September 11, 1972, 1.

²² Ibid.

Kampala to Montreal and then the further voyage from Montreal to wherever they were resettled within Canada.²³ This was a standard practice within Canadian immigration policy as all qualified immigrants would be responsible for funding their own voyage to Canada. However, this did not apply in its entirety to Ugandan Asians, as the Canadian government would absorb the cost of their flights from Kampala to Montreal. The reason behind Canada's benevolence towards the Ugandan Asians was that Ugandan authorities insisted that "if the airlift is in any way a commercial venture with the immigrants being charged for their transportation, East African Airline must be involved with the operation."²⁴ Since the Canadians needed clearance of landing rights for Canadian charter planes from the Ugandan government, they could not simply circumvent this stipulation. Even if the Canadians used their own charter aircrafts, the Ugandan government demanded that East African Airlines receive a fifty percent share of the revenue regardless if they carried any passengers or not.²⁵ This placed the Canadian government in a difficult position. In order to appease the Ugandan government and gain clearance permission, the Canadian government ultimately decided that the "Canadian operation was non-commercial in character, without cost to those transported."²⁶ Although the Assisted Passage loans were waived for their flights to Montreal, they did receive loans for the second leg of their trip within Canada which required repayment.²⁷ In the end, the majority of those who were issued visas in Kampala received free transportation except for 328 Ugandan Asians opted to personally fund their own flights to Canada.²⁸ Having established all the details of how operations would run in Kampala, the immigration team began their operations to admit any qualified Ugandan Asian within the ninety day expulsion period.

²³ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 990, file 5850-3-3-650, "Uganda Asians - Repayment of Assisted Passage Loans," August 16, 1973, 1.

²⁴ LAC, , RG 76, volume 990, file 5850-3-3-650, "Uganda Meeting," 1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁶ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 990, file 5850-3-3-650, "Final Report - Expellees Travelling on Charter Flights," November 14, 1972, 2.

²⁷ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 990, file 5850-3-3-650, "Uganda Asians - Repayment of Assisted Passage Loans," August 16, 1973, 1; Roger St. Vincent, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Montreal, October 30, 2015.

²⁸ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 990, file 5850-3-3-650, "Report Respecting the Special Movement of Ugandan Asians," December 5, 1972, 2.

The immigration team in Kampala established a standard procedure, which was applied to all Ugandan Asians. First, they received an application to be filled out and returned as soon as possible. Upon review by Canadian immigration officials, a list of eligible applicants for a formal interview with one of the immigration officials was posted in the local newspaper, the *Uganda Argus*. If they passed the interview, candidates were then required to complete a medical examination including an x-ray, serology test, urine sample, and stool sample.²⁹ Only upon passing each phase did an applicant receive a visa. By the time the office officially opened on September 6th at 7:30a.m. Ugandan Asians had already been waiting in line since 4a.m.³⁰ The first immigrant to receive a visa was Mrs. Semin Kassam.³¹ She passed the interview process and provided proper medical documentation that included an x-ray and stool report. Within the first week of operations the Canadian immigration office distributed 3,736 applications to heads of families and individual applicants, which accounted for 11,208 expellees.³²

As the team continued to process applicants in Kampala, various shifts occurred in the selection process which enabled immigration officers to be more flexible when admitting Ugandan Asians who did not meet the required fifty-point minimum. ‘Discretionary authority’ was granted to all immigration officers under section 32 of the immigration regulations authorizing them to add points in certain categories if they appeared “adaptable, had proved it and were ready and willing to go anywhere.”³³ Furthermore, officials could also opt to use their own discretion when allotting ten points under the ‘personal suitability’ portion of the application form. Second in command in Kampala, Michael Molloy remembered how immigration officials used this in a subjective manner: “we had ten points to give them on the basis of what was called ‘personal suitability’ and that meant evidence of adaptability, flexibility, you know, is the family hanging together? You know, that sort of thing. It was kind of quite subjective.”³⁴ Immigration officials in Kampala had the personal

²⁹ St. Vincent, *Seven Crested Cranes*, 39.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 26.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

³² *Ibid.*, 37.

³³ *Ibid.*, 42.

³⁴ Mike Molloy, interview by Heather Leroux, The Ugandan Asian Archive Oral History Project, Archives and Research Collections, Carleton University Library, Ottawa, August 13, 2014, accessed on April 18, 2016. https://arc.library.carleton.ca/sites/default/files/audio/UAC_Molloy_Transcript_0.pdf.

liberty to admit those who they deemed to be well suited for life in Canada. Another critical element within the selection process pertained to those who already had relatives living in Canada. Molloy also noted how:

it was really amazing, by week two we were getting telegrams from people's aunties and uncles in Canada, or even friends saying you know, "My friend Mr. Ahmad, you're number 443..." you know, that quickly the numbers went back... went across to Canada and came back to us. And we got so many of those that we actually had to have a special system to keep track of them. Because it made a big difference when you opened that application and you look at their name and you open it up and right there is a telegram from somebody's auntie in Coquitlam, British Columbia saying this is my niece, nephew, my niece, my friend and if you let them in, we'll look after them. We just said, that's as good as gold. That's one we don't have to worry about. So in those cases you would always use your discretionary authority even if they didn't meet the points system, you'd always use the discretionary.³⁵

As described by Molloy, if Ugandan Asians possessed a relative in Canada who was willing to support them, this virtually guaranteed their admissibility to be resettled in Canada. Previous migration to Canada of friends and family members would prove to be a crucial asset to those applying for asylum during the expulsion period. St. Vincent recounted in his oral history interview that certain members of the Ugandan Asian community "had relatives which they left behind and these relatives that were left behind, especially in Uganda, were given a priority because they had someone in Canada. That was one of the basic requirements for us, was to select on a priority basis those who would present no problem in resettling in Canada."³⁶ This was seen to inhibit the possibilities of immigrants or refugees failing to adjust to Canadian society. One instance from within the Ugandan Asian community identified the significance of having a family member who had already immigrated to Canada: "fortunately my sister got married in 1970, and I don't know if this is destiny or something because ... she decided she doesn't want to stay in Uganda and the place they chose was Canada. So in '71 they [her sister and her spouse] came to Canada. So they were here, they were just settling down and in '72."³⁷ Since some Ugandan Asians had relatives or friends already living in Canada, they would receive favourable treatment from Canadian immigration officials.

³⁵ Mike Molloy, interview by Heather Leroux, August 13, 2014.

³⁶ Roger St. Vincent, interview by the S. Muhammedi, Montreal, October 30, 2015.

³⁷ Mohamed and Almas Lalji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 12, 2015.

Inherent within this stipulation to favour those who had relatives in Canada was the reassurance of Canadian officials that these expellees would not become public charges or drains on the social system. Since the bulk of applications for Canada were received within the first week, both immigration officials noted that initial applicants were highly qualified under the point system, confirming the submissions to cabinet made in early September.³⁸ As Molloy explained:

We had probably 60-80 percent of all the applications in the box before anybody out in the community had any idea what our criteria were and in fact before we even knew what our criteria were because they didn't settle down until after the war and all the rest of that. So what did that mean? That meant that we had enormous confidence in what we were seeing and the story of what we were being told reflected the reality ... if you're confident in the application you could have confidence in the people and you could sit back and relax and do your job.³⁹

Government documents, St. Vincent's memoir, and oral testimonies from Molloy and St. Vincent described how the immigration team in Kampala implemented a codified approach to the resettlement initiative. This refutes arguments presented by other scholars such as J.L. Granatstein and Robert Bothwell who argue that the lack of formal refugee policy in 1972 allowed immigration officials in Kampala to "invent one along the way."⁴⁰ However, evidence from oral interviews, documented specific instances where criteria was relaxed by Canadian officials as a means of extending favours to certain Ugandan Asian acquaintances or out of sheer benevolence.

Individuals who had close relationships with Canadian immigration officials were able to circumvent some of the procedures that were mandatory for Ugandan Asians applying to Canada. Jalal Jaffer recollected how his previous squash games with an immigration official were considered as his interview and that he "didn't have to go through the hassle of lining

³⁸ Mike Molloy, interview by Heather Leroux, The Ugandan Asian Archive Oral History Project, Archives and Research Collections, Carleton University Library, Ottawa, August 13 2014, accessed on 18 April 2016. https://arc.library.carleton.ca/sites/default/files/audio/UAC_Molloy_Transcript_0.pdf; Roger St. Vincent, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Montreal, October 30, 2015.

³⁹ Michael Molloy, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 13, 2014.

⁴⁰ J.L. Granatstein, and Robert Bothwell, *Pirouette: Pierre Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 283.

up and getting the forms and getting an interview, which a lot of people went through a lot of difficulties and I felt badly that I was jumping the queue if you will. But it wasn't my doing, it was jump or my life."⁴¹ As his life was in danger he rationalized the situation and opted to travel to Canada through his connection at the Canadian office in Kampala. Others met immigration officials informally at local restaurants and bars during the expulsion period. Amin Sunderji recalled meeting an immigration officer at a bar and explained that he was:

waiting for the application I had done to come to Canada but I haven't heard my interview number but then we became a little more friendlier we had a drink together and then he asked me, 'do you have your application numbers?' I gave him my number, my other two brothers numbers, and my brother-in-laws family my sister and her two children ... the next day he asked me to go there and I went there in the afternoon at 2:30pm and he had the files ready and he verified our identification and ... then we got the numbers right away. We got a medical requisition so we went and gave the medical. The very next day when we gave the medical, as soon as they approved our medical they gave us CP air tickets.⁴²

A friendly encounter at a local bar between Ugandan Asians and Canadian officials accelerated the application process for Amin and his family who were all able to resettle in Canada. Another example of this type of interaction which enabled the success of specific applicants is described by Karim Nanji. His father was originally rejected by the Canadian immigration team for failing to meet selection criteria but by chance ended up at a dinner with several Canadian immigration officials. As conversations began, an officer inquired as to Karim's father's immigration status, Karim recounted how "my dad kind of inquisitively looked at him and he says, 'I did' [apply to Canada]. He says, 'oh really? We haven't seen your application come through'. He says, 'no, you're the guy who failed me'. So when that was revealed ... the person actually re-invited dad to come in the next morning and he actually passed him."⁴³ It is clear that personal interactions with Canadian immigration officials held the potential to sway applications in favour of those Ugandan Asians who informally met with the team members in Kampala.

⁴¹ Jalal Jaffer, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 7, 2015.

⁴² Amin and Farida Sunderji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, June 22, 2015.

⁴³ Karim Nanji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 24, 2015.

Furthermore, there were some instances where Canadian officials aided Ugandan Asians in the application process as a means of ensuring a successful application. Shamim Muhammedi remembered how the immigration official encouraged her to change her date of birth on her passport to make her one year older. This was crucial for her application since “he said if I put ‘51 I can bring [names of her mother, and two younger brothers] as my dependents ... I was the adult, that’s the only reason he asked me to change it.”⁴⁴ Immigration officials colluded with some applicants as a means of navigating the points system of immigration and granting entry visas to those who would not have been eligible otherwise. As the operation continued, there were specific shifts in their methods for selecting Ugandan Asians but it still remained within the purview of the Canadian government.

New information from the federal government advised officials in mid-September to accept those who met selection requirements beyond the initial limit of 3,000 people and to accept up to 1,000 Ugandan Asians who required assistance.⁴⁵ The importance of adhering to the points system was reiterated from the federal government but as previously discussed there were several ways in which immigration officials made accommodations. Most importantly, on the weekend of October 7th, 1972 St. Vincent assembled a core group of the team to review all rejected applications to confirm that anyone who was legitimately stateless or who was admissible to Canada under a more relaxed selection criteria were called for an interview. Upon revisiting 6,000 applications 1,988 Ugandan Asians were invited for an interview.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the entire goal of this exercise was to “yield a sufficient number of accepted persons to ensure that by October 31st, we would issue close to 6,000 visas.”⁴⁷ This demonstrated the broader impacts of the Aga Khan’s meeting with Canadian officials in early October and confirms the shift to accept those who were stateless. It also grants some validity to the rumoured hockey story and how the new quota of 6,000 Ugandan Asian refugees was established. However, St. Vincent described that

⁴⁴ Shamim Muhammedi, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 5, 2014.

⁴⁵ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 948, file sf-c-1-1 “Immigration to Canada of Asian Expellees from Uganda, September 15, 1972, 3.

⁴⁶ St. Vincent, *Seven Crested Cranes*, 74.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

many individuals attempted to circumvent the system by making false claims of statelessness.

For example, he recalled in his memoir that he “had not invited all those claiming to be stateless and for good reason. At interviews, Ugandan Asians would sometimes claim to be ‘stateless’. When asked to produce a declaration form from the Uganda Passport Office stating that they had no claim to Ugandan nationality, most were reluctant. This suggested they were less than truthful.”⁴⁸ As word spread throughout the Ugandan Asian community that Canada was admitting all those who were stateless, especially amongst the Ismaili community, individuals who were reluctant to go to Britain or the Indian subcontinent would apply to Canada under the auspices that they were stateless. The leads of the immigration team, Roger St. Vincent and Michael Molloy, ensured that individuals who were stateless were given priority as per their direct orders from Ottawa.

As the team began to conclude their operations in Kampala a few pertinent issues remained by the end of October. The first problem pertained to those who were stateless. Reports from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, disclosed that more than 4,000 individuals had not received any visas as of October 27th, 1972.⁴⁹ Contrary to these reports, the immigration team in Kampala could only identify 1,200 stateless persons of whom 462 had received visas.⁵⁰ Furthermore, almost forty percent of those who had been called for interviews with the Canadian immigration team had not shown up for their respective interviews and 500 visas remained unclaimed as of late October.⁵¹ St. Vincent outlined several reasons why he believed there was a reluctance amongst Ugandan Asians to claim their Canadian visas. Some individuals had their own funds to finance their own voyage to Canada, whereas others sought to purchase first class tickets to flights around the world as a means of keeping their money out of the hands of Ugandan authorities. Many other Ugandan Asians felt that the charter flights were akin to charity and already believed

⁴⁸ St. Vincent, *Seven Crested Cranes*, 93.

⁴⁹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 990, file 5850-3-650 “Ugandan Asians,” October 27, 1972, 1.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

that the Canadian government had done enough. Additionally, accepting a Canadian visa restricted their plans to travel and visit relatives in the U.K. or the Indian subcontinent before coming to Canada. Finally, some opted to postpone their arrival until the spring or “others were dreamers, prepared to wait up to November 8th, in case the General changed his mind.”⁵² These factors limited the ability of Canadian officials to confirm exactly how many Ugandan Asians would be coming to Canada outside of those who boarded chartered flights.

Reports from Ottawa document the total number of visas issued at 6,292 by November 7th, 1972 with over 1,500 not being claimed.⁵³ Since visas were valid for six months, Canadian authorities were unsure as to when they could expect the arrival of the remaining expellees and argued that “unfortunately, we have no way of knowing how many of these some 1,500 off persons will eventually proceed to Canada.”⁵⁴ Ultimately, St. Vincent’s memoir concluded that the number of ‘no shows’ gradually increased to fifty percent by the end of October, as this was a clear indication that others who had not turned up for interviews had already left Uganda by their own means or were granted an exemption to stay from the Ugandan government.⁵⁵ According to St. Vincent the operation was a success leading to over 6,000 visas being issued. By the end of the expulsion deadline 4,420 Ugandan Asians arrived on Canadian soil via chartered aircrafts, and another 1,735 who wished to make their own travel arrangements were granted visas.⁵⁶ However, one of the most crucial components of the entire initiative was the role played by international organizations alongside their interactions with the Canadian government. They would be responsible for ensuring that every Ugandan Asian - who was not granted an exemption - was out of the country by the November 8th deadline.

⁵² St. Vincent, *Seven Crested Cranes*, 41.

⁵³ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file 5850-3-3-650 “Ugandan Expellees - Expenditures,” November 10, 1972, 3.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ St. Vincent, *Seven Crested Cranes*, 112.

⁵⁶ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file 5850-3-5-650 “Ugandan Asians,” May 15, 1973, 1.

International Organizations

The United Nations partnered with both the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) to coordinate the movement of Ugandan Asians who found themselves without any form of citizenship. Their operations formally began on October 26th, 1972 - less than two weeks before the expulsion deadline.⁵⁷ Advertisements posted by the UN in local newspapers clearly identified the urgency of the situation, as the expulsion deadline loomed and specified who was eligible for admission to a transit centre. The UN outlined that its presence in Kampala was to “assist those members of the Asian Community who are of undetermined nationality and who are required to leave Uganda by 8 November, in accordance with Government Decree, No. 17 ... All persons falling into the above-mentioned category, who do not have in their possession any valid travel document MUST report to the above address.”⁵⁸ Local media sources estimated that the total number of Ugandan Asians who lacked any form of legal documentation was anywhere between four to six thousand.⁵⁹ The final report on the movement published by the UN argued that there were roughly “5,900 Asians of undetermined nationality.”⁶⁰ All those who required documentation were provided with the same Red Cross travel certificate that was issued to thousands of refugees upon the conclusion of the Second World War. This was a critical component of the initiative as those without any legal papers were prohibited from purchasing airline tickets by the Ugandan government.⁶¹

The situation became increasingly dire for the international agencies as both the British and Canadian immigration teams concluded their processing of Ugandan Asians. Britain was

⁵⁷ “UN Ready to Process Stateless Asians,” *East African Standard*, October 27, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 115.

⁵⁸ “United Nations Centre Advertisement” in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 115.

⁵⁹ “UN Ready to Process Stateless Asians,” October 27, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion*, 115; “4,000 Stateless Asians to Fly out to Europe,” *Daily Nation*, November 1, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 117.

⁶⁰ “Special Report How They Did It: Resettlement of Asians from Uganda in Europe and North America,” published by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, May 1973 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 165.

⁶¹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file 5850-3-650, “Background Note on Asians of Undetermined Nationality from Uganda,” January 5, 1973, 2.

primarily concerned with anyone who possessed a British passport and Canada had essentially completed their screening process by late October. This left the remaining individuals in a precarious position and under the care of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). International organizations confirmed that they would fly out 4,000 Asians to various transit camps by November 8th, 1972 through East African Airlines at a reduced rate, funded by the 1.8 million dollars in donations made by the international community, except those traveling to Switzerland who were offered free flights by the Swiss government.⁶² ICEM aimed to fly out up to 700 refugees per day of which “2,300 will find temporary haven in Italy, 1,200 in Austria and 300 in Belgium. Austria will keep 250 and Belgium 150 permanently. Denmark has offered to take 40, Norway 200, Netherlands 300, the United States 1,000 and Argentina, Brazil and Colombia together [will accept] 300, also permanently.”⁶³ The final initiative put forth by these international bodies successfully ensured the relocation of a significant proportion of Ugandan Asians who were ineligible to be admitted elsewhere. However, there were still some who remained in Uganda who had not been granted an exemption and were desperately in need of asylum.

Immediately following the expiration of Amin’s deadline, roughly 800 stateless Asians sought refuge in two Sikh temples and a Hindu community centre.⁶⁴ They were unable to depart within the ninety day period but were considered to be under the custody of the UNHCR who confirmed that they would be leaving the country within twenty four hours.⁶⁵ Many of these stranded Ugandan Asians were flown to Malta as the Maltese government responded to the UNHCR’s request to provide temporary sanctuary for 500 Ugandan Asians on the condition that UN would provide funds for their subsistence in Malta and that refugees would not be able to work while awaiting relocation to a country of permanent settlement.⁶⁶ By mid-November almost every Ugandan Asian who was not granted exemption status to remain in the country had

⁶² “4,000 Stateless Asians to Fly out to Europe,” Daily Nation, November 1, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion*, 117.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Michael Knipe, “Only 800 Stateless Asians left as Amin Deadline Expires,” *The Times*, November 9, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 127.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ “500 Expelled Asians Given Temporary Home at Malta,” *Times of Malta*, November 9, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 130.

been resettled internationally. Temporary transit centres alongside refugee camps were established across Europe and adhered to similar conditions imposed by the Maltese government.

Standard procedures for those sent to transit camps are demonstrated by examples in Rome. Many individuals were placed in hotel accommodations, such as La Villa, just outside of Rome, as refugees awaited relocation to more permanent centres in places such as Oslo and Bergen in Norway.⁶⁷ Ugandan Asians were also provided accommodation in out-of-season hotels along the Danube River in upper Austria since the spring and summer tourist seasons had concluded.⁶⁸ Others were stationed in refugee camps, such as the Centro Canzella refugee camp in Italy, where 386 stateless Ugandan Asians awaited permanent resettlement.⁶⁹ This process was replicated in Austria with their main camp being located in Traiskirchen, which provided sanctuary for not only 700 Ugandan Asians but also 900 Eastern European refugees.⁷⁰ Another common practice within European transit centres involved housing refugees temporarily in central transit centres and then moving them to smaller regions of the country. Beyond hotels and refugee camps, Ugandan Asians were held in transit at youth hostels, holiday centres, and military barracks.⁷¹ For example, Ugandan Asians were flown to Stockholm and then relocated to other areas like Alvesta, where 140 refugees were resettled in southern Sweden.⁷² Once Ugandan Asians had safely left their homes, the primary issue for the UNHCR, ICRC, and ICEM was providing permanent settlement locations as many were only being momentarily placed in transit centres such as the one set up in Malta.

⁶⁷ Penny Symon, "Amin Victims Wait to go to Norway," *The Times*, November 27, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 143.

⁶⁸ Robert Chessyre, "Future of Uganda's Exiles Poses Problem for Countries who gave them Refuge," *The Times*, December 14, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 148.

⁶⁹ Penny Symon, "Stateless Refugees Wait and Worry in Italy," *The Times*, November 29, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 144.

⁷⁰ Chessyre, "Future of Uganda's Exiles Poses Problem for Countries who gave them Refuge," in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion*, 148.

⁷¹ "Special Report How They Did It," *Ugandan Asian Expulsion*, 166.

⁷² Rune B. Axelsson, "Their Lives Begin in a Grey Barrack," December 13, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 147.

The UNHCR needed to find permanent areas of resettlement for the expelled Asians, and needed to do so in a timely manner as their special fund to aid in the initiative would be exhausted by February 1973.⁷³ The crisis for the UN was two-fold since 2,000 Ugandan Asians still required to be permanently resettled elsewhere while countries such as Austria, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Spain, Belgium and Greece faced the potential reality of caring for stateless individuals for prolonged periods of time. The latter issue was particularly problematic as some countries were more reluctant to volunteer as temporary safe havens for refugee communities. Another obstacle for international agencies pertained to the unwillingness of specific countries to accept refugees regardless of their varying human conditions. It was imperative that the international community provided asylum without being selective and refusing to admit ‘hardcore’ refugee cases. The UNHCR representative in Austria firmly articulated the issue: “the Austrians did not select when it was a question of saving life. Countries coming forward to help must not pick and choose, but should simply take people by numbers. Otherwise, Austria will be left with duds. It has happened before.”⁷⁴ However, the Austrian representative also noted how “in twenty years I have never met a better crowd of refugees.”⁷⁵ The discourse employed by the Austrian representative coincided with the ideology that humanitarianism is the foundation of refugee resettlement.

This served as a crucial component of how to evaluate Canada’s efforts in screening and admitting Ugandan Asian refugees from 1972 to 1974. In the coming months, Canada would play a critical role in helping to resettle stateless Asians located in transit centres as well as helping reunify refugee families who were separated during the expulsion decree.⁷⁶ Upon the conclusion of the ninety-day expulsion period, Ugandan Asians who were ineligible to remain in Uganda had for the most part been resettled elsewhere on either a permanent or temporary basis. Amidst the crisis, Ugandan Asians navigated the perils of the expulsion period encountering not only harassment from Ugandan military and government officials but also dealing with the complex refugee determination process.

⁷³ Chessyre, “Future of Uganda’s Exiles Poses Problem for Countries who gave them Refuge,” in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion*, 148.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ This will be discussed at length in the subsequent chapter.

Ninety-Day Expulsion Period Through the Eyes of Ugandan Asians

Oral histories with Ugandan Asian refugees recaptured the realities of the ninety-day expulsion period and provided historical insight into the lived experiences of the community as they prepared to leave their homes in Uganda. President Amin, along with his government, made it abundantly clear to Ugandan Asians that they were not to remain within the country at the end of the expulsion period unless they were granted an exemption or held verified documentation proving their citizenship. Many expellees attempted to remain in the country up until the final days as they hoped that the decree would be lifted. Laila Jiwani described how her father, a second generation Ugandan, “didn’t believe until the end that he would have to leave...he loved the food over there, like matoke [a local Ugandan variety of starchy bananas] and all that, we loved it, even I miss it.”⁷⁷ They required extra time to organize their personal affairs while others genuinely believed the president would change his mind. Errol and Delphine Francis explained how “initially what had happened was when the planes and stuff was coming into Uganda nobody wanted to leave, people wanted to wait.”⁷⁸ This reflected reports from Canadian immigration officials who were perplexed as to why early charter flights were not fully booked. Others defied the expulsion order and chose to remain, regardless of their citizenship status, as they believed that their historical roots in the country were too deep to be deported by President Amin. Azim described how his uncle was adamant about staying in Uganda and did not apply for any visas unlike his relatives. Azim Sarangi recalled that his uncle said, “I’m a Ugandan citizen ... I’m not going to move. You guys are crazy to be applying elsewhere.”⁷⁹

For others it was a matter of pride and love for their homeland. Mumtaz Mamdani recalled her grandfather’s decision to remain in Uganda: “he decided that he was not gonna leave, he was old and his wife passed away there and his home was there. He said, ‘I’m not going to leave this country, this is my home ... if I will die, I will die here.’”⁸⁰ For many Ugandan Asians who had entered the later stages of their lives, leaving Uganda was too much to bear. Conversely, it was

⁷⁷ Laila Jiwani, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 14, 2015.

⁷⁸ Errol and Delphine Francis, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 17, 2015.

⁷⁹ Azim Sarangi, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 15, 2015. His uncle stayed behind in Uganda for two years following the expulsion but joined his family members in Canada as conditions for Ugandan Asian business owners deteriorated.

⁸⁰ Anonymous, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Calgary, July 29, 2015.

extremely difficult for them to travel the long distance to Kampala from their respective village or to endure the long flights to their final destinations. Nimira Charania recounted that her grandmother was 102 years old and that she “can’t travel even 7 miles how are we going to get her to any mode of transportation or even leave the country. So we found somebody in Uganda, in Bududa ... she would be more comfortable with them. So what we did was we asked these people if they would take care of my grandmother and we left them everything we owned in Bududa.”⁸¹ Ugandan Asians responded to the expulsion decree in multiple ways as some would remain in the country due to their personal attachments to the country while others sought to live out their remaining days in their homeland. The reluctance to leave the country was challenged by Amin’s regime since the government had established an environment that condoned wide spread violence targeted at both Ugandan Asians and Ugandan Africans.

After the immediate announcement of the expulsion decree, many Ugandan Asians remained relatively calm as they did not interpret the president’s announcement to be legitimate. Government telexes from the High Commission in Kenya documented the numerous closures of Asian shops and that “Asians [are] still under surprise of shock. No panic noticed but all very anxious.”⁸² However, the early days of tranquility for the Ugandan Asian community dramatically changed under harassment from Amin’s soldiers along with various local incidents of violence that permeated throughout the country. The same telex from the High Commissioner underscored the violence targeted towards Asians reporting that “good sources inform us that two Asians [were] taken away by army officers and shot dead near Jinja. Newsmen here report rumours of Asians being beaten and Asian women raped in [the] past two days.”⁸³

Scholars have documented the varying degrees of antagonism levied against the Ugandan Asian community by government and military officials into five principle categories. The first was the inconvenience caused during the 90-day period. Ugandan Asians were forced to adhere to a strict curfew and subjected to extremely long queues at passport offices. Property loss was

⁸¹ Nimira Charania, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, July 10, 2014.

⁸² LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 990, file 5850-3-650, “Uganda: Expulsion of British Asians,” August 9, 1972, 1.

⁸³ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 990, file 5850-3-650, “Uganda: Expulsion of British Asians,” August 9, 1972, 1.

another issue, as it was confiscated by officials, looted or given up as a bribe. The third issue was personal harassment through unwarranted arrests and the searching of one's home or business. The last two fears were rape and murder as members of the public and military had resorted to extreme measures in order to hasten the departure of Ugandan Asians from the country.⁸⁴ Rape and murder occurred in only a few very extreme cases but nonetheless struck fear within the community.⁸⁵ Bert N. Adams and Mike Bristow contend that "physical violence was much less frequent than people thought it was, with beatings by the army involving about one family in twenty, and killing and rape occurring in less than one of every 300 families expelled. Rumours were rampant in the Asian communities, focusing especially on physical violence."⁸⁶ Adams and Bristow attributed widespread reports of violence to attempts by the British media to garner support for the reception of Ugandan Asian refugees. Additionally, they argued that the prominence of these same stories was due to exaggeration and widespread rumours being circulated throughout the Ugandan Asian community. As Jalal argued, "you know within the Indian community if one person is robbed the whole community goes ballistic. If one person is beaten up it's like, whoa, what's happening? If one woman is raped it's like the most despicable thing you could ever hear of, right? So the emotions rise because we'd never been exposed to that."⁸⁷ Munira Dhanani reiterated how news spread quickly within the respective Ugandan Asian religious communities and explained that "because we are so tight knit, when somebody is kidnapped or someone is being tortured you hear of it first-hand. Because news travels like dominoes, right?"⁸⁸ Although Jalal and Munira's oral testimonies supported the arguments presented by Adams and Bristow regarding rumours, additional media sources, government reports, and the majority of oral history participants documented an alternative perspective.

Ugandan Asians became increasingly more apprehensive as tensions continued to rise during the expulsion period. The situation became desperate for all those living in Uganda by September as both Tanzania's coup attempt failed and prominent Ugandan Asian families were imprisoned or taken captive by Amin's troops. Reports from the High Commission revealed

⁸⁴ Bert N. Adams and Mike Bristow, "Ugandan Asian Expulsion Experiences: Rumour and Reality," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 14, no. 3 (1979): 197.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 200.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 201.

⁸⁷ Jalal Jaffer, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 7, 2015.

⁸⁸ Munira Dhanani, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, February 15, 2015.

incidents of violence being carried out against non-citizens, particularly during the failed Tanzanian invasion of Kampala in late September. The High Commissioner in Nairobi reported the authorities in Ottawa that “there are continuing reports of arbitrary detentions and harassment and molestations of whites by undisciplined soldiers, near breakdown of law and order plus tensions engendered by Tanzanian/Uganda dispute continue to contribute to apprehensions of non-Ugandans.”⁸⁹ Amin’s military personnel created an atmosphere of wanton harassment where anyone was susceptible to interrogation, imprisonment, and verbal or physical abuse. The arrest of Manubhai Madhvani on September 5th, 1972 sent shock waves throughout the community as they realized that one of the most powerful Ugandan Asian families was not impervious to harassment from the government.⁹⁰ This also extended to the other famous industrialist family, the Mehtas, as one of their old family friends was dragged from his car and imprisoned for several days in the “notorious Makindye military barracks.”⁹¹ The youth was later released from the prison and reunited with his family but it demonstrated to Ugandan Asians that regardless of one’s status, no one was immune from mistreatment by Amin’s security forces. Furthermore, oral testimonies from Ugandan Asians alongside research from other scholars refuted the claims of Adams and Bristow that rumours inflated the rates of harassment.

Raids on the businesses of Ugandan Asian expellees as well as impromptu searches within their homes were widely documented amongst oral history participants. Aziz Dhalla and his spouse Fatima recounted how Aziz’s brother continued to run their family business during the expulsion period but since Amin’s decree was amended on a frequent basis he thought he could stay in Uganda. Aziz described that:

he knew that things are changing from day to day, maybe he’ll stick around. So he was running the business and I think six weeks to two months later there was an army colonel and a general, they just walked into the store with a gun and said, ‘Okay you’ve got two minutes to get out.’

⁸⁹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 990, file 5850-3-650, “Uganda: Safety of Canadians,” September 24, 1973, 5.

⁹⁰ “Madhvani and his British Manager Arrested,” *News Compilation*, September 6, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 5.

⁹¹ Hugh Davies, “Amin’s Rampaging Soldiers Hold Asians to Ransom,” *The Telegraph*, September 25, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 81.

Fatima: Take your papers and go.

Aziz: So his hands were shaking and he was just hoping that he'd find his passport, you know he's searching and at the last second he found his passport and he left. So you know, he just left everything lock and key.⁹²

This became a common occurrence amongst Ugandan Asians who owned businesses especially if they owned larger commercial enterprises. For example, Edmond and Maria recalled how the manager of Dunlop's central factory in Jinja became one of Amin's 'marked men'. Edmond described that his close friend "was marked by these soldiers, I don't know why they were after him. I don't know if you heard sometimes they would come and check some Indians and take them to the prison, barracks, and all that. And they were after him and he was so worried."⁹³ Fortunately, he avoided being captured and was able to flee the country within a few days of becoming aware that he was a target for Amin's officials. Those who were not willing to adhere to the orders of Amin's military officials suffered the consequences. Errol and Delphine remembered how a family friend did not turn over the keys to his rental car company: "for he was resisting it, which was silly. I told him, 'just give them the keys, it's worth nothing anyways'. And this was in the midst of the problem. But he didn't, so they picked him up and they actually killed him."⁹⁴ Physical violence and various confrontations between business owners and Ugandan army officials were also extended into residential areas.

Several interviewees articulated the numerous raids that took place in their respective neighbourhoods particularly during September and October of 1972. Amin recalled that the community was becoming increasingly anxious: "people were, towards the September-October months, were starting to get very nervous. Military people were going into different homes, they knew people were leaving, raping women ... stealing their luggages."⁹⁵ Other interviewees remembered specific incidents where their own homes were raided and family members were taken by soldiers. Nimira reflected on when officials raided her home and abducted her father and one of her siblings:

⁹² Aziz Dhalla, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, December 24, 2014.

⁹³ Edmond and Maria Rodriguez, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 5, 2015.

⁹⁴ Errol and Delphine Francis, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, April 17, 2015.

⁹⁵ Amin Visram, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Kitchener, March 2, 2015.

they took my brother and my father to some place and out of sheer luck my brother happened to notice somebody else who was driving by and asked for help and they snuck away into that car. But otherwise, God knows what they would have done. We were hearing all kinds of things about what they were doing because they had guns, they had nobody to ask them what they were doing, nobody to question their power.⁹⁶

From Nimira's testimony it was clear that Amin's government had generated an atmosphere that condoned widespread violence and soldiers were not held accountable for their actions. Another instance of abduction was mentioned by Mobina, who recalled how:

before we left the army picked up my husband which wasn't a very pleasant experience, we suffered a lot. But happily because of my father and those with influence they didn't take him to the army barracks because just the day before we lost one Ismaili and we never heard from him again, from Fort Portal. And if they had taken him to the army barracks ... I know I would have never seen him again ... It wasn't pleasant, it was very unpleasant what happened there but still he did come home.⁹⁷

In this instance, the philanthropy of her father prevented her husband from being sent to an army barrack, from where many individuals never returned. Although her husband sustained severe injuries from the kidnapping, he was returned to the family and successfully sought refuge in Britain. The mistreatment of expellees extended beyond their homes and business to include various roadblocks and random checkpoints throughout the country especially along the airport road from Kampala to Entebbe.

Nicholas Van Hear argues that Ugandan Asians who left the country in the earlier days of the expulsion period often had their items confiscated by soldiers or were robbed of their possessions.⁹⁸ According to Van Hear Ugandan Asians "were robbed on the way to the airport by rank and file soldiers, who realized, rightly, that it would be the higher ranking officers and officials who would be the beneficiaries in the officially sanctioned carve-up of Asian assets later on."⁹⁹ Traveling to the airport became a harrowing experience for many Ugandan Asian refugees.

⁹⁶ Nimira Charania, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 8, 2015.

⁹⁷ Mobina Jaffer, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 13, 2015.

⁹⁸ Nicholas Van Hear, *New Diasporas: The Mass Exodus, Dispersal and Regrouping of Migrant Communities* (London: University Colleges London Press Limited, 1998), 70.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

British media described the road to the airport as “an obstacle course with 10 roadblocks manned by trigger happy soldiers.”¹⁰⁰ Upon arriving at Entebbe international airport, expellees were subjected to another round of inspections. East African media sources reported that Ugandan Asians described instances where Ugandan soldiers looted their baggage as well as several instances of verbal and physical abuse.¹⁰¹ In other instances, physical confrontations were more extreme. For example, the Mombasa Red Cross reported that one Ugandan Asian, Ajit Singh, needed medical treatment after being severely beaten by soldiers while en route to Kenya from Uganda.¹⁰² Roger St. Vincent argued in his memoir that expellees “genuinely feared for their lives.”¹⁰³

Several Ugandan Asians had travelled lengthy distances from their hometown in order to apply for visas to Canada. Unfortunately, their journeys took them through a vast series of military checkpoints where many were robbed, harassed verbally and sexually, and subjected to long delays because of prolonged and unwarranted searches. For example, Iqbal Sunderji recalled the numerous road blocks set up between Jinja and Kampala since he was responsible for traveling to and from his family home to verify documents in Kampala: “every day traveling two-three times traveling, from Jinja to Kampala. Then nine roadblocks, army road blocks. And they tell you in Swahili Muhindi, with a gun like this holding onto your face, *toka chini*, get down...so you’re supposed to get down there every time, there were about nine roadblocks in 50 miles of road.”¹⁰⁴ Azim Sarangi remembered that his mother’s necklace was taken from her at one of the roadblocks leading to the capital city. As they were travelling to Kampala the soldiers “stopped her, the necklace was hidden, they of course saw it, took the necklace and you know hit her with the butt of the gun and uh she was lucky, she didn’t get killed.”¹⁰⁵ Each checkpoint aroused fear and anxiety amongst Ugandan Asians as they were subjected to varying levels of harassment from the

¹⁰⁰ Patrick Keatley, “Amin’s Troops ‘Spread Panic’ in Kampala,” *The Guardian*, September 22, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 74.

¹⁰¹ “Medical Treatment for Asian Beaten by Soldier,” *Daily Nation*, October 2, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 97.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ St. Vincent, *Seven Crested Cranes*, 41.

¹⁰⁴ Anonymous, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Edmonton, August 9, 2015.

¹⁰⁵ Azim Sarangi, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 15, 2015.

military. This was a particularly traumatic situation for Zul Devji as he remembered the “seven checkpoints where they searched everything. Okay? So I was only able to bring my one bag and maybe one picture of my wedding... he ... Idi Amin ... his friends were, one of them was a friend of mine in the army and it’s amazing that they shot an Ismaili neighbour of mine ... he shot him right in front of me.”¹⁰⁶ Soldiers did not refrain from using extreme measures of violence against Ugandan Asian expellees as recaptured by Zul’s memory. Road blocks leading to the capital city remained dangerous throughout the expulsion period as Ugandan Asians legitimately feared for their personal safety. These checkpoints were also established along the airport road leading from the capital city to the international airport in Entebbe.

The road to the airport became particularly treacherous to the point where Canadian immigration officials provided escorted buses draped with large Canadian flags to transport visa holders from Kampala to Entebbe.¹⁰⁷ Azim described his family’s journey to the airport as follows: “the Canadian High Commissioner had a bus set up for a safe transportation because people were being hassled and looted and beat up when they were traveling from their homes to come to the airport... you’ve gone through umpteen army stops, people have come on the bus...they [Ugandan soldiers] couldn’t have been barred from the buses, so the army had the rule.”¹⁰⁸ It was merely a preventative measure by the Canadian immigration team to ensure the safest travel possible but even these buses were subjected to random stops by the Ugandan army. Those who made their own private journeys to the airport were subjected to harsher treatment by armed guards since they did not travel under the protection any government. Zabina Dossa recalled how the trip to Entebbe was “another fearful drive I should say because at every point there was a stop, there were a lot of stops on our way, it wasn’t just a direct drive. At each stop had the army so of course they were asking us where are you going, what are you doing...the army wanted us to bribe them in order for them to let us go.”¹⁰⁹ Zabina described how many Ugandan Asians were able to circumvent harsh treatment from army officials who were hoping to be bribed. Since this

¹⁰⁶ Zul Devji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 20, 2014.

¹⁰⁷ St. Vincent, *Seven Crested Cranes*, 43.

¹⁰⁸ Azim Sarangi, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 15, 2015.

¹⁰⁹ Zabina Dossa, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, June 10, 2015.

had become fairly common place at each of the road blocks, soldiers continued to stop vehicles at several different locations as a means of lining their own pockets with Ugandan shillings. Once completing the journey to the airport, Ugandan Asians were met with another round of checks and various searches through their personal belongings.

Expellees were well aware that they should avoid trying to hide valuables in their luggage or even within their personal affects as they would be strip searched at the airport. Mohamed and Almas Lalji chronicled the thorough searches conducted at the airport as well as the importance of refraining from trying to hide valuables from airport security:

Mohamed: They were checking everything. Now, only because the concern was on my passport occupation said civil servant. So I kept praying... if they notice that they might start questioning and then I'm in trouble. So fortunately they didn't look at the occupation on the passport.

Almas: The way we left we couldn't take anything with us of course, just one bag of clothes and that's all we were allowed to. Nothing, no jewelry, no money, no nothing. Twenty dollars... shillings, Uganda shillings in his [Mohamed's] pocket and at the airport too they check us out, right? So they let the suitcase go through but they searched us and they took that twenty dollars from him at the airport.¹¹⁰

This was a common experience amongst oral history participants who documented vigorous strip searches conducted by airport security and Ugandan soldiers. As noted in the previous chapter, there were clear restrictions on what could and could not be taken out of the country by Ugandan Asian refugees. These limitations were strictly enforced at the airport without any restrictions on who could be searched. Munira described how her entire family was thoroughly searched including her youngest sister who was only a few months old:

then we had to go and individually be hand searched, right? So here my grandmother went in first, got searched, they came out with her hand luggage on the side and gave it to one of the officers and my grandmother... you know, again didn't say much but she had tears that were just dribbling down her face and my dad knew that whatever valuables she had in there were being possessed. Now it's our turn, mum and the three of us. So mum gets frisked, the baby gets frisked, even through her crotch, right? Because locals would do anything to try and smuggle things out, but we weren't smuggling... my turn, my sister's turn,

¹¹⁰ Mohamed and Almas Lalji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 12, 2015.

and here goes the hand luggage, my mother was just shaking like a leaf, she could barely hold my baby sister but we managed to get out of that little inspection room.¹¹¹

Dutifully carrying out orders from Amin's government, airport security along with members of the military were precise with their duties, ensuring that very few Ugandan Asians were able to smuggle valuables out of the country. Furthermore, as argued by Van Hear, many security officials were aware that the major possessions of Ugandan Asians such as their homes and businesses would be distributed amongst high ranking officials.¹¹² Thus, they utilized these opportunities in residential neighbourhoods, various checkpoints, and at the airport to reap their own rewards from the expulsion decree. However, Ugandan Asians demonstrated their agency within these circumstances by tapping into offshore bank accounts or disguising their valuables within hidden luggage compartments or even within deep fried South Asians snacks.

Some Ugandan Asians were successful in utilizing ingenious methods to protect their fortunes and safely remove them from the country. Those who were particularly affluent already possessed offshore banks accounts as a response to the socialist measures taken by Obote's government or the respective nationalization programs in Kenya and Tanzania.¹¹³ Others initially opted to purchase a first class around-the-world ticket in order to keep their money out of Idi Amin's reach.¹¹⁴ Ugandan Asians would refund the remaining portion their tickets upon arrival at their final destination enabling them to successfully circumvent the restrictions placed on physical money that could be taken out of Uganda. A Ugandan Asian who worked for British Airways described how this was a common but also a dangerous practice in the initial days of the expulsion period. Nellie recalled how she was "helping people to issue tickets, our assets were all frozen. So what do we do with our money, all the salaries that we get? We were just buying watches and this and that ... and they were buying around the world ticket."¹¹⁵ In response to this practice, Idi Amin issued a series of decrees

¹¹¹ Munira Dhanani, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, February 15, 2015.

¹¹² Van Hear, *New Diasporas*, 70.

¹¹³ Sathymurthy, *The Political Development of Uganda*, 620.

¹¹⁴ St. Vincent, *Seven Crested Cranes*, 41.

¹¹⁵ Sadru and Nellie Ahmed, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, June 24, 2015.

to prohibit this practice including the tax clearance form and freezing bank accounts as noted in chapter two.

T.V. Sathymurthy argues that President Amin created “sufficient disorder to make it impossible for any businessmen to pursue a consistent policy of expatriating funds by issuing a whole succession of decrees.”¹¹⁶ This practice of purchasing round-world-tickets became particularly dangerous for Nellie since her continued issuing of these tickets made her a target for Amin’s soldiers. She recalled how she advised others to “buy one ticket, one person went to Nairobi, one from Nairobi elsewhere, don’t buy one ticket get multiple. They didn’t listen to me ...so they [Ugandan officials] came, they found out that I had helped them issue the tickets, so I had to leave the country the same day.”¹¹⁷ Although many Ugandan Asians exerted their agency during the expulsion period, the Ugandan government continued to place pressure on the community to limit their ability to export their wealth with them. However, there were other methods employed by Ugandan Asians to conceal their personal belongings from security officials. One of the alleged techniques is described by Ugandan Asian novelist Yasmin Alibhai-Brown. One of the older Ugandan Asians explained to the novel’s protagonist that one must be clever, as she pulled out a container of deep fried bhajias [deep fried spicy potatoes] and opened one “carefully with her bent and brittle fingers. Inside are a couple of diamond rings. ‘Many more in here, you have to be clever. Fifty-five diamonds and some gold - I fried the whole afternoon’.”¹¹⁸ She had baked her wedding jewelry inside various deep fried South Asians snacks. In other instances, Ugandan Asians were able to effectively hide jewelry or other valuable items in secret compartments of their luggage.¹¹⁹ Beyond these methods of deception employed by Ugandan Asians to circumvent the laws enforced by the Ugandan government and descriptions of harassment, there was a significant emphasis amongst the community to protect female Ugandan Asians.

