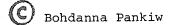Parental Responses to Ethnic Name-Calling:
An Exploratory Study

by

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A thesis
presented to the University of Manitoba
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Interdisciplinary

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Canada

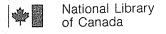PARENTAL RESPONSES TO ETHNIC NAME-CALLING:
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

BY

BOHDANNA PANKIW

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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MASTER OF ARTS

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ABSTRACT

Although ethnophaulism or ethnic name-calling is not new, very little systematic research has been done on the various aspects of the phenomenon. The focus of this study was on responses to ethnophaulism. The goal was to discover, by means of qualitative research techniques, what parents have actually done by way of instructing, guiding, and assisting their children in the matter of responding to, or coping with ethnic derogation. The work includes a review of microsociological and macrosociological interpretations of ethnophaulism derived from research in sociolinguistics, social psychology, psychology, and ethnic relations in Canada. The theory indicates that at the level of the