¹¹⁶ Sathymurthy, *The Political Development of Uganda*, 620.

¹¹⁷ Sadru and Nellie Ahmed, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, June 24, 2015.

¹¹⁸ Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook: Tales of Love, Migration and Food* (London: Portobello Books, 2012), 22.

¹¹⁹ Examples were demonstrated during interviews with Mohamed and Almas Lalji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 12, 2015; Shamim Muhammedi, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 21, 2014.

Scholars such as Anneeth Kaur Hundle alongside Joanna Herbert document the varying gendered experiences during the expulsion period in their research and oral interviews. Hundle argues that there was a particular interest within the community to keep Asian women safe alongside fears of sexual harassment and the decree embodied the effective symbolic emasculation of South Asian men due to the Africanization of the economy in Uganda.¹²⁰ His interviews with male Ugandan Asians refugees reveal that they spent large portions of their interviews discussing the need to protect female Ugandan Asians and consistently felt the need keep their wives and daughters confined to various private spaces as a means of protection.¹²¹ Since males acted primarily as intermediaries between African society and the private South Asian household, they placed further restrictions on the female members of their respective communities as anti-Asian sentiments increased throughout Uganda. Male anxieties are strongly linked to the historical gender constructs and concerns surrounding the purity of women's bodies. Their *izzat* or honour, based on religious and cultural norms in the East African Asian community, required protection from embedded ideologies and stereotypes that labeled Ugandan African males as hyper-sexual and aggressive.¹²²

Oral histories from male Ugandan Asians in Herbert's study provided retellings of specific instances where they needed to protect female Ugandan Asians from the violence of Ugandan officials who "even had the guts to ask my wife to remove her golden ring out of her finger ... and also tried to force, I would use the word snatching, the bracelet out of her neck."¹²³ According to these scholars, males conveyed their sense of duty during the expulsion period based on historical constructions of race and gender by emphasizing the importance of shielding Ugandan Asian women from security forces. However, Herbert's study problematizes male anxieties surrounding the prevalence of sexual harassment during the expulsion period. One female interviewee described that "the army was not cruel like you've heard in some countries where there is a coup. The people are raped and looted and

¹²⁰ Anneeth Kaur Hundle, "Exceptions to the Expulsion: Violence, Security and Community among Ugandan Asians, 1972–79," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 7, no. 1 (2013): 176-177.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Hundle, "Exceptions to the Expulsion," 177.

¹²³ Joanna Herbert, "Oral Histories of Ugandan Asians in Britain: Gendered Identities in the Diaspora," *Contemporary South Asia* 17, no. 1 (2009): 28.

this and that. It didn't happen and we were very, very lucky in that respect."¹²⁴ These studies coincided with the alleged perceptions of widespread violence as argued by Adams and Bristow but do so from a gendered perspective. The reality of various forms of harassment that occurred during the expulsion period are further complicated by the experiences of Ugandan Asian refugees noted earlier and by further oral testimony that identified several instances where women were the principle targets of sexual harassment.

Sikandar Omar reflected on a particularly harrowing experience while en route to Kampala with his two younger sisters. As they reached a checkpoint soldiers ordered the car to be stopped:

and then the soldiers grabbed my sister by her shawl, before that they said to the driver you can go we are going to marry them. So my sisters are pretty much in tears, in shock. They were younger than me, so they were only fifteen... So finally, he [the driver] talks to them [the soldiers] and they come and grab my sister by her shoulder and the necklace and it says Allah so he grabs it and says, 'Allah,' he could read Arabic because he was Idi Amin's Muslims. So he says to my sister, 'you are my Muslim sister, how can I do that to you, you can go'. They took the money and if there was no necklace, what would have happened? Who knows?¹²⁵

Threats similar to these alongside instances of sexual harassment were prominent features within oral interviews.¹²⁶ Female Ugandan Asians were also worried about mistreatment as Nellie revealed to Canadian immigration officer Michael Molloy, who had become a close personal friend, that she was purposefully helping women leave the country. As Amin's soldiers were given free reign, Nellie was concerned that drunken soldiers were "going to start raping them [female Ugandan Asians]" and opted to help as many Ugandan Asian women leave the country as possible using her connections with British Airways.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Herbert, "Oral Histories of Ugandan Asians in Britain," 29.

¹²⁵ Anonymous, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Edmonton, August 4, 2016.

¹²⁶ Other examples of harassment are described by the following oral history participants: Shamim Muhammedi interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 21, 2014; Sadru and Nellie Ahmed, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, June 24, 2015; Laila Jiwani interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 14, 2015; Munira Dhanani interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, February 15, 2015; Rosbina Nathoo interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Calgary, July 20, 2015; Zaina and Altaf Sovani interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, February 16, 2015.

¹²⁷ Sadru and Nellie Ahmed, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, June 24, 2015.

Expellees were particularly concerned with the fate of the female members of their community based on the general atmosphere of antagonism during the expulsion period. Ugandan Asian novelists, including Shenaaz Nanji, wrote about how army officials often threatened younger female Ugandan Asians. As the protagonist in the novel attempted to verify her Ugandan citizenship and is refused, she pleads with the officer that her father will build him a house as large as her own. He responded by arguing that “I’m going to get your house anyhow, but right now the warmth of a pretty girl like you will make me happy.”¹²⁸ The interaction between the main character Sabine and the Ugandan immigration official personified the gendered experiences of Ugandan Asians during the expulsion decree. These gendered attitudes towards Ugandan Asians were supported and reinforced by the Ugandan government.

Gendered concerns for the wellbeing of female expellees were fueled by the Ugandan government as President Amin announced official decrees that placed strict limitations on what was deemed appropriate female attire. As Nimira recounted:

he [Idi Amin] got up one morning and he said Asians were teaching the Africans to wear miniskirts because they were more Westernized and had more education. So he said nothing above the knee so if you were caught with even one inch above the knee they hurt you bad. Sometime they would cut you, sometimes they would beat you up, just put you in jail things like that. They actually made rounds at our school so that some of the girls were actually scared to go to school because sometimes it can happen the dress is just past the knee but it’s been washed or something and you don’t even realize it has gone up a little bit and then you get caught for it.¹²⁹

Nimira’s testimony is verified by an article published in the *Uganda Argus* that reported how two Ugandan Asian girls were fined for wearing ‘mini-dresses’. The article stated that “two Asian girls were fined in Kampala court yesterday after admitting to being idle and disorderly persons. The girls who pleaded guilty ... were Shajda Nasrullah and Gulzar Nasrullah, all residents of Rubaga Road Kampala ... Inspector Oryema said that S. Nasrullah’s dress was 3.5 inches above her knee line and that of G. Nasrullah 3.3 inches.

¹²⁸ Shenaaz Nanji, *Child of Dandelions* (Toronto: Second Story Press, 2008), 167.

¹²⁹ Nimira Charania, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 8, 2014.

Mr. Kantini fined each girl 50/- [East African Shillings].”¹³⁰ It was apparent to Ugandan Asians that this was a law that would be seriously enforced by Ugandan authorities based on the fines levied on both Ugandan Asian girls. By targeting females specifically, the Ugandan government exacerbated the anxieties of the entire Ugandan Asian community who legitimately feared for the safety of their female members.

Although scholars debated both the prevalence and the gendered aspects of violence during the expulsion period, it is evident that numerous experiences documented within oral histories complicate the historical record. Harassment was manifested in varying degrees based on the five principle groupings of antagonism including personal inconvenience, property loss, verbal harassment, sexual harassment, and physical abuse. This research identified concrete examples of how violence was perpetrated against the Ugandan Asian community and how these experiences varied based on gender. These examples refute the conclusions drawn by scholars who argued that harassment was over represented in the media or based on community gossip. Evidence from oral interviews coincides with the arguments of oral historians who contend that local knowledge and experiences alongside including the voices of marginalized communities complicates and enriches our understanding of the past.¹³¹ Oral histories support reports from various Canadian officials who described the deteriorating conditions within Uganda and highlights the severity of the expulsion decree. As the expulsion deadline expired, Uganda’s social and economic climate was quickly transformed.

By the end of the Ugandan Asian exodus, the Ugandan government only allowed expellees to repatriate a limited amount of their wealth without any other form of compensation. In total they left behind “5,655 firms, factories, ranches, and agricultural

¹³⁰ “Mini Dress Girls Are Fined,” *Uganda Argus*, August 31, 1972, 3.

¹³¹ Mary Jo Maynes, Pierce, Jennifer L. Pierce, and Laslett Barbara, *Telling Stories: The Use of Personal Narratives in the Social Sciences and History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 12; Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Science* (New York: Altamira Press, 2005), 11; Teresa Barnett and Chon A. Noriega, “Introduction,” in *Oral History and Communities of Color*, eds. Teresa Barnett and Chon A. Noriega (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press, 2013), 17; Julie Cruikshank, *Do Glaciers Listen?: Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, and Social Imagination*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 9-10; Paul Thompson, “The Voice of the Past: Oral History,” in *The Oral History Reader* eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (New York: Routledge, 1998), 24-25.

estates and about \$400,000,000 of personal goods.”¹³² As the deadline expired reporters documented the emptiness within downtown Kampala as the bulk of Ugandan Asian businesses and shops were closed. Articles emphasized the deserted qualities of Kampala arguing that “even a learner could drive on the main street of Uganda without any difficulty.”¹³³ Furthermore, *Washington Post* reporter Jim Hoagland described that on one specific block in the business district “seventy-one out of seventy-two shops were closed.”¹³⁴ The economy began to decline quickly with the departure of numerous professionals, entrepreneurs, and teachers within the Ugandan Asian community. For example, Kampala’s main secondary school lost nineteen of their twenty-two teachers and only three full time doctors remained in the central hospital.¹³⁵ President Amin justified the expulsion decree on the premise that the economy would be placed back into the hands Ugandan Africans.

Initially, Amin’s expulsion order was well received in Uganda, as the indigenous population believed they would be the direct beneficiaries of the decree. However, it soon became clear that only the economic elite and Amin’s military men would inherit the former businesses and possessions of Ugandan Asians. The Swahili expression *mafuta mingi* was used to describe Amin’s cronies as people with “much cooking oil,” a rare but essential commodity during Amin’s rule.¹³⁶ The economic consequences of the Ugandan Asian expulsion in 1972 were devastating. As Asians dominated the commercial and industrial sectors as well as holding several public sector positions (as doctors, teachers, administrators, etc.), their departure led to shortages in trained manpower, the loss of import and export trading networks, declining revenues for the government derived from taxation, and the disruption of social services including hospitals and schools.¹³⁷ The capital seized from the expelled Asians was distributed

¹³² Thomas P. Ofcansky, *Uganda: Tarnished Pearl of Africa* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1996), 44.

¹³³ Chris Serunjogi, Rebeca Katumba, and Perez Owori, “Domination Ends”, *Uganda Argus*, November 7, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 125.

¹³⁴ Jim Hoagland, “Asian Quarter like a Ghost Town,” *Washington Post*, November 13, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 138.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Tony Avirgan and Martha Honey, *War in Uganda: The Legacy of Idi Amin* (Westport: Lawrence Hill & Company Incorporated, 1982), 6.

¹³⁷ James H. Mittelman, *Ideology and Politics in Uganda: From Obote to Amin*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), 232.

among military officials predominately from north Uganda and south Sudan as a means of repaying their loyalty to Amin's regime.¹³⁸ Amin encouraged the new proprietors of Asian businesses to show large profits. Many Ugandans took this literally and began to hoard essential commodities, smuggle goods, steal other Asian assets that were left behind and created a black market for trade.¹³⁹ These Ugandans replaced the Asians as "Black Patels."¹⁴⁰ As Uganda's economy continued to decline, Idi Amin funneled significant sums of state funding towards the military. For example, in Idi Amin's first year of rule, military expenditure equaled one fourth of the state's budget, which eventually increased to forty percent of the state budget by 1976.¹⁴¹ President Amin's rule of Uganda eventually ended in April 1979 when the Tanzania's People Defence Forces (TPDF) and the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) joint military force occupied Kampala.¹⁴² Amin was exiled to Tripoli, Libya, while the country reformulated under another unified Ugandan government led by former president Dr. Milton Obote.¹⁴³ The fate of Uganda would forever be transformed after the expulsion of almost every Ugandan of South Asian descent.¹⁴⁴

By the end of the expulsion period, 4,624 Ugandan Asian refugees had arrived in Canada.¹⁴⁵ In the coming winter months, refugees began to adjust to Canadian society. Refugees were resettled in Canada amidst high levels of unemployment and mixed reactions amongst Canadians regarding the operations in Kampala. This atmosphere defined resettlement experiences for Ugandan Asian refugees as they began to adjust to their new homeland. Based on the historical context of Canada in the 1970s, the Liberal government announced their plan to aid in the resettlement process of the Ugandan Asians after the recent declaration of multiculturalism policy, an impending federal election in October, and the Canada-Soviet Summit Hockey Series.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 231.

¹³⁹ Jan Jelmert Jorgensen, *Uganda: A Modern History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), 293.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 274

¹⁴² Ofcansky, *Tarnished Pearl of Africa*, 47.

¹⁴³ Jorgenson, *Uganda*, 301.

¹⁴⁴ Upon the completion of the decree, estimates place the number of Ugandan Asians remaining in the country at roughly 2,500 individuals. See Adams and Bristow, "Ugandan Asian Expulsion Experiences," 197.

¹⁴⁵ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file 5850-3-3-650, "Cumulative Statistical Report on the Immigration Movement of Ugandan Expellees," November 14, 1972, 1.

Historical Context of 1970s Canada

Canada's multiculturalism policy established its roots in Canadian society throughout the 1970s.¹⁴⁶ Historian J.M. Bumsted argues that Canadians united under the banner of multiculturalism as it became part "of a new definition of national identity, a statement of the Canadian 'mosaic' in contradistinction to the American 'melting pot'."¹⁴⁷ Although the Liberal government largely politicized multiculturalism to negate French Canadian nationalism and provided 'miniscule' levels of funding for ethnic communities, the concept gained significant support from the public by the 1980s with the launch of *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.¹⁴⁸ From the late 1960s to the early 1970s, Canada struggled to form a new sense of national identity. The declining British connection, the stronger North American identity, Quebec Nationalism and increased immigration altered traditional Canadian society during the 1960s. A new Canadian flag, the celebration of Canada's Centennial Year (1967), and the establishment of state corporations such as Petro-Canada and the Canadian Development Corporation, embodied some of the major changes in Canadian culture and society which paralleled the arrival of Ugandan Asians expelled.¹⁴⁹ Even the Prime Minister openly expressed that Canada was on the verge of formulating a new identity as Canadians "must separate once and for all the concepts of the state and of nation, and make Canada a truly pluralistic and polyethnic society."¹⁵⁰ The new nation-building program in Canada was to embrace an ideology of 'unity through diversity,' which was exemplified by Liberal government's promotion of multiculturalism.¹⁵¹

The march towards multiculturalism began officially in October of 1971 when Trudeau described the policy to the House of Commons: "a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework commends itself to the government as the most suitable means of

¹⁴⁶ Howard Palmer, "Anglo-Canadian Views of Multiculturalism," *Immigration in Canada: Historical Perspectives*, ed. Gerald Tulchinsky (Toronto: Copp Clark Longman Limited, 1994), 317.

¹⁴⁷ J. M. Bumsted, *A History of the Canadian Peoples*, 4th ed (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2011), 442.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 441. At the time of the announcement René Lévesque argued that multiculturalism was a 'red herring' which failed to acknowledge the special status that needed to be attributed to Quebec. Additionally, ethnic communities criticized the limited funds they received whereas others argued that it was simply a waste of taxpayer money and nothing was done to address the issue of ethnic language instruction. For more see Bumsted chapter 10.

¹⁴⁹ Janine Brodie, "An Elusive Search for Community: Globalization and the Canadian National Identity," *Review of Constitutional Studies* 7, no. 1-2, (2002): 167-168.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 168.

¹⁵¹ Anderson and Black, "*The Political Integration of Newcomers, Minorities, and the Canadian Born*," 45-46.

assuring the cultural freedom of Canadians.”¹⁵² Trudeau’s comments were in direct response to the backlash towards the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism’s final report. The study launched by the previous Liberal government concluded that bilingualism should be implemented across Canada but also noted that cultural dualism was not supported by many Canadians since one in four Canadians were not members of the two charter communities (French and English).¹⁵³ Promoting the ideal of biculturalism left several ethnic groups outside of the country’s definition of Canadian nationality. During the hearings of the Royal Commission, ethnic minorities or ‘non-charter’ groups lobbied to be included within Canadian society.¹⁵⁴ The actual term multiculturalism “arose as a response to the attempt by the Royal Commission to define Canada as ‘bicultural’.”¹⁵⁵ Trudeau argued that by “increasing cultural freedom – that is, by recognizing the equal legitimacy of all cultures in Canada – prejudice would be reduced.”¹⁵⁶ Immigrants were encouraged to participate in Canadian society while also being able to hold on to their own cultural practices and beliefs. Conceptions of a multicultural Canadian mosaic played a critical role in establishing a welcoming atmosphere for Ugandan Asian refugees. The historical context for the arrival of refugees was also informed by a rise in unemployment levels which shaped the reactions of several Canadians to the Liberal government’s decision to aid those in need.

Unemployment in the fall of 1972 reached slightly over six percent, contributing to rising levels of anxiety regarding the Canadian job market.¹⁵⁷ The impending arrival of refugees to Canada was heightened by Canadian fears that Ugandan Asians would take jobs

¹⁵² Canada, *House of Commons Debate* (October 8, 1971), VIII, 8545; As argued by Richard F. Day, the foundations of Canadian multiculturalism long proceeded the initial announcement of multiculturalism policy by Prime Minister Trudeau in 1971. By the turn of the twentieth century progressive thinkers began to formulate discourses on Canadian diversity. This included works by J.S. Woodsworth, Kate Foster, and John Murray Gibbon. Day argued that these texts “established a set of generic characteristics that have come to dominate thought, writing, and practice regarding the problem of Canadian diversity.” (8) For more see chapters six and seven of Richard J. F. Day, *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); and the following works produced in the early 1900s: J. S. Woodsworth, *Strangers within Our Gates: Or, Coming Canadians*, Text-Book, no. 5 (Toronto: F.C. Stephenson, 1909); Kate A. Foster, *Our Canadian Mosaic* (Toronto: Dominion Council, 1926); John Murray Gibbon, *Canadian Mosaic: The Making of Northern Nation* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Limited, 1938).

¹⁵³ Bumsted, *A History of the Canadian Peoples*, 440-441.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 441.

¹⁵⁵ Palmer, “Anglo-Canadian Views of Multiculturalism,” 317.

¹⁵⁶ Donald Hugh Forbes, “Trudeau as the First Theorist of Canadian Multiculturalism,” *Multiculturalism and the Canadian Constitution*, ed. Stephen Tierney (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 28.

¹⁵⁷ “Asian Airlift Soon,” *Vancouver Sun*, September 14, 1972, 1.

away from Canadians. This coincided with the central rhetoric that ‘charity begins at home’ as domestic needs trumped those of the Ugandan Asian community. Alongside unemployment both the federal election to be held at the end of October in 1972 and the Canada-Russia hockey series distracted Canadians from the crisis in Uganda. As the Liberal government faced a strong challenge from the Conservative party and Prime Minister Trudeau’s popularity dwindled, the impending federal election preoccupied the minds of many Canadians.¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, the Summit Series hockey match held throughout September attracted the largest television audience by the 1970s.¹⁵⁹ Gerald Dirks’ report to the government argued that “Canadians for the most part, seemed to accept the government’s policy [to resettle Ugandan Asians] without much criticism, being otherwise engrossed in the developing general election campaign or the Canada-Russia hockey contests.”¹⁶⁰ In terms of immigration, Canadians were concerned with the rising number of ‘immigrant visitors’ who remained in the country without official documentation in the form of landed immigrant status or legitimate work permits.¹⁶¹ With the first flight arriving at the end of September 1972, Canadian politicians and the public prepared to receive Ugandan Asian refugees while the majority of Canadians were concerned over rising unemployment, federal politics, and one of the most prominent sporting events in Canadian history.

Canadian Reactions to the Arrival of Ugandan Asian Refugees

As the decision to admit Ugandan Asians was administered solely within Cabinet, there was no major discussion surrounding the resettlement initiative within the House of Commons. Politicians acknowledged the special operation but did not engage in lengthy political debates especially since Parliament was adjourned on September 1st, 1972.¹⁶² Parliamentarians focused

¹⁵⁸ “Pierre Trudeau Experiences Popularity Backlash after 1972 Election,” CBC Digital Archives, <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/trudeau-backlash-after-1972-election> (accessed May 30, 2015.)

¹⁵⁹ Bumstead, *A History of the Canadian Peoples*, 489; for more on the Summit Series see Roy MacSkimming, *Cold War: The Amazing Canada-Soviet Hockey Series of 1972* (Vancouver: Greystone Books, 1996); Neil Earle, “Hockey as Canadian Popular Culture: Team Canada 1972, Television and the Canadian Identity,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 30, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 107–23.

¹⁶⁰ LAC, Records of External Affairs, RG 25, volume 3146, file number 9-1973/1, “Canada’s Refugee Admissions Policy: Three Differing Responses,” 1973, 13.

¹⁶¹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-4-650, “Uganda Asians in Canada,” August, 1973, 15.

¹⁶² “House of Commons Debates, 28th Parliament, 4th Session,” *Canadian Parliamentary Historical Resources*, accessed June 23, 2016, http://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.debates_HOC2804.

on the logistics of the operation, avoiding a clustering of refugees in major cities, and openly condemning the expulsion decree at the upcoming UN general assembly.¹⁶³ Publicly, the Prime Minister framed Canada's response as one that was rooted in humanitarianism as well as reducing Britain's proclaimed burden of accepting a large number of Ugandan Asians. Upon announcing that Canada would be sending an immigration team to Kampala, Trudeau declared that in response to the humanitarian crisis in Uganda alongside the call for aid from the British government, the Canada was "prepared to offer assistance."¹⁶⁴ It was imperative that Canadian officials reinforced the importance of humanitarian considerations as rising levels of unemployment played into the fears of Canadians that refugees would place an additional strain on the Canadian labour market. Bryce Mackasey, the Minister for Manpower and Immigration, was well aware of this issue and stated that "there is always a backlash [from the public], and I'm prepared to live with it. These are people. I'm interested in people and so is the Liberal Government."¹⁶⁵ This continued to be emphasized by the Prime Minister as criticism of the Canadian government's decision was primarily focused on employment issues.

When addressing a group of 500 students at a high school in St. Catherines, Ontario, during Trudeau's campaign trail, a student suggested that Ugandan Asians should not be permitted to resettle in Canada due to high unemployment. The prime minister responded that if Canada only helped those in need when it was easy to do so "we don't have much merit as a government and Canadians don't have much heart if that is their attitude."¹⁶⁶ However, in the same address, Prime Minister Trudeau argued that refugees would not be given any favours in the job market. Ugandans Asians would be taking "their chances like everyone else" and potentially end up working as fruit or tobacco pickers.¹⁶⁷ Evidently Canadians were concerned about the employability of refugees but the rhetoric employed by the government alluded to the importance of humanitarian considerations and dismissed allegations that refugees would receive preferential treatment in the Canadian labour market. The Acting High Commissioner for Uganda, Reg Smith, publicly reinforced the government's rhetoric and declared that "these

¹⁶³ Canada, *House of Commons Debates* (September 1, 1972), IV, 3937-3938.

¹⁶⁴ Terrance Williams, "Canada Will Admit Asians Being Ousted by Uganda," *Globe and Mail*, August 25, 1972, 1.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ Michael Lavoie, "Uganda Refugees May Have to Work Picking Fruit: PM," *Toronto Star*, September 20, 1972, 1.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

people are not destitute refugees, they are the most desirable type of immigrants. It's a windfall for us."¹⁶⁸ Although officials understood the realities of the resettlement as an opportunity to provide asylum to a potentially large group of well educated, entrepreneurial, and highly skilled people, they continuously battled with public anxieties surrounding unemployment in the latter half of 1972.

The Canadian government responded in several ways to the concerns of the public regarding the resettlement. In addition to the remarks made by politicians, the research director of the Canadian Labour Congress, Robert Bell, outlined that "Ugandan Asians pouring into Canada this month will have a negligible effect on the country's unemployment rate ... immigrants have historically picked up jobs rejected by other Canadians ... an increase in the number of immigrants entering Canada at any time has usually resulted in a decline in the unemployment rate."¹⁶⁹ Bell's statement echoes those made by the prime minister, who both posited that Ugandan Asians would most likely take positions within the economy that Canadians "are unwilling to accept."¹⁷⁰ Additionally, the director for the Canadian Institute on Public Affairs, Peter Stollery, contended that concerns over unemployment did not trump the plight of refugees.¹⁷¹ Although, there were considerable efforts made to curtail public opinion regarding unemployment, others highlighted how underemployment as opposed to unemployment might be the toughest barrier to integration for Ugandan Asians.

Based on the experiences of East Indian immigrants living in Uganda, the media argued that many migrants had found work in Canada but the majority are working in positions that do not reflect their knowledge and occupational expertise.¹⁷² The recognition of foreign credentials or work experience posed major barriers for previous immigrants from the Indian Subcontinent or East Africa. These concerns were not met with any official response and the government continued to focus on responding to negative reactions from the public. Initially, the Canadian

¹⁶⁸ Terry Weiland, "Canada the Land of Hope for Asian Exiles of Uganda," *Toronto Star*, October 20, 1972, 39.

¹⁶⁹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-5-650, "CLC says Ugandan Immigrants will Scarcely Affect Jobless Rate," October 20, 1972, 1.

¹⁷⁰ Lavoie, "Uganda Refugees May Have to Work Picking Fruit," 1.

¹⁷¹ "Metro's East Africans to help Asian Refugees," *Toronto Star*, August 28, 1972, 4. The Canadian Institute on Public Affairs is the oldest non-partisan public affairs forum in Canada. For more see: <http://www.couchichinginstitute.ca/>.

¹⁷² Norman Hartley, "Ugandans may Face Canadian Job Problem," *Globe and Mail*, September 15, 1972, 5.

government received letters from the public which were “largely negative” especially within the first month of the prime minister’s announcement.¹⁷³ A radio talk show in Vancouver documented results from their informal poll regarding the resettlement of Ugandan Asians and distinguished the varying rationales behind the public’s reactions towards the initiative. Of those who participated, fifteen individuals were in favour to the resettlement as opposed to twenty-four who were against the resettlement of Ugandan Asians.¹⁷⁴

The majority of radio listeners justified their criticisms of the resettlement initiative based on three principle arguments. First, they argued that charity should be targeted towards Canadian citizens who lived in poverty, or that tax payer money should improve the livelihoods of Canadians before those of incoming non-citizens. Second, listeners maintained that Canada’s social fabric was already being tested by struggling to create positive relations amongst French, English, and First Nations communities. Finally, critics argued that refugees would drain the Canadian social welfare system by becoming burdens on the public health system and unemployment insurance.¹⁷⁵ A small minority of radio listeners contested that refugees living in Canada should be expelled, an influx of refugees would place additional strain on the labour market, refugees would invariably cluster into ethnic ghettos, and that the Canadian government should focus on assimilating the groups of immigrants that were already living in Canada.¹⁷⁶ Other negative responses to the initiative appeared in editorials which primarily focused on issues of unemployment but also discussed ideals pertaining to assimilation. One commentator argued that President Amin’s divine inspiration for the decree was “common sense” since Ugandan Asians “were only interested in money and a comfortable living. They exploited the native population in every possible way...how is it possible for the same government to turn completely around and bring in people who were expelled because they refused to support their own government on the same principle?”¹⁷⁷ Although the editorial ignored the deep historical roots of the community within Uganda and their contributions to society, the author’s critique of

¹⁷³ LAC, Records of the Department of External Affairs, RG 25, volume 8794, file number 20-1-2-UGDA, “Uganda Situation Report,” September 25, 1972, 4.

¹⁷⁴ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 990, file number 5850-3-650, “Radio Station CKNW Vancouver Hotline Show - Asian Expellees from Uganda,” September 11, 1972, 2.

¹⁷⁵ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 990, file number 5850-3-650, “Radio Station CKNW Vancouver Hotline Show - Asian Expellees from Uganda,” September 11, 1972, 3.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ H.G. Krinke, “Idi Amin Acted with Commonsense,” *Vancouver Sun*, October 31, 1972, 5.

the government coincided with the Canadian public's concern over the allegiances and integration of Ugandan Asians.

These concerns adhered to the importance of citizen rights as opposed to human rights demonstrating the Liberal Nationalist perspective of some Canadians who supported “a narrower range of rights that non-citizens can claim against the receiving state.”¹⁷⁸ Nativist sentiments were concerned over the plight of Canadian citizens as opposed to admitting a group of non-citizens which the state apparently had no obligation to accept. In addition to anxieties relating to the Canadian labour market, media reports often quoted the number of applications submitted to the immigration team in Kampala as opposed to the number of accepted Ugandan Asians. The *Globe and Mail* ran several articles that outlined how “unofficial estimates put the number of Ugandan Asians applying to settle in Canada at close to 15,000 and the number is growing by several thousand every day.”¹⁷⁹ This added to public concerns surrounding a large influx of refugees coming to Canada. However, it distorted the reality of the situation regarding the resettlement. This was corrected in mid-October when the media began to quote the number of visas issued.¹⁸⁰ There was some opposition to the resettlement amidst the climate of the impending federal election and major hockey tournament amongst the public; however, the overall objection to the resettlement began to dwindle as the operations in Uganda continued to unfold.

With the arrival of the first flight of Ugandan Asians on September 28th, reports within the government documented how the volume of letters sent to various government departments that were critical of the policy had effectively “dropped off.”¹⁸¹ Numerous letters from leaders of major organizations including the YMCA, OXFAM, and the Canadian Council of Churches

¹⁷⁸ Christopher G. Anderson, *Canadian Liberalism and the Politics of Border Control, 1867-1967* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013), 7.

¹⁷⁹ Philip Short, “Applications Mount for Canada Entry,” *Globe and Mail*, September 9, 1972, 9. Other examples include: Philip Short, “6,000 Asians in Uganda Seeking Entry to Canada,” *Globe and Mail*, September 7, 1972, 1; Philip Short, “Asian Applications Soar, 11,000 Seeking to Enter,” *Globe and Mail*, September 8, 1972, 1; Norman Hartley, “Ugandans may Face Canadian Job Problem,” *Globe and Mail*, September 15 1972, 5.

¹⁸⁰ For examples see: “Ugandan Asians opt for Canada,” *Vancouver Sun*, October 19, 1972, 18; “Estimate Unlikely until Election over,” *Globe and Mail*, October 28, 1972, 15; Terry Weiland, “‘Canada the Land of Hope’ for Asian Exiles of Uganda,” *Toronto Star*, October 20, 1972, 39.

¹⁸¹ LAC, Records of the Department of External Affairs, RG 25, volume 8794, file number 20-1-2-UGDA, “Uganda Situation Report,” October 5, 1972, 3.

expressed their support for Canada's decision to accept Ugandan Asian refugees. The president of the YMCA, Mary Chadsey, sent her organization's support of the initiative and their availability to assist incoming refugees. Additionally, her letter urged the government to guide their operations based on the "utmost humanitarian criteria in granting entry permits even in cases where the necessary fifty merits would not be reached under normal immigration procedure. As a rich and developed nation, we should be able to extend a hand also to those who have been made most wretched by an arbitrary and cruel act."¹⁸² The concern for a strong humanitarian approach to the evaluation of Ugandan Asian refugees was reiterated by OXFAM Canada. Chairman of the Board, Derek Hayes, stressed that asylum should not only be granted to those who qualify under the points system but also to selection criteria to "cover individuals who would not normally be acceptable ... only by accepting such individuals can Canada truly demonstrate its compassion for the victims of the current situation in Uganda."¹⁸³ Major voluntary organizations continued to offer their assistance to the government and simultaneously lobbied parliamentarians to exercise an altruistic policy when screening Ugandan Asian refugees. Moreover, the Jewish Immigrant Aid Services and the Canadian Council of Churches communicated their full cooperation and support in facilitating the arrival and integration of Ugandan Asian refugees.¹⁸⁴ These organizations were not alone in commending the government for their actions and stressing the importance of humanitarian considerations regarding the resettlement initiative. Editorials within several Canadian newspapers demonstrated the positive responses amongst the public with respect to the arrival of Ugandan Asians.

Those who wrote into major Canadian newspapers expressed their concern for the plight of Ugandan Asians by reiterating the importance of humanitarianism. Members of the public argued that "Canada can do no less. There is a humanitarian duty to admit some of these unfortunate displaced people to the country - to prove that we are, as we so often boast, a tolerant open society."¹⁸⁵ This coincided with the prime minister's remarks that accepting Ugandan Asians was

¹⁸² LAC, Pierre Elliot Trudeau Fonds, MG 26, volume 748, file number, 840/U26, Mary Chadsey, "Letter to the Prime Minister," October 6, 1972, 1.

¹⁸³ LAC, Pierre Elliot Trudeau Fonds, MG 26, volume 748, file number, 840/U26, Derek Hayes, "Letter to the Prime Minister," September 7, 1972, 1.

¹⁸⁴ LAC, Pierre Elliot Trudeau Fonds, MG 26, volume 748, file number, 840/U26, Jos Ain, "Letter to the Prime Minister," October 4, 1972, 1; LAC, Pierre Elliot Trudeau Fonds, MG 26, volume 748, file number, 840/U26, Eoin MacKay, "Letter to the Prime Minister," August 25, 1972, 1.

¹⁸⁵ "Let Uganda's Asians Come to Canada," *Toronto Star*, August 15, 1972, 6.

quite simply the Canadian thing to do. Other editorials were in direct opposition to the concerns of unemployment and argued that many refugees “will take jobs which do not appeal to Canadians, others in the professions or with various forms of training and experience, should soon make places for themselves in our economy.”¹⁸⁶ Commentators also argued that those who disapproved of the initiative on “either economic or racial grounds only put themselves in a class with Mr. Amin.”¹⁸⁷ Combating critiques based on the high level of unemployment within editorials corresponded with comments made by government officials. Beyond the importance of demonstrating the Canadian value of humanitarianism, editorials noted that Canada had an obligation to accept Ugandan Asians based on past discrimination of South Asians immigrants.

James Eayrs argued that “after decades of statecraft devoted to keeping their people out [South Asians], it would be a fitting act of retribution to waive our rules and let them [Ugandan Asians] in.”¹⁸⁸ The historically discriminatory immigration policies directed towards South Asians served as an impetus, according to the University of Toronto professor, for Canada to make amends for their previous actions.¹⁸⁹ Others suggested that Canada should lead the charge in dismissing Uganda from the United Nations arguing that “we ought not to pussyfoot with such demonic little tyrants as Amin...surely, the UN if it has any integrity at all, can see that Amin’s expulsion order is the grossest violation of human rights.”¹⁹⁰ Canadians favoured the government’s decision based on a number of reasons including: the genuine plight of Ugandan Asians, a humanitarian impulse, continuing to aid refugees as was done with the Hungarians and Czechoslovakians, and beliefs that East Indians tend to avoid going on welfare as they were assisted by their own communities.¹⁹¹ Canadians were torn between nativist concerns and humanitarianism as demonstrated by the rhetoric presented by the government and the various editorials in major Canadian newspapers. This highlights the debate between the citizen rights

¹⁸⁶ “Friendly Welcome to Uganda Refugees,” *Vancouver Sun*, October 18, 1972, 5.

¹⁸⁷ “Mr. Amin’s Racism isn’t Welcome Here,” *Vancouver Sun*, September 15, 1972, 4.

¹⁸⁸ James Eayrs, “Canada has an Obligation to Admit Ugandan Expellees,” *Toronto Star*, August 21, 1972, 6.

¹⁸⁹ Previous barriers to South Asian migration are manifested in the infamous Komagata Maru affair in 1914 alongside Mackenzie King’s statement that “The Native of India is not a person suited to this country, accustomed as many of them are to the conditions of a tropical climate” as quoted in Freda Hawkins, *Critical Years in Immigration: Canada and Australia Compared* (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1991), 18. For more on the racial discrimination targeted at South Asian immigrants see Chapter one in Hawkins.

¹⁹⁰ Scott Bell, “Let UN expel Uganda for its Racist Action,” *Toronto Star*, August 26 1972, 9.

¹⁹¹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 990, file number 5850-3-650, “Radio Station CKNW Vancouver Hotline Show - Asian Expellees from Uganda,” September 11, 1972, 3.

versus universal human rights, as argued by liberal nationalists and liberal internationalists. These debates inherently embodied the trivial aspects of refugee resettlement in Canada as a consistent battle between opportunism and humanitarianism. This would serve as the context for the arrival of Ugandan Asian refugees in late September 1972.

Motivated by a multitude of factors, the Canadian government launched a full scale operation in Kampala, Uganda to screen and admit Ugandan Asians. The points system was at times strictly adhered to when evaluating Ugandan Asian expellees whereas in other instances immigration officers were more lenient with selected applicants or made exceptions using discretionary authority. Ultimately, international organizations coordinated their efforts during the final days of Canada's operation in Uganda. They ensured the safe transportation of all those who were unable to receive visas from various high commissions and immigration teams. Oral histories with Ugandan Asians provided detailed insight regarding the expulsion period and challenge scholarship that dismissed the prevalence of harassment under Idi Amin's presidency. The experiences of Ugandan Asian refugees demonstrated the hardship they endured during the expulsion period alongside their genuine fear under President Amin's regime. Oral testimonies also articulated how expellees navigated the complex refugee determination process as they applied for asylum around the world. The historical context of Canada in the earlier part of the decade played a crucial role in defining the major concerns of the Canadian public regarding the resettlement initiative. High levels of unemployment, the creation of a new Canadian national identity, an impending federal election, and the Canada-Soviet Summit hockey series influenced local responses to the arrival of Ugandan Asian refugees. Concerns over the government's decision waned between emphasis being placed on domestic concerns to practicing what Canadians preach by providing asylum to those in need. Ugandan Asians flew into the Longue Pointe military base in Montreal with the majority of Canadians believing that it was time to create an honourable place for these refugees in Canada.

Chapter 4:

‘An Honourable Place’: Establishing New Roots in Canada and Evaluating the Resettlement Initiative

For our part we are prepared to offer an honourable place in Canadian life to those Uganda Asians who come to Canada under this program. Asian immigrants have already added to the cultural richness and variety of our country, and I am sure that those from Uganda will, by their abilities and industry, make an equally important contribution to Canadian society.

Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, 1972¹

You know I cried when I saw the Indian curry, chicken curry and pilau being cooked for us. I said, ‘there are people and then there are people’.

Ishad Razack, 1994²

What is Canadian experience? I mean if you’re a lawyer or a secretary or whatever, you have experience. So it was tough to get a job. But the more devastating thing for me was they wouldn’t accept my qualifications.

Jalal Jaffer, 2015³

Once refugees arrived on Canadian soil, the lengthy processes of adaptation, adjustment, and integration began. As refugees flew on chartered flights to the military base in Montreal, they were greeted by volunteers and members of the Manpower and Immigration office. Collaborative efforts between the various levels of government and the voluntary sector at Longue Pointe were replicated by the twelve Ugandan Asian Committees set up across Canada. Their primary objective was to provide knowledge about the job market, housing, and social support to incoming refugees. Committee facilities served as a central location for encouraging open dialogue and interactions between Canadians and newcomers. Both the military base in Longue Pointe and the Ugandan Asian Committees established across the country provided a focal point for refugees and Canadians to interact. Combined efforts from the government, voluntary sector, and the public were critical to the success of the resettlement initiative. These first impressions

¹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 948, file number, sf-c-1-1, “Ugandan Asians,” August 22, 1972, 2.

² Richard Saunders, *Journey Into Hope*, directed by Richard Saunders (Ottawa, 1994).

³ Jalal Jaffer, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 7, 2015.

dismissed public anxieties surrounding the integration of Ugandan Asians and provided an inclusive and welcoming environment for newly arrived refugees.

This chapter explores the initial reception Ugandan Asian refugees received at Longue Pointe and in their final destination cities. This section also critically examines allegations from scholars that the Canadian government selected the ‘cream of the crop’ amongst the Ugandan Asian community. Various government sanctioned independent studies by prominent scholars demonstrated evidence of Canada’s admittance of a disproportionate number of professionals, managers, young adults, and highly educated Ugandan Asians.⁴ This fueled debate as to Canada’s intentions behind sending an immigration team to Kampala as being opportunistic. The same reports also pointed to rapid labour market integration and argued that large numbers of refugees were extremely satisfied with life in Canada. This led government officials to conclude that the resettlement was an overwhelming success. Understanding the struggles of refugees within the job market and Canadian climate problematized these assessments of the resettlement being entirely successful. Furthermore, oral history interviews demonstrated the agency of refugees who sought rapid labour market integration for a host of personal reasons. Refugees were active in lobbying the government to accept their family members and relatives who were transported to refugee camps or who sought temporary asylum in Kenya. They petitioned for reduced selection criteria on the grounds of alleviating the suffering that Ugandan Asians had endured during the expulsion period. An exploration of the first five years of life in Canada provides a concrete basis to evaluating the positive and negative aspects of the resettlement initiative from the perspective of the government, the public, and the Ugandan Asian refugee community.

⁴ Bert N. Adams and Victor Jesudason, “The Employment of Ugandan Asian Refugees in Britain, Canada, and India,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 7, no. 4 (1984): 462–76; Mike Bristow, Bert N. Adams, and Cecil Pereira, “Ugandan Asians in Britain, Canada, and India: Some Characteristics and Resources,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 4, no. 2 (1975): 155–66; Reginald Whitaker, *Double Standard: The Secret History of Canadian Immigration* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1987); LAC, Records of External Affairs, RG 25, volume 3146, file number 9-1973/1, Gerald Dirks, “Canada’s Refugee Admissions Policy: Three Differing Responses,” January 31, 1973; LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-4-650, “Ugandan Asian Expellees: The First Twelve Months in Canada,” October 1976.

Longue Pointe Reception Centre

All Canadian chartered flights of Ugandan Asian refugees flew from Entebbe airport onwards to Montreal after necessary refueling stops. Longue Pointe served as the principle reception centre and would define the earliest experiences of Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada. The military base provided crucial services for refugees while ultimately facilitating the movement Ugandan Asians to their new homes across the country. Operations at the Canadian Forces Base (CFB) in Montreal commenced on September 22nd, 1972. Longue Pointe Garrison was the principle reception centre for refugees who required a short rest to recover from their long journey. Six buildings on the base provided lodging for families and individuals while other buildings housed the dining quarters, emergency health services, a clothing outlet, a reception area, recreational space, and offices for the necessary government departments including: Manpower and Immigration, National Health and Welfare, and Agriculture. Longue Pointe received 4,448 Ugandan Asians during ‘Operation UGX,’ in a coordinated effort between the government, military, and voluntary agencies. Approximately ten to twelve volunteers arrived daily from various church groups, the Salvation Army, and other private citizens who were instrumental in providing care for children while parents attended to administrative affairs.⁵ Volunteers also offered their services at refreshment tables and more general assistance to families. These charitable acts included sizeable donations from Miracle Mart, a grocery store in Montreal which donated winter clothing and provided food and beverage at the reception centre.⁶

Upon arrival at Dorval International Airport, refugees met with Manpower officials and were transported to the military base on school buses. Once at Longue Pointe, Ugandan Asians were welcomed by the base commander of CFB Montreal, Major D.O. Tinklin and the head of the Montreal Manpower and Immigration Office René Lefèbvre.⁷ Refugees met with other dignitaries who welcomed Ugandan Asians and then registered for temporary accommodation. Registration was accompanied by refreshments and necessary medical attention.⁸ Bryce

⁵ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file 5850-3-650, “Final Report - Operation UGX,” January 8, 1973, 1-4.

⁶ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file 5850-3-8-650, “Letter to Mr. Rogers,” November 14, 1972, 1.

⁷ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file 5850-3-3-650, “Progress Report Respecting the Special Movement of Ugandan Asians,” October 19, 1972, 4.

⁸ LAC, RG 76, volume 1257, file 5850-3-650, “Final Report - Operation UGX,” 5.

Mackasey, Minister of Manpower and Immigration, was present for the first flight to greet some Ugandan Asians and distributed small plastic Mountie dolls to younger refugees.⁹ As flights arrived in the earliest hours of the day around two and three o'clock, the vast majority of Ugandan Asians promptly retired to their quarters after a short meal. The following day after being served breakfast, refugees returned to the reception centre to carry out more stringent documentation procedures. These processing procedures included: necessary agricultural and immigration clearances, interviews with Manpower counsellors (one from each region), distribution of allowances and pocket money if needed, and winter clothing.¹⁰ The vast majority of those who came to Longue Pointe were able to depart for their final destination within twenty-four hours and an approximate total of \$80,000 was spent at the military base on lodging, food, transportation, medical services, personnel, and telecommunications.¹¹ Quick turnaround times at Longue Pointe were implemented because "it was felt to be psychologically encouraging for the Uganda Asians to get to their final destination quickly [and] also to avoid establishing anything like a refugee camp however temporary."¹²

Meetings with Manpower counsellors were crucial in providing information for refugees on what Canada had to offer and where they were most likely to find employment based on their occupational skills. There were five desks for each of the Manpower regions (Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, Prairies, and the Pacific) in the drill hall along with a clothing store, cafeteria, nursery, and medical centre.¹³ These consultations enabled refugees to reconnect with family members or friends who had previously migrated to Canada, or who had arrived earlier during the expulsion period.¹⁴ Azim Sarangi recalled how his family was able to reunite with his sister in St. Albert: "they were asking, where we should go, where we wanted to go? And my sister was in a little

⁹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file 5850-3-3-650, "Progress Report Respecting the Special Movement of Ugandan Asians," October 19, 1972, 4; Dennis Trudeau, "Ugandan Couple like Canada Because she 'Really Wants to Help'," *The Calgary Herald*, September 29, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 87.

¹⁰ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file 5850-3-3-650, "Report Respecting the Special Movement of Ugandan Asians" December 5, 1972, 2.

¹¹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file 5850-3-650, "Final Report - Operation UGX" January 8, 1973, 5-8.

¹² LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file 5850-3-4-650, Freda Hawkins, "Uganda Asians in Canada," August 1973, 3.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

town in St. Albert ... if you had family, or if you had the means then the government would say ok, we'll get you there and then you are on your own. So we said we had family, my family was in St. Albert.”¹⁵ Those who were able to reunite with family members presented an ideal situation for the Canadian government as they would no longer be provided with financial assistance.

Additionally, all further inland voyage costs from the military base would be incurred through Assisted Passage loans. A small number of families who resettled in Regina were “very upset” to have received a letter from the government prompting them to repay their respective loans as they were not “yet successfully re-established” and “claimed they had no knowledge they would be charged with this debt.”¹⁶ Although there was some confusion amongst Ugandan Asians surrounding the repayment of these loans, the Canadian government enforced their repayment only when refugees were “financially able to do so.”¹⁷ James Cross argued that these loans should not be forgiven since refugees have already received special treatment as the repayment was significantly delayed and due to the fact that Ugandan Asians “were fully aware of the conditions attached to them [assisted passage loans].”¹⁸ Although the government had incurred the cost of chartered flights to Canada given the circumstances imposed by President Amin, transportation within the country would not be absorbed by Canadian tax payers. Furthermore, Manpower Counsellors were also responsible for ensuring that Ugandan Asians did not cluster in major Canadian cities.

Oral histories with Ugandan Asian refugees provided insight on the realities of their permanent resettlement across Canada and the role Manpower counsellors played in assuring that they were evenly dispersed. Umedali Nanji explained that even though his sister lived in Toronto he was instructed to go elsewhere: “they said, ‘no you can’t go to Toronto or Vancouver because lots of people are going to Vancouver and Toronto’. So I said, ‘okay, send me wherever you want but somewhere around Toronto’. So they sent us ... to Wallaceburg [Ontario].”¹⁹ Edmond

¹⁵ Azim Sarangi, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 15, 2015

¹⁶ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file 5850-3-3-650, “Change in Immigration Policy Regarding Uganda Asians,” July 17, 1973, 1.

¹⁷ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file 5850-3-3-650, “Uganda Asians - Repayment of Assisted Passage Loans,” August 16, 1973, 1.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Umedali Nanji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Calgary, July 27, 2015.

Rodriguez recounted the same response when requesting to be resettled in Toronto, “I told him, ‘I want to go to Toronto’. Oh you can’t go there and all this stuff. Then he said, ‘I’ll send you to British Columbia’ ... see they didn’t want us in major cities.”²⁰ One of the major concerns within the public regarding the resettlement of Ugandan Asians was the creation of ethnic ghettos. Therefore, government officials ensured that refugees were dispersed throughout the country. In some instances, this occurred in a haphazard manner, particularly for those who did not have friends or family living in Canada. One interviewee relayed that they were placed in a smaller Canadian city because their surname rhymed with the city according to the counsellor.²¹ Others received advice on where to settle in Canada based on interviews with the special coordinator who discussed their previous work experience and provided recommendations on which regions in Canada would be best suited to their needs.²² Ultimately, based on those who flew into Longue Pointe, 237 were resettled in the Atlantic provinces, 638 in Quebec, 1,956 in Ontario, 501 in the Prairies, and 2,279 in British Columbia.²³ Although their final destinations varied greatly, both the media and Ugandan Asians mentioned how services at the military base were exemplary.

As the first plane arrived on the same night as Canada’s final match against Russia in the Summit Series, the joint military-civilian team greeted Ugandan Asians at Longue Pointe military base.²⁴ According to Vic Wilczur, the information officer for Manpower and Immigration, the first week of reception at Longue Pointe “was an unqualified success in every respect.”²⁵ Additionally, Wilczur emphasized how the reception occurring on the same night as the hockey match practically “sold itself” and the second flight was promoted on “the angle that all the kinks and bugs had been eliminated as a result of the trial run. We told the media what we learned from our mistakes, listed them, and said what would be avoided on future arrivals.”²⁶ The reception of Ugandan Asian refugees at Longue Pointe was well publicized and received positive reviews within the media due to the government’s transparency in outlining their initial

²⁰ Edmond and Maria Rodriguez, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 11, 2015.

²¹ Anonymous, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Edmonton, August 9, 2015.

²² LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file 5850-3-4-650, Freda Hawkins, “Uganda Asians in Canada,” August 1973, 4.

²³ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file 5850-3-3-650, “Report Respecting the Special Movement of Ugandan Asians” December 5, 1972, 2.

²⁴ Norman Hartley, “Canadians Sacrifice Hockey to Receive Refugees,” *Globe and Mail*, September 29, 1972, 10.

²⁵ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file 5850-3-5-650, “Preliminary Report on UGX Information Centre,” October 31, 1972, 1.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

shortcomings and eventual solutions to these issues. Furthermore, they continued to provide members of the press with exclusive access to specific news stories and treated them favourably as a means of garnering support and positive media reviews of the resettlement centre. For example, Wilczur granted CTV news the opportunity to be the only television station to cover a birthday party that was held for a Ugandan Asian who arrived on one of the first flights and celebrated her eighteenth birthday in Canada.²⁷

Vic Wilczur deliberately facilitated a positive relationship with Canadian news agencies. In his report to Manpower and Immigration he questioned his superiors as to whether it was best to continue “planting and pushing stories or do we let it die a quiet death.”²⁸ He also noted that as media interest dwindled after the arrival of the second flight, it would pick up again as the deadline in Uganda approached since it “will result in really heartbreaking stories.”²⁹ Wilczur purposefully curtailed media stories to create positive media coverage on resettlement operations in Montreal. He argued in his report that the “base is chock full of feature stories for tv, radio, news agencies, magazines, daily papers and the army has given me a blank check to release anything I want.”³⁰ Efforts by Wilczur created the perception within various media outlets that operations in Montreal were running smoothly which purposefully appealed to the sensitivities of the public.

One of the most prominent features of the reception centre was the food served in the dining halls that were operational twenty-four hours a day and accommodated the dietary restrictions of each religious community within the group of Ugandan Asian refugees.³¹ For the officials working at Longue Pointe, it was imperative that particular attention was given to these religious requirements. As aptly stated by an armed forces spokesperson, “we certainly did not want to offend the refugees right on the first day by giving them food they are not allowed to eat because of their religious beliefs.”³² Additionally, army and civilian cooks were trained by a local

²⁷ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file 5850-3-5-650, “Preliminary Report on UGX Information Centre,” October 31, 1972, 1-4.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

³¹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file 5850-3-650, “Final Report - Operation UGX” January 8, 1973, 6.

³² Hartley, “Canadians Sacrifice Hockey to Receive Refugees,” 10.

Indian restaurant owner leaving refugees with the sense of being truly welcomed by Canadians. One Ugandan Asian described the food as authentic and even “better than what I can cook at home. They thought of absolutely everything.”³³ Oral history participants who spent time in the military base also recalled the excellent services and food provided at the reception centre. Edmond Rodriguez recounted how “there was food and everything...I mean they [soldiers at Longue Pointe] were quite polite and all that.”³⁴ Others described the reception they received at Longue Pointe as being indicative of the Canadian spirit of humanitarianism. Rossbina Nathoo remembered feeling:

proud of coming to Canada. I felt like I was a chosen one, you know, it felt really really good. And my teachers [at her school in Calgary], my students [her classmates], they all respected me so much and they wanted to help me a lot you know. They didn't want to trip you, or come in your way, and that was such a different feeling, I'll never forget that. Especially upon arrival, when we first arrived at the airport it was October, winter, 1972. It was a freaking blizzard there and I think we landed in Montreal... we were taken into this army barracks ... but we were taken into this humongous warehouse which was filled with winter clothing. With coats and boots and whatever and we were asked to selected our winter clothing because we landed at the airport in our summer tropical clothes right? Wearing this summer dress with these *champals* [sandals] on my feet.³⁵

Rossbina's interview outlined the individual efforts of Canadians who provided her with an early sense of belonging. Many Canadians went out of their way to help new arrivals as will be explored later in this chapter. The reception centre in Montreal served a variety of purposes and most importantly made a genuine attempt to welcome refugees to Canada. Other interviewees described how their first experiences of Canadian hospitality in Montreal were “incredible, they had food that was good ... food that at least we could eat. You could move around the barracks, not a problem.”³⁶ These oral testimonies reinforced the positive reviews of the reception centre within the media and government documents. Although Manpower counsellors, in certain instances, encouraged refugees to settle throughout the country and avoid clustering in Toronto and Vancouver, the reception centre provided crucial services for newcomers. By having a centralized facility to receive refugees who boarded Canadian chartered aircrafts, the Canadian

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Edmond and Maria Rodriguez, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 11, 2015.

³⁵ Rossbina Nathoo, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Calgary, July 20, 2015.

³⁶ Nazir Walji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Calgary, July 29, 2015.

government was able to provide beneficial services to Ugandan Asians. A specific letter addressed to the prime minister from Reverend A.I Avery of the St. John's United Church in Quebec, indicated how both the team in Kampala and in Montreal had carried out their duties with professionalism and the spirit of humanitarianism.

Reverend Avery commended the hard work of both the government and the military in their successful operations. He wrote:

In the past month my congregation and I have been greatly involved with the hosting of Ugandan Asians to Canada. This has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. These wounded people are the essence of charm and gratitude. They speak so highly of the warmth and thoughtful treatment given to them in Uganda by the Canadian officials. The Canadians that went to Uganda for this occasion must have been superior people. They were able to treat the Asians with such empathy - a smile, a cheery hello and a chair, these have been mentioned so often. Facilities at Longue Pointe Barracks have truly done justice to Canada. The warmth of the reception, the personal touch, the carefully prepared meals, the clothing store, Immigration and Manpower - each one has made its unique and valuable contribution. The Asians have been overwhelmed. The tribute for opening the door and escorting these people through is especially attributable to you, Mr. Prime Minister, and to Mr. Mackasey, for carrying through your humanitarian wishes. I am proud to be Canadian.³⁷

For Reverend Avery, the reception centre was emblematic of the entire resettlement initiative. It demonstrated the continued empathy of Canadians from those who were on the ground in Kampala to others helping with the resettlement on Canadian soil. Ugandan Asians expressed their sincere gratitude to the Canadian government and military on several occasions to the religious leader. As the letter to the prime minister confirmed, this portion of the initiative encompassed the humanitarian spirit of the resettlement. Furthermore, refugees made public statements in the media about their gratitude towards the Canadian government. For example, Maurice Pinto extended his "sincere appreciation to the Canadian people for their hospitality ... from our departure in Kampala to our destination here, everything was carried out with perfect coordination by so many of the various organizations and we hope to be citizens of credit to the

³⁷ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file 5850-3-8-650, "Letter to the Prime Minister," October 31, 1972, 1.

Canadian nation.”³⁸ Mr. Pinto’s remarks in the local newspaper reiterated the expressions of gratitude from refugees while simultaneously congratulating the Canadian government on their execution of the resettlement initiative. The success of the reception centre encouraged the establishment of welcoming committees across the country to aid in the integration process for Ugandan Asian refugees.

Uganda Asian Committees and Manpower Centres

Uganda Asian Committees were established across the country as a means of assisting incoming refugees with all matters pertaining to integration. Twelve committees were set up across the country with an approved budget of \$73,000 and included the following cities: Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Hamilton, Windsor, Sarnia, Winnipeg, Regina, Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver.³⁹ Their mandate was to “assist in every possible way the satisfactory settlement and adjustment of the Uganda Asians in the Canadian community.”⁴⁰ Membership within the Uganda Asian Committees included a diverse group of individuals. They incorporated members of local voluntary organizations, all three levels of the Canadian government, local religious communities, and ethnic communities. For example, Regina’s team consisted of Dr. H. Gupta, the president of the East India Association of Saskatchewan, Merle Kennedy, a consumer consultant with the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Eleanor Bujea and L.A. Petry, the president and a member of the Regina Folk Arts and Cultural Council respectively, G.F. Bruce, a representative from the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, R.M. Paiement, the social animator with Cultural Association of Franco-Canadians of Saskatchewan, A.L. Lamontagne, a member of Canadian Women’s Club, Klaus Burmeister, a member of Can-German Harmony Club, A.H. Nogue, social development officer for the Citizenship Branch, Leo Courville, a member of the provincial Planning and Research Council, and the final two members were Murray Whitmore and Betha Kohli of the Manpower Centre in Regina.⁴¹ This

³⁸ “Asian in Toronto finds a Schoolmate,” *Toronto Star*, September 29, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 89.

³⁹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-3-650, “Report Respecting the Special Movement of Ugandan Asians,” December 5, 1972, 3.

⁴⁰ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, Bernard Ostry, “Letter to Dr. R.M. Adams,” October 24, 1972, 3.

⁴¹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, “Regina Uganda Asian Committee,” October 18, 1972, 1. For more examples see “Committee Membership” in RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650.

collaborative component of the resettlement committees were fundamental in addressing the immediate needs of refugees while simultaneously utilizing an inclusive approach to integration for Ugandan Asians.

Bernard Ostry, the assistant under-secretary of the state, identified the motivations behind creating settlement committees and argued that “we hope that, through the work of these Committees ... we may be able to encourage what has evidently been a rather inner-oriented community to participate as fully as possible in Canadian life; and by creating a very positive role for voluntary organizations in the settlement process we hope to encourage their acceptance in the Canadian community in this difficult period of high unemployment.”⁴² According to Ostry, there were two primary motivations behind the establishment of the committees. The first was to shift the focus of the apparent ‘inner-oriented’ community of Ugandan Asians to become full members of Canadian society. This echoed comments made in editorials which questioned the allegiances of Ugandan Asian refugees as they had failed to integrate in Uganda and would coincidentally duplicate these practices of self-segregation in Canada.⁴³ While evidence presented in chapter one examined how the accusations of social exclusivity were complicated based on the colonial hierarchy and generalizations of the community, the Canadian government was concerned about the willingness and ability of Ugandan Asians refugees to integrate and contribute to Canadian society.

The second motivation was to reduce animosity between local communities and Ugandan Asians in terms of competition within the job market during the ‘difficult period of high unemployment’. Since the committees collaborated with local Canada Manpower Centres it was implied that this would lead to improved employment prospects for Ugandan Asian refugees and ultimately reduce the “degree of general public criticism of the decision to accept the Asians.”⁴⁴

⁴² LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, Bernard Ostry, “Letter to Dr. R.M. Adams,” October 24, 1972, 3. Bernard Ostry was an academic and public servant for over 25 years. He was the undersecretary of state from 1970 to 1973 before becoming the secretary general of National Museums of Canada for four years. He concluded his public service career in 1992 as the President of the Association for Tele-Education in Canada. For more see: Norman Hillmer, “Bernard Ostry,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, accessed October 24, 2016, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/bernard-ostry/>.

⁴³ H.G. Krinke, “Idi Amin Acted with Commonsense,” *Vancouver Sun*, October 31, 1972, 5.

⁴⁴ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, “Progress Report Respecting the Special Movement of Ugandan Asians,” October 19, 1972, 4.

Given the historical context and concerns expressed by the public, the government purposefully sought to engage with public criticism by utilizing the committees as a means of reducing misconceptions surrounding the employment of refugees and establish a physical site where Canadians and refugees could interact with one another. The establishment of the Uganda Asian Committees firmly coincided with theories that underscore the importance of integration being a two-way process.⁴⁵ The document also revealed the government's acknowledgement of the issues raised by the Canadian public. By creating committees with high levels of civic engagement, the Canadian government sought to facilitate the resettlement of Ugandan Asian refugees while simultaneously combatting negative criticism pertaining to both high unemployment rates and concerns over integration.⁴⁶ The creation of these committees was also prompted by the past success of reception centres established in 1956 to "assist in the smooth integration of the Hungarian [refugees] into Canadian society."⁴⁷

The three major tasks of the committees were to provide refugees with access to the job market, assist in locating suitable housing, and organize several orientation activities. It was imperative that the committees proceed to establish a housing registry, a visible central location for at least one year for reception and information services, and to develop an orientation program for Ugandan Asian refugees that included specific programming for the elderly, women, and children.⁴⁸ It was emphasized that the committees should facilitate any program that may be beneficial to ensure the successful integration of Ugandan Asians. This underscored the principles of social citizenship as discussed by several scholars.⁴⁹ Social integration is an

⁴⁵ See Rahsaan Maxwell, "Evaluating Migrant Integration: Political Attitudes Across Generations in Europe," *International Migration Review* 44, no. 1 (2010): 25–52; Irene Bloemraad, "Citizenship and Immigration a Current Review," *Journal of International Migration and Integration / Revue de L'integration et de La Migration Internationale* 1, no. 1 (2000): 9–37; Valerie Preston, Audrey Kobayashi, and Guida Man, "Transnationalism, Gender, and Civic Participation: Canadian Case Studies of Hong Kong Immigrants," *Environment and Planning* 38, no. 9 (2006): 1633–1651; Zheng Wu, Christoph M. Schimmele, and Feng Hou, *Social Integration of Immigrants and Their Children in Canada's Urban Neighbourhoods* (Vancouver: Metropolis British Columbia, 2010).

⁴⁶ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, Bernard Ostry, "Letter to Dr. R.M. Adams," October 24, 1972, 1.

⁴⁷ LAC, Records of External Affairs, RG 25, volume 3146, file number 9-1973/1, Gerald Dirks, "Canada's Refugee Admissions Policy: Three Differing Responses," January 31, 1973, 8.

⁴⁸ LAC, Records of External Affairs, RG 25, volume 3146, file number 9-1973/1, Gerald Dirks, "Canada's Refugee Admissions Policy: Three Differing Responses," January 31, 1973, 2.

⁴⁹ Irene Bloemraad, "Citizenship and Immigration a Current Review," *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 1, no. 1 (March 2000): 9–37; Janine Brodie, "An Elusive Search for Community: Globalization and the Canadian National Identity," *Review of Constitutional Studies* 7, no. 1–2 (2002): 155–178; Zheng Wu, Christoph M.

interdependent process that involves the adaptation of immigrants to their receiving society in conjunction with host societies embracing new immigrant communities. Consequently, scholars argued that “if immigrants have restricted or negative interactions with their host communities it cannot be expected that they will achieve a level of structural integration that is on par with non-immigrants.”⁵⁰ By encouraging the committees to look beyond the immediate basic requirements of refugees, Canadians actively engaged in grassroots level interactions with Ugandan Asians by demonstrating the more intangible components of integration. This methodology also reflected Dirk Hoeder’s theory on the importance of how everyday casual interactions between Canadians and newcomers defines inclusive pathways to belonging.⁵¹

Before embarking from Longue Pointe, all Ugandan Asians received a copy of *Your First Few Months in Canada*, composed by the citizenship branch as a means of orienting refugees with Canadian society.⁵² The document outlined the organizational framework of the Ugandan Asian Committees in addition to providing an extensive list of useful information. This included basic information on the committees, provincial citizenship programs, community organizations, telephone service (how to place long distance calls and how to use the yellow pages), emergency contact procedures, long and short distance travel (air, bus, and train), shopping, buying on credit, consumer protection, banking, housing, education, telegrams, medical care, climate, and public libraries.⁵³ Information provided within the pamphlet ranged from specific details such as “long distance calls can be made on a public telephone by dialing ‘0’,” to general advice such as, “do not hesitate to ask for information, it is available without charge.”⁵⁴ Similar to the underlying intentions of the committees, the pamphlet reinforced the social sides of citizenship offering the assistance of average Canadians in aiding the resettlement process for Ugandan Asians. This is particularly identified in several passages from the pamphlet including one that informs refugees

Schimmele, and Feng Hou, *Social Integration of Immigrants and Their Children in Canada’s Urban Neighbourhoods* (Vancouver: Metropolis British Columbia, 2010).

⁵⁰ Wu, Schimmele, and Hou, *Social Integration of Immigrants and Their Children in Canada’s Urban Neighbourhoods*, 5-6.

⁵¹ Dirk Hoerder, *Creating Societies: Immigrant Lives in Canada*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999), ix.

⁵² LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, “Your First Few Months in Canada,” 1-3.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 2.

to ask a police officer for assistance if they are lost or to “ask anyone.”⁵⁵ Moreover, the leaflet detailed that the committees would not only host information sessions on Canadian society but that “they will also be arranging social activities in which you [Ugandan Asian refugees] can participate.”⁵⁶ This demonstrated the ways in which the government of Canada continuously reiterated their commitment to making Canada a permanent home for refugees.

Beyond these inclusions, several sections of the pamphlet detailed processes that were particularly foreign for refugees. These included the instructions on how to conduct credit purchases in Canada. Many Ugandan Asians practiced making purchases on credit that were implemented on an informal basis in Uganda between local *dukawallahs* and other business persons that often did not include interest payments. The pamphlet advised that “great care should be taken when buying on credit. If you cannot maintain regular payments, do not buy. You should also be aware that you are paying interest on items bought on credit.”⁵⁷ Although there is a paternalistic tone presented throughout the pamphlet on certain elements such as advice on budgeting and housing, the majority of the leaflet provided crucial advice on the particularities of life in Canada.

The most pertinent piece of information for Ugandan Asians concerned advice on how to navigate the realities of the Canadian climate. To aid refugees in adjusting to the weather the pamphlet outlined that central heating is universal in public spaces and homes, provided advice on how to dress appropriately for the winter, and ended on a positive note asserting that “most Canadians enjoy their cold but sunny winters very much, partly because of the delightful opportunities it offers for winter sports and vacations.”⁵⁸ The leaflet concluded with a positive message for refugees stating that “we hope the few suggestions offered in this pamphlet will be of some assistance to you as you begin life in Canada. We hope your adjustment will be easy and your life in Canada a happy one.”⁵⁹ The final message firmly articulated the government’s stance of promoting Canada as the new permanent home of Ugandan Asian refugees.

⁵⁵ LAC, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, “Your First Few Months in Canada,” 2.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Parliamentarians, including Prime Minister Trudeau, consistently dismissed negative criticisms, as mentioned in previous chapter, from the public or opposition party members based on high unemployment rates and the questionable allegiances of Ugandan Asian refugees. They publicly emphasized the humanitarian and geopolitical considerations within the resettlement initiative as paramount to these domestic concerns. The pamphlet and federal funding for Ugandan Asian Committees solidified the government's material contributions to creating an "honourable place in Canadian life to those Ugandan Asians who come to Canada under this program."⁶⁰ Over the following year, the Uganda Asian Committees, in conjunction with other organizations and institutions, launched a host of social programs to aid in the establishment of an 'honourable place in Canadian life' for refugees.

Numerous local organizations were mobilized to provide assistance to local committees. For example, the Toronto Transit Commission extended their service of the "Bay Street bus route to allow expelled Asians to reach the new Ontario Government Ugandan Asian Centre on weekends and after six o'clock in the evening on weekdays."⁶¹ Additionally, the government collaborated with the *Indian Times*, a bi-monthly journal to "produce a special issue of their journal for us which will contain a message of welcome, practical advice and help for the Uganda Asians and useful background material."⁶² Ugandan Asian committees across the country implemented the same strategies of cooperation amongst a variety of groups to host social activities that promoted inclusivity and created a welcoming environment for Ugandan Asians. For example, in Toronto and Edmonton the East Africa Asian Association and the Hindu Association invited all Ugandan Asian refugees to participate in social gatherings within their respective organizations.⁶³ The YM-YWCA in Montreal, Hamilton, and Vancouver offered free

⁶⁰ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 948, file number, sf-c-1-1, "Ugandan Asians," August 22, 1972, 2.

⁶¹ "TTC is Urged to Extend Bus for Ugandans," *Globe and Mail*, October 21, 1972, 4.

⁶² LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, "The Uganda Asians," September 27, 1972, 5.

⁶³ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, "Committees to Assist the Uganda Asians," December 7, 1972, 2.

memberships from six weeks to three months for refugees as a means of promoting healthy lifestyles in Canada.⁶⁴

Monthly reports to the Department of Manpower and Immigration on the activities hosted by the committees emphasized how each of the committees organized several social events for refugees including “teas, dinners, get-togethers, dances, theatre evenings, and bus tours.”⁶⁵ For example, Montreal averaged three social activities per week while many other committees reported that facilities evolved into drop-in centres. The physical centres provided a source of comfort and a type of one stop shop for many Ugandan Asian refugees. As argued by the former coordinator of the Uganda Settlement Project, Diana F. Eaton, the “welcome house became the Ugandan Asians’ second home . . . a place where people reunited, where they inquired about family and friends they had been separated from.”⁶⁶ These centres also facilitated voluntary efforts by private individuals and other immigrant serving agencies. The Vancouver Immigrant Reception Service worked out of the Vancouver office to aid in the appraisal and assessment of Ugandan credentials while members of the British Columbian Medical Association, the Bar, and Chartered Accountants Association volunteered to assist in the process.⁶⁷ According to the monthly reports, “the Uganda Asians in Vancouver have made extensive use of this service.”⁶⁸ Additionally, activities within each of the committees varied based on the size of the reception centre.

Smaller centres developed more structured orientation programs while simultaneously offering a mentorship program.⁶⁹ These volunteers assisted refugees on a “one-to-one” basis in areas such as Edmonton, Sarnia, Winnipeg, and Windsor with one refugee family being provided with private accommodations by “one Canadian and one Asian family.”⁷⁰ In the larger centres,

⁶⁴ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, “Committees to Assist the Uganda Asians,” 3.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁶⁶ Zul Hirji and Shaffin Shariff, “Journey Into Hope: A Chronicle of the Ugandan Asian Migration,” *The Ismaili Canada*, (Toronto: The Ismaili Canada 1994), 12.

⁶⁷ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, “Committees to Assist the Uganda Asians,” December 7, 1972, 4.

⁶⁸ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, “Committees to Assist the Uganda Asians,” December 7, 1972, 4.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

this was not a prominent feature, although attempts were made by Anand Chopra, the secretary of the Toronto Uganda Asian Committee, who expressed that “we are looking for families—Canadian or Asian—who would be willing to take a refugee family into their home until they can get settled in more permanent accommodation.”⁷¹ Ultimately, in larger cities, the committee facilities became the central location for providing services and hosting social gatherings for Ugandan Asians. One of the most distinct findings from the smaller committees that was circulated across the country explored the dietary habits of Ugandan Asians. The Sarnia Food Sub-Committee reported that “the first and most important fact to keep in mind is that the majority of the Uganda Asians are vegetarians. Some will eat meat, some will also eat fish or eggs. Of those who will eat meat, Hindus can eat no beef, Moslems no pork.”⁷²

In conjunction with the consideration made regarding the dietary restrictions of Ugandan Asians at Longue Pointe, the Sarnia Food Sub-Committee compiled a detailed report to respect these religious traditions pertaining to their eating habits. The report emphasized the genuine concern and care of Ugandan Asian Committees who promoted successful strategies for resettlement. The committee also noted a few particularities that were distinct from standard Canadian meals such as the heavy use of plain yogurt, boiled rice, and the consumption of rice pudding during the main course.⁷³ Furthermore, the report outlined that Ugandan Asians recognized Christmas and “share in celebrating it. Should you invite a Uganda Asian family to Christmas dinner, those who are vegetarian would enjoy all but the meat dish, and you could substitute an omelet for them. Include rice in the menu as well. In their own celebrations they serve lots of sweets.”⁷⁴ Sarnia may have received a smaller number of Christian Ugandan Asians based on their observations that Christmas is a recognized holiday; however, they encouraged other settlement committees to include refugees in their holiday celebrations.

⁷¹ “Toronto Families Asked to Open Homes to Asians,” *News Compilation*, September 27, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 82.

⁷² LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, “Committees to Assist the Uganda Asians,” December 7, 1972, 7.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

Several cities embraced this suggestion including the committee in Edmonton. More than 200 Ugandan Asians and Edmontonians attended a Christmas party and dinner sponsored by the Uganda Asian Committee of Edmonton and the Catholic, United, Anglican and Unitarian churches.⁷⁵ Children received presents ranging from small stockings filled with candies and oranges to gift certificates for a free pair of ice skates from Woodward's.⁷⁶ Donna Archibald, the head of the Gold Bar Neighbour voluntary agency, coordinated with sponsors to provide ninety meals for the attendees, and expressed that the intent of the dinner was "to provide an opportunity for Edmontonians to meet the Ugandans and we hope they will establish friendships. We're also trying to stress to the Ugandans that different religions can work together."⁷⁷ Not only did the event adhere to the advice of Sarnia's Uganda Asian Committee but it also included other religious and voluntary agencies within the celebrations. Donna Archibald's comments epitomized the efforts of numerous Canadians who actively participated in the resettlement initiative. The committees created inclusive environments for Ugandan Asian refugees to participate in celebrating a major Christian holiday while several other committees also hosted other religious festivals in the month of December. This included the celebration of both Diwali and Idd, two major celebrations in the Hindu and Muslim religious communities respectively.⁷⁸ The "very elaborate party" for both religious communities in Toronto was very well attended with over 250 participants.⁷⁹ Community based programming continued as refugees sought to secure employment and integrate into Canadian society.

⁷⁵ "Snow and Christmas Lights Delight Ugandans in City," *Edmonton Journal*, December 26, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 152.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Diwali or the Festival of Lights is celebrated within various parts of the world as a Hindu religious holiday. It is also known as the Kali Puja or Deepavali and it commemorates the triumph of good over evil and the renewal of life. Typically, celebration include the decorating of houses with small oil lamps, sharing sweets with the entire community, and the use of fireworks to symbolically use the light, colour, and fire as a means of banishing evil and ushering in joy. Eid al-Fitr commemorates the end of the month of Ramadan in the Muslim calendar. It celebrates the culmination of a month of fasting as a means of purifying the mind, body, and soul for evil deeds. Typically, it is celebrated amongst the entire community with a major feast and the exchanging of gifts. For more information on each festival see: Roy C. Amore et al., eds., *A Concise Introduction to World Religions*, (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁷⁹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, "Uganda Asian Committee - Newsletter Two," January 24, 1973, 10.

As months passed, several committees shared observations on the adaptation of Ugandan Asians to life in Canada. The Toronto committee argued that refugees were reluctant to meet with others in their homes to socialize since “they are not very happy about showing the drabness of their homes to people whom they have known in their better days.”⁸⁰ This offered one possible explanation for the hesitations of refugees to host others in conjunction with the popularity of the Ugandan Asians Centre as a central social hub. Other committees such as the one based in Edmonton outlined that “job opportunities in Edmonton attracted Ugandans from other cities, too, (and we were able to find jobs for them also) e.g., from Calgary, Vancouver, and Saskatoon. There is a trend for more Ugandans to come to this city than to leave it.”⁸¹ Employment was one of the central concerns for the committees as noted earlier, and was one of the primary measures for the government to claim that the implementation of local resettlement committees was successful. Final progress reports conducted by Canadian Manpower counsellors in each region identify the major successes and failures of each committee. As a whole, the summaries revealed that the social and cultural aspects of the committee were critical in establishing a welcoming atmosphere for refugees. As noted by the Director General of Prairie Region for the Department of Manpower and Immigration, J.W. Edmonds, the Uganda Asian Committees’ “greatest contribution lies in the area of social and cultural orientation and that the responsibilities of accommodation, job finding, and financial assistance can best be dealt with through our Department.”⁸² The Director General’s comments reasserted the importance of social citizenship as an imperative element within resettlement initiatives.

This was also echoed by other Manpower officials including, J. Paproski based in Hamilton, who argued that, “it is the unanimous opinion of our counsellors who dealt with Ugandan Expellees, that the Ugandan Asian Committee was a most effective asset.”⁸³ Cooperation between the government, the voluntary sector, and the public, enabled Canadians to mobilize a vast network of individuals to provide assistance to refugees in a myriad of ways. The collaborative efforts also provided a tangible economic advantage for the federal government.

⁸⁰ LAC, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, “Uganda Asian Committee - Newsletter Two,” 10.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁸² LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, J.W. Edmonds, “Ugandan Asian Committees,” March 7, 1973, 3.

⁸³ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, Mr. J. Paproski, “Ugandan Asian Committee,” February 19, 1973, 1.

K.D. Allen, the Manpower Counsellor in Toronto, “estimated that approximately 100 to 200 man days and approximately \$15,000 to \$25,000 were saved by the activities of the Committee.”⁸⁴ Although this was an unintended consequence of the Uganda Asian Committees, it provided another beneficial byproduct of this approach to resettling Ugandan Asian refugees. Ultimately, as of March 9th, 1973 the Uganda Asian Committees along with Canada Manpower Centres found employment for 2,041 refugees who were issued visas in Kampala, while 453 were still seeking employment, 308 were participating in a Canada Manpower Training Program, and forty-four were waiting to enter the program.⁸⁵ This was considered to be “extremely encouraging” according to Citizenship Branch of the Department of the Secretary of State.⁸⁶ For most regions of Canada the Ugandan Asian Committees were considered a success based on their intentions of facilitating economic and social integration. However, British Columbia, and Vancouver in particular, faced significant employment issues.

A formal complaint was filed by an MP in British Columbia expressing allegations that Ugandan Asians in the Pacific region were abusing the assistance program offered in Vancouver.⁸⁷ The complaint accused refugees of taking advantage of financial aid offered by the Canadian government which was “purported to carry a two-year guarantee to recipients.”⁸⁸ As of June 29th, 1973 Vancouver held the highest level of unemployment amongst Ugandan Asian refugees with nearly sixty percent of those who received visas in Kampala “still being maintained on adjustment assistance,” which meant that almost 365 Ugandan Asians were being supported by the Canadian government.⁸⁹ According to the acting chief of the procedures branch, “it now seems clear that it was a bad judgement call in permitting so many expellees to proceed to the Pacific Region. Worse still, they have now been there a long time and if they do not become self-sustaining within the next few months, the picture becomes very bleak indeed.”⁹⁰ Although Vancouver received a significantly large group of Ugandan Asians, including 545

⁸⁴ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, K.D. Allen, “Ugandan Asian Committee,” February 20, 1973, 2.

⁸⁵ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, “Uganda Asian Committee Newsletter Three,” March 23, 1973, 1.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-2-650, “Ugandan Expellees Visaed Kampala and Adjustment Assistance Expenditures Generally - Pacific Region,” July 17, 1973, 2.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 1.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

refugees in the first month of the program, other documents underlined issues that influenced the higher levels of assistance needed for refugees in the region.⁹¹

Miscommunication between Manpower counsellors and local volunteers at the Howe Street Centre in Vancouver led to overpayments of adjustment assistance. The auditor's report concluded that overpayments were made for the following reasons:

(A) Adjustment assistance was not terminated when applicants found permanent employment. (B) Payments were made to refugees without adequate investigation of personal funds on arrival or of funds subsequently transferred. (C) Payments were made for accommodation, furniture and clothing when refugees were no longer indigent. (D) Adjustment assistance was paid in addition to Canada Manpower Training Program allowances. (E) Payments continued in respect of refugees for whom responsibility had been transferred to another Centre in Vancouver, resulting in duplicate payments.⁹²

Furthermore, volunteers at the Vancouver Uganda Asian Committee attempted to assist Ugandan Asians in finding readily available employment opportunities. However, "the quality of placement was not always the highest as, generally, the volunteers are not experienced in employment placement and were more concerned at the time with obtaining a job for the immigrant rather than whether the immigrant was actually qualified for the job. The number of immigrants who failed to retain their jobs appears to support this opinion."⁹³ This report justified excess expenditure in Vancouver along with others that argued that the city received large proportions of Ugandans suffering from shock and fatigue who required costly "medical attention on arrival."⁹⁴ Therefore, the high levels of assistance needed in Vancouver were complicated by issues within the committee and miscommunication between government

⁹¹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-5-650, "Overpayments of Adjustment Assistance to Ugandan Expellees," October 1, 1974, 1.

⁹² LAC, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-5-650, "Overpayments of Adjustment Assistance to Ugandan Expellees," 3.

⁹³ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, "Ugandan Asian Committees - Evaluation Report," March 14, 1973, 3.

⁹⁴ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-5-650, "Overpayments of Adjustment Assistance to Ugandan Expellees," October 1, 1974, 1.

officials. Misinformation provided by volunteers also occurred in Regina's Uganda Asian Committee as members advised refugees that assisted passage loans did not need to be repaid.⁹⁵

Additionally, the reports that indicated a large number of Ugandan Asian refugees in Vancouver were unemployed and still receiving assistance may be convoluted according to the Auditor General's report filed in January of 1975. The report indicates that 332 expellees received overpayments from the Immigrant Adjustment Assistance Program in the amount of \$35,984.18 due to "immigrants failing to properly disclose their status with regard to work and/or financial position."⁹⁶ This complicated the reality surrounding the MP's allegations of a misuse of funds while simultaneously muddling the real number of Ugandan Asians who were unemployed and in need of financial assistance. Although the success of Vancouver's resettlement initiative according to government standards is complicated by conflicting reports, the committees were, in general, beneficial for refugees. The Uganda Asian Committees also succeeded in ensuring a positive public response to the resettlement initiative.

Government documents confirmed the efficiency of the Uganda Asian Committees in garnering public support across the country. For example, the committee in Quebec "has been welcomed and accepted by the public at large, who demonstrated their interest and its help in making available clothes and used furniture. The radio, television, and press praised the committee for its active participation in this project and they, without a doubt, contributed largely to the favourable reaction of public opinion concerning this subject."⁹⁷ Beyond providing a collaborative effort for the resettlement of refugees, the committees offered avenues for any Canadian to participate in the initiative. It was not required that one must be a formal member of the committee to contribute in some way to facilitating the integration process for Ugandan Asians.

⁹⁵ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-3-650, "Change in Immigration Policy Regarding Uganda Asians," July 19, 1973, 1.

⁹⁶ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-5-650, "Ugandan Expellee Program - Auditor General's Report," January 31, 1975, 1.

⁹⁷ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, "Ugandan Asian Committee," January 25, 1973, 5.

Overall, there was a significant reduction in negative responses from the public pertaining to the resettlement. Committees in Ontario specifically noted that there was only a small number of individuals who continued to express negative reviews of the resettlement program.⁹⁸ The Manpower counsellor in Vancouver also noted the favourable public reaction to the committee since they facilitated the coordination of several community groups and organizations who wanted to assist in the resettlement.⁹⁹ The Uganda Asian Committees successfully accomplished their primary goals of reducing negative public opinion and facilitating the integration of refugees into the Canadian labour market. The committees ended their formal activities in March of 1973 “in order to avoid any feeling that the Uganda Asians were having prolonged special treatment in a period of high unemployment.”¹⁰⁰ However, some of the committees continued their efforts informally or established permanent centres for welcoming incoming refugees and immigrants from other regions around the world.¹⁰¹ Ultimately, the Uganda Asian Committees succeeded due to the collaborative efforts of several government departments, community organizations, and individual volunteers. Building on these initiatives, average Canadian citizens also came together to provide assistance to Ugandan Asian refugees.

Canadian Lending a Helping Hand

Other groups were formed across the country in addition to the Uganda Asian Committees. Examples include the Interfaith Immigrant Reception Committee based in Cambridge, Ontario, which provided assistance during the 1968 Czech Refugee Program and continued to collaborate with Canada Manpower Centres to assist in the resettlement of Ugandan Asians.¹⁰² A similar committee was also created in Guelph based on the previous success of their efforts in resettling Hungarian and Czechoslovakian refugees.¹⁰³ Friends of Ugandan Refugees (FOUR) was also established by three faculty members at the University of Waterloo. They coordinated with the

⁹⁸ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, “Report on Ugandan Asian Committees,” February 15, 1973, 2.

⁹⁹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, “Ugandan Asian Committees - Evaluation Report,” March 14, 1973, 3.

¹⁰⁰ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file 5850-3-4-650, Freda Hawkins, “Uganda Asians in Canada,” August 1973, 15.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, “Organizations Involved in UGX Assistance,” February 15, 1973, 2.

¹⁰³ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, “Ugandan Asian Committees” February 14, 1973, 1.

Canada Manpower Centre to provide assistance to incoming refugees in the Waterloo-Kitchener area.¹⁰⁴ Shiraz Lalani recalled the importance of FOUR when he first moved to Kitchener: “as soon as I landed there was a Manpower guy who came to receive me and he told us about this FOUR and he says, your arrangement has already been made. You are going to stay with one of the professors, he has invited you to his house and he is going to take care of you and get you on your feet, basically. That was amazing! That they would do this.”¹⁰⁵ In several cities, private citizens offered their homes or employment opportunities to Ugandan Asians to ease their transition into Canadian society.

Families across Canada were requested by local resettlement committees to “open their homes to Asian refugees from Uganda to help them settle in the city.”¹⁰⁶ These were temporary accommodations for refugees as the committees and Ugandan Asians searched for permanent residences. Canadians responded immediately to these requests and within three weeks 200 Toronto families had made offers to temporarily house Ugandan Asian refugees.¹⁰⁷ In addition to the overwhelming response from Canadian families in Toronto to host refugee families, many organizations offered employment opportunities for Ugandan Asians. President of the India-Canada Association Tejpal Thind explained that forty-two jobs had already been offered to Ugandan Asians in Montreal on the same day as the first flight arrived in Canada.¹⁰⁸ According to Thind, “most of the offers were for skilled technical help,” and the first offers to help came from the Hungarian community.¹⁰⁹ This trend continued in Toronto, as 250 job offers were submitted to the Ugandan Asian Committee by the third week of arrival.¹¹⁰ The private sector, in conjunction with the Canadian public, coordinated a notable response to the government’s call for aid to assist in the resettlement of Ugandan Asian refugees. In some instances, institutions

¹⁰⁴ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, P. MacDonald, “Report on Ugandan Asian Committees,” February 15, 1973, 1.

¹⁰⁵ Shiraz Lalani, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, April 25, 2015.

¹⁰⁶ “Toronto Families Asked to Open Homes to Asians,” *News Compilation*, September 27, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 82.

¹⁰⁷ “Ugandan Refugees in Toronto Get Together,” *News Compilation*, October 10, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 100.

¹⁰⁸ “First Ugandan Arrive Today,” *Montreal Gazette*, September 28, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 83

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ “Ugandan Refugees in Toronto Get Together,” in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion*, 100.

went above and beyond what the Canadian government was willing to provide to the newly arrived refugee community.

For example, several universities provided financial assistance to Ugandan Asian refugees even though it was not supported by the federal government. In Kampala, visa officers admitted Ugandan Asians on the grounds that refugees would enter the Canadian labour market as soon as possible. A representative for the Department of Manpower and Immigration argued that “Ugandan Asians were selected in their home country for admission to Canada as landed immigrants. They were given entry visas on the understanding that they would join the work force on arrival in Canada. None were admitted as students.”¹¹¹ The Department of Manpower and Immigration confirmed this stance internally by reinforcing to all Ugandan Asian Committees that “no financial support for tuition would be provided by this department.”¹¹² This supported evidence in chapter two that argued that the government’s response to the expulsion decree was motivated by economic considerations. This decision also contrasted the government’s extension of financial support for the tuition fees of Czechoslovakians who arrived in 1968.¹¹³ To further justify the government’s stance, Manpower officials argued that “the Czechs were true refugees in that they fled their homeland to seek asylum in other countries.”¹¹⁴ Since Ugandan Asians were not considered refugees, the Department of Manpower and Immigration was not obligated to provide additional financial assistance.

Conversely, James Cross, Director for the Programs Branch for the Department of Manpower and Immigration, suggested that the federal government should attempt to provide

¹¹¹ Patrick Best, “Government Won’t Help Ugandans with Tuition Fees,” *Ottawa Citizen*, November 30, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 145.

¹¹² LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, J.O. Swales, “Meeting of Ugandan-Asian Central Committee,” November 22, 1972, 1.

¹¹³ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 990, file number 5850-3-650, Robert M. Adams, “University Students in Ugandan Expellee Movement,” October 23, 1972, 1. Only a select group of students from Sopron University were provided with financial assistance during the Hungarian refugee resettlement operation as outlined by Adams’ report. For more see: Laura Madokoro, “The Refugee Ritual: Sopron Students in Canada,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association / Revue de La Société Historique Du Canada* 19, no. 1 (2008): 253–78.

¹¹⁴ Best, “Government Won’t Help Ugandans with Tuition Fees,” in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion*, 145.

further funding to Ugandan Asian students.¹¹⁵ He specifically referenced how the “Ontario Department of Health made arrangements with this Department [Manpower and Immigration] and the Department of National Defence for sixteen Czech dentists to attend a ten-month course designed to qualify them for practice in Ontario. Ontario provided \$160,000 to finance the course and this Department paid subsistence and travel costs for the dentists and their families.”¹¹⁶ Although there was some support within the government, along with a precedent being set by the Czechoslovakian movement, it was estimated that roughly 100 Ugandan Asian refugees would be forced to withdraw from enrolling in Canadian universities due to a lack of funding.¹¹⁷ However, this did not prevent individual universities from supplying refugees with grants, scholarships, and bursaries.

The London Academy of Medicine issued funding for five Ugandan Asians to attend medical school at the University of Western Ontario along with another student who was enrolled in chemistry.¹¹⁸ Four medical students were also offered bursaries by the provincial government of Manitoba to attend the University of Manitoba Medical School while two students also received \$500 bursaries to attend local colleges in Sarnia, Ontario.¹¹⁹ Beyond these formal university programs, “a special eight-month professional re-orientation course for five Ugandan expellee teachers who had had up to twenty years of teaching experience in their former country of residence” was hosted and fully funded by Simon Fraser University in Vancouver.¹²⁰ Federal authorities did not sanction further financial assistance regarding the educational aspirations of Ugandan Asian refugees as it did not fit within the purview of the initiative. However, several universities issued individual forms of financial assistance or waived tuition fees for both students and reorientation courses. Furthermore, oral histories documented numerous instances of average Canadian citizens extending their support to newly arrived refugees.

¹¹⁵ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, James Cross, “Ugandan Expellee Teachers,” March 20, 1973, 1-2.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹¹⁷ Best, “Government Won’t Help Ugandans with Tuition Fees,” in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion*, 145.

¹¹⁸ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, “Uganda Asian Committee - Newsletter Two,” January 24, 1973, 12.

¹¹⁹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, “Uganda Asian Committee - Newsletter Three,” March 23, 1972, 2.

¹²⁰ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, “Ugandan Expellee Teachers Following Professional Re-Orientation Courses at the Simon Fraser University,” March 14, 1973, 1.

Ugandan Asians discussed numerous examples of friendly neighbours or encounters with Canadians who made personal efforts to introduce refugees to Canadian society. Edmond and Maria Rodriguez recalled how they happened to meet a friendly man who:

Edmond: would come every Saturday and pick us up and take us out. That was a wonderful thing he did, you know. And then when my family came he did the same for us, he visited us. For Christmas day he called all of us to his place for dinner. Maria: Seven and Five. Twelve of us he would call, even on Sunday evenings he would have a simple meal, you know mashed potato and something. But he would call twelve of us, would you believe it? It was amazing, and my children... you know in Uganda we had two cars and we used to take the children out for drives, they loved the car. They missed it, but this man his name was... what was his name? Edmond: Leo. Maria: Leo. Yeah he would come and take the children for a drive and ... oh, that meant a lot to us, you know.¹²¹

Canadians went out of their way in many instances to provide social support to the newly arrived refugees. Hosting dinners for family members and offering tours of the city were critical to establishing a welcoming environment for Ugandan Asians. Terrence Francis remembered how a Canadian couple offered their home to his family of four who recently arrived in Thornhill, Ontario: “they took us to the basement and it was all done up and he said, listen, you are here as our guests. This house is your house, this is where you can sleep, you can go anywhere in the house you want and what we have is yours ... they were just unbelievably wonderful people.”¹²² Many Canadians answered the requests for aid posted in newspapers but went above and beyond to extend a welcoming hand to refugees. Considering the harassment and trauma experienced by several Ugandan Asian refugees, these extensions of comfort to refugees were instrumental in creating a receptive atmosphere. Zabina Dossa’s oral history presented another example of how entire Canadian communities came together to assist in any way they could. She recounted her family’s first few weeks in Smith’s Falls as “a very small but warm community, so people came over and they brought us things because now we found a home but we need to furnish it and everything. So they brought us furniture and whatever else they could. They brought us welcome

¹²¹ Edmond and Mari Rodrigues, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 11, 2015.

¹²² Terrence Francis, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 3, 2015

baskets with food and all kinds of goodies.”¹²³ Another example of efforts made by average Canadians is described by Errol and Delphine Francis who recalled their first time attending a National Hockey League game in Montreal within days of their arrival:

Errol: Thanksgiving weekend, we came on October fifth and the first weekend was Thanksgiving so you know... even we got tickets to the Montreal hockey game.

Delphine: That’s why he’s a staunch Montreal Canadians fan.

Errol: At that time, we didn’t know much about ice hockey so we watched it on T.V. a bit and we saw these people chasing the black little thing all over the place so when they offered us the tickets actually nobody wanted the tickets and then two months later we were hooked on the game.¹²⁴

As demonstrated by these oral histories, many refugees continue to hold fond memories of Canadians offering a broad range of assistance.

Some Canadians offered their homes for temporary accommodation, physical donations, or less tangible assistance in the form of social support. This reinforced the chair of Edmonton’s Uganda Asian Committee, Dr. Ram Gupta’s request for “dinner invitations, periodic phone calls, or just tea and chit-chat,” to help ease their transition into Canadian society.¹²⁵ Collaboration between various government initiatives and volunteer organizations facilitated Canadians’ participation in the resettlement initiative. From hosting incoming families to providing employment opportunities, the private sector and Canadians, actively created a welcoming environment for Ugandan Asian refugees. This led the government to conclude that there were two principle reasons for the success of the resettlement. The first was the “massive participation of the Canadian people in the resettlement and integration of the Asians,” which “contributed immeasurably to the success of this operation.”¹²⁶ Secondly, “the initiative and adaptability of the Asians themselves” greatly contributed to the overall success of the resettlement program.¹²⁷ This supports scholarly works that promote the importance of integration as a two-way

¹²³ Zabina Dossa, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, June 10, 2015.

¹²⁴ Errol and Delphine Francis, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, April 17, 2015.

¹²⁵ “Exiled Asians Need Help,” *Edmonton Journal*, November 2, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 118.

¹²⁶ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, “UNHCR’s Request for a Report on the Ugandan Asians Resettled in Canada,” April 27, 1973, 2.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

process.¹²⁸ These reception efforts by both Canadians and Ugandan Asians dramatically shaped their first few months in Canada as refugees embarked on their journey to create new roots in Canada.

Early Days in Canada

Upon their arrival in Canada, Ugandan Asians quickly embraced the challenges of reestablishing themselves in a new country. Many Ugandans reported to various media outlets how relieved they were to be out of Uganda. For example, Zul and Yasmin Rupani along with another Ugandan Asian couple expressed how happy they were to be in a country that “really wanted to help us.”¹²⁹ Other refugees such as Tom de Souza and his family explained to reporters that “we really like it here...what has really pleased me is the friendliness of Canadians,” who “just don’t seem to know the meaning of bigotry.”¹³⁰ The joint effort from the government and voluntary sector, in conjunction with the initial welcome facilitated by several Canadians explored earlier, had lasting impacts on Ugandan Asian refugees. Even within a few days of resettling in Canada, Ugandan Asian refugees noted the generosity of many Canadians. This included others, such as T. N. Noormohamed, who remarked how the Ugandan Asian community was “getting used to this place very quickly ... I am very surprised. People are kind.”¹³¹ Others were filled with a renewed sense of hope, including Hamil Nagla who described how “nobody in Canada is going to rob me of my work and my country the way President Amin has.”¹³² Nagla’s comments reiterated the traumatic experiences of Ugandan Asians who felt deprived of their livelihoods

¹²⁸ See Rahsaan Maxwell, “Evaluating Migrant Integration: Political Attitudes Across Generations in Europe,” *International Migration Review* 44, no. 1 (2010): 25–52; Irene Bloemraad, “Citizenship and Immigration a Current Review,” *Journal of International Migration and Integration / Revue de L’integration et de La Migration Internationale* 1, no. 1 (2000): 9–37; Valerie Preston, Audrey Kobayashi, and Guida Man, “Transnationalism, Gender, and Civic Participation: Canadian Case Studies of Hong Kong Immigrants,” *Environment and Planning* 38, no. 9 (2006): 1633–1651; Zheng Wu, Christoph M. Schimmele, and Feng Hou, *Social Integration of Immigrants and Their Children in Canada’s Urban Neighbourhoods* (Vancouver: Metropolis British Columbia, 2010).

¹²⁹ Dennis Trudeau, “Ugandan Couple Like Canada Because She ‘Really Wants to Help’,” *Calgary Herald*, September 29, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 87.

¹³⁰ Gerald Utting, “Asian Children Here from Uganda Long to See Snow for the First Time,” *Toronto Star*, October 14 1972, 10.

¹³¹ “Ugandan Refugees in Toronto Get Together,” *News Compilation*, October 10, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 100.

¹³² “Asian who left Everything He Owned,” *Toronto Star*, September 29, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 86.

during the expulsion period. Furthermore, refugees were also hopeful of their futures due to the “security of life, personal liberty and the public services offered in Canada.”¹³³ Many refugees felt reassured of the opportunities to reestablish themselves and their families in Canada.

This sense of relief was also articulated by the de Souza family. Lucy de Souza mentioned how her children “could sense the tension and they were afraid. Now they see how happy my husband Tom and I are to be here in Toronto and they can’t help but feel happy too.”¹³⁴ Although there were several expressions of gratitude towards the Canadian community, refugees were not unaware of the public resistance and negative views of the resettlement initiative. As explained by one refugee, “we are willing to do all kinds of jobs. I see that the Prime Minister of Canada said that some of us might work on farms picking fruit. There’s nothing wrong with that.”¹³⁵ This was a direct response to concerns regarding the loss of employment opportunities for Canadians who faced issues in the labour market due to high unemployment levels. Since Ugandan Asians were admitted to Canada as landed immigrants, as noted earlier, the primary concern upon arrival was to find employment in Canada as soon as possible. This coincided with the economic considerations behind the resettlement initiative alongside the motivations of the Canadian government in creating Uganda Asian Committees.

Employment remained the greatest concern of Ugandan Asians once they had safely arrived in their respective cities of resettlement. For example, another refugee expressed that his topmost priority was seeking employment in Canada: “let the winter come. At the moment all I’m worried about is finding a job.”¹³⁶ Others built on this drive to seek employment in Canada, including Avril De Souza, who started working within just three days of arriving in Canada at the University of Saskatchewan.¹³⁷ Her experience not only demonstrated the desire of many

¹³³ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-4-650, J.S. McIntosh, “Meeting on the Ugandan Asian Immigrant Study,” June 20, 1973, 1.

¹³⁴ Utting, “Asian Children Here from Uganda Long to See Snow for the First Time,” 10.

¹³⁵ “Refugee dies after Flight,” in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 75.

¹³⁶ Carol Hogg, “Finding a Job is Biggest Worry for Ugandan Immigrant,” *Calgary Herald*, October 4, 1972, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), Z. Lalani, 98.

¹³⁷ Glen Allen, “Ugandans See Canada Life as Welcome Challenge,” *The Gazette*, September 30, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 91.

refugees to begin contributing to the Canadian economy and rebuilding their lives in Canada but it also underscored the employability of many refugees who were highly skilled and well educated. For many newly arrived refugees Noormohamed's attitude towards employment defined their efforts to work in Canada: "There's always something if you are ready to work hard ... If I can't get a job as a hairdresser I can work on a farm, drive a tractor, pick fruit - anything."¹³⁸ By December 5th, 1972 nearly fifty percent of those who applied as heads of families and single persons were employed in Canada.¹³⁹ This increased to almost ninety percent within the first six months of arrival.¹⁴⁰ This was consistent with the rate of employment of Hungarian refugees, as nearly eighty-six percent of Hungarian refugees were employed within their first three months in Canada.¹⁴¹ Officials attributed the rapidity of their integration into the labour market to "their initiative and skills...a number of new arrivals were highly successful entrepreneurs and businessmen in Uganda."¹⁴² Although these statistics paint an encouraging picture of employment within Canada, they do not acknowledge the forms of employment discrimination levied against Ugandan Asians or the ratio of refugees who found positions outside their fields of expertise.

Government reports specifically noted that many Ugandan Asians were willing to "accept employment below their accustomed level," citing the example of one Ugandan Asian engineer "who worked locally as a farm labourer until he found more suitable employment."¹⁴³ A research survey, which included the participation of 1,839 Ugandan Asians, concluded that refugees "disliked the requirement for Canadian experience in order to obtain employment and they indicated some racial discrimination."¹⁴⁴ Credentialization, the process of recognizing foreign degrees, certificates, or work experience, is a common feature within global migration and is

¹³⁸ "Ugandan Refugees in Toronto Get Together," *Ugandan Asian Expulsion*, 100.

¹³⁹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-3-650, "Report Respecting the Special Movement of Ugandan Asians," December 5, 1972, 3.

¹⁴⁰ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-4-650, "Ugandan Asian Expellees: The First Twelve Months in Canada," October 1976, 12.

¹⁴¹ Bert N. Adams and Victor Jesudason, "The Employment of Ugandan Asian Refugees in Britain, Canada, and India," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 7, no. 4 (1984): 472.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, J. McMaster, "Memorandum to the Chief of the Procedures Division," January 24, 1973.

¹⁴⁴ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-4-650, J.S. McIntosh, "Meeting on the Ugandan Asian Immigrant Study," June 20, 1973, 1.

particularly problematic within North America.¹⁴⁵ Refugees from Uganda were not exempted from systemic discrimination which disenfranchised many Ugandan Asians as they were barred from obtaining employment opportunities that reflected their occupational expertise. Sikandar Omar recalled his attempt to continue his career in agriculture but his “Ugandan qualification was not recognized in Canada,” although the university of Calgary offered to reduce the length of his undergraduate program by one year.¹⁴⁶ Jalal Jaffer faced the same issue of having his credentials ignored in conjunction with a lack of Canadian work experienced. He reflected on the injustice as follows:

Coming here was not a pleasant experience because first of all, as you know to come here to get any kind of job you need Canadian experience ... what is Canadian experience? I mean if you're a lawyer or a secretary or whatever, you have experience. So it was tough to get a job. But the more devastating thing for me was they wouldn't accept my qualifications.¹⁴⁷

Jalal felt betrayed by the Canadian system as it failed to acknowledge his educational qualifications in addition to his experience as a practicing lawyer in Uganda. A lack of Canadian experience was a common theme amongst oral history participants while other Ugandan Asians faced alternative barriers to entering the Canadian workforce.

Vinnay Dattani remembered his application for an engineering position at the Canadian Pacific Railway. When he was called in for an interview he was told, “we've [CP Rail] got a new car shop opening up here in Ogden. We have a position of labourer' [laughter]. I said, 'you know what position I applied for? They said, 'yeah I know, you can apply for the CEO position but I have a job that is a labourer job, you told me a story so I called you. If you want, take it, if you don't want it, I've got somebody else on the list'.”¹⁴⁸ Being offered a different position that did not recognize their past experience was a prevalent feature amongst oral history participants.

¹⁴⁵ Aneta Bonikowska and Feng Hou, “Reversal of Fortunes or Continued Success? Cohort Differences in Education and Earnings of Childhood Immigrants,” *The International Migration Review* 44, no. 2 (2010): 320–53; Garnett Picot, Feng Hou, and Simon Coulombe, “Poverty Dynamics among Recent Immigrants to Canada,” *The International Migration Review* 42, no. 2 (2008): 393–424; Raluca Buzdugan and Shiva S. Halli, “Labor Market Experiences of Canadian Immigrants with Focus on Foreign Education and Experience,” *The International Migration Review* 43, no. 2 (2009): 366–86.

¹⁴⁶ Anonymous, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Edmonton, August 4, 2015.

¹⁴⁷ Jalal Jaffer, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 7, 2015.

¹⁴⁸ Vinnay Dattani, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Calgary, July 29, 2015.

Aziz Fakirani described how he had initially applied to be a salesperson in Canada, “I have experience in sales ... back home I was selling, doing the sales ... this guy he hired me, he says meanwhile I want you to work in the warehouse.”¹⁴⁹ Although Aziz had applied for a sales position that was advertised by the firm, he was only granted the opportunity to work in the warehouse once he was interviewed. Furthermore, Vasant and Sudra Lakhani both articulated how a lack of Canadian work experience hindered their abilities to find employment in Canada. Sudra struggled to find employment because they had two young children at the time and “no Canadian work experience.”¹⁵⁰ This was a predominant theme amongst interviewees who described instances of their credentials and work experience from Uganda not being recognized, ultimately hindering their ability to be gainfully employed in Canada.

The government report clearly identified that throughout the initial twelve months of resettlement “fifty-seven percent of respondents failed to find the type of work they had hoped to do in Canada. This situation sprang mainly from a lack of Canadian experience and the unavailability of work in those occupations respondents had hoped to enter.”¹⁵¹ Furthermore, this was the primary reason, amongst survey participants, as to why they were unable to find appropriate forms of employment. Additionally, “twenty-three percent of reasons cited pertained either to the non-recognition or non-acceptance of foreign qualifications in Canada. Language difficulties posed a problem in relatively few instances.”¹⁵² Language did not serve as a particularly strong barrier to employment amongst Ugandan Asians since many of those who came to Canada were accepted on the basis of being conversant in one of Canada’s national languages. During an interview with John Stackhouse, the Aga Khan commented that one of the principle reasons why the Ugandan Asian community was able to successfully integrate into Canadian society was due to their fluency in English, particularly those who were young.¹⁵³ English fluency amongst Ugandan Asian refugees was also noted by Cecil Pereira who argued that when respondents discussed their abilities to communicate with Canadians “over sixty

¹⁴⁹ Khaerun Lalani, Azad Lalani, and Aziz Fakirani, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 8, 2015.

¹⁵⁰ Vasant and Sudra Lakhani, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 13, 2015.

¹⁵¹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-4-650, “Ugandan Asian Expellees: The First Twelve Months in Canada,” October 1976, 1.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁵³ John Stackhouse, “Aga Khan: ‘Without a Doubt, I Am Seriously Worried’ about the World,” *The Globe and Mail*, accessed June 30, 2016, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/aga-khan-without-a-doubt-i-am-seriously-worried-about-the-world/article17185492/>.

percent indicated they had experienced no problem ... as people had been exposed to the English language in Uganda, only ten percent of the sample were not content with the type of communication they had with Canadians.”¹⁵⁴ As a whole, the demands for Canadian credentials and work experience hindered the available employment opportunities for Ugandan Asian refugees. Reports indicated that over time some conditions did improve as two-thirds of those surveyed were satisfied with their earnings within the first year of resettlement.¹⁵⁵ However, it is vital to note that satisfactory earnings did not necessarily equate to employment within their respective fields of expertise nor did it acknowledge the realities of the deskilling process that occurred for many Ugandan Asian refugees.

Evidence from oral history interviews provided numerous examples of employment discrimination against refugees. Similar to Vinnay’s experience of being offered a manual labour position which ignored his engineering background, Terrence recounted his struggle to work in his respective field of expertise in the airline industry:

I went into the interview with this guy and he looked at my resume and said, you know, we have a job for a person loading bags onto an airplane but that’s the only job we have. He says, you’re overqualified for it and you don’t have any Canadian experience. I said, I’m confused. I thought I had just come to a democracy after living in a third world country. I thought the system of democracy worked, you tell me what you have and I’ll tell you what I want. Don’t say you can’t give me a job because you don’t think I’ll take it, ask me first. Secondly, I told you I landed here four days ago and you’re looking for Canadian experience so I’m under the belief that it’s something I can get in four days? I don’t have it now but I will have it in four days, whatever it is you want. It was just the way he was acting, and then he said, okay I can offer you a job as a baggage agent with the airline, it pays four hundred dollars a month, or something. And I said, I’ll take it.¹⁵⁶

Terrence’s oral testimony noted the problematic assumptions behind requiring Canadian experience and outlined the personal injustice he experienced. Only after he had confronted the employer about the poor job offer was he presented with a more suitable opportunity. Although it

¹⁵⁴ Cecil Patrick Pereira, “A Study of the Effects of the Ethnic and Non-Ethnic Factors on the Resettlement of the Ugandan Asian Refugees in Canada” (Ph.D., The University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1981), 188.

¹⁵⁵ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-4-650, “Ugandan Asian Expellees: The First Twelve Months in Canada,” October 1976, 2.

¹⁵⁶ Terrence Francis, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 3, 2015.

may seem that Terrence was offered a position that more closely reflected his previous experience it paled in comparison to his senior position in Uganda at Trans World Airlines. Structural barriers to employment were commonly enforced by falsely advertising specific positions.

Building on Aziz's example of applying for a sales position and then being offered an entirely different job at an interview, Iqbal Sunderji recalled his application to an advertisement for "management trainees" in Sarnia:

I took up a job in the gas station that says ... management trainees so I thought I would become a manager of a gas station. I applied there and then the men came from Toronto from Holiday Inn...this was a job pumping gas, they said you have to start like this here, you can't get management trainees like that. We'll give you a gas station but later. So I worked there only for a week. I didn't, I was a boss there [in Uganda] running a business, I had a watchmaker, two African watchmakers working at a shop. We had a summer there, and here we had to pump gas. I felt so small myself that I'm a servant now. I had to run when someone comes into the aisle and when there's no one in the aisle I have to sweep the aisle. I felt so bad and I had to learn to fix tires and all that, manual job, labour job and doing sweeping the floor and all that. I felt so bad. I did that only for a week.¹⁵⁷

Iqbal's life story recaptured methods employed by specific companies to hinder work opportunities. His oral testimony demonstrated the personal struggle experienced by many Ugandan Asian refugees who accepted manual labour positions. Iqbal's personal narrative also reflected the emotions of some Ugandan Asian refugees who encountered a loss in their sense of self. As demonstrated by interview participants, refugees began to adjust to the reality of the Canadian job market by accepting jobs that were not reflective of their abilities. Additionally, a study conducted by K.U. Chandra in 1973 highlighted employment discrimination amongst the South Asian community in Montreal. Chandra concluded that in Montreal when distributing identical resumes those with Anglo Saxon names received calls for an interview thirteen times out of twenty four compared to only two out of twenty four when resumes contained South Asian

¹⁵⁷ Anonymous, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Edmonton, August 9, 2015.

names.¹⁵⁸ Moreover, a critical element within the adaptation to life in Canada for many Ugandan Asians pertained to the role that female refugees played in attaining rapid employment.

Many female Ugandan Asian refugees sought employment in Canada which replicated the overall trend of rising employment levels for women in Canada.¹⁵⁹ Within one year of resettlement slightly more than fifty percent of Ugandan women were working with forty percent of those occupations being based in clerical work or sales.¹⁶⁰ Their average monthly salary was \$390 per month which was considerably below the average overall salary for Ugandan Asian refugees of \$581.¹⁶¹ Additionally, amongst married women, their primary dislikes of Canadian life were low pay and poor working conditions.¹⁶² This was reflected within many of the oral history interviews where female refugees described specific instances of attaining rapid employment. Almas Lalji described how her job at Wood Gundy in Toronto served as the primary source of income for her household since her husband was unable to find employment during their first six months in Canada.¹⁶³ Other female refugees, including Shamim Muhammedi and Delphine Francis, were employed within a matter of days.¹⁶⁴ High levels of employment for female refugees was influenced by the push for female empowerment within the South Asian community in Uganda dating back to the 1900s.¹⁶⁵ Both the Aga Khan and his grandfather openly encouraged female emancipation within and outside of their religious community. The push for women's rights was exemplified by Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah, Aga Khan III who argued that "no progressive thinker of today will challenge the claim that the social advancement and general well-being of communities are greatest where women are least

¹⁵⁸ K.U. Chandra, *Racial Discrimination in Canada*, (San Francisco, 1973) as cited in Norman Buchignani, Doreen Marie Indra, and Ram Srivastava, *Continuous Journey: A Social History of South Asians in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), 211.

¹⁵⁹ Government of Canada, "The Surge of Women in the Workforce," *Statistics Canada*, accessed on July 5, 2016, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2015009-eng.htm>.

¹⁶⁰ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-4-650, "Ugandan Asian Expellees: The First Twelve Months in Canada," October 1976, 2.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁶² LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-4-650, J.S. McIntosh, "Meeting on the Ugandan Asian Immigrant Study," June 20, 1973, 1.

¹⁶³ Almas and Mohamad Lalji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 12, 2015.

¹⁶⁴ Shamim Muhammedi, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 21, 2014; Errol and Delphine Francis, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto April 17, 2015.

¹⁶⁵ Dharam P. Ghai and Yash P. Ghai, eds., *Portrait of a Minority; Asians in East Africa*, (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1970), 29-31. This occurred within several South Asian regional and religious communities living in Uganda as documented earlier with the rise of female teachers and administrators in chapter one.

debarred, by artificial barriers and narrow prejudice, from taking their full position as citizens.”¹⁶⁶ Beyond the demand for female labourers within the Canadian job market, many female refugees sought employment as a means of providing supplemental income for their respective families.

Rossbina accurately described the importance of immediate employment to contribute to overall family earnings:

McDonald’s was my first job, so you won’t believe it, it was 90 cents an hour at that time in 1972. But I was determined to you know, to empower myself, I would call it... so it wasn’t, for me, it was not that oh now I’m able to earn because now I can invest in this, or I can do this. No it was just earning it and paying back into the family pot and just supporting the family to say, ok, maybe next month we’ll buy a car or the following 6 months later, we will invest in buying a home.¹⁶⁷

Female employment played an essential role in enabling the Ugandan Asian refugee community to adapt to life in Canada. The centrality of contributing to the family’s overall income defined their efforts to accept almost any job. This is reflected in Farida Sunderji’s life history as she recalled her first occupation in Canada: “I did work [in Kamloops] ... My first job was as a dishwasher which I’m not ashamed of saying, [laughter]. Because I could get any job because we wanted to support our family and stuff right? So I did that work for almost a year then I went and worked for the leather factory in Kamloops.”¹⁶⁸ Although being granted landed immigrant status in Canada required refugees to seek immediate employment, female refugees did not express this requirement as the primary motive for working in Canada. As highlighted through Rossbina and Farida’s testimony, contributing to the overall family income was their paramount responsibility when being resettled in various Canadian cities. Furthermore, seeking employment as a means of supporting one’s family was also a dominant theme within interviews for both genders.

Ugandan Asian refugees were willing to accept jobs below their levels of expertise due to concerns regarding family income. Sikandar explained why he was unable to complete his post-

¹⁶⁶ Mehdi Remtulla, “Educational and Social Adjustment of Francophone and Anglophone Khoja Ismailis in Montreal” (M.A., McGill University, 1979), 34.

¹⁶⁷ Rossbina Nathoo, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Calgary, July 20, 2015.

¹⁶⁸ Farida and Amin Sunderji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, June 22, 2015.

secondary education in Canada because his older brother asked him, “How can you go to school when your parents are sleeping on carpet?”¹⁶⁹ He agreed with his brother’s comments and acquired a manual labour position at a local factory. As demonstrated through the oral histories of female Ugandan Asians, males were also concerned with seeking immediate employment as a means of providing supplemental income for their families. Accepting these jobs was not only a response to the structural barriers to employment within the Canadian labour market for Ugandan Asian refugees, but it was also motivated by the need to support their parents. Furthermore, refugees who were in their early teens were likewise expected to contribute to household earnings. Amin Visram recalled how:

from the minute we landed, even when we were at the Waldorf Astoria, the motel, I started working, I remember making my first quarter at the age of thirteen. There was a baker’s milk store and the guy would tell me please go do this for me go do that for me so he would give me a quarter or 50 cents. My brother Azim was working in the hotel, cleaning floors downstairs. So they were paying him and he was what 17-18 at that time. And when we came to Mississauga, right away within hours, within a day we were all working. I worked ever since I was 13, all my life, all my life, and so I started working delivering you know those flyers back then.¹⁷⁰

Both Amin and his brother sought various forms of employment while they completed their secondary and post-secondary education. Earnings for Ugandan Asian refugees were an amalgamation of funds collected by all members of the household. Nimira Charania detailed how her family of ten siblings worked as a single unit performing odd jobs to provide additional income for their family. She remembers her siblings who worked in the evening delivering “newspapers, going and mowing somebody’s lawn, plowing and shoveling somebody’s driveway, anything so that we could help. So, at least, even if we couldn’t provide for the rest of the family, we could at least depend on them to support our ... school money. So that’s how we did for a good ten years, that’s how we did like that.”¹⁷¹ Additionally, many refugees sought immediate employment regardless of its suitability to their previous experience to avoid taking advantage of the Canadian government and becoming a public charge.

¹⁶⁹ Anonymous, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Edmonton, August 4, 2015.

¹⁷⁰ Amin Visram, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Kitchener, March 2, 2015.

¹⁷¹ Nimira Charania, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 6, 2014.

Karim Nanji explained how his father accepted his first job within a week of resettling in Canada: “it wasn’t in accounting, my dad in fact, had never picked up a hammer in his life. But he became a display fixturer [sic] for Sears and the only reason was simply that he had three kids to feed. He didn’t want to stay on Manpower because that was not the right thing to do.”¹⁷² For Karim’s father it was unethical to continue receiving welfare subsistence from the government of Canada. He believed he was capable of supporting his family by any means necessary and was willing to accept a position as a manual labourer even though he was an experienced accountant in Uganda. This is supported by Vinnay’s oral history as he explained that “the minute I got a job, I went back and I said I found a job. So I don’t need the money anymore because we were not used to welfare or somebody giving us money, it would be not right to take money in fact... since then, I have never gone on unemployment insurance.”¹⁷³ Nimira also remembered how “in those days, relying on the government to supply you, for us, it was not ethical ... all of us were striving to support ourselves. We wanted to get off the government as quickly as we could.”¹⁷⁴ The impulse to avoid government subsidies was a prominent feature within oral history interviews. Many oral history participants mentioned how they repaid initial government loans or avoided claiming unemployment insurance while being resettled in Canada.¹⁷⁵ It is clear that Ugandan Asian refugees possessed multiple motivations for attaining rapid employment in Canada. Beyond finding work, refugees also focused on adapting to the social and cultural norms of Canadian life.

The most considerable obstacle regarding life in Canada for Ugandan Asian refugees was the Canadian climate. A survey report conducted by Freda Hawkins with 1,700 Ugandan Asian refugees concluded that “many of the expellees found the variety of climate in Canada difficult to become accustomed to.”¹⁷⁶ As adequately described by Bhanumati Patel in December of 1972, “we came here with the intention of starting from the beginning. If we can just get used to the

¹⁷² Karim Nanji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, April 24, 2015.

¹⁷³ Vinnay Dattani, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Calgary, July 29, 2015.

¹⁷⁴ Nimira Charania, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 6, 2014.

¹⁷⁵ Examples include: Shamim Muhammedi, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 21, 2014; Vasant and Sudra Lakhani, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 13, 2015; Karim Nanji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, April 24, 2015; Nimira Charania, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 6, 2014; Amin Visram, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Kitchener, March 2, 2015; Vinnay Dattani, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Calgary, July 29, 2015.

¹⁷⁶ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-4-650, J.S. McIntosh, “Meeting on the Ugandan Asian Immigrant Study,” June 20, 1973, 1.

climate we'll be all right."¹⁷⁷ Considering the equatorial climate of Uganda, arriving in Canada before the formal start of the winter season was a significant change for refugees. Oral history interviews provided a multitude of responses to the Canadian climate. Amin's personal narrative recaptured the fundamental experience of many refugees as he recalled his first winter experience in Kamloops with his wife:

coming from Uganda you probably mostly have khaki pants and cotton shirts but luckily we were given warm clothes in Montreal and we had some warm clothes but shoes you know ... going to work in snow boots don't look good so we had these shoes from Uganda and in the month of November coming into Kamloops it starts snowing and here you've got light clothes on. So it was freezing, it was freezing. It was the first time I saw snow in Canada, in my life I had never seen snow and it did get very cold ... weather wise of course we will have to get used to it. It was cold, it was very very cold. It was quite a good experience.¹⁷⁸

Refugees were shocked at the below zero temperatures especially those who had never travelled to particularly colder areas before the expulsion decree. Munira Dhanani's oral history personified the reality of Canadian winters for the majority of Ugandan Asian refugees: "holy crap what an experience it was coming to Toronto! Or rather coming to Canada, landing in Toronto to now realize what it is to have minus temperatures."¹⁷⁹ For some refugees the first few winters in Canada were particularly harsh as they adjusted to bitter temperatures. Diamond Akbarali remembers how winter was "terrible, lots of snow to the knee. Like now is nothing, to the ankle and that's it. Oh the snow was terrible."¹⁸⁰ Others recalled their initial excitement, particularly those who were in their youth, at witnessing their first snow fall. For example, just a few days after their arrival in 1972, the children of the De Souza family were already looking forward to their first snowfall as Lucy De Souza described that "it's [snow] all they talk about, their first snowman."¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ "Ugandan Asians Find Canadian Winter Cold but People Very Warm," *Ottawa Citizen*, December 23, 1972 in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 150.

¹⁷⁸ Farida and Amin Sunderji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver June 22, 2015.

¹⁷⁹ Munira Dhanani, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, February 15, 2015.

¹⁸⁰ Diamond Akbarali, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Calgary, July 21, 2015.

¹⁸¹ Utting, "Asian Children Here from Uganda Long to See Snow for the First Time," 10.

Edmond reflected on when “we saw the snowflakes and everyone ran out. Snow! Snow! So excited to see the snow, everyone was trying to catch the snowflakes in our hand and then it used to melt. Then we saw the snow on the ground and ... everyone was so excited. The first time in our lives we saw snow.”¹⁸² For some Ugandan Asians, snow was a completely novel experience. Shiraz recalled asking someone on the street “what’s this white stuff? He was shocked, you don’t know? This is snow! They were flurries, but this was my first time experiencing snow, and I had no idea how snow fell ... I had seen it on the ground in pictures when I was back home ... so that was my first experience with snow ... boy, forty years of snow, I’ve had enough [laughter].”¹⁸³ Others were more hesitant to rush out with other refugees to observe their first snow fall including Sikandar who recounted how “all the Ugandan Asians, there were seven - eight of us working, they run out like crazy ... and I was embarrassed, so I stayed inside. So, didn’t want to go out and I thought I would make myself look like a fool in front of these white guys, you know so I stayed inside.”¹⁸⁴ Ugandan Asian refugees held varying recollections of the Canadian climate based on oral history interviews. Ultimately, many refugees would adjust to the climate as they continued to create new roots in Canada.

The early experiences of Ugandan Asians reinforced the government’s conclusion surrounding the overall success of the resettlement initiative being attributed to both the Canadian effort and the resiliency of the Ugandan Asian community. The government’s initial review of the program was based on the major survey conducted by immigration historian Freda Hawkins titled, *Ugandan Asian Expellees: The First Twelve Months in Canada*. that explored the first year of resettlement for Ugandan Asian refugees. It argued that “to the extent that Ugandans did not experience long periods of unemployment, an inordinately low level of income, or feelings of social isolation, it may be concluded that they adapted without serious difficulty to their new life, at least at the outset.”¹⁸⁵ These conclusions are complicated by employment discrimination that many refugees faced upon arrival alongside adjusting to the harsh Canadian climate. Refugees accepted a wide array of employment opportunities as a means of supporting

¹⁸² Edmond and Maria Rodriguez, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 11, 2015.

¹⁸³ Shiraz Lalani, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, April 25, 2015.

¹⁸⁴ Anonymous, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Edmonton August 4, 2015.

¹⁸⁵ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-4-650, “Ugandan Asian Expellees: The First Twelve Months in Canada,” October 1976, 8.

their families and avoiding long term social assistance from the government based on ethical grounds.

Regardless of these barriers, refugees made conscious attempts to adapt to Canadian life and appreciated the efforts of the government and Canadian public at large in offering them an honourable place in Canadian society. With ninety-four percent of refugees who were surveyed expressing their desire to remain in Canada, the preliminary report on the initiative provided a positive review of the resettlement.¹⁸⁶ Furthermore, over seventy percent of respondents were “satisfied with their opportunity to meet Canadians,” and after twelve months in Canada, “nine out of ten of the Ugandan households surveyed believed they were accepted in the community in which they lived.”¹⁸⁷ The collaborative efforts of both communities encouraged Ugandan Asian refugees to quickly integrate into Canadian society. Beyond these initial experiences of resettlement, the foremost concern for many refugees was to unite with family members who either held passports for other countries such as Britain, India, or Pakistan or were temporarily sent to UN transit camps in Europe.

Family Reunification

At the end of the expulsion decree there remained 4,200 Ugandan Asians who were flown to various transit camps across Europe.¹⁸⁸ Additionally, approximately four to five hundred Ugandan Asians sought temporary refuge in Kenya before the expulsion deadline.¹⁸⁹ As noted by the Canadian High Commissioner in Kenya, William Oliver, the ‘in transit’ status of Ugandan Asians in Kenya and the given political and cultural climate in East Africa created “a veritable ‘time-bomb’,” in the region as President Kenyatta requested for the early removal of refugees.¹⁹⁰ Due to the wide range of circumstances for granting or denying admission to Canada, some family members were rendered inadmissible based on a failure to meet selection criteria or their tenure of British, Indian, or Pakistani passports. Given these circumstances, Ugandan Asian

¹⁸⁶ LAC, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-4-650, “Ugandan Asian Expellees: The First Twelve Months in Canada,” 6.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 68; 72.

¹⁸⁸ LAC, Records of External Affairs, RG 25, volume 13668, file number 47-4-UNHCR-1-AFR, “Background Note on Asians of Undetermined Nationality from Uganda,” March 14, 1973, 2.

¹⁸⁹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-9-650, “Ugandan Expellees,” March 12, 1973, 1.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

refugees sought to reunite with their family members in Canada. Family reunification became particularly complex for the Canadian government due to miscommunication with the UNHCR based on alternative understandings of Canada's role in the resettlement initiative. After the expiration of the expulsion deadline, the UNHCR continued to pressure the international community to accept refugees being held in transit centres and encouraged the Canadian government to participate.

UNHCR representatives reminded global leaders of the urgency in resettling refugees as a means of preventing the “demoralization and frustration that camp life invariably causes. This group with their high professional qualifications and will to succeed should be contributing positively to a country of resettlement. Moreover, the reunion of families which became separated through the exodus is becoming increasingly more urgent.”¹⁹¹ Amidst their strategies to relocate Ugandan Asians to permanent countries of resettlement, the Canadian government was perplexed as to the UNHCR's request for further assistance. According to the Director of Programs and Procedures for the Department of Manpower and Immigration, G.M. Mitchell, Canada had “already done more both in terms of financial outlay and of the number accepted for resettlement than all other countries combined, excluding Great Britain.”¹⁹² Officials asserted that Canada had already committed significant financial and human resources to global resettlement efforts. Additionally, the Canadian government was also hesitant to commit to any form of major extension to the resettlement initiative as it required both Cabinet approval and further funding. Therefore, as resettlement efforts extended into 1973, the Canadian government was content with how the initiative was being carried out and did not wish to expand the program.

Roughly fifty to seventy-five refugees continued to arrive each week relating to the 1,500 visas that were left outstanding as of November 7th, 1972.¹⁹³ To further complicate the request from UNHCR, the Canadian government legitimately had no knowledge of how those 1,500

¹⁹¹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, “Background Note on Asians of Undetermined Nationality from Uganda,” January 1, 1973, 3.

¹⁹² LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, “Ugandan Asians in the United Kingdom,” January 15, 1973, 2.

¹⁹³ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, “Unresettled Ugandan Expellees with Relatives in Canada,” May 7, 1973, 2.

refugees would eventually travel to Canada. Since visas were valid for six months, government officials reasoned that they may visit relatives abroad or seek entry to other countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, India or Pakistan.¹⁹⁴ Using this line of argument, immigration officials concluded that “unfortunately, we have no way of knowing how many of these some 1,500 odd persons will eventually proceed to Canada.”¹⁹⁵ The number of outstanding visas reported in early November of 1972 confused matters for the Canadian government as UN officials were under the presumption that Canada would accept 1,600 refugees from transit camps since that was roughly equivalent to the number of outstanding visas.¹⁹⁶ The Canadian response to these assumptions was definitive. The Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, Robert M. Adams, firmly expressed that in reality “some 1,600 of the people issued visas in Kampala have not arrived in Canada has no bearing whatsoever on Ugandan Asians in temporary transit in Italy, Austria, Belgium and Spain.”¹⁹⁷ Canadian immigration authorities in Ottawa expected that a significant portion of those who had not traveled by charter aircraft would arrive before the expiration of their visas. The under secretary reaffirmed this assumption and argued that “no doubt most of the Ugandan Asians carrying Canadian visas will arrive here eventually.”¹⁹⁸ The outstanding 1,500 visas that were issued to expellees who had not arrived in Canada did not translate to the automatic admission of the same number of Ugandan Asians who were sent to transit centres. Once this issue was clarified, the central problem of how to apply for entry to Canada remained.

The Director for Programs and Procedures for the Department of Manpower and Immigration, G.M. Mitchell emphasized that those who sought to resettle from transit centres or those granted asylum in other countries would be required to meet regular immigrant selection

¹⁹⁴ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-3-650, V. A. Latour, “Ugandan Expellees - Expenditures,” November 10, 1972, 3.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ LAC, Records of External Affairs, RG 25, volume 8794, file number 20-1-2-UGDA, “Uganda Asians,” November 23, 1972, 1.

¹⁹⁷ LAC, Records of External Affairs, RG 25, volume 13668, file number 47-4-UNHCR-1-AFR, Robert M. Adams, “Letter to Mr. Hathway,” November 30, 1972, 1. The discrepancy between the two number represented 1,500 and 1,600 is based on whether government officials composing internal government documents outlining the number of visas issued by November 7th (6,292) or November 23rd (6,400).

¹⁹⁸ LAC, Records of External Affairs, RG 25, volume 13668, file number 47-4-UNHCR-1-AFR, Robert M. Adams, “Letter to Mr. Hathway,” November 30, 1972, 1.

criteria.¹⁹⁹ The only exemption to this pertained to the reunification of immediate family members of Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada who should apply through the “sponsored dependent category.”²⁰⁰ Another caveat to this exemption pertained to stateless refugees who were granted asylum in the U.K.. Stateless refugees were eligible to apply for relaxed selection criteria.²⁰¹ Canadian embassies in Britain and other regions of Europe received “several hundred applications for re-migration,” but applications were to be strictly evaluated under regular selection criteria unless they were sponsored by a relative living in Canada.²⁰² Immigration policy regarding the admission of refugees allowed visa officers to use their discretion when evaluating applications of Ugandan Asian refugees in transit centres.²⁰³ Since Ugandan Asians were outside their country of origin and were applying for asylum from transit centres, they were to be evaluated as refugees as opposed to immigrants.²⁰⁴ Of particular importance in extending visas to those who did not meet selection requirements was the availability of “sufficient private and/or government assistance available to ensure the applicant’s successful establishment in Canada.”²⁰⁵ Moreover, nominated relatives who were applying as refugees, especially for those who did not meet the outlined criteria, could seek special admission under the oppressed minorities clause within the immigration act.²⁰⁶ They were considered to be “unresettled refugees” if their sponsors did not possess the necessary financial obligations to nominate a family member.²⁰⁷ Thus, officials in Ottawa stressed that a “lenient approach” should be used when “the member in Canada has not yet established satisfactory settlement arrangements to have a nominated application approved.”²⁰⁸

¹⁹⁹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, “Ugandan Asians in the United Kingdom,” January 15, 1973, 2.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, “Ugandan Asians,” January 26, 1973, 2.

²⁰² LAC, Records of External Affairs, RG 25, volume 3146, file number 9-1972/6, “Ugandan Expellee Program - Possible Visit of U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees,” January 25, 1973, 1.

²⁰³ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, “Ugandan Asians,” January 26, 1973, 3.

²⁰⁴ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, “Settlement in Canada,” January 16, 1973, 1; LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, “Stateless Ugandan Asian Expellees in European Transit Camps with Relatives in Canada,” March 21, 1973, 1.

²⁰⁵ LAC, Records of External Affairs, RG 25, volume 13668, file number 47-4-UNHCR-1-AFR, “Canadian Immigration Policy for Refugees,” September 29, 1972, 2.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, “Ugandan Expellee Program - Possible Visit of U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees,” January 25, 1973, 3.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

Canada eventually accepted the UNHCR's request to admit more refugees who were in transit camps and did not have relatives living in Canada. The Canadian government agreed to accept 200 to 350 refugees and noted that they would be "less qualified than earlier arrivals, possibly even what are usually referred to as 'hard-core cases'. If so, their establishment will be more difficult."²⁰⁹ The same report argued that it would be within the government's interest to delay the admission of these individuals until the spring to accommodate for the "annual improvement of the Canadian labour market" and it would also coincide with more favourable weather conditions.²¹⁰ An additional provision to delaying the admission of 'hardcore cases' was the annual renewal of federal funding which provided \$150,000 for financial assistance to incoming refugees as of April 1st, 1973.²¹¹ Stateless refugees who did not meet admission requirements were to be accepted under the "same conditions of selection and settlement assistance as prevailed for the main movement, including free transportation if required."²¹² Ultimately, free transportation was not provided to these refugees. They were granted loans between 120 and 135 Canadian dollars which were to be repaid to UNHCR and ICEM six months after arrival.²¹³ It was essential for Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada to prove they possessed sufficient financial means in order to sponsor family members who were applying for 'remigration' from Britain, India, or Pakistan. If family members were in specific transit centres in Europe or Kenya, they would be admitted under relaxed criteria or Ugandan Asian refugees could advocate for special consideration.

Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada were given detailed information on how to make inquiries about family and friends who were either in the United Kingdom or in transit centres. To reach refugees in transit centres, they were requested to contact the ICRC to coordinate the

²⁰⁹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, "Visit of United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees," January 31, 1972, 2. 'Hard-core cases' refers to anyone who required substantial government assistance during resettlement due to physical or mental illnesses, lack of language skills or lower levels of education. Essentially, anyone who failed to meet selection criteria by a substantial sum.

²¹⁰ LAC, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, "Visit of United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees," 2.

²¹¹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, "Further Assistance to Ugandan Asian Expellees," February 16, 1973, 1.

²¹² LAC, Records of External Affairs, RG 25, volume 3146, file number 9-1972/6, "Ugandan Expellee Program - Possible Visit of U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees," January 25, 1973, 2.

²¹³ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, "Transportation Loans - UNHCR," March 22, 1973, 1.

logistics of locating specified individuals. Whereas when requesting for information on relatives in the United Kingdom, refugees contacted the Immigration and Nationality Department of the British Home Office.²¹⁴ Refugees who wished to nominate their relatives were required to provide examining officers with relevant information which was forwarded to the appropriate visa office abroad. As their family members applied to their respective visa office this information was taken into account when assessing applications to immigrate to Canada. Visa officers were encouraged to “use their discretion where the relative is a refugee, is in one of the transit camps in Europe, and has some reasonable prospect of eventual successful establishment in Canada. Relatives accepted for immigration in this way would be eligible for all normal settlement assistance from the Department, having been dealt with as independent applicants.”²¹⁵ This reinforced the principle requirements for sponsoring refugees to resettle in Canada. Refugees needed to demonstrate that adequate financial resources, provided by either the government, a private institution, or the sponsoring family, were available. Assisted passage loans were also distributed to facilitate the funding of travel costs if the UNHCR or ICEM was unable to assist.²¹⁶

As major operations continued into the new year, government officials began to screen and process applications from both Europe and Kenya. By January 22nd, 1973 there remained 1,937 stateless refugees in European transit centres that needed to be permanently resettled abroad.²¹⁷ As Canada’s annual budget to resettle refugees reset in April, more stateless refugees from transit centres became eligible for resettlement assistance. With continuing arrivals of those who were initially issued visas in Kampala, new applicants, and sponsored individuals, 6,137 Ugandan Asians were officially resettled in Canada by May 11th, 1973 which included 465 people who were visaed abroad.²¹⁸ Canada also needed to respond to the ‘veritable time bomb’ regarding Ugandan Asians who were in neighbouring East African countries. Kenyan authorities were under pressure to relocate refugees quickly as animosity towards African Asians continued to rise

²¹⁴ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, “Ugandan Expellee Program,” November 15, 1972, 1.

²¹⁵ LAC, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-7-650, “Ugandan Expellee Program,” 1.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, “Background Note on Asians of Undetermined Nationality from Uganda,” January 1, 1973, 2.

²¹⁸ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-5-650, “Ugandan Asians,” May 15, 1973, 2.

in the region. Additionally, the Kenyan government did not want to provoke hostility from Uganda by “antagonizing Amin by harbouring imaginary enemies of the general.”²¹⁹ Refugees who filtered into Kenya comprised of a wide range of individuals. Some had travelled to Kenya illegally due to the extreme measures placed on Ugandan Asians who were particularly sought after by Idi Amin’s military regime.²²⁰ Others were refused entry to Canada due “to a lack of qualifications in Kampala,” and principally included “hardcore cases whose OS8’s [immigration application forms] were sent by St. Vincent to immigration for perusal.”²²¹

There were 150 application submitted by Ugandan Asian refugees in Tanzania and 500 from those in Kenya, which reflected these categories of refugees who remained ‘in transit’ within East Africa.²²² The UNHCR representative in East Africa, Kadosa, requested Canadian assistance for these individuals who were outside their country of origin and officially considered refugees based on the UN Declaration. Kodosa estimated that nearly two-thirds of these individuals were “genuinely stateless.”²²³ Initially, the Canadian government responded to this request by clarifying that the UNHCR should not “expect that even *bona fide* Ugandan refugees in Kenya would be considered for the type of special assistance provided to expellees in Kampala.”²²⁴ Roger St. Vincent echoed these recommendations and outlined that “all applications [should] be assessed under normal criteria stage B as per 7.18. We [Manpower] concur that you should continue to follow this instruction in dealing with Ismaeli (sic) families in Kenya or elsewhere.”²²⁵ The leader of the immigration team in Kampala’s advice was to simply continue following the same protocol used in Uganda enabling visa officers to apply their own discretion when dealing with refugees in Kenya and Tanzania. St. Vincent was never made aware of the motivations behind the importance of selecting stateless refugees. Correspondence between the Prime Minister and the Aga Khan regarding Ismaili applicants demonstrated how St.

²¹⁹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, “Visit of UNHCR to CDA - Ugandan Refugees,” January 26, 1973, 1.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1214, file number 5750-11, “Telex to Immigration Office in Beirut,” November 18, 1972, 1.

²²² LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, “Visit of UNHCR to CDA - Ugandan Refugees,” January 26, 1973, 1.

²²³ Ibid., 1-2.

²²⁴ Ibid., 1.

²²⁵ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1214, file number 5750-11, “Question Regarding Processing of Ismaelis Already Answered in Nairobi,” November 22, 1972, 1.

Vincent was left in the dark and the overarching significance of accepting those who were stripped of their claims to citizenship.

Letters between Prime Minister Trudeau and the Aga Khan provided insight on Canada's uptake of refugees who remained in East Africa. Many refugees in Kenya remained 'in transit' until April of 1974.²²⁶ Prime Minister Trudeau explained to the Aga Khan that the UNHCR informed his dignitaries that "some 300 Ugandan Asians, mainly Ismailis, are regarded by the government of Kenya as persons 'in transit'. At present these people are able to obtain extensions to their residence permits in Kenya."²²⁷ The prime minister informed the Aga Khan that according to immigration officers on the ground most refugees were not under any immediate duress and could safely remain in Kenya. As refugees continued to apply for asylum in Canada, based on the recommendations for the use of standard protocol outlined by St. Vincent, the prime minister clarified to the Aga Khan that these procedures did not include information on the religious background of applicants.²²⁸ Prime Minister Trudeau was unable to provide precise numbers on those who were Ismaili but he described to the Aga Khan that:

you may be interested to know that during 1973 our Nairobi office received applications representing 1,619 persons in Kenya and issued 1,181 visas. During January of this year the number of visas issued exceeded the number of applications received. It is our estimate that well over one half of this movement of persons represented members of the Ismaili community - in excess of 800 people. I have instructed the Canadian immigration officer in Nairobi to get in touch with the leader of the Ismaili community in Kenya in order to be assured that all cases of duress or distress be communicated to aim without delay and thus permit the priority process mentioned above to be instituted.²²⁹

Although the prime minister was unsure of the exact numbers of those who were followers of the Aga Khan, it appeared that many applicants were presumed to be Ismaili. The letter also noted the difficulty in determining which individuals were stateless refugees or independent applicants from the entire region of East Africa. Nairobi served as the sole visa office in the region and

²²⁶ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1214, file number 5750-11, Pierre Elliot Trudeau, "Letter to the Aga Khan," March 21, 1974, 2.

²²⁷ LAC, RG 76, volume 1214, file number 5750-11, "Letter to the Aga Khan," 2.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid., 2-3.

accepted applications from Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Kenya. The Aga Khan appreciated the efforts made by the Canadian government but also expressed his concern for those who were still considered to be “in transit.”²³⁰

In response to the Prime Minister’s letter, the Aga Khan described how his lead official in East Africa confirmed the processing of a large number of Ugandan Asian refugees in Kenya.²³¹ Although the final portion of the prime minister’s letter expressed that some individuals may in fact be under duress, the Aga Khan underscored the reality of the situation for those in transit:

The reason I raised the matter with you was because I know that for internal reasons, as well as because of the delicate nature of their contact with the Ugandan Government, the Kenyan Government cannot extend the ‘in transit’ status indefinitely. I have discussed the problem at the highest level with the Kenyans, and while I am satisfied that the present Kenyan Government intends to treat the issue as humanely as possible, it is the Government’s serious wish that a definitive home for the Ugandan Asians should be found as quickly as possible. I am therefore extremely grateful that you should have instructed the Canadian Immigration Officer in Nairobi to get in touch with Sir Eboo Pirbhai, so that when the problem becomes immediate, the appropriate priority process will be instituted.²³²

Based on communication with high ranking officials in Kenya, the Aga Khan outlined the importance of providing a safe haven for all Ugandan Asian refugees in Kenya. Acknowledging Canadian efforts to aid those under duress, the Aga Khan emphasized that the situation might become increasingly more dire for refugees. Government documents reiterated the Aga Khan’s concern and detailed that “it is not unlikely that the increasing pressure being exerted on the Asian community to emigrate will produce charges that Canadian immigration requirements are too stringent, and that Canada should do more to assist Asians wishing to leave Kenya.”²³³

There was legitimate concern that hostility could arise in Kenya surrounding the plight of Ugandan Asian refugees who were still classed as people ‘in transit’. In response to the situation

²³⁰ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1214, file number 5750-11, Aga Khan, “Letter to Prime Minister Trudeau,” April 16, 1974, 1.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² LAC, RG 76, volume 1214, file number 5750-11, Aga Khan, “Letter to Prime Minister Trudeau,” 1-2.

²³³ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1259, file number 5850-3-9-650, “Narrative Report,” May 7, 1972, 2,

in Kenya, the Department of Manpower and Immigration continued to admit refugees who fit within immigration policy but were cautious when accepting applications. Internal documents reinforced that “the Prime Minister, in his letter to the Aga Khan dated March 21st, 1974, promised nothing beyond giving priority to Ismaili applicants who were subject to duress or distress (oppressed persons). On this basis any Ismaili who is not an oppressed person or refugee will be treated like any other applicant.”²³⁴ This served as a protective measure to avoid criticism of privileging Ismailis while also granting humanitarian considerations to all Ugandan Asian refugees. Ultimately, documents outlined that there was direct contact between the Prime Minister and the leader of the Ismaili community but the application of immigration policy was universal. Canada accepted all those who were stateless and fit within the oppressed minority clause on a priority basis especially after the expiry of the ninety-day deadline. However, refugees across the world continued to seek permanent resettlement or family reunification in Canada. The first wave of Ugandan Asian arrivals actively pressured the government to sponsor family members and accept additional refugees.

Ugandan Asians were not idle in the process of seeking to be reunited with their families in Canada. Many sent letters and aggressively petitioned for Ugandan Asians to be considered under reduced selection criteria as they were genuine refugees. Examples include letters from representatives of the Ismaili community who argued that the Canadian government “be requested on humanitarian grounds and sufferings to waive the condition of sponsorship and even consider our applications on reduced selection criteria and reunite our separated families.”²³⁵ The same community leaders sent specific lists of individuals who were in transit centres located in Belgium and Spain who sought refuge in Canada.²³⁶ A collaborative effort between the Ismaili community in Toronto and the National Interfaith Immigrant Community raised 1.3 million dollars to support the sponsorship of Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada.²³⁷

²³⁴ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1214, file number 5750-11, “Visits to Beirut, Nairobi, and Lagos,” June 26, 1974, 1.

²³⁵ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, “Settlement in Canada,” January 16, 1973, 1.

²³⁶ Ibid; LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, Zeenatali Virani, “Sponsorship of Ugandan Expellees Now Residing at the Calella Centre (Barcelona) Spain,” March 6, 1973, 1.

²³⁷ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, “Stateless Ugandan Asian Expellees in European Transit Camps with Relatives in Canada,” March 22, 1973, 1. The National Interfaith Immigrant community was formally established in 1960 as several different church groups across Canada held shared mandates to assist with the integration of newcomers. For more see: <http://miic.ca/history/>.

James Cross, the Assistant Deputy Minister for the Department of Manpower and Immigration, responded firmly to these appeals from the Ugandan Asian refugee community in Canada. Cross confirmed that “under normal circumstances we would not accept such a blanket guarantee for unnamed refugees, and our visa officer in Brussels has quite properly refused to take action on it without clearance from Ottawa ... they have been given no encouragement ... to believe their proposal will be accepted.”²³⁸ Moreover, immigration officials outlined that it would be impossible to create an additional special assistance program since the sponsorship of 540 refugees in Europe required “Cabinet approval and a further financial commitment.”²³⁹ Officials in Ottawa reiterated their commitment to the community that sponsorship of family members continued to be assessed on compassionate grounds.²⁴⁰ Given the assurances offered by the Canadian government, many oral history participants documented how sponsorship was an ongoing process between 1973 and 1974 as they amassed the necessary financial requirements to reunite with family and friends.

Sponsoring family members to Canada was not a particularly straight forward process. Diamond Akbarali articulated the struggles of choosing between seeking recertification of his university credentials and reuniting with his family. After applying to the University of Calgary, immigration officials advised him to continue working in order to sponsor his immediate family: “immigration said. ‘no no, you work and you sponsor these guys’. So I said, ‘ok, I’ll go next year.’ And getting people here from there takes years. I had a mother who has diabetes so in that she has problems. One person was mentally challenged. It took 2 years to get them here but I got everybody here. So I had to work for two or three years.”²⁴¹ Many refugees began working immediately in order to sponsor family members who were abroad. Nimira’s oral testimony encapsulated the complexities of sponsorship for refugees that were sent to transit camps in Europe:

²³⁸ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, “Ugandan Asian Expellees,” March 8, 1973, 1.

²³⁹ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, “Stateless Ugandan Asian Expellees in European Transit Camps with Relatives in Canada,” March 22, 1973, 3.

²⁴⁰ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, “Visit to Ottawa of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees February 4-6, 1973,” March 5, 1973, 3.

²⁴¹ Diamond Akbarali, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Calgary, July 21, 2015.

As a family, we, after getting in touch with the other brothers and sisters, we decided that this is the best time to go to Canada, try for Canada. But by that time you have to remember a lot of refugees were already here so they started to get picky at this point. They wanted to reunite families but there were conditions like they were making it not so easy. Before they would provide you with ... all kinds of things when you came as well as providing you with tickets and things but then they were saying no no no, you are not in any danger where you are. You just want to be reunited with your family but you are fine in the place that you are. So then they say ok you can only come if you're like 2, no four brothers and sisters, four of them were here but one had already sponsored a fiancée because she was already engaged to married when she left Uganda and he ended up somewhere in England so she had to sponsor him here in order to marry him. So she lost all her rights to help her family because you were only allowed so many per person. So my other three brothers and sisters they had to show like something like \$10,000 in the bank plus pay for all of our tickets in order for us to come and all of our medicals and this and that. So these were new, even though they were, they had graduated from university and all that, you can't come and right away, had no Canadian experience, so you can't find decent jobs, university level, their level jobs so they had to do like any job. One of my brothers worked at a grocery store at a \$1.80 per hour and his was considered good pay. Dollar eighty per hour and he got to bring home so many free groceries and when you have 9 mouths to feed that sounds like a good salary, right? And yet he was a university graduate, so that sort of job and a couple of my brothers were doing like three shifts. First double shifts on an everyday basis and then they used to do one weekend shift in order to get as much money together as they could. Plus us too, whatever they were giving us in the form of allowances for learning Swedish [while they were in a transit centre] or whatever we were trying everything. Strawberry plucking, this, that, anything we could lay our hands on for money and we had the advantage of numbers. Eight to ten members there so we got together as much as we could so that we could put it in the bank and show the ten or twenty thousand dollars because whoever was left in Sweden out of that only two, my oldest brother and another one after him were like working age. The rest of us were school age and under, we were dependents of my parents and my brother who was married and was working age had a wife and two kids so we had to show more to come out, there was too many of us to come out. So we had to wait during that time when they were building the capital to show and then they had to go to a church here and ask for help. They had to show that they had a place to stay. So they were living, all three of them were living in one apartment the other sister remember she sponsored her fiancée and they were living in that house after they got married and the other three were living in a two bedroom apartment so they had to get a five or four bedroom apartment to show that they could accommodate the rest of us.²⁴²

²⁴² Nimira Charania, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 6, 2014.

Nimira's life history embodied the numerous struggles that Ugandan Asian refugees faced when applying for family reunification. Her entire family endeavoured to participate in multiple forms of labour to amass capital collectively in order to prove to Canadian authorities that their family indeed possessed 'sufficient private assistance'. As priorities shifted away from the immediate perils of the expulsion deadline, officials in Ottawa were not as hard pressed to rapidly admit Ugandan Asian refugees. As many had sought refuge in transit camps or had been offered permanent resettlement in European countries, the Canadian government was wary to admit refugees that may become public charges. For Nimira's family, it was crucial that her family not only held the required financial means but also demonstrated that adequate housing was already acquired. For a family of fourteen, this presented evident problems. However, appeals made to local religious institutions in Canada facilitated their eventual resettlement in Montreal by the end of 1974.²⁴³ A similar experience was described by Sikandar Omar whose transportation costs from Malta to Edmonton were funded by the Catholic Church of Canada.²⁴⁴ Resettling larger families required coordinated efforts that in some cases were facilitated by Canadian authorities.

Khaerun and Aziz Fakirani recounted the leniency provided to their family who were also sponsored by family members from the refugee camp in Malta. The sponsorship process required patience according to Aziz who recalled how:

It took almost one year for everybody to join the family in England and in Canada mostly, in America, you know so like for us, for my family we were lucky that you know my two sisters they were in Montreal already you know like in Canada. So Zarine the elder sister and my younger sister.

Khaerun: Yeah I came with my sister Zarine. And we were the two ones who, we were lucky that we found jobs very quickly and we had both done secretarial studies in Nairobi so we found you know, we could sponsor them if we had a good, you know, income coming in as well right? Because how can we support these nine people with nothing, no jobs you know so. Anyways after as soon as we found the jobs then we applied with the immigration thing that we want to call our families, so one by one they started coming.

Aziz: Ok, so Zarine sponsored five of them. My parents, my two brothers and one sister. So five of them they, she managed to sponsor at once. And then my, Khaerun, my sister Khaerun she sponsored me. So six of us we were sponsored from Malta to Canada. So we came, we ended up as refugees in Malta but we ended up in Canada

²⁴³ Nimira Charania, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 6, 2014.

²⁴⁴ Anonymous, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Edmonton, August 4, 2015.

by landed immigrant ... because Canada has already closed the door at that time. After 90 days, what happened in Uganda, they had to assist everybody to come but once that period was gone you know. But still Canada was quite helpful for bringing in.

Khaerun: They were very lenient, you know.

Aziz: Very lenient for the family to join. So when you go to the immigration that I want to bring my family from the refugee camp, they will do everything possible to help.²⁴⁵

Oral history evidence outlined the particularities of sponsorship from the perspective of refugees. Similar to Nimira's family, Khaerun and Aziz discussed the importance of rapid employment as a means of collecting financial resources to expedite family reunification in Canada. Their narratives of resettlement demonstrated the shifting moments within the resettlement initiative supporting Nimira's recollections of the reduced uptake of Ugandan Asian refugees. Although government documents emphasized universal treatment and leniency administered within the sponsored dependent category, they failed to address the realities of the sponsorship process for Ugandan Asians. Rapid employment was not only a response to barriers within the Canadian labour market but it was also a conscious decision taken by refugees whose priorities were to be reunited with their loved ones. The agency of refugees is embodied by oral histories that outlined various motivations regarding employment and appeals to the Canadian government to accelerate the resettlement of stateless Ugandan Asians. These efforts combined with the greater calls from international organizations such as the UNHCR, ICEM, and major religious leaders and institutions effectively motivated the Canadian government to accept more than the officially mandated 6,000 Ugandan Asians refugees.

Ultimately, Canada accepted 645 refugees from camps in Europe based on the requests of Ugandan Asian refugees as well as the UNHCR's general request to the global community to admit stateless refugees.²⁴⁶ Of those who arrived from Europe, 69 were privately sponsored, 278 were nominated by recently arrived friends and family in Canada, and 298 were independent applicants who met selection criteria.²⁴⁷ Furthermore, an indeterminate number of refugees continued to be sponsored from Britain, India, and Pakistan due to "Canada's liberal sponsorship

²⁴⁵ Aziz and Khaerun Fakirani, and Azad Lalany, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver July 8, 2015.

²⁴⁶ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-5-650, A.E. Gotlieb, "Ugandan Asians - Press Briefing by British Community Relations Commission," July 7, 1975, 3.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

and nomination provisions.”²⁴⁸ As operations came to a formal conclusion at the end of 1974, government officials deemed the entire initiative an overwhelming success. Reports deduced that Canada’s response to the expulsion decree was “lauded by the Asians themselves, the UNHCR and the press throughout the world.”²⁴⁹ This fulfilled Canada’s desires to appease Britain’s request for aid, assert themselves on the international political scene, adhere to the Aga Khan’s appeal for resettling his community members, and provide humanitarian assistance to a group of individuals that desperately needed asylum. This echoed the prevailing dominance of Liberal internationalism and Canada’s transition towards becoming an international champion of human rights in the early 1970s.

The report also emphasized that the success of the program was due to “the initiative, resourcefulness and qualifications of the expellees, their resettlement in Canada was greatly facilitated by the joint efforts of the federal and provincial governments, the voluntary agencies and thousands of individuals in Canada.”²⁵⁰ Collaboration between government departments, voluntary agencies, and the Canadian community, at large, played a vital role in easing the adjustment process for Ugandan Asian refugees as they arrived in Canada. Concerted efforts from various bodies encouraged the creation of a welcoming environment in Canada. This cements arguments presented by numerous scholars on the significance of both host communities and newcomers participating in the integration process.

Hoerder’s theory of everyday interactions manifested itself within the distinct efforts made by Canadians to provide social support in a myriad of forms to Ugandan Asian refugees. Additionally, the resiliency and initiative of refugees themselves was imperative to the overall success of the resettlement. Canada’s intentions to admit nearly 8,000 Ugandan Asian refugees was also evidently motivated by opportunism. Government officials were well aware of the high levels of education, technical skills, and specialized expertise of Ugandan Asians. As the Canadian government utilized strict selection criteria within the refugee determination process, some refugees were selected on pure humanitarian grounds whereas the majority exceeded the

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-5-650, A.E. Gotlieb, “Ugandan Asians - Press Briefing by British Community Relations Commission,” July 7, 1975, 3.

required points for standard independent immigrants. This led to overall charges from scholars and the press that Canada undoubtedly accepted the cream of the crop amongst the Ugandan Asian community and was not on a 'mission of mercy'.²⁵¹

A Mission of Mercy or Selecting the Cream of the Crop?

A series of internal studies produced by scholars for the Canadian government and evaluation reports by government officials analyzed the entire resettlement initiative. Authors involved in these evaluations and internal reports include renowned academics such as Gerald Dirks and Freda Hawkins, as well as Canadian immigration officials who worked on the ground in Kampala, namely, Gerry Campbell. These reports provided the basis for understanding criticisms lobbied against the government of Canada for "bidding for the cream of the crop, the most attractive potential immigrants in skills and education, [and] those who it may be predicted will offer Canada the most."²⁵² An intrinsic component of interrogating these accusations is to explore how visa officers working on the special movement in Uganda evaluated their operations on the ground. Gerry Campbell was one of the youngest visa officers in Kampala and had only been working in the field for six weeks in London, England, when he was selected by Mike Molloy to join the immigration team being sent to Uganda.²⁵³ Campbell's report identified several major issues for visa officers in Kampala who were responsible for admitting or rejecting Ugandan Asians. Of particular confusion for the young visa officer was understanding the degree in which they could be lenient in applying selection criteria and the use of the oppressed minorities clause. According to Campbell, there was "constant uncertainty over the degree of liberality to be used in applying the selection criteria" and "this problem did result in a degree of inconsistency of selection."²⁵⁴ As discussed earlier, visa officers could utilize discretionary authority to assign additional points to potential applicants under section thirty-two of the immigration act where Ugandan Asian refugees appeared "adaptable, had proved it and were

²⁵¹ Bert N. Adams and Victor Jesudason, "The Employment of Ugandan Asian Refugees in Britain, Canada, and India," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 7, no. 4 (1984): 464.

²⁵² "Humanity Requires Admitting the Weak too," *Globe and Mail*, August 26 1972, 6

²⁵³ Mike Molloy, interview by Heather Leroux, The Ugandan Asian Archive Oral History Project, Archives and Research Collections, Carleton University Library, Ottawa, August 13 2014, accessed on 18 April 2016. https://arc.library.carleton.ca/sites/default/files/audio/UAC_Molloy_Transcript_0.pdf.

²⁵⁴ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, Gerry Campbell, "Contingencies of the Kampala Operation," March 22, 1973, 5.

ready and willing to go anywhere.”²⁵⁵ However, the particularities of applying this level of flexibility were left entirely in the purview of individual visa officers.

An additional source of complexity involved the priority of resettling stateless Ugandan Asians. Campbell outlined the difficulty in confirming the legitimacy of claims to statelessness: “where immigrants appeared to be stateless, travel documents were issued on the spot if the claim to statelessness could be substantiated. This substantiation was difficult to obtain and a liberal issuance of these documents doubtless resulted in many unwarranted persons obtaining them.”²⁵⁶ His report acknowledged that under the circumstances of the resettlement initiative “little could be done to avoid this problem.”²⁵⁷ According to the report, Campbell believed that some applicants may have gained admission to Canada without adhering to the specified criteria. This was due to a lack of clear directives from Ottawa along with difficulties in verifying claims to statelessness. Another issue relating to the alleged arbitrary procedures was how visa officers were expected to deal with special assistance cases:

Individual cases meriting humanitarian consideration but requiring special assistance were another problem. Referral to Ottawa before approval resulted in delay and uncertainty ... the arrangement of prior provincial approval for a given number of tuberculosis cases would be particularly useful in this respect. Also previous indications of the degree of assistance which will be available for potential long term financial liabilities and/or hard-core unemployed.²⁵⁸

Campbell sought clarification on whether refugees were eligible for financial assistance if they arrived in Canada during the latter months of their visa expiration dates.²⁵⁹ Complex cases ranged from applicants who were epileptic or pregnant to specifics on whether step children were considered to be the dependents of the principle applicant.²⁶⁰ As a visa officer working under a strict deadline, seeking the advice and approval of department officials based in Ottawa hindered his ability to quickly process Ugandan Asian refugees. This led to frustration as Campbell

²⁵⁵ Roger St. Vincent, *Seven Crested Cranes: Asian Exodus from Uganda: The Role of Canada's Mission to Kampala*, (Canadian Immigration and Historical Society, 1993), 42.

²⁵⁶ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, Gerry Campbell, “Contingencies of the Kampala Operation,” March 22, 1973, 11.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

described that “an advance indication of Ottawa’s attitude towards acceptance of these more dubious cases would facilitate selection decisions and obviate the necessity of constant referral back to headquarters.”²⁶¹ Beyond these issues faced by immigration officers in Kampala, Campbell’s report outlined three problematic areas within the operation’s guidelines.

The first issue provided crucial details on the separation of many families who applied for asylum in Canada. Campbell sought clarification on whether visa officers were to “approve two brothers and refuse the third if he does not comply? What about parents who were independent in their country of residence but will have poor prospects of employment in the Canadian labour market and become either dependents of their children or public charges?”²⁶² His report described specifically how families were evaluated under strict selection criteria with a major emphasis being placed on the employability of applicants. Using two examples, Campbell’s report directly identified the realities of families being separated due to inadmissibility based on the visa officer’s assessment of their application. Furthermore, within the application process, Ugandan Asians were required to certify that “I [name of applicant], hereby declare that if my admission to Canada is authorized, it could result in a permanent separation from my dependents.”²⁶³ This clearly demonstrated the federal government’s awareness and support for enabling a screening process that could potentially separate families. This regulation questioned the scope of Canada’s humanitarian intentions to admit Ugandan Asians.

The second issue pertained to letters or telegrams sent to the Department of Manpower and Immigration with offers of assistance and accommodation from relatives in Canada. According to Campbell, these offers were not verified to confirm that sponsors possessed sufficient financial means or adequate housing.²⁶⁴ Letters of support strongly influenced an applicant’s eligibility to seek refuge in Canada. Campbell’s final major critique of the operations in Uganda was the apparent favouritism that was extended towards the Ismaili Muslim community. He outlined that “above all else our selection of expellees/refugees must be done on a purely individual basis ... even the entertainment of verbal representations from members of one

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² LAC, RG 76, volume 1257, file number 5850-3-650, “Contingencies of the Kampala Operation,” 11-12.;

²⁶³ Ibid.; Also see appendix A of Campbell’s report.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 13.

segment of the community will leave our department open to unfounded charges of discrimination and threaten to negate much of the positive publicity attached to Canada for its role in an emergency operation.”²⁶⁵ The universality of the resettlement initiative remained of utmost importance to visa officers on the ground. Interviews with Mike Molloy and Roger St. Vincent alongside their respective works on operations in Uganda reiterated Canada’s commitment to accepting all those who met selection criteria and those who were genuinely stateless.²⁶⁶ As discussed earlier, although there were direct communications between the Prime Minister and the Aga Khan, Ismailis did not receive special treatment. Their admission to Canada was facilitated by specific legislation within immigration policy that was applicable to all Ugandan Asians. Campbell’s evaluation documented the issues faced by visa officers in Kampala and provided insight on the importance of following selection criteria. His reflections on the resettlement initiative informed critiques from scholars who debated the altruistic nature of Canada’s decision to admit nearly 8,000 Ugandan Asian refugees between 1972 and 1974.

Upon the conclusion of the formal operations in Kampala and the initial arrival of Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada, the first academic assessment of the resettlement was conducted by Gerald E. Dirks in 1973. Dirks was commissioned by the Canadian government to conduct a comparison study of the latest refugee movements in Canada. This included the Hungarians who arrived in the 1950s and the Czechoslovakians who arrived in the late 1960s. With regards to the reception and integration of Ugandan Asian refugees, Dirks concluded that Ugandan Asians were not welcomed as warmly as the Hungarians in 1956 due to concerns over employment but these anxieties dissipated as refugees integrated within the Canadian labour market.²⁶⁷ This supported the impetus behind the creation of Ugandan Asian Committees across the country and confirms the highly skilled background of Ugandan Asians. As a whole, the resettlement initiative was cost effective according to Dirks’ analysis. Considering the per capita expenditure, the Ugandan Asian resettlement was the cheapest refugee assistance scheme since the initial resettlement of

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Michael Molloy, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 13, 2015; “Michael Molloy - Uganda Asian Refugee Movement 1972,” YouTube Video, 1:31:49, 40th anniversary lecture on October 18, 2012, posted by Western University Migration and Ethnic Relations, May 2, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtQPKNhymY>; Roger St. Vincent, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Montreal, October 30, 2015; Vincent, *Seven Crested Cranes*, 94.

²⁶⁷ LAC, Records of External Affairs, RG 25, volume 3146, file number 9-1973/1, Gerald Dirks, “Canada’s Refugee Admissions Policy: Three Differing Responses,” January 31, 1973, 13.

Displaced Persons in 1947 and 1948.²⁶⁸ Dirks articulated that funding and the final decision of the Canadian government to admit refugees from each of the three regions all derived from Cabinet.²⁶⁹ However, one significant caveat to this is that both the Hungarian and the Ugandan Asian resettlements were carried out by Cabinet members “where no strenuous opposition to the movements seems to have existed,” which also “demonstrated the confidence in the correctness of their decision often associated with policy-making bodies which have enjoyed responsibility for considerable periods.”²⁷⁰ The role of Cabinet members was critical to enacting a rapid response to the plights of both Hungarians and Ugandan Asians.

One of Dirks’ critical observations with regards to all three resettlements is the role played by the geographical location of Canada as a means of limiting the arrival of asylum seekers. Furthermore, since Canada “is not a state of first asylum,” the government could therefore “continue to carefully select those refugees from throughout the world to show promise of quickly and quietly integrating into the society.”²⁷¹ Dirks extended his argument of Canada’s ability to consistently select political refugees that demonstrate the potential for rapid integration as a practice that has been carried out since Confederation.²⁷² Based on this historical process, Dirks argued that the “entry of desirable refugees, in fact, had become almost routine owing to the existence of facilities and programmes suited to bringing about their prompt and smooth integration into Canadian society.”²⁷³ According to Dirks’ assessment of immigration policy, Canada had established a precise framework to facilitate the admission of ‘desirable refugees’. Cabinet members immediately reviewed the potential of Ugandan Asian refugees to become contributing members of Canadian society and thus commenced the process for resettling refugees in Canada as argued in chapter two. The notion that the government knowingly selecting those who were considered ‘desirable’ is reiterated by other scholars.

Freda Hawkins who chaired a longitudinal study on the various refugee movements in the postwar era, argued that the vast majority of Ugandan Asian refugees were selected based on

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 16.

²⁷⁰ LAC, RG 25, volume 3146, file number 9-1973/1, “Canada’s Refugee Admissions Policy,” 16.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 17.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid.

standard selection criteria of independent immigrants. According to Hawkins, “with few exceptions the Ugandan Asians were admitted as normal immigrants to Canada. Most were processed as independent applicants.”²⁷⁴ Both Dirks and Hawkins outlined the realities of how immigration policy was applied on the ground in Kampala with the vast majority of Ugandan Asians being evaluated under normal selection criteria and being admitted to Canada on the basis of attaining the required points. Their conclusions supported the idea that Canada had received a disproportionate number of young, highly skilled, and well-educated Ugandan Asian refugees.

A major study conducted by three sociologists, Cecil Pereira (University of Winnipeg), Bert N. Adams (University of Wisconsin), and Amber Chand (University of Michigan) covering 400 heads of Ugandan Asian households in Canada, India, and 490 heads of households in Britain drew strong conclusions on the skills and qualifications of refugees who were resettled in each of these countries.²⁷⁵ Adams argued that “Canada utilized its own immigration criteria in accepting the stateless, with the result that those entering Canada were likely to have good English skills, to have a sponsor or a job waiting for them, to be young, and to be of reasonable economic means. Canada was not on a ‘mission of mercy’ so much as on a search for possible contributors to the Canadian economy.”²⁷⁶ The three sociologists also found that “only four percent of the Ugandan Asians coming to Canada were over fifty years of age while thirty-five percent of those going to Britain were and thirty percent of those going to India were over fifty” and that “only ten percent of those coming to Canada” had a primary level of education or less.”²⁷⁷

This coincided with statistics presented by Dirks who argued that within the group of refugees who were offered visas in Kampala, more than fifty percent of them possessed a minimum average of fourteen years of formal schooling.²⁷⁸ Reginald Whitaker also supported

²⁷⁴ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-4-650, “Ugandan Asian Expellees: The First Twelve Months in Canada,” October 1976, 75.

²⁷⁵ Ross Henderson, “Canada Took in Cream of Asian Refugees from Uganda Sociologists Report,” *Globe and Mail*, July 5, 1975, 1; Adams and Jesudason, “The Employment of Ugandan Asian Refugees in Britain, Canada, and India,” 462-476.

²⁷⁶ Adams and Jesudason, “The Employment of Ugandan Asian Refugees in Britain, Canada, and India,” 464.

²⁷⁷ Henderson, “Canada Took in Cream of Asian Refugees from Uganda Sociologists Report,” 1.

²⁷⁸ Gerald E. Dirks, *Canada’s Refugee Policy: Indifference or Opportunism?* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1977), 243.

accusations of the Canadian government selecting the best refugees, and argued that Canada chose the most educated and desirable migrants.²⁷⁹ Additionally the sociologists concluded that Canada received a disproportionate number of “professional and managerial class members while the less skilled workers and operators of small retail stores tended to go to Britain and India.”²⁸⁰ As aptly stated by an official from the Department of Manpower and Immigration, there was “no doubt about it - we’ve [Canada] got the cream of the crop.”²⁸¹ By strictly adhering to the selection criteria in the majority of applications, scholars, government officials, and outside observers accused the federal government of hand selecting the best qualified Ugandan Asians. As these allegations came to the fore in the late 1970s, the Canadian government and the public responded to these reports adamantly reaffirming the humanitarian motives behind the resettlement initiative.

Although these major studies used raw data to support their claims of Canada’s intake of highly qualified refugees, government officials argued that there was also a sufficient intake of dependents and relatives. Accordingly, dependents would not have been eligible to enter Canada under regular selection criteria. A memorandum to Prime Minister Trudeau outlined that “while most of the heads of families selected in Uganda were those whom we considered would settle successfully in Canada, we also accepted a large number of dependents and relatives who met virtually no criteria, because we felt they could become successfully established here with the assistance of other family members.”²⁸² This acknowledged the reality of Canada selecting those who would successfully integrate into Canadian society but officials also trusted that highly skilled principle applicants would support their family members to become well established Canadians over time. This was supported by editorials that responded to the allegations of Canadian opportunism.

²⁷⁹ Reginald Whitaker, *Double Standard: The Secret History of Canadian Immigration* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1987), 255.

²⁸⁰ Henderson, “Canada Took in Cream of Asian Refugees from Uganda Sociologists Report,” 1.

²⁸¹ Peter Desberats, “Asian Airlift Efficient, Humane,” *Vancouver Sun*, November 7, 1972, 10.

²⁸² LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-5-650, A.E. Gotlieb, “Ugandan Asians - Press Briefing by British Community Relations Commission,” July 7, 1975, 3.

As one writer stated, “yes, we did pick young, healthy, well-educated heads of families ... but we also included the sick, the old and the frail members of their families.”²⁸³ The same editorial addressed the reality that many Ugandan Asian refugees were underemployed in Canada but attributed this to the competitive nature of the Canadian labour market. The writer argued that refugees “had to take their chances with the rest of us in weathering hard times. We aren’t auditioning for the role of angels, but looking back, we sure did a bang-up job on behalf of the Ugandan refugees. What’s more we’re glad, because they sure made fine citizens for Canada.”²⁸⁴ Again, officials and the public noted that Ugandan Asian refugees faced barriers to employment, were particularly well-educated and highly skilled, and were making strong contributions to Canada but there were specific instances where Canada acted in a benevolent manner. Furthermore, they articulated the same conclusions of Dirks and Hawkins who identified Canada’s ability to screen refugees and select those who were deemed to be the most desirable. Ultimately, Canada did receive disproportionate numbers of highly qualified refugees but their selection process relied specifically on privileging those who were stateless. Stateless refugees coincidentally were particularly young, well educated, and skilled workers. However, the push to accept those who were stateless led to criticism that the Canadian government purposefully accepted more Ismaili Muslims.

An Indian journalist expressed his concerns that Canada accepted a large proportion of Ismailis since the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was Prince Sadruddin - the Aga Khan’s uncle. Reports from the debate detailed that the High Commissioner wanted to secure the “best possible homeland for his co-religionists [and] pulled strings to get them into Canada ... perhaps the most significant thing is not whether that accusation is true, but that Indian journalists think it is true and write as if it is.”²⁸⁵ Canadian officials were growing increasingly concerned over these allegations as they continued to gain support from the Indian media. However, Bristow explained why a large number of Muslims in general were accepted by Canadian visa officers. According to Bristow:

²⁸³ “Canada Showed Heart on Ugandans,” *Toronto Star*, July 27, 1978, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 160.

²⁸⁴ “Canada Showed Heart on Ugandans,” in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion*, 160

²⁸⁵ Henderson, “Canada Took in Cream of Asian Refugees from Uganda Sociologists Report,” 1.

the Hindus and others had retained these [British Passports] ... but the Moslem [sic], urbanized professionals in Uganda had believed that they would be accepted into Ugandan society, and had renounced their British passports and adopted Ugandan citizenship. Then, when the Ugandans expelled all types of Asians, the Moslems were stateless and had renounced their right to a claim on British help. But Canada had agreed to take in the stateless - and these just happened to also be the most urbanized, educated, youngest and occupationally advanced.²⁸⁶

Bristow's comments reiterated Canada's admission of those who were stateless as well as the universality of Canadian immigration policy. Furthermore, visa officers reported to the Canadian government during the expulsion period that "earlier estimates that most Ismailis were stateless are not being borne out. Neither is the belief that most stateless are Ismailis. Accordingly, the decision to give priority to the stateless group will not necessarily mean that a sizeable portion of the Ismailis will come to Canada was originally expected."²⁸⁷ Once officials were on the ground in Kampala the assumptions regarding the prevalence of Ismailis being stateless was quickly dismissed.

Ultimately, of those who were issued visas in Kampala and had arrived in Canada by November 8th, 1972, 2,862 were Ismaili Muslims, 649 were Hindus, 466 were Christians, 382 belonged to other denominations of Islam, and 61 were Sikh.²⁸⁸ Visa officers did not require background information on religious affiliation for all those who were either sponsored by a family member or applied as an independent class immigrant from the U.K., India, or Pakistan.²⁸⁹ Therefore, there are no concrete statistics on the entire Ugandan Asian refugee population in Canada. These are the only reliable statistics on the religious backgrounds of Ugandan Asian refugees. Although the Canadian government was charged by various media outlets and academics for acting in an opportunistic fashion when admitting Ugandan Asian refugees, the motivations behind the resettlement were far more complex. Canada adhered to their role globally as a recent champion of international human rights while simultaneously

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 990, file number 5850-3-650, "Report Respecting the Special Movement of Ugandan Asians," October 19, 1972, 6.

²⁸⁸ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-5-650, V.A. Latour, "Ugandan Expellees - Expenditures," November 10, 1972, 2.

²⁸⁹ One could speculate that proportionally since a large number of arrivals were Ismailis they would also sponsor the largest number of family members in transit centres. However, there are no hard statistics on their religious background to confirm the religious background of all Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada.

appeasing international leaders and the public by accepting Ugandan Asian refugees. As expressed by Campbell, the issuing of visas in Kampala was not carried out in a uniform manner. Families were separated based on the assessments of visa officers while others remained together due empathetic considerations extended to them by Canadian officials.

Canada's priority to accept those who were stateless reduced pressure being placed on Britain to accept the estimated 50,000 Ugandan Asians and reaffirmed Britain's necessary commitments to their own citizens. Furthermore, prioritizing stateless refugees gave the alleged impression that there was a preference to the Ismaili Muslim community due to their leader's request. The majority of Ugandan Asians that arrived in Canada by the end of the expulsion decree were Ismailis, however, they represented under seventy percent of the overall Ugandan Asian refugee population. Most importantly, drawing any strong conclusions on the religious affiliations of the entire group of 7,550 refugees remains unattainable. The Canadian government was aware of the high qualifications of Ugandan Asians before they formally announced their intentions to admit expellees to Canada. However, they did not purposefully select the 'cream of the crop'. The large proportion of professionals and managers within the stateless category was due to their requirement of holding Ugandan citizenship as a means of continuing to conduct business during the push towards Africanization within Uganda after independence. Additionally, anyone who worked for the Ugandan civil service was required to hold citizenship in order to retain their positions. This led to a large number of Goan Christians also being rendered stateless. Evaluations, reports, and academic studies of the Ugandan Asian resettlement clearly demonstrated the qualifications of Ugandan Asian refugees but also confirmed Canada's application of universal immigration policy.

Canada welcomed nearly 8,000 Ugandan Asians between September 1972 and December 1974. Amidst the historical context of 1970s, Ugandan Asians became the first major non-European refugee community to be resettled in Canada. Opposition to the arrival of Ugandan Asians was rooted in the high rates of unemployment in Canada during the fall months of 1972 along with animosity surrounding the allegiances of Ugandan Asians. These major public concerns influenced the creation of Ugandan Asian Committees and the design of the reception centre in Longue Pointe. Refugees received landed immigrant status, advice, and a place to rest

and gather themselves at the military base before they embarked for their final destinations. The initial reception at Longue Pointe set the tone for how both the government and the people of Canada would support the Ugandan Asian community. With twelve formal Uganda Asian Committees being set up across the country, the government, voluntary sector, and average Canadians participated in a variety of programs to aid new arrivals. This included formal and physical assistance in the form of job offers, employment counselling, loans, and donations. Furthermore, many volunteers and Canadian citizens made active efforts to extend social support to incoming refugees. These efforts combined with the motivations of Ugandan Asian refugees to build a new life in Canada categorized the entire resettlement as a success. Without the ingenuity of the community and the extension of formal and informal support services to Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada, the resettlement would not have been considered an overwhelming success by the international community, government officials, the Canadian public, or refugees themselves. Although the resettlement was characterized as the ideal initiative, Ugandan Asians did face major issues upon arrival in Canada. Employment barriers and the failure of Canada to recognize foreign credentials or work experience led to underemployment amongst the refugee community. Ugandan Asians accepted the realities of the Canadian labour market for a multitude of reasons. Since their priority lay in contributing to family income and sponsoring relatives from abroad, they accepted employment outside of their respective fields of expertise. Ugandan Asians were not idle in the family reunification process and mobilized personal, community, and local resources in Canada to ensure that they were reunited with their loved ones.

Evaluations of the resettlement initiative as a whole uncovered the realities behind the separation of families. These evaluations also strongly questioned the nature of Canada's efforts to admit Ugandan Asians. Canada strictly adhered to standard immigration selection criteria but allowed visa officers to use personal discretion in cases where they deemed family members or the government possessed necessary financial resources to aid in their successful establishment in Canada. Canada admitted refugees who did not meet the selection criteria but this represented a minority of those who were accepted. Charges of selecting the best qualified refugees fits within the intrinsic debate amongst refugee scholars pertaining to humanitarianism or opportunism. Moreover, Suha Diab contends that resettlement initiatives in Canadian history must also balance humanitarianism with national security. The humanitarian-security nexus is

defined as “the tension between the Canadian government’s expressed desire, on the one hand, to intervene in order to protect the safety and security of Canadians and Canada’s social, political, and economic institutions, and, on the other, to provide the humanitarian space to protect refugees.”²⁹⁰ Based on the low levels of intervention from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Ugandan Asians posed little threat to the country’s security and clearly demarcated the Canadian government’s desire to provide ‘humanitarian space to protect’ Ugandan Asian refugees. Ultimately, Canada acted humanely to assist nearly 8,000 Ugandan Asians refugees and applied a universal immigration policy when screening applicants but the initiative was not entirely altruistic. Moving beyond the initial years of resettlement, Ugandan refugees established themselves permanently within Canada and embarked on their journey towards becoming active Canadian citizens.

²⁹⁰ Suha Diab, “Between Fear and Vulnerability: The Emergence of the Humanitarian Security-Nexus in the Canadian Refugee Protection Regime” (Ph.D., Carleton University, 2014), 9.

Chapter 5:

From Refugees to Citizens: Integration, Commemoration, and Identities in Canada

When we first came I think there was so much discrimination in Kamloops. You could feel it, you could see it ... it was a small city but there were people, they weren't as friendly, as welcoming at that time.

Amin Sunderji, 2015¹

However, more times than we encountered difficulties, we encountered friends. People opened up their homes and their hearts and gave generously of everything. The spirit of hospitality the state had extended to us from Uganda was repeated over and over again by the citizens of Brantford.

Zain Alarakhia, 1994²

If I had to choose between Canada and Uganda, I think I would choose Canada because this is the country that gave me a refuge when I needed it.

Anonymous, 2015³

I am a Canadian, a Ugandan, an African, an Indian, and a Goan. You don't have to choose except if one goes to war with another then you might have to choose but I don't have to. And I embrace all of them, they are all part of psyche.

John Nazareth, 2015⁴

Recapturing the lived experiences of Ugandan Asian refugees after over forty years of resettlement in Canada reveals the numerous ways in which the community engaged in the processes of becoming active Canadian citizens. Integration is not a linear exercise and is a particularly lengthy undertaking. Evangelina Tastsoglou and Baukje Miedema argue that “making new friends, learning the language, the idioms and idiosyncrasies of a new society is a slow, emotional and time consuming process.”⁵ Oral histories with Ugandan Asian refugees provided detailed insight on how refugees navigated this arduous process as they reestablished themselves and their families in Canada. Government documents in the previous chapter

¹ Farida and Amin Sunderji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, June 22, 2015.

² Richard Saunders, *Journey Into Hope*, directed by Richard Saunders (Ottawa, 1994).

³ Anonymous, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Edmonton, August 4, 2015.

⁴ John Nazareth, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, March 21, 2015.

⁵ Evangelina Tastsoglou and Baukje Miedema, “‘But Where Are You From, Originally?’ Immigrant Women and Integration in the Maritimes,” *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice* 24, no. 2 (2000): 88.

concluded that the resettlement initiative was deemed a success amongst the global, local, and Ugandan Asian refugee communities but was based on limited evidence as the latest government sanctioned report was published in 1976.⁶ The latest comprehensive study on Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada was published in 1981 and measured their initial success in Canada and focused on the impacts of ethnicity on resettlement.⁷ The study concluded “that the resettlement picture for this group of refugees from Uganda in Canada is a very attractive one since the majority appear to be on the way to resettlement in the society which gave them asylum.”⁸ However, as noted in the previous chapter, these generalizations ignore the levels of employment discrimination and do not discuss how the historical context the of 1970s shaped the initial years of resettlement for Ugandan Asians.

This chapter revitalizes the historical record by exploring the oral histories of Ugandan Asians as they became permanent members of the Canadian community. Oral testimonies revealed the contested grounds of gaining membership within society as Canadians served as gatekeepers to belonging and provided both inclusive and exclusive pathways to integration. Canada’s lack of diversity and severe racial antagonism targeted towards South Asians particularly in the 1970s informed the ways in which Ugandan Asians expressed their current sense of self. This coincided with Stuart Hall’s assertion that history as opposed biology informs identity.⁹ Refugees expressly noted that in most cases these racialized interactions dissipated over time as both Canada’s demographic became increasingly diverse and as Ugandan Asians felt stronger attachments to Canada.

⁶ LAC, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, volume 1258, file number 5850-3-4-650, “Ugandan Asian Expellees: The First Twelve Months in Canada,” October 1976.

⁷ Cecil Patrick Pereira, “A Study of the Effects of the Ethnic and Non-Ethnic Factors on the Resettlement of the Ugandan Asian Refugees in Canada” (Ph.D., The University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1981). Ethnicity is used as a catchall term by Pereira to describe all aspects of ethnicity and its effect on integration. Ethnicity embodies a three central dimensions. The first is a geographic component that acknowledges how all interactions are rooted in ties to a specific region or bonds to a specific homeland. The second is the personal dimension relating to the attachment and/or commitment of individuals to their ethnic background in terms of personal choices for food preferences, dress, language spoken at home, dating practices, and friendship patterns. The final element is the structural/public dimension which refers “to those crystallized social relationships that are based on shared group expectations, and receive formal ‘publicly’ recognized status”. (45)

⁸ *Ibid.*, 196-197.

⁹ Stuart Hall et al., eds., *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*, (Cambridge: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996), 598.

A central element within oral histories are the multifaceted elements of memory and how memory is used in historical practice. Historians have used memory in two principle ways either as a means of understanding the lived experiences of individuals or to comprehend the ways in which the past is represented and reproduced in a “shared cultural knowledge.”¹⁰ Similar to the multiplicity of identities, memories are also fluid, contested, and continuously reconstructed. As several scholars have noted, the inherent diversity of social identities ultimately creates a similar plurality of memories that are also influenced by an individual's interpretation of the past.¹¹ In the words of Jan Assman “memory is knowledge with an identity-index, it is knowledge about oneself ... be it as an individual or as a member of a family, a generation, a community, a nation, or a cultural and religious tradition.”¹² The ways in which Ugandan Asian refugees remember and conceptualize the expulsion decree and their resettlement in Canada are demonstrated by several commemorative events hosted by the community. These public history events are inherently political and social as they involved the coordination of group and individual memories which may appear consensual but as John R. Gillis argues are the “product of processes of intense contest, struggle, and, in some instances, annihilation.”¹³ In many instances commemorations are used by the dominant culture to assert their privilege over others and paint over diverse histories, however, Ugandan Asians used these opportunities to write themselves into the national consciousness. By challenging the conventional narrative through commemoration, Ugandan Asian refugees actively reconfigured the collective popular interpretation of the past demonstrating that the “shaping of collective memories are overlapping.”¹⁴ Ultimately, commemoration is used as a tool to understand how the past is linked

¹⁰ Alon Confino, “Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method,” *American Historical Review* 102, no. 5 (1997): 1386.

¹¹ See: Thomas Butler, ed., *Memory: History, Culture and the Mind* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989); Confino, “Collective Memory and Cultural History”; Terry Cook, “Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community: Four Shifting Archival Paradigms,” *Archival Science* 13, no. 2–3 (2013): 95–120; Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning, and Sara B. Young, eds., *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008); Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” *Representations*, no. 26 (1989): 7–24, Kendall R. Phillips, ed., *Framing Public Memory, Rhetoric, Culture, and Social Critique* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004); Jonathan Franklin William Vance, *Death so Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997).

¹² Jan Assmann, “Communicative and Cultural Memory,” in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* eds. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 114.

¹³ John R. Gillis, ed., *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994), 5.

¹⁴ Steven High and Edward Little, “Introduction,” in *Remembering Mass Violence: Oral History, New Media, and Performance*, eds. Steven High, Edward Little, and Thi Ry Duong (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 5.

to the present with the aims of avoiding an “in-ward looking historical focus” that is linked to a “forward-looking social or political engagement.”¹⁵ These events were held across the country and were attended by prominent government officials, scholars, community members, and fellow Canadians. These events acted as measures to solidify their recent historical roots in Canada while simultaneously acknowledging their upbringing in Uganda and cultural affiliations to both East Africa and South Asia. Strong affiliations to Canadian society amongst Ugandan Asian refugees materialized with the establishment of the Ugandan Asian Archives at Carleton University in 2014. The establishment of the archive firmly symbolized the efforts within the refugee community to situate their experiences within the broader Canadian historical narrative. Ugandan Asians also used other methods to express their multiple identities and links to different regions of the world including diverse practices in preparing ethnic cuisine.

Cook books and the dietary habits of Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada marked their connections to East Africa and South Asia. Eating certain foods reminded refugees of their homes in Uganda while simultaneously reinforcing the flavours of their multiple identities that combined Canadian, East African, and South Asian ingredients. These culinary practices are one manifestation of how Ugandan Asian refugees articulated their sense of self. The chapter concludes by analyzing the responses of Ugandan Asian refugees to questions of self-identification. They were asked, “how do you identify yourself today?” Every participant within the dissertation project expressed themselves as being or feeling Canadian. This evidently demarcated the ways in which Ugandan Asians refugees identified as Canadians. However, their claims to Canadian identity were challenged by other members of society. They were continuously probed to explain where they were *really* from by other Canadian who refuted their expressions of being Canadian. To combat these challenges, refugees referenced their numerous commitments to voluntarism, political participation, and verbal expressions of allegiance to Canada as a means of reaffirming their understanding of what it means to be Canadian. Evidence presented in this chapter reinforces the transnational linkages of refugees whose identities are positioned within a complex web of national, religious, and ethnic affiliations. Ultimately, these

¹⁵ High and Little, “Introduction,” in *Remembering Mass Violence*, 7.

relationships and associations are all situated within constructions of Canadian identity amongst Ugandan Asian refugees who consistently reported that they are Canadians.

The Contested Grounds of Becoming Canadian

Ugandan Asian refugees resettled in Canada during the establishment a new dynamic within Canadian immigration policy marked by the creation of the *1976 Immigration Act*. The act created three principle categories for applicants including a designated category for refugees within the humanitarian class, alongside the family class, and independent class. According to Valerie Knowles, the 1976 act embodied Canada's "demographic, economic and social goals."¹⁶ The formal creation of refugee policy was spurred by the recent arrival of Ugandan Asian refugees in addition to reaffirming Canada's commitment to becoming a signatory of the *United Nations Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* in 1969.¹⁷ Furthermore, the 1976 act formally acknowledged Canada's non-discriminatory immigration policy and emphasized collaboration "between all levels of government and the voluntary sector in the settlement of immigrants in Canadian society."¹⁸ Cooperation between various government departments and the voluntary sector in particular, was influenced by the success of the Uganda Asian Committees in providing positive social support for refugees. Based on government reports noted in the previous chapter it was clear that both the resiliency of the community and the general participation of Canadians and volunteers within the committees facilitated the adaptation and integration processes for Ugandan Asian refugees.

With the arrival of nearly 80,000 refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos in the mid-1970s and early 1980s, Canadian immigration policy continued to promote resettling refugees while balancing local and international concerns.¹⁹ As articulated by Suha Diab in the previous chapter, the humanitarian-security nexus played a crucial role in distinguishing exactly which groups of displaced people would be admitted to Canada. Furthermore, with the collapse of the

¹⁶ Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-2006* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2007), 208.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 217.

Soviet Union the “biopolitical order became increasingly concerned with foreign bodies.”²⁰ With the decrease in Cold War rhetoric, the Canadian government shifted their focus to enacting additional screening measures on potential immigrants and refugees. As Canada faced increasing economic hardship in the 1980s, reflective changes in immigration policy occurred with annual admission reaching a decade low of 84,000 in 1985.²¹ However, in the 1990s, levels of immigration rose and favoured independent immigrants who would contribute to the Canadian labour market despite shifts in the Canadian economy. This was demonstrated by the Five-Year Immigration Plan launched by the Canadian government in 1990, which actively sought to “increase immigration in recessionary economic times.”²² During the 1990s Canada elected to admit roughly 250,000 immigrants per year representing approximately one percent of the Canadian population. Within the same period, anxieties surrounding the legitimacy of refugees emerged as numbers of refugee claimants continued to rise. This created a backlog of refugees awaiting hearings while authorities failed to locate and deport those who were perceived to be ‘illegal’ migrants which fueled perceptions amongst the public that immigration levels were too high. As global conflicts, natural disasters, and other political crises escalated in the late 1980s, the number of refugees worldwide increased to 14,914,160 by 1989.²³

A series of amendments to the *1976 Immigration Act* occurred throughout this period to reflect anxieties involving terrorism and veritability of refugee claimants. The arrival of two boats of refugees in August of 1986 and July of 1987 from Sri Lanka would reshape Canadian immigration policy and begin the process of criminalizing asylum seekers. Both groups of refugees, including 135 Tamil and 174 East Indians, were granted asylum in Canada but would ultimately lead to the creation of Bill C-84, the *Refugee Deterrents and Detention Bill*.²⁴ Although the bill was never fully implemented, Diab argues that it prompted Canadians to form

²⁰ Suha Diab, “Between Fear and Vulnerability: The Emergence of the Humanitarian Security-Nexus in the Canadian Refugee Protection Regime” (Ph.D., Carleton University, 2014), 202-203. Diab argues that as the Communist threat declined refugees and asylum seekers were “seen to import dangerous values became an existentialist threat to Canada’s social, economic, political and cultural fabric and its liberal-democratic practices.” (202-203)

²¹ Ninette Kelley and Michael Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 380.

²² *Ibid.*, 415.

²³ *Ibid.*, 221.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 223.

problematic links between refugees and terrorists.²⁵ Moreover, Diab explains that “the highly publicized case of Mahmoud Muhammad Issa Muhammad,” in addition to the arrival of Sikh refugees, “were fortuitous moments that provided the government with the missing link and the legitimating discourse to demonstrate that the refugee determination system was broken, dangerous and in need of immediate intervention.”²⁶ Another security measure was created two years later under the guise of permitting fair hearings for refugees. Bill C-55 was implemented in 1989 established the creation of the Immigration Review Board (IRB) based on the outcomes of the precedent-setting *Singh v Minister of Employment and Immigration* case, which ultimately ruled that once refugees arrived on Canadian soil they were entitled to protection under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.²⁷ The court case called into question whether the denial of Harbajan Singh and six others requests for refugee status was unfair based on the procedures established in the *1976 Immigration Act*. Claimants were denied an oral hearing based on the grounds that they were not entitled to due process under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* since they were non-citizens. The final unanimous Supreme Court ruling granted the appeal request and officially mandated the Department of Employment and Immigration to grant all refugees the right to a formal hearing under section 7 of the Charter pertaining to the security of person and fundamental justice. The ruling ensured that all refugees were entitled to appeal denied asylum claims as a Charter right.²⁸

The IRB was mandated with the task of determining the status of refugee claims and outlawed the ability of governing authorities to deport prospective applicants without fair hearings. However, the same bill granted immigration officials the ability to refuse the applications of refugees who submitted their request from a ‘safe third country’, which was arbitrarily defined and was heavily criticized.²⁹ Any refugee claimant who applied for asylum in Canada but had traveled through what was deemed a ‘safe country’ before arriving in Canada,

²⁵ Diab, “Between Fear and Vulnerability,” 209.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 210. Mahmoud Muhammad Issa Muhammad’s case became highly publicized in 1987 after it was discovered that he had links to the Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine (PLFP). He had failed to disclose this information on his permanent resident application in Canada and was ordered to be deported. After 25 years of court battles and continuous appeals, Issa Muhammad was deported in October of 2013.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 209.

²⁸ For more see: Donald G. Casswell, “Singh v. Minister of Employment and Immigration Case Comments and Notes,” *Alberta Law Review* 24 (1986): 356–60; Andy Lamey, *Frontier Justice: The Global Refugee Crisis and What to Do about It* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2011).

²⁹ Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates*, 228.

for example the United States, would be either sent back to the safe country or deported to their country of origin “where their lives would be in jeopardy.”³⁰ Critics of the bill argued that “breadth of the provision could bar even very deserving claimants from receiving protection.”³¹ Although this piece of legislation was not implemented until 2004, the ideology behind the bill reflected increasing concerns over the genuine plight of refugees who may have been able to seek asylum elsewhere. As Canada moved into the new millennium, concerns over security and terrorism became paramount within Canadian immigration policy.

In the wake of 9/11, the Canadian government released a new immigration act titled the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)*.³² Inherent within the act’s formal title, emphasis was placed directly on national security. The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (CIC) at the time, Elinor Caplan, argued that the purpose of the latest act was to “close the back door to those who would abuse our rules, in order to open the front door wider to those who would come to us from around the world and help us build our country.”³³ Caplan’s statement aligned itself with the rhetoric and discourses of authorities who targeted refugees as potential criminals, terrorists, and bogus claimants. Furthermore, the creation of the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) in 2003 demonstrated the primacy of security for government officials.³⁴ The act embodied a major shift in immigration policy towards a restrictive approach to the refugee determination process in Canada. As Kelley and Trebilcock argue the IRPA differentiated itself from the specificity of the 1976 act by “leaving considerable discretion to the executive to determine and implement immigration admission, exclusion, and removal policies through regulations.”³⁵ Both Diab and Anderson argue that policy changes in the early 2000s emphasized the importance of the humanitarian-security nexus and the return of liberal nationalist discourse within immigration policy.

Major policy changes from the 1970s onwards encouraged increasing levels of immigration while simultaneously diversifying the source countries of newcomers. Prior to the

³⁰ Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates*, 288.

³¹ Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, 441.

³² Diab, “Between Fear and Vulnerability,” 220.

³³ Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, 425.

³⁴ Diab, “Between Fear and Vulnerability,” 232.

³⁵ Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, 457.

creation of the points system, nearly ninety percent of all immigrants came from Europe whereas by 1990 immigrants from Asia and the Middle East represented more than over fifty percent of all arrivals.³⁶ These figures continued to rise in the early 2000s with new arrivals from Asia and the Middle East increasing to fifty-eight percent with China and India being the two largest source countries of immigrants.³⁷ By the turn of the new millennium, one in every five Canadian residents were born outside of the country.³⁸ Major shifts in Canadian immigration and refugee policy alongside Canada's changing demographic fostered the growth of both the South Asian and East African communities living in Canada. The fallout of the expulsion decree within East Africa encouraged many other African Asians to consider migrating to other regions of the globe.³⁹ This was complemented in the 1970s by further migrations of individuals of South Asian heritage from Fiji, the West Indies, Mauritius and elsewhere.⁴⁰ Although the South Asian presence in Canada dates back to 1890, those who migrated during the 1970s onwards represented a major wave of migration as Canadian immigration policy moved away from the previous discriminatory legislation.⁴¹ The number of East Indians living in Canada increased from 6,774 in 1961 to over 300,000 by 1985.⁴² Ugandan Asian refugees established themselves permanently within Canada amidst these major policy changes and shifts in the cultural mosaic of Canadian society.

During their initial years of settlement, interactions between refugees and Canadians ranged significantly. Interviewees document a myriad of experiences and specifically mentioned how some Canadians were extremely helpful while others were more hesitant or prejudiced towards Ugandan Asian refugees. For example, Shamim Muhammedi described her experiences with Canadians as:

For me like my experience was good. You know I got lost, they helped me out, for me it was a good experience because they were there for me in my difficult time.

³⁶ Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, 380-381.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 418.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 419.

³⁹ Judith M. Brown, *Global South Asians: Introducing the Modern Diaspora* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 25.

⁴⁰ Hugh Johnston, *The East Indians in Canada*, (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1982), 3.

⁴¹ Norman Buchignani, Doreen Marie Indra, and Ram Srivastava, *Continuous Journey: A Social History of South Asians in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), 1; Johnston, *The East Indians in Canada*, 5.

⁴² Johnston, *The East Indians in Canada*, 16; Buchignani, Indra, and Srivastava, *Continuous Journey*, 205.

When they found out my story, you know, I have a family. I'm looking after my family. I don't have a penny in my name. I'm broke ... I don't have money. I came from Uganda. When they heard, they were very sympathetic but they weren't ... like they didn't sympathize, they started to understand me ... To me they were more helpful.⁴³

For Shamim, Canadians made a concerted effort to learn about her background and this was the prevailing feature of her workplace environment. According to her interview, this reduced instances of discrimination at the Canadian Bank of Imperial Commerce where she worked. As a bank teller with a strong work ethic, she specifically mentioned how her queue of customers went from being the shortest, due to an initial reluctance to be served by her, to the longest line, as she was known to process transactions quickly.⁴⁴ Others specifically mention how they did not personally face any form of prejudice in their work place or in Canadian society. Tom and Joan Francis recalled how:

Joan: we never really had a bad experience. Honestly.

Tom: No, we have not.

Joan: With our neighbours, or with our friends ... a lot of our friends say they had problems at work ... we never experienced that.

Tom: And I think part of it... a lot of it was the university environment [McGill, Guelph, and Western University]. But also part of it I think is I think people don't understand Canadians. I think for me I found particularly among rural Canadians, sometimes they can seem to be standoffish, but actually they're shy. Once you start talking to them they open up. But Canadians are shy, they're not like Americans ... you have to start the conversation, but you can sometimes perceive that to be discrimination, you know, or antagonism or something. It isn't, mostly they're just shy. So once we realized that we would start the conversation and you know, we made a lot of friends. I never, like Joan says, never really experienced discrimination. I'm sure there was, maybe people avoided us but we never had any overt discrimination, we never had to feel like we didn't belong or anything like that.⁴⁵

Tom and Joan's oral testimony is indicative of several layers of experiences for Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada. Like Shamim, they found that as time passed and relationships were formed with friends and neighbours, barriers to integration dissipated. They described the apprehension from Canadians to generate conversation as 'shyness' as opposed to racial discrimination. This

⁴³ Shamim Muhammedi, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 24, 2014.

⁴⁴ Shamim Muhammedi, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 24, 2014.

⁴⁵ Tom and Joan Francis, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 8, 2015.

was labelled as a misinterpretation by newcomers to understand that “Canadians are shy” and are not implicitly racist. Furthermore, they acknowledged that other Ugandan Asian friends did face discrimination in their workplaces but in terms of their own life histories, it was not a prevalent experience. For Tom and Joan, they consciously chose to dismiss prejudiced interactions as either a failure to understand the ‘shyness of Canadians’ or to misinterpret the ignorance of society as purposeful discrimination.

Others also argued that they personally felt they were well received by members of Canadian society. Errol and Delphine Francis outlined how their memberships in specific Caucasian dominated golf clubs were welcoming:

Errol: Even when I joined my golf club here at Markland Woods it was predominantly Caucasian ... never felt like I didn't belong.

Delphine: I would say that as well because, in my capacity as a teacher, I never ever would miss out at all, neither from the parents, nor from the staff or anything. I did not feel that if I wanted to pursue and do something else would it have been a hindrance because I wasn't white-Canadian. Now too I say to Errol, I'm the golf captain of a little group... I say little but there's about sixty of us, seniors who play golf at Centennial and I'm the only coloured person... I don't feel that I'm the only one, I just notice it.⁴⁶

As Errol became the president of a Canadian airline company in the 1980s, he felt his potential to advance in Canada was not hindered by his racial background. He argued that in Canada he “didn't witness any discrimination or racism ... now in the U.S. when I used to go in the early 80s, I'd go with my VPs [Vice Presidents] who were all Caucasian and you could see the presentations that were being made, they were addressing them [the Vice Presidents] ... And then they'd soon find out that I was the president of the company and there would be a sudden switch, and you could see that.”⁴⁷ He juxtaposed his experiences in Canada with those in the United States to specify ways in which racism was a prominent feature south of the border. Shiraz Lalani also noted how his initial interactions with Canadians at work in Kitchener were cordial. He reflected on his first job at a factory and described that “it was a little bit difficult in the beginning to understand where they were coming from, what our values were and what their

⁴⁶ Errol and Delphine Francis, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, April 17, 2015.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

values were ... we got caught up with them eventually. But by and large it was not very difficult dealing with them ... they were mostly Germans in Kitchener”.⁴⁸ These oral testimonies are illustrative examples of interactions between refugees and Canadians that appeared to be void of prejudice. However, these experiences were contested even amongst couples who settled in the same regions of Canada.

Prejudice was not a linear and universal process for refugees across Canada. For example, Amin and Farida Sunderji who lived in Kamloops together remembered contrasting interactions with Canadians. Amin recalled that “when we first came I think there was so much discrimination in Kamloops. You could feel it, you could see it ... it was a small city but there were people, they weren’t as friendly, as welcoming at that time.”⁴⁹ Whereas for his partner, Farida, she expressed that “it was good because I knew the London style and I did have a British accent at that time ... So I got along really well and I didn’t have a problem with any Canadians. In fact, they liked me and they loved to talk to me. And wherever I went there wasn’t any discrimination with me because I knew the weather, I knew what to wear.”⁵⁰ From Farida’s recollections it is clear that her previous exposure to British society when she was in London attending a beauty and aesthetician school that she did not face the same levels of prejudice that her husband did. Amin, however, described that he could ‘feel’ the antagonism in Kamloops. He lacked the exposure that his spouse had to British society and embodied the traits of a newcomer in terms of his physical appearance and his accent. As argued by numerous scholars, accents are used as a means of discriminating against others based on race, ethnicity, and national origin where it is no longer deemed socially acceptable to outwardly be prejudiced towards an individual’s race.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Shiraz Lalani, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, April 25, 2015.

⁴⁹ Farida and Amin Sunderji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, June 22, 2015.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Gillian Creese, “Erasing English Language Competency: African Migrants in Vancouver, Canada,” *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 11, no. 3 (2010), 298. Murray J. Munro argues that accent discrimination in Canada is manifested in three dynamic ways which include biased hiring decisions, denial of access employment or rental properties, and harassment or ridicule based on the speaker’s pronunciation. For more on impacts accent discrimination and its varying manifestations see: Bonny Norton, *Identity and Language Learning: Gender, Ethnicity and Educational Change*, Language in Social Life Series (Harlow, England ; New York: Longman, 2000); Gillian Creese and Edith Ngene Kambere, ““What Colour Is Your English?”” *Canadian Review of Sociology* 40, no. 5 (December 2003): 565–73; Murray J. Munro, “A Primer on Accent Discrimination in the Canadian Context,” *TESL Canada Journal* 20, no. 2 (June 26, 2003): 38–51.

Farida also identified that she ‘knew what to wear,’ as a means of blending into Canadian society. These same sentiments were echoed by Munira Dhanani who argued that “prejudice will always be there. It was there, it is there ... now when we first came here we were always very culturally diversified. And when I say that, do you know in Uganda we didn’t walk around deliberately wearing traditional clothing or anything of that sort and socially we always had what I call European dressing.”⁵² For both Munira and Farida, ‘European’ styles of clothing specifically mitigated prejudice which is predicated on their personal histories of adopting western clothing practices before arriving in Canada. According to G.S. Basran, adopting Canadian styles of dress was a common experience for Indo-Canadian families dating back to the 1930s. Basran argues that due to “their immigration status and colonial thinking, some made extraordinary efforts to integrate into white society. They started following Canadian dress, social behaviours and customs.”⁵³ Both Farida and Munira’s oral testimonies confirm the importance of European styles as a means of limiting the amount of discrimination they faced. However, western styles of dress did not negate prejudice for all refugees.

Shamim, who expressed an initial welcoming experience at her place of work, found that when her manager was replaced in the coming years, discrimination came to the fore:

...after a few years you know the assistant manager who hired me she got a transfer somewhere else. Somebody replaced her it was a guy this time ... comments from him were like that too. Like he would say, you know, you are so pretty it’s too bad you’re brown I can’t take you out. Things like that, like he told me on my face, it’s too bad you are brown, you are not white. I wish you were white because I would love to take you out.⁵⁴

In some instances, as noted by Shamim’s testimony, racial discrimination was presented in a direct manner whereas other participants experienced discrimination in other ways. Many of the participants specifically noted how they initially experienced being racialized in the 1970s but over time things changed. For example, Zul Devji explained that Canadians:

⁵² Munira Dhanani, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, February 15, 2015.

⁵³ G.S. Basran, “Indo-Canadian Families: Historical Constraints and Contemporary Contradictions,” *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 24, no. 3 (October 1993), 345.

⁵⁴ Shamim Muhammedi, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 24, 2014.

were kinda cool at the beginning... Like cold I mean. They didn't accept us you know. Most of the people at work were ok, people at my work were perfect and readily acceptable. But in Nilufar's work they were naturally [prejudiced]. If any positions came up for a promotion, it didn't happen easy, you had to work hard and show your work.⁵⁵

Furthermore, Amin Jamal recalled that "when I came to Ottawa, there were not too many immigrants, even in the last like 20 years there has been a drastic change you know. Before that, Rideau Centre you wouldn't see too many brown faces or too many black faces. There were more whites only."⁵⁶ Another mention of the historical period is made by Shamim, who argued that Canadians "didn't know what we were right? They didn't have that many brown people at that time in ... the 70s."⁵⁷

Edmond Rodriguez recalled a similar experience of discrimination being reduced over time. He described that only once in the 1970s did he experience outright discrimination: "only once I think when I was at Union Station when ... I was walking up – this was in the '70's, '73 – I was getting in there, a young boy ... spat in front of me before I could take the steps. He's looking at me and I didn't say anything, just walked past him."⁵⁸ Open discrimination was articulated as a product of the historical context according to Edmond. He argued that this incident occurred "in like the 70's and 80's, I don't know now but I'm sure things have changed a lot," in terms of the current levels of discrimination in Canada.⁵⁹ Not unlike other interviewees who described the initial prejudice they experienced in 1970s Canada, Sikandar Omar remembered a specific racially motivated incident:

I remember one time I was driving a car and four guys, kids, in the car and I was a young guy too. So they start yelling and screaming Paki, go back to your country and so I gave them a finger, which is wrong on my part too ... they started chasing me with their car, so I said oh my god they are four and I am one. I am gonna get beat up. So I just drove my car right to where I used to work but before I could turn, they threw a big stick at my car and hit my car with a big stick ... but I've never had a problem for a long time.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Zul Devji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 20, 2014.

⁵⁶ Aminmohamed Jamal, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 13, 2014.

⁵⁷ Shamim Muhammedi, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 24, 2014.

⁵⁸ Edmond and Maria Rodrigues, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 11, 2015.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Anonymous, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Edmonton, August 4, 2015.

Similar to Edmond, Sikandar described early experiences of racism when arriving in Canada but it was considered to be a problem of the past. Each of the participants highlighted how Canada in the 1970s lacked sizeable proportions of visible minorities which attributed to issues surrounding 'cool' or prejudiced attitudes towards Ugandan Asian refugees.

These types of experiences were common for refugees who settled in particularly large immigrant centres such as Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver. For example, in an interview with the *Ismaili Canada* magazine Mohammedhussein Manji argued that his "family loved the city of Toronto, but from time to time they were subject to racist attacks, name-calling and abuse."⁶¹ These interviews reflect the increased prevalence of racial discrimination towards the South Asian community in the 1970s and 1980s. Historian Hugh Johnston argues that the media presented biased reports relating to violence which purposefully drew attention to "ethnic identity if an Indian was involved, when they would not have done otherwise, and in this way have distorted the picture presented."⁶² Furthermore, the media reinforced negative stereotypes of the Indian sub-continent as a whole by exclusively reporting on "poverty, illiteracy, violence, flood, and political repression."⁶³ Heightened animosity towards the entire South Asian community was embodied in numerous forms of prejudice ranging from "racist signs and bumper stickers to acts of vandalism, assaults on individuals and, in a couple instances minor riots."⁶⁴ Racial tensions reached a pinnacle in Vancouver for the Sikh community in particular from 1972 to 1975 where the Vancouver police sanctioned the establishment of special neighbourhood patrols to reduce vandalism and violence targeted at Sikhs.⁶⁵

Racial tensions continued to rise in the 1970s as 'Paki-baiting' became increasingly more frequent amongst small groups of Canadian youth in Vancouver, urban Ontario, Edmonton, Calgary, and Montreal.⁶⁶ Antagonism against the South Asian community in Toronto culminated

⁶¹ Abidah Lalani, "Ours to Discover: Toronto," *Ismaili Canada*, Summer 2014, 58.

⁶² Johnston, *The East Indians in Canada*, 21.

⁶³ Buchignani, Indra, and Srivastava, *Continuous Journey*, 208.

⁶⁴ Johnston, *The East Indians in Canada*, 21.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Buchignani, Indra, and Srivastava, *Continuous Journey*, 215. This involved white Canadian youth chasing South Asians in their cars and provoking them by yelling racial slurs.

in the shooting of a fifteen-year-old South Asian boy on April 14, 1976.⁶⁷ The shooter justified his actions claiming that he “just shot the nigger. For every one you shoot, you leave a white girl with a broken heart.”⁶⁸ Norman Buchignani, Doreen M. Indra, and Ram Srivastiva argue that by 1977, general acts of prejudice against South Asians had become common occurrences in downtown Toronto and was spreading across Ontario and the Prairies.⁶⁹ Beyond issues in the workplace and other public spaces some refugees recalled instances of racialized bullying while attending public schools in Canada. For example, both Karim Nanji and Amin Visram reflected on racial prejudice in their local schools. Living in St. Catherines, Ontario, Karim’s oral testimony highlighted that he “was made fun of at school. I was the only brown person in my class. My name was Karim so people thought that cream in my coffee would be a better name to call me. So they would constantly tease me about that. They would call me chocolate because of my skin colour. They would call me chocolate milk.”⁷⁰ These same racial slurs were lobbied against other refugees while attending public schools that even escalated into a physical confrontation. Amin recalls being in a machine shop class when a schoolmate turned to him yelling “hey you fucking Paki ... he hit Ivan [Amin’s high school friend] and I grabbed this guy and I just went nuts. I started punching him.”⁷¹ In addition to the clear racial connotations of the names given to Karim in high school, the term “Paki” was commonly used in a pejorative manner. This demonstrates the impacts of discrimination alongside imposed identities which labelled Ugandan Asian refugees as Pakistani as a means of not only grouping any ‘brown body’ within this term but also using a racial slur to antagonize refugees.

Being called a ‘Paki’ in Canada was a racialized and demeaning act which exemplified the post-colonial subjectivity of Ugandan Asian refugees.⁷² In the eyes of Canadians, they were not East Africans, or even Indians, they were distinctly labelled as an inferior Other.⁷³ Furthermore, this robbed refugees of the opportunity to self-identify. Power dynamics of the dominant Anglo-Saxon majority in Canada did not enable refugees to rightfully express their upbringing and

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 216.

⁷⁰ Karim Nanji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 24, 2015.

⁷¹ Amin Visram, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Kitchener, March 2, 2015.

⁷² Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (London: Routledge, 1996), 9.

⁷³ Ibid.

heritage in Uganda. As Avtar Brah argues “looks mattered because of the history of the racialization of ‘looks’; they mattered because discourses about the body were crucial to the constitution of racisms.”⁷⁴ Their phenotypical appearance effectively situated refugees within the realm of being Pakistanis. This distorted their ability to associate with Uganda and furthermore, accentuated the historical context and racism within the ‘colonial sandwich’. However, interviewees did not solely attribute these pejorative labels to racialization or the lack of cultural diversity in Canada.

Ugandan Asian refugees expressly noted the various ways that their own actions may have influenced biased perceptions of their community. As Amin and his spouse argued:

But you know even us like us, even though, I think now looking back it wasn't just the fault of the Canadians to call us names because in high school I remember hanging out with just Ismailis right? and then we would sit and talk in Gujarati so no wonder they were calling us names but at that time we were like look at them they were discriminating but now I look back and I say no wonder they were discriminating... You always gravitate towards your own. That's human nature when you are in a strange environment you look for comfort and comfort is where something is familiar.⁷⁵

Their remarks outlined the way that refugees potentially reinforced stereotypes associated with newcomers who appeared to be socially exclusive and refrained from interacting with other Canadians. Conversely, other participants expressed that they understood Canadian anxieties and contended that “we would have been the same way if we were in their shoes and we saw all these new peoples coming into the country... And you do become defensive, you do care about your jobs, you do care about other things, you do care about the fact that the perceived notion that it's the public money that's going into spend on these peoples and why are we using these energies and resources on people?”⁷⁶ These oral histories suggest that refugees were aware of public perceptions that their resettlement was a potential drain on social services, as noted in the previous chapter, as well as their ethnic clustering as a motivator for discrimination. It is critical to note that these observations may be distorted by their recontextualizations of the past or as

⁷⁴ Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora*, 3.

⁷⁵ Aminmohamed Jamal, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 13, 2014.

⁷⁶ Karim Nanji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 24, 2015.

Vijay Agnew argues these “memories are constantly made and remade as people try to make sense of the past.”⁷⁷ The potential danger of gathering in larger groups of South Asians is reiterated by Amin who argued that “you didn’t want to be seen around them [other South Asians] because everyone was called Paki at that time ... if you really were conglomerate, if you really were gathering in batches of 10-20 people it becomes a scary phenomenon.”⁷⁸ As articulated by many oral history participants, racial discrimination as a whole eventually dissipated after the 1970s.

Canadians struggled to adjust to the arrival of a non-white refugee group amongst a largely white population in Canada during the 1970s. As noted by some of the participants, this was partly because of their lack of exposure to different ethnic communities as well as the reluctance of some refugees to actively engage in Canadian society. The ethnic landscape of the 1970s informed these issues of race and shaped their interactions with Canadians. Although there were instances of prejudice, interviewees strongly articulated how Canadians were also friendly, curious, and very helpful.⁷⁹ This gives salience to Dirk Hoerder’s argument that everyday cultural interactions, not race and ethnicity, defined inclusion and integration for immigrants.⁸⁰ It was day-to-day interactions with Canadians that influenced how Ugandan Asian refugees perceived Canadians as opposed to top-down legislation in the form of the *1976 Immigration Act* or multiculturalism policy. However, there were regional differences amongst interviewees. Nimira Charania argued that Canadians in Montreal were far more accepting than those in Ottawa and Toronto:

To begin with we used to find them, some of them [Canadians] were extremely nice, extremely helpful, more accepting, especially Montreal. When we were in Montreal, we, because at the time we didn’t realize this but Montreal was the most cosmopolitan town in the country... there were some that were snotty but when we went to Toronto or Ottawa or anything, oh my God we used to feel so strange. They used to call us Paki, hahaha, you know words like that but when you are amongst others who they themselves have been immigrants they don’t make fun of you. Whereas we found that here [Ottawa] they didn’t have as many and they really made

⁷⁷ Vijay Agnew, “Introduction,” in *Diaspora, Memory, and Identity: A Search for Home*, ed. Vijay Agnew (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 9.

⁷⁸ Amin Visram, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Kitchener, March 2, 2015.

⁷⁹ As presented in the previous chapter.

⁸⁰ Dirk Hoerder, *Creating Societies: Immigrant Lives in Canada*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999), xii.

fun. And in Toronto it was the other extreme, they had too many so they didn't like it.⁸¹

For Nimira, Montreal was far more cosmopolitan and accepting than any other Canadian city especially since she had spent her first 10 years in Canada living in Montreal. Her experience with Canadians was shaped by her South shore neighbourhood composed of a large immigrant base from various parts of the world.⁸² This coincided with many oral histories of those who permanently resettled in Ottawa and Toronto. While addressing a sizeable audience at a commemorative event for Ugandan Asian refugees in Ottawa, Zain Alarakhia described these regional differences:

I believe that those immigrants who choose to settle in the smaller cities had a significantly different experience than those who settled in the larger centres. In the smaller cities the Ugandan immigrants had to interact, largely, with the general population at all times. There was no sizeable Ugandan community to provide a buffer of sorts. Sometimes people didn't know what to make of us. At other times they preferred not to try. However, more times than we encountered difficulties, we encountered friends. People opened up their homes and their hearts and gave generously of everything. The spirit of hospitality the state had extended to us from Uganda was repeated over and over again by the citizens of Brantford.⁸³

The vast majority of those interviewed held similar recollections of their exposure and interactions with Canadians. Evidently, refugees experienced many forms of discrimination but these instances of prejudice were not representative of the general Canadian population who 'opened up their homes and their hearts' to Ugandan Asian refugees. Ultimately, these experiences of prejudice were specifically related to the historical context and occurred infrequently.

Racial discrimination was experienced by refugees publicly, institutionally, and systemically. Although it was not a universal experience amongst all interviewees, the vast majority of participants described instances of prejudice throughout their first ten to twenty years

⁸¹ Nimira Charania, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 6, 2014.

⁸² Government of Canada, "Canada's Ethnocultural Portrait: The Changing Mosaic," *Statistics Canada*, accessed on October 28, 2016, <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/analytic/>. Of the three major immigrant receiving cities in Canada, Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver welcomed 12%, 14%, and 12%, of all newcomers in the 1970s respectively.

⁸³ Richard Saunders, *Journey Into Hope*, directed by Richard Saunders (Ottawa, 1994).

of arrival in Canada. These issues may have dissipated over time due to the historical shifts in the demographics of Canada, however, ethnic antagonism complicated the continuing processes of identity formation. Scholars maintain that expressions of one's sense of self is fluid, multifaceted, and continuously reconstructed but it is also significantly informed by imposed identities. Haideh Moghissi, Rahnema Saeed, and Mark J. Goodman argue that "the assigned identity of others is not a matter of choice. It is not fluid. It is fixed by forces of racism and xenophobia, despite the possibility of social mobility and regardless of the individual's wishes or desires ... the 'ethnicity' of such groups is absolute."⁸⁴ Regardless of the historical backgrounds of Ugandan Asian refugees they were subsumed within the categorization of being South Asian. Racial slurs were based on their physical resemblance to East Indians, however, there was a substantial decrease in discriminatory experiences amongst interviewees as Canada became increasingly more multiracial. As refugees transitioned to becoming citizens of Canada, they began to reflect and commemorate their adaptation to Canadian society through various anniversary celebrations held across the country.

Celebrating and Commemorating Life in Canada

To solidify their connection to Canada, Ugandan Asian refugees held several commemorative events to mark the anniversary of the resettlement initiative. Exploring the ways in which Ugandan Asians celebrated their arrival in Canada provides detailed insight on their creation of an imagined community. Building on Benedict Anderson's seminal work on nationalism being rooted in "an imagined political community," it is essential that we interrogate the ways in which the Ugandan Asian refugee community in Canada presented their shared historical experiences in a public setting to understand "how they have come into historical being, in what ways their meanings have changed over time, and why, today, they command such profound emotional legitimacy."⁸⁵ These commemorative events attempted to ground the Ugandan Asian refugee experience within the Canadian historical narrative and serve as a means of reaffirming the community's identity. These celebrations were public demonstrations that reaffirmed their simultaneous membership within both Canada and the global diaspora of Ugandan Asian

⁸⁴ Haideh Moghissi, Saeed Rahnema, and Mark J Goodman, *Diaspora by Design: Muslims in Canada and Beyond* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 7.

⁸⁵ Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Editions, 1983), 6.

refugees. Agnew argues that these events reinforced shared histories of “displacement, suffering, adaptation, and resistance” within the community which represented as an intrinsic component of diasporas communities.⁸⁶ Furthermore, the collective memory of Ugandan Asian refugees played a formative role in their identity construction and is articulated at various junctures of these anniversary celebrations.

Social groups are responsible for the creation of public memories, as Maurice Halbwachs argues they “determine what is ‘memorable’ and also how it will be remembered. Individuals identify with public events of importance to their group.”⁸⁷ As an imagined community, establishing a formal historical narrative that privileged certain events as particularly worthy of remembrance allowed refugees to bond over shared experiences of resettlement. However, given the realities of social memory it is crucial to be aware of how these shared memories are selective. Peter Burke argues that “we need to identify the principles of selection and to note how they are shaped and by whom.”⁸⁸ Commemorative events are also manifestations of public history which hold high levels of significance for marginalized communities. As Ugandan Asian refugees navigated the influences of race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender they established new identities that search through the “memory of past triumphs or abuses, traumas or achievements, very powerful ammunition to justify and strengthen their identity formulation, and re-formulation, to serve the needs of the present.”⁸⁹

Three major commemorative events were held in various parts of the country in 1994, 1998, and 2002. A two-day symposium in Ottawa titled, *Journey into Hope* was held at the Canadian Museum of Civilization on April 29th, 1994.⁹⁰ This was initiated by the Canadian Immigration Historical Society (CIHS) in conjunction with Citizenship and Immigration Canada and various Ugandan Asian refugees. It sought to promote Canadian multiculturalism while highlighting a specific group of refugees who were not only well integrated but also grateful to

⁸⁶ Agnew, “Introduction,” 3.

⁸⁷ Peter Burke, “History as Social Memory,” in *Memory: History, Culture and the Mind*, ed. Thomas Butler (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1989), 98.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁸⁹ Terry Cook, “Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community: Four Shifting Archival Paradigms,” *Archival Science* 13, no. 2–3 (2013): 96.

⁹⁰ Zul Hirji and Shaffin Shariff, “Journey Into Hope: A Chronicle of the Ugandan Asian Migration,” *The Ismaili Canada*, (Toronto: The Ismaili Canada 1994), 14.

the Canadian government for their efforts.⁹¹ According to the brochure distributed at the event, the *Journey Into Hope* banquet and symposium sought to commemorate the resettlement of Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada.⁹² Over 300 people attended the two day event that was co-sponsored by the CIHS, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), UNHCR, and several members of the Ugandan Asian community.⁹³ Attendees included several dignitaries such as Sergio Marchi, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Mwanyengela Ngali, High Commissioner for Kenya, Aziz Bhaloo, president of the Ismaili Council for Canada, as well as several members of Uganda's immigration team including Roger St. Vincent and Michael Molloy. Many Ugandan Asian refugees from across the country attended the two-day event. Keynote speakers along with several participants were filmed during the event to circulate amongst those refugees who were unable to attend.

The second event marked the twenty-fifth anniversaries of resettlement initiative. *Flight of Courage* was held in Vancouver on May 30th, 1998 and featured several prominent speakers and members of the community.⁹⁴ This included speeches from Dr. Hedy Fry, the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and the Status of Women, Sue Hammell, Minister of Women's Equality, Dr. Charles Olweny, a professor of Oncology at the University of Manitoba and president of Friends of Makerere in Canada, Sam Kuteesa, the Minister of State for Planning and Investment for the Republic of Uganda, and several members of the refugee community such as John Halani, Sultan Baloo, and Umeeda Switlo.⁹⁵ The event was organized by the chair of the Canada Uganda Association John Halani who also served as an honorary consul to Uganda. The event brought together members of the refugee community but also others from Uganda to demonstrate the various ways in which Ugandans have made significant contributions to Canada. *Flight of Courage* was also used as a means of promoting philanthropic endeavours in Uganda and foster renewed commercial and humanitarian connections in East Africa. Building on the success of the previous two celebrations, another anniversary event was held in Ottawa to commemorate thirty

⁹¹ Richard Saunders, *Journey Into Hope*, directed by Richard Saunders (Clarion Communication: Ottawa, 1994).

⁹² Hirji and Shariff, "Journey Into Hope," 14.

⁹³ Ibid; Saunders, *Journey Into Hope*.

⁹⁴ Jon Halani, "Flight of Courage: Commemorating 25 Years of Ugandan Settlement in Canada," *Canada Uganda Association*, May 30, 1998, 8.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

years of resettlement in Canada. The event titled, *30th Anniversary Celebration* was held on October 2nd, 2002 at Parliament Hill's West Block to "celebrate the 30th anniversary of the South Asian Exodus from Uganda to Canada."⁹⁶ It was sponsored by the Pearson-Shoyama Institute, the Uganda 30 Committee and various other sponsors from within the Ugandan Asian community. In addition to promoting diversity and Canadian multiculturalism, the event aimed to bring attention the resettlement of Ugandan Asian refugees as a "Canadian success story."⁹⁷ The event featured speeches from Sheila Copps, Minister of Canadian Heritage, Mobina Jaffer, senator and Ugandan Asian refugee, and both Roger St. Vincent and Michael Molloy.⁹⁸ Reviewing the themes presented within each of these commemorative functions provides a broader understanding of the ways in which refugees conceptualized their community, collective and personal identities, and reinforced their histories of resettlement.

Marking the anniversary of the Asian exodus from Uganda provided formal avenues for Ugandan Asians refugees in Canada to reassert their connections to East Africa while simultaneously reaffirming their allegiance to Canada. For example, Senator Jaffer, a fellow refugee from Uganda, reminded Ugandan Asians who attended the thirtieth anniversary celebrations of their allegiances to East Africa and urged "all Ugandans, though we may be here and Canada has been good to us, I ask you not to forget Uganda."⁹⁹ Senator Jaffer encouraged refugees to make peace with the past and offer their skills and expertise to assist in the development of Uganda. Similarly, Honorary Consul to Uganda, Jon Halani, explained to attendees, at the twenty-fifth anniversary, that "President Museveni took very courageous steps towards national reconciliation and reconstruction. These and other bold steps have marked a turning point in Uganda's revitalisation."¹⁰⁰ As Uganda made steps towards reconciliation and a formal declaration was made welcoming expelled Asians to return to Uganda, the Honourary Consul reiterated Senator Jaffer's appeal to refugees 'not to forget Uganda'. An official campaign to return confiscated property was officially announced under President Milton Obote in 1982, however, it was not until 1992, when the World Bank threatened to withhold a 125

⁹⁶ Victor Crowl, *30th Anniversary Celebration: Ugandan Refugees a Canadian Success Story* (Ottawa: S.M.F. Productions, 2002).

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Halani, "Flight of Courage," 9.

million dollar loan, that the Ugandan government facilitated the processing of claims to lands and businesses submitted by Ugandan Asian refugees.¹⁰¹ Under the leadership of current President, Yoweri Museveni, a campaign was launched in the early 1990s to revitalize economic development in Uganda by inviting Ugandan Asians to return.¹⁰²

Dr. Sudhir Ruparelia built on these statements of attachment to Uganda in the Kampala Goan Institute's brochure marking the 100th anniversary of the KGI. For Dr. Ruparelia these celebrations served "the dual purpose of reviving a journey down the memory lane and at the same time provides a word of encouragement to our future generation - new settlers - of the opportunities that exist in Uganda. It will also be a strong reminder to them not to forsake the crucial rope of their culture and traditions."¹⁰³ Promoting the opportunities for furthering the development of Uganda and creating transnational links was a central theme amongst several speakers at commemorative events. However, these linkages were situated within the multiple identities of Ugandan Asians who are simultaneously South Asian, East African, and Canadian. Government representatives at these major events continuously emphasized the roots of refugees in Canada by applauding the numerous contributions to the diversity of the country and to society as a whole.

The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration, Sergio Marchi, delivered a speech at the 1994 *Journey into Hope* symposium which embodied the Canadian government's formal recognition of the refugee community's engagement within Canadian society and their transition to becoming active Canadian citizens. Marchi expressed that "among us this evening are representatives of the Ugandan Asians who are now proud Canadians. You have proved Pierre Elliot Trudeau's words to be right. You have made an immeasurable contribution to the richness and variety of our country and we are honoured and blessed to have you in our midst."¹⁰⁴ After over twenty years of resettlement in Canada, the arrival of Ugandan Asian refugees continued to

¹⁰¹ Tammerlin Drummond, "Asians Return to Hope and Hostility in Uganda, *Los Angeles Times*, August 17, 1993, in *Ugandan Asian Expulsion: 90 Days and Beyond Through the Eyes of the International Press*, ed. Z. Lalani (Florida: Expulsion Publications, 1997), 161.

¹⁰² Halani, "Flight of Courage," 9.

¹⁰³ Sudhir Ruparelia, "From the Kampala Institute, 2010," *Kampala Goan Institute 100th Anniversary*, June 2010, 7.

¹⁰⁴ Hirji and Shariff, "Journey Into Hope," 14.

be viewed as an overwhelming success that modelled the multicultural fabric of Canadian society. These same sentiments were expressed by Prime Minister Jean Chretien in 1998 during the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration held in Vancouver. Prime Minister Chretien noted that “the strength and diversity of our society are vitally dependent on the continued cooperation of its diverse peoples, and events such as this anniversary celebration provide an excellent opportunity for Canadians of Ugandan origin to celebrate both their uniqueness and their valuable contributions to Canada’s prosperity and cultural heritage.”¹⁰⁵ Government officials emphasized the contributions of Ugandan Asian refugees alongside reinforcing their position as Canadian citizens. Directly acknowledging their membership within Canada during these major commemorative events served as clear method of affirming their transition to becoming Canadians.

Additionally, representatives from the UNHCR used these celebrations as a means of promoting the contributions that refugees make in their countries of resettlement. Judith Kumin, the UNHCR representative in Canada during the thirtieth anniversary, told attendees that Ugandan Asian refugees “are active and productive in so many walks of life and each of you is testimony to the fact that the courage, the energy, the hard work, the tenacity of refugees, refugees from all countries deserve our constant respect. Your remarkable economic and social success in Canada is, I think, a powerful example of the potential of refugees the world over to contribute to their new countries.”¹⁰⁶ Kumin’s remarks encapsulated the significance of a two-way integration process as both Canadians and refugees worked cohesively to promote their resettlement in Canada. Her comments also demonstrated the global impact of their resettlement in Canada as it has been branded as a success story. Coinciding with Kumin’s assertion, the President of the Ismaili Council for Canada Aziz Bhaloo reinforced the narrative of success amongst refugees in Canada. He stated that “the once penniless refugees have blossomed into large and medium sized entrepreneurs, highly placed professionals, senior civil servants, and academics, all contributing actively to Canada’s economic and social development and thereby enriching the Canadian Mosaic.”¹⁰⁷ Although his speech is biased towards a favourable review of the community, as the President of the Ismaili Council for Canada, his comments articulate the

¹⁰⁵ Halani, “Flight of Courage”.

¹⁰⁶ Crowl, *30th Anniversary Celebration*.

¹⁰⁷ Hirji and Shariff, “Journey Into Hope,” 14.

strong connections between refugees and Canadian history. Building on the government's recognition of Ugandan Asian refugees as contributing Canadian citizens, many refugees utilized these commemorative events as a platform for expressing their level of sincere gratitude for the efforts of the Canadian government in resettling Ugandan Asian refugees.

Each of the celebrations contained passages or speeches that explicitly thanked Canadians and the government for their wholehearted support and efforts in resettling their community in Canada. For example, Ugandan Asian refugee Zain Alarakhia concluded her speech at the 1994 *Journey into Hope* banquet in Ottawa by stating that "I want you know that we still carry a deep sense of gratitude to this country and its people. And that God willing, we shall somehow give back to this country a little of all that it has given us."¹⁰⁸ These same sentiments were echoed by Jon Halani in Vancouver's anniversary celebrations who wrote that "we [Ugandan Asian refugees] are extremely grateful to Canada for welcoming us with open arms and warm generosity. During this period, we have all faced challenges and with God's grace, most of us have done well."¹⁰⁹ This replicated the sentiments expressed by refugees when they first arrived in Canada as discussed in previous chapters but also demonstrates the continued sentiments of gratitude amongst Ugandan Asian refugees. The theme of gratitude was prevalent amongst oral history participants, as many refugees expressed their appreciation for Canada's continued support in their transition to becoming Canadian citizens.

Delphine Francis reflected on how fortunate she and her partner are to have been resettled in Canada. Upon returning from a trip to visit relatives abroad she described that "we always come back to Canada saying how fortunate ... we were that Canada opened their doors, we accepted it ... here were the opportunities, here you took advantage, education, jobs, everything, for us, for the next generation, and now for the next generation it has worked out just wonderful in comparison to the others."¹¹⁰ For Delphine and her family, Canada ensured generational success for those who were willing to seize opportunities available within the country. Nazir Walji also described Canada as "a country of opportunity and adventure. It is a country that does

¹⁰⁸ Saunders, *Journey Into Hope*.

¹⁰⁹ Halani, "Flight of Courage," 9.

¹¹⁰ Errol and Delphine Francis, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, April 17, 2015.

let you as an individual gain as much as you wish to gain.”¹¹¹ Refugees continuously mentioned the beneficial conditions of being resettled in Canada. Other refugees express their continuous appreciation to the government and Canadians as a whole when recounting their life histories. For example, Aziz and his family members agreed that “we are always grateful to Canada because Canada really took care of us ... Like Canadians, initially when we came here, they really looked after us. Even the Canadian government, even the people, they really helped us to be what we are.”¹¹² The Fakirani family highlighted the collaborative efforts of the government and the public as a fundamental process within the resettlement initiative that helped them to ‘be what we are’. Every interviewee within the study thanked the government for their efforts as they reflected on their personal life histories. This coincided with the general theme of gratitude within the speeches of several Ugandan Asians at each of the commemorative events. Moreover, other Ugandan Asians attendees found additional layers of meaning in paying tribute to their resettlement in Canada.

Jalal Jaffer who spoke at the symposium in Ottawa reflected on the atmosphere at *Journey into Hope* during his oral interview. Within his personal life history, he described that there were:

representatives from the Bora community for example, other Muslim communities, Goan communities, everyone recounted their so called success stories but in an unusual sense everybody’s story had such a sense of hurt feelings and emotional baggage they were carrying ... in the audience there wasn’t a single dry eye. It was almost like a catharsis of sorts, complete letting down your emotional hurt feelings. It was quite a spectacle. So we heard so many stories in those two days.¹¹³

Journey into Hope encouraged refugees to reflect on the expulsion decree and their resettlement in Canada which presented an avenue for refugees to communicate their ‘emotional baggage’. Both Mark Klempner and Dori Laub argue that recounting trauma narratives within oral history interviews, or in this instance at a public gathering, enables survivors to ‘re-externalize’ the event through “the therapeutic process of constructing a narrative and telling it to a listener, the event may be externalized once again, that is, re-externalized. In the process, its meaning changes, due in part to the empathy of the listener and the safety of the setting in which the narrative is

¹¹¹ Nazir Walji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Calgary, July 29, 2015.

¹¹² Aziz Fakirani, Khaerun Lalany, and Azad Lalany, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 8, 2015.

¹¹³ Jalal Jaffer, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 7, 2015.

shared.”¹¹⁴ Attendees participated in a communal expression of re-externalization as they engaged in a therapeutic process amongst fellow refugees and government officials who were sympathetic to their plight. In addition to expressions of gratitude and communal catharsis, commemorative events sought to reunite members of the Ugandan diaspora in Canada alongside sharing their histories with future generations of Ugandan Asians in Canada.

At the twenty-fifth anniversary event in Vancouver, Jon Halani reminded attendees that “this occasion will hopefully remind us, our children, and our fellow Canadians of the important lessons of our past – namely that racial and religious intolerance hurts everybody and ultimately weakens the very fabric of a nation and community.”¹¹⁵ Halani noted the significance of the twenty-fifth anniversary event in relation to reminding the children of refugees and Canadians of historical lessons on discrimination and xenophobia. This was echoed by the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Sheila Copps, at the thirtieth anniversary celebration held on Parliament Hill in October of 2002. In the wake of September 11th, 2001, Minister Copps declared that:

after September 11, we have another message. Multiculturalism is not enough. We also need to work on interculturalism. Interculturalism so that the story of the Ugandan refugees is the story of building Canada ... until we teach our children about religions, until our children carry the story of Uganda and you as refugees from Uganda as part of their story of Canada. Until we manage through the instruments that are at our fingertips to see ourselves reflected on television and films, in books, in music. Our children will be strong in our cultures but not strong between cultures and one of the exceptional messages, I believe, of the Ugandan ex patriots is that you can come to this country and you can build your community as you’ve done in an incredible fashion. But you also have something incredible to contribute to the community at large and these are stories that most Canadians do not know.¹¹⁶

Minister Copps advocated for a pluralistic model to be embraced within Canadian society by using the case study of Ugandan Asian refugees who resettled in Canada as a means of breaking down barriers to integration and countering Islamophobia. Furthermore, she directly emphasized the necessity of situating the Ugandan Asian refugee experience within the broader Canadian historical narrative, one of the central tenets of this dissertation project. Her statement coincided

¹¹⁴ Mark Klempner, “Navigating Life Review Interviews with Survivors of Trauma” in *Oral History Reader* eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (New York: Routledge, 1998), 201.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Crowl, *30th Anniversary Celebration*.

with those made by other government officials who acknowledged the transition of refugees into contributing members of Canadian society and reaffirmed their status as Canadian citizens. Similar to Halani's statement, Minister Copps vocalized the importance of sharing the life histories of Ugandan Asian refugees with the general public who are unaware of their contributions to Canada. A critical step within this process of educating the general public and preserving this history for future generations is embodied by the creation of the Uganda Asian Archives at Carleton University.

The Ugandan Asian Archives opened on June 20th, 2014 as a collaborative effort between Carleton University, the CIHS, and the Fakirani family.¹¹⁷ As the principle donors to the archive, the Fakirani family emphasized the significance of establishing a formal archive as means of solidifying the place of Ugandan Asian refugees within Canadian history. The donation was made in honour of Hassanali and Sikinabai Fakirani who passed away in Canada after ensuring that all nine of their children were resettled in Canada. As noted by Nizar Fakirani at the opening of the archive "it's [the donation to the archive] very important because it allows the family share some of the experiences we'd been through during the time that we had to leave the country and also the experience of settling into Canada."¹¹⁸ Nizar also mentioned that the intentions behind the donations were to "preserve this experience for the future generations. I hope that they will learn about it and extrapolate from it. That it will assist Canada, and our policy makers, to be able to respond to any future incidents of similar kind, where people have to be uprooted in large numbers."¹¹⁹ For the Fakirani family the purpose of the archive was twofold. First, the archive would educate the children of refugees and future generations of Canadians. This reflected the call for interculturalism stated by Minister Copps. Second, the archive sought to inform public policy regarding future refugee resettlements. Nizar Fakirani reiterated how the history of the Ugandan Asian refugee resettlement initiative holds clear policy implications on the significance of refugee resettlement in Canada.

¹¹⁷ Catherine Kitts, "Carleton Thanks the Fakirani Family for Its Donation to the Ugandan Asian Archives," accessed on September 1, 2016, <https://futurefunder.carleton.ca/carleton-thanks-the-fakirani-family-for-its-donation-to-the-ugandan-asian-archives/>.

¹¹⁸ Kitts, "Carleton Thanks the Fakirani Family for Its Donation to the Ugandan Asian Archives."

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

Building on Minister Copps' statement in 2002, Senator Mobina Jaffer, the first and only Ugandan Asian refugee to become a senator in Canada, argued that the establishment of a permanent archive marked the "next stage in our evolution, and it's a very emotional stage, because now we have a place in history."¹²⁰ The opening of the archive alongside major commemorative events are public memories that "serve as a horizon within which a public finds itself, constitutes itself, and deliberates its own existence. The arena of public memory becomes a realm within which we act together."¹²¹ According to Kendall Phillips, these events and institutions facilitate interactions between all members of society to consciously investigate the historical roots Ugandan Asian refugees and provides active spaces to "interact, deliberate, and share."¹²² Additionally, Marianne Hirsch argues that the archive serves as a site of 'post-memory', which enables the survival of these memories to be carried on to future generations who have not experienced the expulsion themselves.¹²³ Beyond the archives, Ugandan Asian refugees also participated in events that celebrated milestones in Uganda's independence that were hosted in collaboration with Ugandan Africans.

In late September of 2012 an anniversary celebration was held in Toronto by the Uganda50Toronto committee that included the membership and attendance of all Ugandan expatriates.¹²⁴ The intent of the event was to commemorate the golden jubilee of Uganda's independence from British rule "from the viewpoint of the Ugandan Diaspora living in Canada."¹²⁵ The Uganda High Commission sponsored the event held on September 8th, 2012, along with the creation of the souvenir book titled, *Uganda 50 Years of Independence*. Committee members consisted of a mix of all Ugandan expatriates.¹²⁶ To conclude activities marking the Golden Jubilee anniversary of independence a boat cruise was held in Toronto on October 7th, 2012.¹²⁷ The souvenir book embodied the diversity amongst Ugandans now living in Canada. Committee members included both Ugandan Asians and Ugandan Africans. Examples include Dr. Munini

¹²⁰ Kitts, "Carleton Thanks the Fakirani Family for Its Donation to the Ugandan Asian Archives."

¹²¹ Kendall R. Phillips, "Introduction," in *Framing Public Memory* ed. Kendall R. Phillips (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004), 4.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 22.

¹²⁴ John Nazareth, *Uganda 50 Years of Independence*, 2012.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 4.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 56.

¹²⁷ John Nazareth, *Uganda 50 Years of Independence*, 2012, 56.

Mulera who escaped Uganda as a refugee in 1977 during Idi Amin's reign and resettled in Canada as of 1981, Opiya Oloya who also came to Canada as refugee fleeing President Obote's regime in the 1980s, and Persis Kavuma who immigrated with her spouse after graduating from Makerere University in 1985.¹²⁸ The brochure also profiled several Ugandan expatriates who sent their greetings and congratulations to readers on the Golden Jubilee of Uganda's independence.

Naresh Majithia, chairman of the committee, outlined the significance of Uganda's independence and stated that "in a special way I would like to welcome all the children of those of us who came from Uganda. I hope this celebration will help you understand that our hearts are large enough to have love and gratitude for our adopted country Canada and the country we are honouring - Uganda."¹²⁹ Majithia's welcoming address highlighted the multiple identities of all Ugandan expatriates who simultaneously hold allegiances to Canada and Uganda. He also complemented the statements of others who noted the inherent importance of sharing these identities with those who were born in Canada. Ultimately, the events and souvenir book emphasized the bonds that some refugees hold with Ugandan Africans who have moved in Canada. Furthermore, it reasserted their deep historical roots in East Africa and amplified their attachments to Uganda. These commemorative events and the formal creation of a Ugandan Asian archive are prominent examples of the ways in which Ugandan Asian refugees have transitioned to becoming active Canadian citizen while adhering to multiple affiliations of being both Canadian and Ugandan. Jan Assman argues that these acts of remembrance are fundamental components of belonging as "one has to remember in order to belong."¹³⁰ The process of belonging and reaffirming one's sense of self is manifested in various forms by Ugandan Asian refugees from commemorations to Ugandan Asian cookbooks that reassert their multiple identities.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 12-13. For more examples see pages 11-15. Ugandan Asian refugees who were members of the committee include Zul Jaffer, John Nazareth, and Jitu Tanna.

¹²⁹ Naresh Majithia, "Welcome From the Chairman," *Uganda 50 Years of Independence*, 2012, 3.

¹³⁰ Jan Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory," in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* eds. Astrid Erll and Ansfar Nunning (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 114.

Recipes for Identity: Food as a Means of Belonging

One particular facet of identity for Ugandan Asian refugees pertains to their dietary habits. Food inherently embodies a wide range of social, cultural, and political elements of human life. The consumption of food is an intrinsic component of personal identity construction and is dynamically informed by the historical experiences of immigrants and refugees. As Dwaine Plaza argues, “the power of food lies not only in the foods themselves but also in the symbolism and meanings that people equate with them. Food commands the full sensory experience; it is touched, smelled, tasted, heard, and visually explored, and through interactions with food, individuals mentally mark the moments, days, and years of their lives.”¹³¹ Sensory experiences are inextricably linked to the historical moments that shape these meals. Other scholars also note how food encompasses more than simple associations to physical health arguing that food “holds emotional, social, community and cultural significance in the ways it can be used for comfort, to show love and affection (or the withholding of those), and to define individual identities and social relationships.”¹³² Several oral history participants specifically mentioned the importance of recreating familiar meals along with adjusting to new foods in Canada. Additionally, two cookbooks were created by Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada and England which reinforce the links between identity and food.

Home cooked food is an inherently gendered process. Women are primarily viewed as the bastions of ethnic cuisine in many cultures. As Svetlana Riztovski-Slijepcevic, Gwen E. Chapman, and Brenda L. Beagan argue “the mother’s role in caring for the health of her children is linked to gendered assumptions about food provision in the family and her identity as a woman. It is often taken for granted that women will be the food-preparer and thus gatekeeper of family food choices”.¹³³ This is exemplified by both authors of the cook books being created by female Ugandan Asian refugees. They are viewed as not only the experts in healthy dietary

¹³¹ Dwaine Plaza, “Roti and Doubles as Comfort Foods for the Trinidadian Diaspora in Canada, the United States, and Britain,” *Social Research* 81, no. 2 (2014): 464. For more on links between food and identity see Franca Iacovetta, Valerie J. Korinek, Marlene Epp (eds.) *Edible Histories, Cultural Politics: Towards a Canadian Food History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012); Donna Gabaccia, *We are What we Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of the Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

¹³² Svetlana Riztovski-Slijepcevic, Gwen E. Chapman, and Brenda L. Beagan, “Being a ‘Good Mother’: Dietary Governmentality in the Family Food Practices of Three Ethnocultural Groups in Canada,” *Health* 14, no.5 (2010): 479-480.

¹³³ Riztovski-Slijepcevic, Chapman, and Beagan, “Being a ‘Good Mother’,” 469.

habits within their respective families but are also expected to replicate traditional cultural norms. Both cookbooks articulate how these recipes were passed on from their mothers directly to them as they continued to extend traditional culinary practices into their lands of resettlement. For example, Lella Umedaly accurately described the gendered roles of cooking when she recounted her father's retort when she requested flying lessons while growing up in Uganda: "Lella, you learn to pilot your pots and pans!"¹³⁴

Both cookbooks are produced by Ugandan Asian refugees Yasmin Alibhai-Brown and Lella Umedaly. The first is written by an Oxford educated Ugandan Asian who was resettled in Britain along with her family. Yasmin Alibhai-Brown's recipe book takes a historical approach to uncovering the importance of several recipes. It was recommended to me by an interviewee who noted that her and her husband were related to the author. Using autobiographical elements within her cookbook she situated her family's experiences within the historical context of South Asians living in East Africa. Her work is written as a novel with recipes interspersed throughout the book that relate to her life history. She documents the ways in which many dishes reflected specific historical periods and the larger social impacts of food. The second cookbook is written by Lella Umedaly, a Ugandan Asian refugee who was resettled in Canada.¹³⁵ This cookbook was graciously donated to me by her son, Mossadiq, who participated in the oral history portion of the dissertation. Her approach to her cookbook is similar to a traditional cookbook that many of us are more familiar with. Umedaly captured important historical elements while following the standard pattern of detailed recipes supplemented with accompanying photos. Historian of food and culture Marlene Epp, argues that cookbooks act as historical sources which reveal how immigrant groups "maintain a public connection with homeland culture, reinforce ethnic identity, integrate into a new culture, and form new hybrid identities."¹³⁶ Investigating the themes

¹³⁴ Leila Umedaly, *Mamajee's Kitchen: Indian Cooking From Three Continents* (Vancouver: UP Umedaly, 2006), 178

¹³⁵ I was fortunate to interview her son while I was in Vancouver, however, she was out of the country when I was conducting research in Vancouver from June 15th until July 15th 2015. Regrettably she was unable to participate in the oral history portion of the study but she did participate in an oral history interview with Pier 21. See Lella Umedaly and Umeeda Switlo, interview by Emily Burton, Canadian Museum of Immigration, Vancouver, February 21, 2014, accessed on June 20, 2016. <http://www.pier21.ca/search/node/Umedaly>

¹³⁶ Marlene Epp, "Eating Across Borders: Reading Immigrant Cookbooks" *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 48, no. 96 (2015): 45–65.

presented within these two cookbooks illustrate the affiliations between, food, history, and identity.

Several examples within the cookbooks articulated the ways in which South Asian and East African cuisine fused to produce hybrid or creolized snacks and entrees. For example, the propensity to deep fry various South Asian snacks from bhajias to pakoras led to the creation of cassava chips. Using a regional root vegetable, migrants from the Indian subcontinent thinly sliced the vegetable, deep fried it, and then added salt and chili powder to provide more flavouring to the local snack.¹³⁷ Another example, provided by Alibhai-Brown is the matoke with peanut curry. Matoke is a starchy banana that is popular in Rwanda and Uganda. This dish fuses the traditional use of the staple crop in Uganda with South Asian flare due to the addition of chilli powder, garlic, tomatoes, and the common *dhana* and *jeera* powder seasoning (coriander and cumin). This fusion of both cuisines along with attachments to local Ugandan crops is mentioned in an interview with Rossebina. She recalled how Ugandan Asians “experienced cooking with African style. We had matoke, we had the plantain, the green bananas, and the *mogo* [cassava] ... those were our favourites ... at the same time the Africans learned how to make samosas and they became so creative. So instead of having meat or chicken samosas, they would start making chick pea samosas, or potato samosas.”¹³⁸ Her oral testimony reinforces the themes of fusion cuisine presented in both cookbooks while acknowledging the ways in which Ugandan Africans created their own hybrid versions of South Asian dishes. Furthermore, local Ugandan crops were considered a ‘favourite’ amongst other refugees. Laila Jiwani reiterated the importance of staple crops such as matoke signifying her father’s attachment to Uganda along with her own: “he loved the food over there, like matoke and all that, we loved it, even I miss it.”¹³⁹ These reinforce the strong attachments to Uganda held by refugees who identify with East African crops as being personal ‘favourites’. As refugees were resettled internationally, these types of foods and recipes took on new forms of meaning.

¹³⁷ Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook: A Memoir of Love, Migration and Food: Tales of Love, Migration and Food* (London: Portobello Books, 2012), 49.

¹³⁸ Rossebina Nathoo, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Calgary, July 20, 2015.

¹³⁹ Laila Jiwani, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 14, 2015.

Refugees who resettled in Canada had limited access to familiar spices and were forced to be creative. As Umedaly argues, “it was difficult to find the correct ingredients, and we had to improvise, altering recipes to be more flexible and even more practical.”¹⁴⁰ This made trying to eat Canadian foods particularly difficult since many interviewees expressed how they found the basic Canadian diet to be ‘bland’. Shiraz remembered how when Ugandan Asians first came to Canada “we were eating all Canadian food, we found it very bland in the beginning ... there is no Indian stores or anything and we would go in the grocery stores, Dutchboy was the big one at that time, and we would ask them for chilies or some spices, there were some spices ... but not the spices that we use for our cooking kind of thing.”¹⁴¹ To combat the bland flavours of Western cuisine, Alibhai-Brown explains her mother’s solution to the standard Sheppard’s pie in England: “‘now *beti* [term of endearment for daughters], wait til I make it,’ said Jenna as she threw the pie into the bin. ‘Next time this will be my Indian Shepard’s pie. With a bit of garam masala and magic we can repair the dish’.”¹⁴² South Asians actively lifted or added flavour to various recipes that were considered bland. This coincided with the findings within Donna Gabaccia’s pioneering work on ethnic foods in the United States, as she detailed how immigrant mothers innovated with new ingredients to respond to changes in their geographical settings.¹⁴³

The same issue of bland food was echoed by Tom and Joan as they described their shifts in eating habits once they came to Canada. Tom and Joan described that

we also changed our diet, let’s face it. I mean kids were not ... now they are, but at the time they were not accustomed to the spices so a lot of times we ate – for lack of a better word – bland food. We adapted to the Canadian thing and then occasionally on weekends and so on Joan would make something spicy, but we didn’t have to have spicy food every single day. I mean it was not a requirement in our house and you know with kids a lot of other things, pasta, things like that went over better so yeah, it was a mix. It still is, we still have both types of food.¹⁴⁴

Tom and Joan exemplified the struggles of Ugandan Asians to locate certain spices that were common in Uganda and essential to creating authentic South Asian dishes. Their oral testimonies

¹⁴⁰ Umedaly, *Mamajee’s Kitchen*, 168.

¹⁴¹ Shiraz Lalani, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, April 25, 2015.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 165.

¹⁴³ Gabaccia, *We are What we Eat*, 179.

¹⁴⁴ Tom and Joan Francis, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 8, 2015.

reinforced the adjustment to Canadian food that was ‘bland’. Furthermore, they mentioned the integration of what they considered were common Canadian foods, such as pasta, for their children who were not ‘accustomed to the spices’. This demonstrates how female Ugandan Asian refugees had to navigate between the appeals of their husbands and children. Historians Franca Iacovetta, Marlene Epp, and Valerie K. Korinek argue that immigrant or ethnic men encouraged their wives to create authentic traditional dishes or more Canadian foods to demonstrate their integration into the cultural fabric of Canada. Canadian born children made this increasingly complex as they pressured their mothers to ‘try’ or ‘buy’ Canadian goods such as hotdogs and hamburgers.¹⁴⁵ However, not all foods were considered to be lacking flavour since some goods in Canada were not readily available in Uganda. For Azim and many other Ugandan Asian refugees, certain fruits like “apples and grapes” were items they “never saw in Uganda, you only got it as a treat.”¹⁴⁶ This included other novelties such as processed and canned goods as well as time saving cooking tools as described by Umedaly who “developed one-pot, quick cooking techniques ... so I have been able to reduce my cooking time. Now I can cook a complex meal for family and friends in an hour and still stay true to traditional tastes”.¹⁴⁷ Although Umedaly outlined that processed goods reduced cooking times, other refugees like Nimira argued that canned products did not have the same flavour as natural ingredients found in Uganda. Nimira asserted that:

when we came here we had to buy ready-made stuff and ready made this and ready-made that. It didn’t taste the same. It was more than just adapting to another country and food but more adapting to the taste of everything. Even if we were used to eating something, breads we were used to eating bread but bread here doesn’t taste the same as bread over there. So very different, it took a long time and first when we came there were no Indian stores either so we didn’t even find spices never mind different spices.¹⁴⁸

For Nimira and her family it was clear that adapting to Canada embodied a distinct process that required time and effort from refugees in order to adjust. This demonstrates that adjusting to life in Canada was not a universal process amongst Ugandan Asian refugees. Beyond the contested

¹⁴⁵ Franca Iacovetta, Valerie J. Korinek, Marlene Epp (eds.) *Edible Histories, Cultural Politics: Towards a Canadian Food History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 10.

¹⁴⁶ Azim Sarangi, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 15, 2015.

¹⁴⁷ Umedaly, *Mamajee’s Kitchen*, 2.

¹⁴⁸ Nimira Charania, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 6, 2014.

grounds of the benefits of ‘ready-made’ products, the identities of Umedaly, as a Ugandan Asian refugee in Canada, come to the fore as she reflected on the creation of her cookbook.

Umedaly firmly expressed how the writing of each recipe brought back memories of “a person, a story and feeling. In this book I see so many colours, smell the spices, hear the laughter, and I feel the tears and the challenges that have made me who I am today.”¹⁴⁹ This echoes some of the sentiments of Shamim who identified how “green mangoes, sweet potatoes for me that’s my roots I should say.”¹⁵⁰ Other refugees, like Jitu Tanna, who had traveled back to Uganda, argue that food even in India did not reflect feelings of home: “in terms of food... huge, vast country [India] but it just doesn’t feel like here [Uganda], it doesn’t feel like this is my country [Uganda]. Whereas when you go to Uganda, yes, this is my country. It just feels so good to be back.”¹⁵¹ This reinforces the findings of other scholars who argue that food is a powerful element within personal identity construction. An African-Canadian living in Nova Scotia aptly states: “the way I eat it reflects who I am. I like hot meals, you know I like a lot of Soul food, it reflects who I am and I’m not changing that for nobody.”¹⁵² It is clear within these cookbooks, life histories, and various works interrogating the role of food in the lives of immigrants and refugees, that food and history significantly impact identity. Fusion recipes, popular crops in Uganda, processed goods, and adjusting to bland foods all significantly contributed the identities of Ugandan Asian refugees. For some, a balanced Canadian and South Asian diet exemplified their multiple identities, whereas for others nothing could match the true tastes of Ugandan matoke, cassava, and plantains. These complexities surrounding food demonstrate the contested grounds of identity formation and how Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada express their sense of self.

Exploring the Identities of Ugandan Asian Refugees

Oral history participants were asked directly how they identified themselves after being in Canada for over forty years. The question was used as a means to comprehend the diverse ways

¹⁴⁹ Umedaly, *Mamajee’s Kitchen*, 178.

¹⁵⁰ Shamim Muhammedi, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 21, 2014.

¹⁵¹ Jitu Tanna, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 9, 2015.

¹⁵² Svetlana Ristovski, Gwen E. Chapman, Brenda L. Beagan, “Engaging with healthy eating discourse(s): Ways of knowing about food and health in three ethnocultural groups in Canada,” *Appetite* 50, (2008): 171.

in which Ugandan Asians navigate their multiple allegiances and possible attachments to Canada, Uganda, and South Asia. Exploring expressions of how refugees formulate their sense of self provides crucial insight within the identity construction process. Each interviewee was asked how do you identify yourself and prompted to explain what this meant to them. When asking this personal question, I continuously reminded participants that there was no right or wrong answer. They were encouraged to identify as they wished and were welcome to challenging the question itself. David Snow contends that “personal identities are the attributes and meaning attributed to oneself by the actor; they are self-designations and self-attributions regarded as personally distinctive.”¹⁵³ Exploring one’s sense of self requires the freedom to create an individual sense of personhood which may not fall within clearly defined categories of being strictly a Canadian, Ugandan, or South Asian.

Furthermore, national identities are not the only means of exploring one’s sense of self. Eric Hobsbawm argues that “we cannot assume that for most people national identification ... excludes or is always superior to the remainder of the set of identifications which constitute the social being. In fact, it is always combined with identifications of another kind, even when it is felt to be superior to them.”¹⁵⁴ Avtar Brah argues that these assumptions are inherently problematic since naming a single national identity “rendered invisible all the other identities - of gender, caste, religion, linguistic group, [or] generation.”¹⁵⁵ As discussed in the previous section, identities are informed by numerous daily practices such as the production and consumption of food and are influenced by histories of migration as well as race, class, gender, age, ethnicity and other categories of analysis. Responses from Ugandan Asian refugees who participated in the study reveal the complexity of identity formation while simultaneously reinforcing how refugees all express a clear attachment to Canada and being Canadian.

Some interviewees declared that they were quite simply a Canadian through and through. For example, Aminmohamed Jamal argued that “I am Canadian ... 100 per cent. I believe in the

¹⁵³ David Snow, “Collective Identity and Expressive Forms,” *Center for the Study of Democracy*, University of California, October 1, 2001, 2.

¹⁵⁴ E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 11.

¹⁵⁵ Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora*, 3.

values of Canada.”¹⁵⁶ Similarly John declared that for him his identity is “simple, we are citizens of this country so our loyalty now is to Canada and we play our role in the day to day affairs of this country and see where our input is required.”¹⁵⁷ For both Aminmohamed and John, their identities as Canadians were clear and uncontested within their interviews. Their formal citizenship confirmed their allegiance to Canada and authenticated their status as Canadians. In conjunction to formal citizenship, Aminmohamed expressed that he believed strongly in Canadian values. When asked to explain what makes you feel Canadian, Amin outlined what he believed were intrinsic values of Canadian society: “the freedom to express yourself, freedom of religion ... respecting others religions, tolerating other people’s views.”¹⁵⁸ This was a common theme amongst several participants who equated their membership within society to respecting the values of Canadians. For example, Zul who also felt a strong sense of Canadian identity, echoed these sentiments of shared Canadian values: “I, appreciate the values of Canada from day one ... they let me practice my religion ... I can speak out.”¹⁵⁹ In a special issue of the *Ismaili Canada* magazine celebrating the settlement of the religious community in Canada, Abidah Lalani wrote that “Canada’s respect and tolerance of other cultures, commitment to volunteerism, and dedication to freedom, equality and peace are values that have proven to be a natural fit for Ismailis, most of whom embody the same characteristics that our beloved country holds dear.”¹⁶⁰ Lalani’s article embodied the breadth of Canadian values that significantly shaped Ugandan Asian refugees association to identifying as Canadian. This was confirmed by Senator Jaffer as she explained one of the fundamental beliefs of Canadians is their commitment to “sharing and making spaces for all of us.”¹⁶¹ Inclusivity and personal freedoms cemented the affiliations of Ugandan Asian refugees to being or feeling Canadian. For other refugees, peace and security was a prominent feature of Canadian society that confirmed their status as Canadians.

Building on Lalani’s article that labelled ‘peace’ as a component of Canadian values, Shamim argued that Canadian identity was premised on the idea of safety. When she answered the question as to what encompasses her Canadian identity she argued that “it means that I don’t

¹⁵⁶ Aminmohamed Jamal, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 13, 2014.

¹⁵⁷ John Halani, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, June 21, 2015.

¹⁵⁸ Aminmohamed Jamal, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 13, 2014.

¹⁵⁹ Zulfikar Devji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 20, 2014.

¹⁶⁰ Abidah Lalani, “Ours to Discover: Toronto,” *Ismaili Canada*, Summer 2014, 59.

¹⁶¹ Crowl, *30th Anniversary Celebration*.

have to worry about political situations, I don't have to be scared, I feel safe ... personally, financially, it's better, I feel more safe than anything else".¹⁶² Unlike other respondents, the primary Canadian value for Shamim is safety in the form of being protected from the instalment of an authoritarian regime or random acts of violence. This demonstrated one of the ways in which historical experiences shape personal identity construction. Her previous experience of being expelled from Uganda under military threat influenced her association of being a Canadian to reflect a sense of being and feeling safe. The Nanji family also reiterated the same quality and argued that "they [the Canadian government] give my children shelter, food, education. And the best part is security."¹⁶³ Assurances of security in Canada played a crucial role in reinforcing aspects of Canadian identity for some Ugandan Asian refugees. Additionally, several oral testimonies mention that over time they have adopted Canada as their home and principally describes themselves as Canadians.

Living in Canada for over forty years, many Ugandan Asian refugees have dissociated themselves from their country of birth. For example, Diamond Akbarali argued that he is "Canadian and Ismaili and that's it. I mean, I'm at that age now where I've been here for a long time. Yeah I'm from Uganda but that was a long time ago."¹⁶⁴ Although he mentioned his roots in Uganda, a sufficient amount of time has passed in which his national identity as a Canadian permeates his sense of self. This concept of spending a large portion of time in Canada was repeated by Almas who argued that she is "more Canadian than Uganda because I lived in Uganda for twenty-five years and I've been here [in Canada] forty-three years. So I think I've become more Canadian ... Ugandan can become ... part of it but first is Canadian."¹⁶⁵ Others found that over time their memories of Uganda faded since they arrived in Canada as teenagers. Mumtaz Mamdani described that she does not "think of Uganda anymore because I was young when I came here. I was in high school. I went to high school here. I consider myself Canadian ... I don't, I kind of forget the Ugandan life. It's almost like a dream ... I really don't associate myself as Ugandan at all."¹⁶⁶ For Mumtaz, her affiliations to Uganda dissipated as over time

¹⁶² Shamim Muhammedi, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 21, 2014.

¹⁶³ John Nazareth, "Celebrating Ugandans Who Have Excelled in Canada," *Uganda 50 Years of Independence*, 2012, 21.

¹⁶⁴ Diamond Akbarali, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Calgary, July 21, 2015.

¹⁶⁵ Mohamed and Almas Lalji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, May 12, 2015.

¹⁶⁶ Anonymous, interviewed by S. Muhammedi Calgary, July 29, 2015.

similar to the experiences of Diamond and Almas. Some refugees identified distinctive moments that marked their transition to placing their Canadian identity before others.

Sikandar noted how his priorities have changed to embrace an allegiance to Canada while continuing to be proud of his heritage as a Ugandan. He explained that:

I'm proud of being from Uganda but at the same time I think my priorities have changed. I feel I am more loyal to Canada. If I had to choose between Canada and Uganda, I think I would choose Canada because this is the country that gave me a refuge when I needed it ... what they did for us when we came here, they accepted us, it was fantastic. I think this is the best country to live in.¹⁶⁷

Sikandar's oral testimony reinforced the importance of time in relation to personal identity construction. Similar to Sikandar, Nimira argued that for her that there was a specific turning point where she realized that she had truly become a Canadian. Nimira expressed in her interview that there:

is a turning point at which one time you stop thinking of yourself as an East African because suddenly you don't feel as at home. Not in East Africa but in the East African ways, you've outgrown from aging, from moving on, you know, we have a choice of picking the better things out of the Canadian life, out of the Western life ... here you earned your own value, you earned your own respect, if you stay true to yourself, you are a hard worker. In East Africa, there was no opportunities. You could work to the bone but life kept you at a certain level. If you were poor, you were sure to die poor. No opportunity could be given to you where you could, you have to struggle for everything, work very very hard, very few people make that transition from being poor to being rich. Whereas in Canada, if you were willing to work hard, if you were willing to you know be good, be honest, be this, there was places to go... You earned the respect you got and society suddenly didn't mean anything.¹⁶⁸

Nimira directly identified a 'turning point' where her identity shifted from being wholly East African to being Canadian. She expressed how coming of age in Canada and embracing the norms of Canadian society enabled strong feelings of identifying as a Canadian. Furthermore, a primary Canadian value for Nimira was the idea of opportunity, hard work, and freedom from being judged by others. The notion of opportunity and breaking the cycle of poverty was

¹⁶⁷ Anonymous, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Edmonton, August 4, 2015.

¹⁶⁸ Nimira Charania, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 6, 2014.

common amongst all interviewees who expressed that hard work and dedication lead to their successful integration in Canada as previously mentioned in this chapter. Moreover, Nimira deliberately distinguished between specific societal norms in East Africa and Canada to emphasize how her Canadian identity is formulated.

Her appreciation, acceptance, and even promotion of what she deems as Canadian values embodied her Canadian identity. She articulated her promotion of Canadian values later in her interview when she described her return trip to East Africa:

somebody there made a comment, oh you're Canadian, yes I am. I'm happy that I have an identity now. I don't want to be one of you, haha. Because their attitude, you know, like we accepted certain things there because some things we brought from India. When I say we, I mean as a group, the culture that came from India to East Africa was mainly the non-educated, illiterates because they were the only ones that were doing so badly in India that they were willing to make that journey to Africa into the unknown and live there. So really they had no education, no nothing, so all they had they just adopted from either somebody or the culture, this is how you are, this is how you should behave. So they were the ones who came up with if you're a male you're a god if you're a woman you're nothing. That sort of an attitude was so accepted and then society was like that in East Africa where it was a male chauvinist society. Males made all the decisions, they treated women like dirt.¹⁶⁹

This excerpt demonstrated precisely how history impacts the construction of identity for Nimira. She articulated how their historical experiences and roots in the Indian Subcontinent were transferred to East Africa, adopted and adapted in Uganda, and then subsequently challenged and refuted in Canada. For example, when told by her uncle to wear an Indian dress to the local *jamat khana* when she visited Nairobi in 2014, she curtly responded, “no you can't tell me to do that I'm over 18 I get to decide what I'm gonna wear.”¹⁷⁰ For Nimira, in particular, Canadian values also encompassed gender equality and the right to carry herself as she deemed appropriate. Both Nimira and Sikandar mentioned their transitions and reinforced their Canadian identities but still acknowledged their Ugandan roots. Other refugees built upon these roots and expressed hyphenated or multiple identities that reflected their allegiance to Canada, Uganda, and South Asia.

¹⁶⁹ Nimira Charania, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 6, 2014.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

Multiple and dual identities were mentioned by several oral history participants. For example, John Nazareth articulated his multiple affiliations and argued that he now accepts “that I am a Canadian, a Ugandan, an African, an Indian, and a Goan. You don’t have to choose except if one goes to war with another then you might have to choose but I don’t have to. And I embrace all of them, they are all part of psyche and when I am with Ugandan Africans something almost goes click in my brains and I joke like a Uganda.”¹⁷¹ This was a common theme between several respondents regarding the opportunity to switch between several identities coinciding with the findings of Czarina Wilpert and Steven Vertovec who argue that newcomers and their children possess the ability to turn on and off specific affiliations and switch between cultural codes.¹⁷² Jalal identified a similar multiple identities while simultaneously expressing frustrations about being limited to a ‘narrow hole’. Jalal recalled that he is:

certainly very Canadian, I’ve got cultural heritage which is Indian – which I am not at all defensive about – so I am a combination of all of that, and proudly so. But if you say does my absolute loyalty go to Canada as a country? Of course it does, vis a vis India, vis a vis Africa, of course it’s Canada, right? But to identify me or put me in a narrow hole, ‘Are you Ismaili? Are you Canadian? What does Canadian mean?’ Canadian to me incorporates all of these, the value system, the cultural background, the attitudes... whatever. So that’s a long winded answer to a simple question, but I’m questioning the question.¹⁷³

His oral testimony articulated his multiple affiliations to each of country or region of his historical background while expressing his firm loyalty to Canada. Furthermore, Jalal was the only individual to interrogate the question of identity itself. This confirms Hobsbawm’s assertion that components that inform personal identity construction are multifaceted and extend beyond notions of nationality. For other participants, they were able to create a ‘mélange’ of their histories in Uganda and Canada. Zaina Sovani described that “if I look back from an identity perspective

¹⁷¹ John Nazareth, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, March 21, 2015.

¹⁷² Czarina Wilpert, “Ethnic and Cultural Identity: Ethnicity and the Second Generation in the Context of European Migration,” in *New Identities in Europe: Immigrant Ancestry and the Identity of Youth*, ed. K. Liebkind (Aldershot: Gower, 1989); Steven Vertovec, “Young Muslims in Keighley, West Yorkshire: Cultural Identity, Context, and Community,” in *Muslim European Youth: Reproducing Ethnicity, Religion, Culture*, ed. S. Vertovec and A. Rogers (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).

¹⁷³ Jalal Jaffer, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver July 7, 2015.

it is a mixture of all, it's a *mélange* of the two."¹⁷⁴ For this participant, identity is in a constant flux between both identities that have mixed together. However, these distinct multitudes of identity are not embraced without varying levels of conflict especially when we consider the historical context.

Although John expressed the ability to embody numerous identities simultaneously, he explains the emotional and psychological hardships of multiple allegiances. He argued that “when I was in Uganda, I considered myself an African, it took Amin to remind me that I was an Indian again.”¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, the same participant notes a distinctive rupture in their identity and attachment to Uganda. As John reflected on submitting his official resignation letter to Ugandan government he explained that he “actually sort of remember telling them that I’m so thankful that you gave me a chance to really contribute to my country and ... when I wrote that and signed it I really, I shed a few tears because that was a break ... [pause in interview] I can never think about that without breaking, I can’t.”¹⁷⁶ His personal history revealed the direct impact of historical experience within the interview. John experienced a psychological, physical, and emotional break from their self-constructed identity of being a Ugandan. This identity, however, was later reclaimed by the interviewee when he became one of the founding members of the Canadian Ugandan Committee. As demonstrated by John’s oral testimony several other Ugandan Asian refugees struggled with the realities of possessing multiple identities.

Several interviewees argued that their personal sense of belonging within Canadian society was challenged through imposed identities. Regardless of their self-ascribed assertions of being and feeling Canadian they faced numerous questions on their ethnic and racial backgrounds. For example, Errol argued “if you answer where are you from with I’m Canadian, people ... don’t accept that as an answer, right? That unfortunately will last for the next umpteen generations ... because people associate if you are Canadian you have to be Caucasian, right? I mean that’s how it will always be because they want to know your ancestry and they want to know where you actually come from.”¹⁷⁷ Errol was barred from identifying strictly as a Canadian regardless of his

¹⁷⁴ Zaina and Altaf Sovani, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, February 16, 2015.

¹⁷⁵ John Nazareth, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, March 21, 2015.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Errol and Delphine Francis, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, April 17, 2015.

personal assertions due to the failure of Canadian society to accept his answer the question, “where are you from?” This was echoed by others including Altaf Sovani who recounted his difficulties in explaining to incoming college students who:

always think you’re from India [laughter]. They say where are you from? And I say where do you think I’m from? [laughter] they never think of me as from Africa... But for us you know you have to go back and say you know I’m from Uganda then I start explaining it to them. My thing was different, my dad was not born in India he was born in Uganda. My grandfather came from India so my dad was born in Uganda too right. So it’s a whole different stuff, we’re Ugandans. My mom was only 8 months when she came to Uganda so she wasn’t anything else except Ugandan. So it’s hard to explain right. First and foremost, we are from Uganda then you have to start telling the story.¹⁷⁸

Similar to Errol, his allegiance to a specific country it challenged by others. Although Altaf aims to describe his connection to Uganda as opposed to Canada, it is still assumed that he is originally from South Asia. These assumptions prevailed amongst other refugees. Karim recounted how new patients or those who meet him for the first time:

look at me and say so you’re from ... and I’ll say I’m Canadian. No no no but where are you from? ... I say Uganda. Oh, not India? No, I’ve never stepped foot in India ... I think what you want to hear is that my blood is East Indian. My grandfather was from India, but he moved to Uganda where my dad was born and I was born so theoretically I’m African. And then I am now in Canada and I was a refugee when I came here. So now I am by citizenship Canadian.¹⁷⁹

Regardless of how Karim expressed his historical roots in Canada and Uganda, members of Canadian society refuted his assertions of being a Ugandan and Canadian. Similar to both Errol and Altaf, imposed identities restricted their ability to express their sense of self as being Canadian who were previously Ugandan Asian refugees. Although the vast majority of oral history participants expressed a clear allegiance to Canada and strong Canadian identities, their membership within society was continuously challenged based on their physical appearance. This is manifested in the continual probing of others to satisfactorily answer the question of

¹⁷⁸ Zaina and Altaf Sovani, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, February 16, 2015.

¹⁷⁹ Karim Nanji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Toronto, April 24, 2015.

“where are you from?” However, not all refugees defined their identities based on associations to Uganda and Canada.

While many refugees commented on their connections to Uganda and Canada four particular interviewees consciously severed their connections to Uganda and argued that they were Canadians of Indian or Goan ancestry. These refugees expressed holding hyphenated identities but as Canadians of Indian origin. For example, Amin explained that “I don’t think of myself as a Canadian of Ugandan origin. I’ve never really ... because I ... have an affinity towards India because of the foundation that I’ve opened in India and plus I’ve taken the girls to India ... I don’t think of myself as a Ugandan.”¹⁸⁰ Evidently, this serves as another example of how the experiences of multiple migrations for Ugandan Asian refugees impacts the manner in which they articulate their sense of self. Their associations are blurred across both space and time as argued by historian Margaret Frenz.¹⁸¹ Given the background of being twice migrants and even though the individuals’ parents were both born in Uganda, Amin felt a direct link to India. This was repeated by Terry who exclaimed that “I generally say to people I am a Canadian of Indian origin.”¹⁸² When asked to elaborate on his answer he recounted that “one of the decisions I made early ... when I came out of Uganda I shut the door and I had no interest in the country ... It really was a great life [in Uganda], I enjoyed it ... we just had a fairytale life in Uganda. But that door is shut and I have no interest.”¹⁸³ For Terry, ‘closing the door’ to his Ugandan identity was a conscious and purposeful decision used as a means of providing closure. It allowed Terry to concentrate on starting life anew in Canada which he believed helped his brothers and other refugees to prosper in Canada.¹⁸⁴

Edmond and Maria also acknowledged their upbringing in Uganda but described themselves as Canadians of Goan ancestry. As Edmond explained, “we are proud to be of Goan ancestry and the culture is slightly different from the rest of the Indian community, we have our

¹⁸⁰ Amin Visram, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Kitchener, March 2, 2015.

¹⁸¹ Margret Frenz, “Global Goans, Migration Movements and Identity in a Historical Perspective,” *Lustopie* 15, no. 1 (2008): 185.

¹⁸² Terrence Francis, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Vancouver, July 3, 2015.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

own culture. We are Christians, that is one other major difference.”¹⁸⁵ Maria built on Edmond’s construction of identity definition and argued that “we usually say we are Goan origin. Goan and brought up in Africa, and we live most of our life in Canada, so I always say that.”¹⁸⁶ Similar to most Ugandan Asians Amin, Terry, Edmond, and Maria all expressed strong attachments to Canada but they purposefully dismissed their affiliations to Uganda. Although reasons for this disassociation varied from the psychological rupturing of identity to providing a sense of closure with President Amin’s decree, their oral histories reveal the nuanced differences between the construction of one’s sense of self. Beyond these influencers within personal identity construction, family played a critical role in aiding refugees express their links to various parts of the globe.

The centrality of family was exhibited in each oral history conducted for the dissertation research. Many participants commented on how their family was an integral part of their support structure and how East African family values were significantly stronger. For example, Nimira noted how there was a stronger sense of community in Uganda:

You felt cared for no matter what [in Uganda]. Especially, if you were aged you had respect. Everybody respected you. If you were a child everybody cared for you, it’s not like that here. Those are some of the negatives. Not big negatives but still negatives. Neighbour to neighbour. You know in East Africa we were not able to travel, none of us had cars and we lived in little villages so we didn’t always have an opportunity to get together with others from the same family or something so whoever was next to you was your brother, your neighbour was your brother.¹⁸⁷

Family played a significant role in adjusting to Canadian society as explained by Nimira but also served as a foil to how life in Canada compared to life in East Africa. Zaina reinforced the centrality of family when she explained that “my identity is not Canadian or Ugandan it really is more around that family growing up and this family being here [Canada].”¹⁸⁸ Family was directly associated with identity and was mentioned specifically by all research participants. For some, it was a marker of feeling at home, whereas for others, it was a reminder of how extended

¹⁸⁵ Edmond and Maria Rodrigues, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, May 11, 2015.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Nimira Charania, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 6, 2014.

¹⁸⁸ Zaina and Altaf Sovani, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, February 16, 2015.

kinship networks or society in Uganda was based largely on a stronger sense of family and community. Zaina's oral testimony reveals the complications of living both 'here' and remembering 'there'. For many refugees in Canada, this articulated the dynamic everyday tension between "living 'here' and remembering 'there,' between memories of places of origin and entanglements with places of residence, and between the metaphorical and the physical home."¹⁸⁹ Ultimately, many refugees identified as being and feeling Canadian for a multitude of reasons that were influenced by their historical experiences, personal affiliations, and interactions with other Canadians. One final central component within their personal identities related to a fervent ethic of volunteerism.

Within each of the oral history interviews, refugees noted an intrinsic belief and commitment to volunteering within their own local communities and religious organizations or internationally. Their desire to give back to those less fortunate was driven by their deep sense of gratitude for the efforts made by Canadians and the government. For example, Pyarali and Gulshan Nanji personally aspired to give back to Canada once their family had established themselves in Montreal and have made numerous donations to various hospitals in the Greater Toronto Area including the opening of the Gulshan and Pyarali G. Nanji Orthopaedic and Plastics Centre in 2006.¹⁹⁰ Refugees like Noordin Somji immediately began to volunteer after they were settled in Canada. He described in his autobiography that "since having settled in Canada, I decided to volunteer giving blood demonstrating generosity and sincere interest in others and received a certificate from the Red Cross signed by the Governor General of Canada for 31 donations of blood for this noble cause during 1997."¹⁹¹ Furthermore, the Honourary Consul to Uganda in Vancouver, John Halani listed several major initiatives that refugees across the country have participated in including: the Clubfoot Project founded by Dr. Shafique Pirani (a Ugandan Asian refugee) that received one million dollars in funding from CIDA and the University of British Columbia and treated over 1,500 Ugandan children for the congenital clubfoot deformity, the Maternal Mortality project which promoted training to doctors,

¹⁸⁹ Agnew, "Introduction," 4.

¹⁹⁰ Nazareth, "Celebrating Ugandans Who Have Excelled in Canada," 21.

¹⁹¹ Noordin Somji, *Memoirs and Autobiography of Noordin Somji* (Vancouver, 2006), 42. Further examples of his voluntary commitments include serving on North Vancouver District Council's Local Court of Revision Committee for twelve years, being a member of the Social Planning and Advisory Committee in North Vancouver and part of the Public Involvement Program.

midwives, and birth attendants in the Kiboga District, and the Shanti Uganda Society that collected funds to provide women's health programs in Uganda.¹⁹²

Many other refugees created international aid organizations that served to provide education to girls in rural communities in Northern India, equitable housing in India, and mobile clinics in remote areas of Uganda.¹⁹³ Additionally, interviewees noted that volunteering was an inherent component of being Canadian. Zul argued that he has been a member of the Rotary Club since 1977 and asserted that dedicating your time to others is what “makes you Canadian. It’s just all the values, and you participate in Easter Seal campaigns ... yeah, when you become part of all this you feel Canadian.”¹⁹⁴ Similar to previous statements on Canadian values, Zul felt that being Canadian naturally involved volunteering with various organizations. This complements findings from other scholars who have conducted oral histories with various immigrant communities. For example, one participant in Baukje Miedema and Evangelia Tastsoglou’s study argued that she “became a Canadian citizen by doing community work. A real Canadian citizen by doing Canadian work.”¹⁹⁵ Miedema and Tastsoglou’s article concludes that volunteering and participating in other community based organizations provide immigrants with “a safe place to explore, make friends, build networks, become politically active and learn how to navigate Canadian society.”¹⁹⁶ Various initiatives both within the country facilitated the process of making Canada a permanent home for Ugandan Asian refugees who gave back to those less fortunate for a host of personal reasons. These conceptions of Canadian values extended beyond national borders to assist other impoverished communities.

¹⁹² John Halani, “Consulate of Uganda 2012 Annual Report,” Vancouver 2012, 5-12.

¹⁹³ The following organizations were created by Ugandan Asian refugees who have been resettled in Canada which either operate in Uganda or India. Dr. Shafique Pirani in conjunction with the University of British Columbia founded the Uganda Sustainable Clubfoot Care Project (USCCP). This organization trains doctors in Uganda in the detection and management of clubfoot. For more information visit: <http://usccp.orthopaedics.med.ubc.ca/>. Amin Visram founded REACH Empowering Girls Through Education and provides underprivileged girls with housing, food, and access to health practitioners. For more information visit: <http://www.visramfoundation.com/>. Vasant Lakhani founded the Indo-Africa Charitable Society which promotes public health in rural areas of Uganda through mobile medical and dental clinics. For more information visit: <http://www.indoafricacharity.com/about/>. Azim Sarangi founded Shukhar Philanthropic Foundation in Porbandar, India to help the ultra poor upgrade their living quarters and encourage education amongst youth. For more information please visit: <https://chimp.net/charities/shukhar-philanthropic-foundation>.

¹⁹⁴ Zulfikar Devji, interviewed by S. Muhammedi, Ottawa, August 20, 2014.

¹⁹⁵ Evangelia Tastsoglou and Baukje Miedema, “‘But Where Are You From, Originally?’ Immigrant Women and Integration in the Maritimes,” *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice* 24, no. 2 (2000): 87.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 89.

International work that is based in Uganda or the Indian Subcontinent reflected the transnational links of Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada. As argued by Rina Cohen and Guida Man, these activities demonstrate how refugees simultaneously integrate to life in Canada while also “engaging in a variety of social relations in their home countries.”¹⁹⁷ Transnational volunteering activities such as Uganda Sustainable Clubfoot Care Project and REACH reinforced affiliations with Uganda and South Asia for many refugees while solidifying their Canadian citizenship as they implemented the Canadian ethic of giving back. Their motivations to aid those less fortunate was highly influenced by their identities and as a means of expressing their gratitude for being resettled in Canada. Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada transitioned to becoming active Canadian citizens through their dietary practices, commemorative events, and personal descriptions of who they are. Although migrants possess multiple identities that are consistently influx and continuously reconstructed, as well as being subjected to imposed racialized identities, Ugandan Asian refugees who participated in this study all reported that they are Canadians in every sense of the word.

Ugandan Asian refugees transitioned to becoming active Canadian citizens throughout the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Their life histories recaptured the lengthy process of integration including their interactions with Canadians over time. The vast majority of refugees documented several instances of cordial relations with Canadians who were extremely helpful, courteous, and supportive. However, these experiences did not negate racial discrimination that was expressed publicly, institutionally, and systemically through ‘Paki-baiting’, imposed identities, and employment discrimination. Several refugees noted that racism dissipated over time due to the increasing levels of diversity within Canadian society and as refugees adjusted to life in Canada. A critical step within the integration process for Ugandan Asian refugees was the creation of a formal archive and the celebration of various commemorative events. These events solidified the place of Ugandan Asian refugees within the broader Canadian historical narrative and reaffirmed their attachments to Uganda and newfound sense of being or feeling Canadian.

¹⁹⁷ Rina Cohen and Guida Man, “Introduction,” in *Engendering Transnational Voices: Studies in Family, Work, and Identity* by Guida Man and Rina Cohen (eds.), (Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2015), 3.

Refugees were encouraged by community members to give back to Uganda, while government officials continuously recognized the numerous contributions and citizen activism amongst community members. This reinforced the conclusions of Tara Gilkinson and Genevieve Sauve, who argued that “the continued recognition of citizenship as the ultimate goal of the Government of Canada’s Immigration Program plays a critical role in fostering a shared national identity and a sense of belonging for immigrants.”¹⁹⁸ These efforts by the Canadian government were exemplified by the statements from officials such as the Minister for Citizenship and Immigration, the Minister of Heritage Canada, and even the Prime Minister of Canada. Additionally, these commemorative events also marked their inclusion within the broader Ugandan diaspora marked by the diverse membership of the Uganda50Toronto committee.

Refugees held multiple affiliations as evidenced by their creation of transnational cookbooks and personal expressions of identity. Adjusting to Canadian dietary practices and lack of spices embodied one aspect of adapting to life in Canada. As refugees navigated various consumption practices in Canada they invented new recipes that reflected their historical roots in the Indian Subcontinent and in East Africa. Certain dishes evoked strong memories of life ‘back home’ and provided a source of comfort to refugees as they continued to adapt to Canadian society. Their culinary practices reflected a single aspect within the process of personal identity construction. As refugees reflected on their sense of self, each interviewee expressly asserted an affiliation to Canada. Although this affirmation of Canadian identity was challenged by society, refugees continuously contended that they were in fact Canadians. Imperative within this process, was the importance of time in Canada. As refugees continued to establish themselves in Canada, they expressed that over time they became Canadians. Due to their ethnic heritage many refugees expressed difficulties in explaining to others their multiple affiliations to Uganda whereas others purposefully disassociated themselves of East Africa. This demonstrated the continued pain of remembrance for some refugees who experienced a psychological rupturing of identities due to President Amin’s expulsion decree.

¹⁹⁸ Tara Gilkinson and Genevieve Sauve, *Recent Immigrants, Earlier Immigrants and the Canadian Born: Association with Collective Identities* (Ottawa: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2010), 22.

The oral histories of Ugandan Asian refugees captured the significance of history within the processes of personal identity construction. Continued reformulation of one's sense of self is informed by their initial migration from the Indian subcontinent, establishment in Uganda, and final resettlement in Canada. As the first major non-European refugee community to arrive in Canada, Ugandan Asian refugees define themselves as Canadians who continue to express their gratitude to the government and the public for their generosity in accepting them and their families. Although integration is an enduring process that requires efforts from both newcomers and the host community, the Ugandan Asian case study in Canada continues to be regarded as a successful example of refugee resettlement by the government, the public, and the Ugandan Asian refugee community. As the future generation of Ugandan Asian refugees continue to raise their families in Canada, it is imperative that the historical record reflect the diversity of Canadian peoples. It is at this juncture that we can begin to comprehend the numerous ways that Ugandan Asian refugees have become full-fledged Canadians.

Conclusion:

Gifts that Keep on Giving: Ugandan Asian Canadians in the 21st Century

The expulsion of Ugandan Asians in August of 1972 led to the forced migration of thousands of people from East Africa to various parts of the globe. According to President and Military General Idi Amin, Ugandan Asians were Britain's problem as he aimed to restore the control of the economy back into the hands of Ugandan Africans. Unfortunately, his dream never came to fruition as he privileged the recruitment of those from the Kakwa and South Sudanese tribes in military and economic positions. His government also condoned an atmosphere of mass killing which witnessed deaths between the ranges of three to five hundred thousand Ugandan Africans. Uganda descended into an economic recession that would require decades of reconstruction to restore. Under the guise of African nationalism and post-colonial rhetoric, Amin justified his decision to remove all Ugandans of South Asian descent. Canada admitted nearly 8,000 Ugandan Asian refugees in the early 1970s, the largest resettlement of non-white and predominantly non-Christians before the creation of formal refugee policy. Through coordinated efforts between multiple government departments, voluntary agencies, and Canadians, Ugandan Asian refugees were offered various levels of social support. Collaboration between refugee community members and the public led to the successful resettlement of Ugandan Asians. Although they faced various barriers as they confronted gatekeepers of integration, Ugandan Asian refugees who participated in the study firmly identified themselves as Canadians.

As self-defined Canadians, Ugandan Asian refugees have claimed their place within the broader Canadian historical narrative. Their personal commitments to contributing to society in various fields from business and politics, to education and medicine, consistently reinforced their attachments to Canada. These acts coincided with transnational commitments to founding charity organizations that provided education for girls in rural India, safe and clean sanitary facilities in remote regions of India and Uganda, as well as mobile clinics and the training of medical professions throughout Uganda to provide improved access to healthcare and reduce instances of

clubfoot throughout the country.¹ In order to reaffirm their position within Canada, the Ugandan Asian refugee community has dedicated themselves to various endeavours that embody their sense of Canadian identity. Cookbooks, memoirs, commemorative events, and the Ugandan Asian Archives are all manifestations of the multiple affiliations that these ‘new’ Canadians hold. They are situated within a complex web of attachments to Canada, Uganda, and South Asia that are contested and continuously recreated but all conform to the imagined community of the Canadian citizenry.

The four central arguments presented throughout the dissertation demonstrate the significance of history as opposed to biology in the formation of personal identities. Comprehending the rich historical experiences of Ugandan Asian refugees provides the necessary context for our understanding of their multiple affiliations and sense of self. Their initial exposure to the humanitarian spirit of Canadians contrasted with instances of racial prejudice. These interactions produced inclusive or exclusive pathways to belonging, however, for the majority of those interviewed, racial intolerance was a product of the historical period that dissipated over time. Continued efforts from both Ugandan Asian refugees and Canadians led to a strong sense of feeling Canadian according to interview participants. This Ugandan Asian case study confirms the realities of integration being a two-way process requiring commitments from the host community and newcomers. Additionally, decisions to admit specific groups of refugees within Canada are positioned within the duality of opportunism and humanitarianism. As Canada’s refugee policy is determined at the federal level, politicians and government officials base commitments to resettlement on concerns for international human rights, cosmopolitanism, and civic duty in juxtaposition to securitization, citizen rights, and economics. The Ugandan Asian case study is no exception to the complexity of motivating factors within Canadian refugee policy.

¹ The following organizations were created by Ugandan Asian refugees who have been resettled in Canada which either operate in Uganda or India. Dr. Shafique Pirani in conjunction with the University of British Columbia founded the Uganda Sustainable Clubfoot Care Project (USCCP). This organization trains doctors in Uganda in the detection and management of clubfoot. For more information visit: <http://usccp.orthopaedics.med.ubc.ca/>. Amin Visram founded REACH Empowering Girls Through Education and provides underprivileged girls with housing, food, and access to health practitioners. For more information visit: <http://www.visramfoundation.com/>. Vasant Lakhani founded the Indo-Africa Charitable Society which promotes public health in rural areas of Uganda through mobile medical and dental clinics. For more information visit: <http://www.indoafricacharity.com/about/>.

Chapter one provided a detailed account on the trajectories of migration from the Indian sub-continent to East Africa. Trade networks spanned the Indian Ocean preceding European expansion into East Africa dating as far back as before the common era. The majority of migration that led to increasing populations of South Asians in East Africa coincided with British imperialism. Migrants consisted of various peoples including traders, money-lenders, merchants, civil servants, tailors, and indentured labourers. Although there was a long history of trading networks between both areas, the migration of labourers, merchants, and civil servants dominated popular perceptions of Asians living in Uganda. With the successful establishment of the colonial sandwich in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, South Asians were labeled as colonial collaborators by several politicians in the region as well as those who fought for independence. These race and class based hierarchies were not impermeable structures. Many Ugandan Asians sympathized with African nationalists which culminated in the creation of Uganda Action Group that sought to establish an inclusive approach to politics once Uganda had attained independence. High levels of philanthropy amongst Ugandan Asians refuted misconceptions of the community being strictly concerned about affairs ‘back home’ in India. Academic studies also articulated the transition of migrants to viewing themselves as members of the East African community.

Over seventy percent of those interviewed before the expulsion decree argued that they preferred to remain in Uganda as opposed to returning to the Indian sub-continent later in life.² Works by several Ugandan Asian novelists reaffirm these allegiances to Uganda. They provide detailed accounts of sincere emotional pain for Ugandan Asian expellees upon being forcibly removed from their homelands. Oral histories provided a complex understanding of the rigidities of the colonial sandwich. For some interviewees their friends and family made efforts to become integrated members within Ugandan society whereas others distanced themselves from the greater population through self-segregation and being prejudiced towards Ugandan Africans. President Amin rose to power amidst increasing antagonism targeted at the Asian population in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. Both Kenya and Tanzania addressed the ‘Asian problem’ with various nationalization programs and policies to restore the economy back into the hands of citizens. Once Idi Amin had effectively seized power during a bloodless coup, he sought to

² Bert N. Adams, “The Kin Network and the Adjustment of the Ugandan Asians,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 36, no. 1 (1974), 193.

implement his solution to the 'Asian problem' by removing all Ugandans of South Asian descent from the country within ninety days.

The subsequent chapter explored the realities of the expulsion decree. Initially, the president's declaration called for the expulsion of all those who had failed to attain Ugandan citizenship; but within a matter of weeks was extended to include all those of South Asian descent. There were also notable exemptions for those who were considered to be critical to society including various professionals such as doctors, lawyers, and teachers. However, the methods for verifying one's citizenship or attaining an exemption were embodied within an arbitrary process. Ugandan officials confiscated valid documents or declared birth certificates to be forgeries during the verification process. Harnessing the popular misconceptions of Ugandan Asians being brown colonialists, the media published articles that emphasized the 'trickery' employed by Asians to move their assets outside of the country. President Amin charged the Asian community with sabotaging Uganda's economy and a failure to integrate socially with African Ugandans. Capitalizing on increasing resentment towards the Asian community as brown colonialists, the Ugandan government did not rescind their expulsion order. Consequently, local East African governments deplored Amin's decree but did not offer asylum to any Ugandan Asians. Leaders such as the president of Tanzania argued that Uganda was clearly promoting a racist policy while other international heads of state criticized Britain for failing to protect and admit their own citizens. Officials in Uganda were quick to rebuke Britain's request to repeal the decree as hypocritical based on Britain reluctance to readily admit British passport holders. The British government dismissed the expulsion order as a violation of international human rights and cut all foreign aid to Uganda. They also appealed to the Commonwealth for assistance in resettling Ugandan Asians due to heightened levels of unrest amongst citizens over increased levels of migration from former colonies.

Ugandans largely applauded the decree since, they felt it was high time the Asians were forced to flee the country after exploiting Ugandan Africans and failing to invest their profits back into the development of the country. This demonstrated the vilification of Ugandan Asians as the economic and social oppressors of indigenous Ugandans as opposed to British imperialists. Oral histories combined with the protests held by the National Union of Students of

Uganda complicated the realities of the outright support from all Ugandan Africans of the expulsion order. The NUSU argued that the expulsion was racially motivated and served to create African capitalists known as 'black Asians' to replace the Ugandan Asian business owners and operators. The vast majority of refugees believed the decree was a cruel joke. Interviewees argued that President Amin could not order for the expulsion of the entire commercial class and that it would soon be dismissed. After the final announcement in September that all Ugandan Asians had to leave, interviewees noted a genuine sense of fear and anxiety. With enforced curfews and increased harassment at military checkpoints across the country, particularly en route to Entebbe international airport, expellees realized that their time in Uganda was limited. Under these increasingly dire circumstances Canada answered Britain's call to aid Ugandan Asian expellees. The decision was predicated on a host of factors that included the ability for Ugandan Asians to contribute to the Canadian economy, supporting the Commonwealth, prior knowledge that they would be industrious based on reports from the British government on the arrival of Kenyan Asians, awareness that the vast majority were apt entrepreneurs, highly educated, and highly skilled professionals, responding to the Aga Khan's request for assistance, as well as a sense of humanitarianism, and a lack of national security threats as refugees were fleeing an oppressive authoritarian regime.

Upon attaining cabinet approval in mid-August, Canada sent a team of immigration officials to screen Ugandan Asian refugees. Chapter three covered the 90-day expulsion period in-depth from the perspective of immigration officials and Ugandan Asian refugees. The office opened at the beginning of September and received the bulk of initial applications within the first week. This greatly benefited the staff as they could be reassured that many applicants were honest in their applications since many were unaware of the particular requirements visa officers were looking for. Once expellees had passed the interviews and medical examinations they were issued Canadian visas and were prompted to leave as soon as possible. As some delayed their departures in hopes of President Amin altering his decision or were unable to reach Kampala in time, international organizations ensured that every Ugandan Asian was out of the country by the expulsion deadline. The UNHCR partnered with ICEM and ICRC to distribute valid travel documents to ensure that expellees were able to gain passage to various transit centres and refugee camps around the world. The 90-day period was one of considerable hardship amongst

Ugandan Asians. Although scholars have refuted the levels of widespread harassment by ‘Amin’s goons,’ several oral history participants dismissed the claims that rumour within the community spurred false claims of verbal and physical abuse. The majority of interviewees described specific instances of harassment as they sought to flee the country which included abuse at checkpoints and at the Entebbe international airport. Once Ugandan Asians had safely departed the country they entered Canada during a period of high unemployment, an impending federal election, and Canada’s victory over the Soviet Union in the Summit Series hockey match.

Canadians held mixed views on the admission of Ugandan Asian refugees. Concerns revolved around similar anxieties related to the arrival of immigrants and refugees in the postwar era pertaining to unemployment, fears over refugees becoming public charges, and arguments that charity begins at home. These criticisms were situated within the beginning of a new era of Canadian immigration policy ushered in by the official deracialization of legislation, the implementation of the points system, and the announcement of multiculturalism policy in 1971. Under these shifts in the demographic of Canada, political leaders argued that refugees would be willing to work in positions that Canadians refused and that they would not cluster in particular regions of the country. Additionally, the Prime Minister and his Minister for Manpower and Immigration continuously reaffirmed that it was our civic duty as Canadians to provide asylum to those in need, arguing that it was simply the Canadian thing to do. Under these circumstances, expellees would be relocated across the country.

Canada opened its doors to over 7,000 Ugandan Asian refugees between 1972 and 1974. Those who were issued visas in Kampala and boarded Canadian charter aircraft flights, flew to Montreal and were given accommodations, food, and other provisions at the military base in Longue Pointe. The host of services provided at Longue Pointe set the tone for how refugees would be welcomed throughout Canada. Several refugees received winter clothing alongside advice on where best to settle in Canada based on their professional experience or if they had family that already lived in a specific city. An essential step in the overall success of the resettlement pertained to the twelve Uganda Asian Committees that were established across the country. The combined government and voluntary efforts created a physical site that encouraged ordinary Canadians to spend time with refugees and offer various forms of assistance.

Government reports concluded that these settlement committees were fundamental in facilitating the resettlement of Ugandan Asian refugees. Although they were fully functional for only the six months of arrival and were not running while many other refugees arrived from transit centres and refugee camps, they provided the roots for adaptation and adjustment amongst refugees. These reports argued that these collaborations in conjunction with the resiliency of the Ugandan Asian refugee community led to the rapid integration of refugees within Canadian society.

Interviews with Ugandan Asian refugees complicated the conclusions presented by government documents that paint a positivist picture of the resettlement. Oral history participants problematized conclusions citing high rates of employment amongst refugees providing numerous examples of downward labour market integration. Studies done at the time and oral history testimonies identify employment discrimination as the primary reason behind refugees attaining employment that was not reflective of their expertise. Refugees were willing to accept poor working conditions as they continued to provide for family members and to amass sufficient capital in order to sponsor friends and relatives that remained in refugee camps. Visa officers were instructed to prioritize family sponsorship within refugee camps leading to only 298 successful independent applicants who were required to meet selection criteria. As the formal operations concluded various reports were submitted to the government alongside other media reports and studies which accused the federal government of selecting the cream of the crop. Chapter four identified the manner in which a universalist policy was applied when screening applicants with those who met selection criteria in the early weeks of operations and those who were stateless receiving beneficial treatment. Although Canada did receive disproportionate numbers of professionals, youth, and skilled entrepreneurs this was a product of the nature of those who were rendered stateless or who met the point system. As argued in the previous chapters, the motivations for Canada's decision to admit refugees was multifaceted; however, the manner in which legislation was applied on the ground adhered to a universalist policy. There were instances when regulations were applied in an *ad hoc* manner based on the discretionary authority of visa officers but they did not seek to privilege certain religious or ethnic groups over others.

Given the historical context of their initial years in Canada, Ugandan Asian refugees transitioned to becoming active Canadian citizens. Adapting to life in Canada in the early 1970s was particularly difficult for several oral history participants. As Canada's demographic lacked ethnic diversity, several oral testimonies documented instances of racial prejudice in Canada. Interviewees noted that these issues dissipated over time with the arrival of new waves of immigrants who enriched Canada's multicultural landscape. These experiences coincided with the prevalence of 'Paki baiting' and the imposition of identities by Canadians that labelled all refugees as South Asians. Oral histories identified how racial antagonism was not a linear process that was equally expressed or interpreted as racial discrimination by refugees. Over the following forty years refugees purposefully reasserted their position within Canadian history through various commemorative events and the establishment of the Ugandan Asian Archive at Carleton University. These events functioned as opportunities to express their gratitude to the Canadian government but also served to emphasize the enumerable contributions of that Ugandan Asians have made to Canadian society. Prominent guests including members of parliament, senators, and Ministers for Immigration reiterated the importance of interculturalism and situating the experiences of Ugandan Asians within the broader historical narrative.

As refugees solidified their place within history, all of those interviewed expressed a strong sense of attachment to Canada. Although refugees possessed multiple and hyphenated identities, including Ugandan Canadian, South Asian-Canadian, Goan-Canadian, and Ismaili-Canadian, every oral history participant identified themselves as Canadians. These definitions of their sense of self directly correlated to their historical experiences. Their affiliations to Uganda and the Indian sub-continent were fraught with the impacts of the expulsion decree and the rupturing of their identities for some refugees whereas others embraced all facets of their respective roots in all three regions. Ultimately, Ugandan Asian refugees in Canada have transitioned to become active Canadian citizens through their dietary practices, commemorative events, and personal descriptions of who they are. As the community approaches the forty-fifth anniversary of their arrival it is imperative to acknowledge their allegiances and historical roots within the country as their children come of age in Canada.

Marking their forty-fifth anniversary in the fall of 2017, Ugandan Asian refugees continue to share their oral histories with the Ugandan Asian Archives at Carleton University with the hopes of preserving their lived experiences for future generations. As I have continued to work closely with the community a direct emphasis has been placed capturing these experiences to inform their children and grandchildren of their historical roots in both East Africa and South Asia. First, second, and third generation Ugandan Asian refugees are currently investing their time and energy into understanding their own histories of migration. Many youth have been fraught with navigating multiple identities as visible minorities who face consistent challenges to their identities. Canada continues to critically examine multiculturalism policy and its utility in establishing an inclusive Canadian society. For second generation youth - the children of immigrants - their largest impediment to senses of belonging in North America is racial minority status.³

The issue for visible minority second-generation immigrants is that “they may feel Canadian, but nonetheless experience racism and prejudice that situate them as outsiders ... the pressures to assimilate and ‘belong’ can result in denying aspects of one’s own culture, feeling inferior, and internalizing the dominant ideology.”⁴ This becomes highly problematic for members of the second-generation who have greater contact with Canadian society. This has important psychological consequences as higher levels of social integration with Canadian society may lead to negative effects on wellbeing.⁵ In several studies, second-generation

³ Caroline L. Faulkner, *Economic Mobility and Cultural Assimilation among Children of Immigrants* (Texas: LFB Scholarly Publications, 2011); David Chariandy, “‘The Fiction of Belonging’: On Second-Generation Black Writing in Canada,” *Callaloo* 30, no. 3 (2007): 818–29; Dwaine Plaza, “The Construction of a Segmented Hybrid Identity Among One-and-a-Half-Generation and Second-Generation Indo-Caribbean and African Caribbean Canadians,” *Identity* 6, no. 3 (2006): 207–29; Jeffrey Reitz and Ye Zhang, “National and Urban Contexts for the Integration of the Immigrant Second Generation in the United States and Canada” in Richard Alba and Mary C Waters, *The Next Generation: Immigrant Youth in a Comparative Perspective* (New York: New York University, 2011); Pauline Beharry and Sharon Crozier, “Using Phenomenology to Understand Experiences of Racism for Second-Generation South Asian Women,” *Canadian Journal of Counselling* 42, no. 4 (October 2008): 262–77; Philip Kasinitz, John H. Mollenkopf, and Mary C. Waters, eds., *Becoming New Yorkers: Ethnographies of the New Second Generation* (New York: Russell Sage, 2004); Mona Abouguendia and Kimberly A. Noels, “General and Acculturation-Related Daily Hassles and Psychological Adjustment in First- and Second-Generation South Asian Immigrants to Canada,” *International Journal of Psychology* 36, no. 3 (2001): 163–73; Susan S. Chuang and Robert P. Moreno, eds., *Immigrant Children: Change, Adaptation, and Cultural Transformation* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011).

⁴ Pauline Beharry and Sharon Crozier, “Using Phenomenology to Understand Experiences of Racism for Second-Generation South Asian Women,” *Canadian Journal of Counselling* 42, no. 4 (October 2008): 263–264.

⁵ Mirella L. Stroink and Richard N. Lalonde, “Bicultural Identity Conflict in Second-Generation Asian Canadians,” *The Journal of Social Psychology* 149, no. 1 (2009): 44–65; Abouguendia and Noels, “General and Acculturation-

immigrants felt as if they would never be regarded as ‘true’ Canadians regardless of where they were born and the number of years they have spent in Canada.⁶ These issues are pertinent within the Ugandan Asian refugee community as their children and grandchildren continue to fight to be recognized as Canadians. The dissertation project presents a point of departure for the second generation by including the histories of their parents and grandparents to reassert their linkages to Canadian history. Most importantly, it provides a scholarly piece of work that situates their roots within our nation’s history. Additionally, the dissertation refutes the practice of ignoring the shared humanity of refugees and Canadians which has been marred by recent policy changes that criminalize refugees.

Over the past two decades, a considerable shift has taken place regarding the Canadian government’s attitude towards immigrants and refugees. Particularly during the previous Conservative government, barriers to refugee resettlement and restrictive policies regarding citizenship have increased dramatically.⁷ These major shifts are embodied in two recent developments in public policy through *Bill C-24* and *C-31*. *Bill C-24* creates a two-tiered system for refugee protection in Canada as those who hail from a ‘safe’ country are held to different standards within the refugee determination system. These individuals are particularly more vulnerable to exploitation based on political considerations as the minister for Citizenship and Immigration holds the power to determine which countries are deemed ‘safe’. In these instances, expert oversight is eliminated from the refugee determination process as a means of expediting the claims process. Therefore, those deemed to be arriving from a ‘safe’ country are not entitled to “a full, fair and independent decision process to decide who is a refugee, based on the facts of their case and regardless of their countries of origin.”⁸ Furthermore, there are tighter time lines as to when asylum seekers must present themselves in front of Canadian courts as well as

Related Daily Hassles and Psychological Adjustment in First- and Second-Generation South Asian Immigrants to Canada”.

⁶ Caroline B. Brettell and Faith Nibbs, “Lived Hybridity: Second-Generation Identity Construction Through College Festival,” *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 16, no. 6 (2009): 678–99; Plaza, “The Construction of a Segmented Hybrid Identity Among One-and-a-Half-Generation and Second-Generation Indo-Caribbean and African Caribbean Canadians,”; Chariandy, “The Fiction of Belonging”; Beharry and Crozier, “Using Phenomenology to Understand Experiences of Racism for Second-Generation South Asian Women,”; Abouguendia and Noels, “General and Acculturation-Related Daily Hassles and Psychological Adjustment in First- and Second-Generation South Asian Immigrants to Canada”.

⁷ Anderson, *Canadian Liberalism and the Politics of Border Control, 1867-1967*.

⁸ “Canada Rolls Back Refugee Protection: Bill C-31 Receives Royal Assent,” *Canadian Council for Refugees*, June 29, 2012, <http://ccrweb.ca/en/bulletin/12/06/29>.

mandatory detention for anyone that enters Canada as an “irregular arrival.”⁹ This creates a dangerous association between asylum seekers and criminals, which ultimately exacerbates the vilification of refugees.

Bill C-24 has created problematic associations regarding Canadian citizenship. These adjustments create two classes of citizenship. Those who solely possess Canadian citizenship and are ineligible for citizenship elsewhere represent the former, where as those who are dual-citizens or who are eligible for citizenship elsewhere reflect the latter category. Under *Bill C-24* a citizenship officer has the jurisdiction to revoke one’s citizenship under various circumstances including suspicions of treason or if they reasonably believe that an individual does not intend to live in Canada. Additionally, there is no opportunity for a formal hearing or an appeal if an officer revokes an individual’s citizenship. Furthermore, *Bill C-24* violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and was vehemently denounced by the B.C. Civil Liberties Association and the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers who describe the bill as “anti-immigrant, anti-Canadian, anti-democratic, and unconstitutional.”¹⁰ Although there have been several challenges to *Bill C-24*, promises to remove the entirety of the bill have not materialized under the current Liberal government. Both *Bill C-24* and *C-31* promote the ideology that “citizenship is not a right, it’s a privilege” as articulated by former Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Chris Alexander.¹¹ This coincided with the historically famous sentiment asserted by Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King in 1947: “It is not a ‘fundamental human right’ of any alien to enter Canada. It is a privilege.”¹² As immigration scholars have noted, this directly embodies Canada’s prejudiced and discriminatory immigration policy in the postwar period.¹³ In current political discourse we have witnessed a return to these perceptions and

⁹ Canada Rolls Back Refugee Protection: Bill C-31 Receives Royal Assent,” *Canadian Council for Refugees*, June 29, 2012, <http://ccrweb.ca/en/bulletin/12/06/29>.

¹⁰ Debra Black, “Legal Advocacy Groups Launch Constitutional Challenge Thursday, Arguing Bill C-24 Creates Discriminatory ‘Two-tier Citizenship Regime’,” *The Toronto Star*, August 20, 2015, <http://www.thestar.com/news/immigration/2015/08/20/court-challenge-slams-new-citizenship-act-as-anti-canadian.html>.

¹¹ Somayeh Bahrami, “Critical Review of the New Canadian Citizenship Law Bill C-24,” University, *Simon Fraser University*, (2014), <http://www.sfu.ca/education/cels/bilingual/bilingual-corner/bill-c-24.html>.

¹² *House of Commons Debates*, May 1, 1947, (William Lyon Mackenzie King) pp. 2644-6.

¹³ Ninette Kelley and M. J. Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010); Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-2006*, (Toronto: Dundurn, 2007); Freda Hawkins, *Canada and Immigration: Public Policy and Public Concern* (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1988); Yasmeen Abu-Laban,

attitudes towards Canadian immigration and refugee policy. Although the recently elected Liberal government has made several changes to legislation, there still remain problematic associations between refugees and concerns over national security and non-citizen rights.

Amidst the current global refugee crisis and the recent arrival of Syrian refugees it is vital for Canadians and policy makers to comprehend the dynamic ways in which past refugees have contributed to Canadian society. When given appropriate support from not only the government but the Canadian community as a whole refugees transition to becoming active Canadian citizens. The case study of Ugandan Asian refugees serves as a means of enlightening public and government perceptions of refugees. It fosters further knowledge on the impacts of public policy on refugee communities in the twenty-first century. With the unfortunate increase in global warfare, climate change, and global inequalities of wealth, the numbers of displaced people will undoubtedly continue to rise. Under these circumstances, we as Canadians, should be reminded that all refugee communities have the potential to be gifts that enrich our country's pluralistic nature.

“Welcome/stay out: The Contradiction of Canadian Integration and Immigration Policies at the Millennium,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies / Études Éthniques Au Canada* 30, no. 3 (1998): 191.

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Appendices

Appendix A



**Western
Research**

Research Ethics

Use of Human Participants - Initial Ethics Approval Notice

Principal Investigator: Dr. Stephanie Bangarth
File Number: 105066
Review Level: Delegated
Protocol Title: 'Gifts from Amin': The Resettlement, Integration, and Identity of Ugandan Asian Refugees and their Children in Canada
Department & Institution: Social Science\History, King's University College
Sponsor:
Ethics Approval Date: April 21, 2014 **Expiry Date:** September 30, 2016

Documents Reviewed & Approved & Documents Received for Information:

Document Name	Comments	Version Date
Recruitment Items		2014/04/15
Other		2014/04/15
Revised Letter of Information & Consent		2014/04/15
Other		2014/04/15
Recruitment Items		2014/04/15
Other		2014/04/15
Response to Board Recommendations	List of changes made after initial ethics review	2014/04/15

This is to notify you that The University of Western Ontario Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects (NMREB) which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the approval date noted above.

This approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the NMREB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

Members of the NMREB who are named as investigators in research studies, or declare a conflict of interest, do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on, such studies when they are presented to the NMREB.

The Chair of the NMREB is Dr. Riley Hinson. The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

List of Interview Questions:

This is a list of the prominent questions that I shall be asking. However, as indicated below, the open-ended questions are intended to elicit more questions as the conversation progresses, and the nature of these subsidiary questions will be determined by the answers provided by the subjects.

Closed Ended Questions for Ugandan Asian Refugees:

1. In what year did you leave Uganda?
2. Did you come directly to Canada from Kampala or did you first reside at a temporary refugee camp before coming to Canada?

Open-ended Questions for Ugandan Asian Refugees:

1. Tell me your story about how you ended up in Canada ... This question is intended to initiate a conversation about the personal migration experiences of the individual subject. It is intended to illicit more questions based on the types of answers that are provided. Ultimately, this will be a conversation based on/ guided by the narratives that the interview subject choses to tell. Some other questions might be: what are your favorite memories of living in Uganda – what do you remember the most? If you have a child (dren), what are some of the memories that you would like to pass on to your children?
2. Tell me about some of your life experiences in Canada
 - a. What are some of your daily activities?
 - b. Are you currently working? If so, in what field?
 - c. What are the highlights of your job?
3. How has resettling in Canada changed your life?
 - a. How have your experiences of integration and resettlement in Canada been?
 - b. What are some of your fondest memories of living in Canada?
 - c. Do you identify with being Canadian?
 - d. What does it mean to be Canadian to you?
 - e. How have you negotiated your attachments to Uganda and South Asia?
 - f. Has any form of religion played a significant role in your identity construction?
 - g. Do you feel integrated in Canadian society?
 - h. Do you feel that your child(ren) are integrated in Canadian society?
4. Have you gone back to Uganda since you resettled in Canada? If so, how was your experience there?
5. How do you feel about Uganda now?
 - a. How do you feel about the services that the Canadian government provided when resettling?

Appendix B



Image courtesy of John Nazareth editor of *Kampala Goan Institute 100th Anniversary*, June 2010, 34.

Appendix C

Religious Affiliation

Religious Affiliation	Number of Interviewees
Ismaili Muslim	35
Goan Christian	9
Hindu	4
Other Denominations of Islam	1
Total	49

Gender

Gender	Number of Interviewees
Male	31
Female	18
Total	49

Age Upon Arrival

Ages Upon Arrival	Number of Interviewees
5 - 15	9
16 - 25	30
26 - 35	6
36 - 45	4
46 and over	0
Total	49

Curriculum Vitae

Name: Shezan Muhammedi

Post-secondary Education and Degrees:

The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada
2012-2017 Ph.D. (History, Migration and Ethnic Relations)

The University of Western Ontario
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2011-2012 M.A. (History, Migration and Ethnic Relations)

Queen's University
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2007-2011 B.A. (History)

Honours and Awards:

Lynne-Lionel Scott Fellowship
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Province of Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS)
2014-2015, 2015-2016

Related Work Experience

Research Advisor and Oral Historian
Ugandan Asian Archives, Carleton University
2014-present

Sessional Lecturer
King's University College (The University of Western Ontario)
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Teaching Assistant
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Publications:

Turkel, William J., Shezan Muhammedi & Mary Beth Start. "Grounding Digital History in the History of Computing." *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing*. April-June 2014.

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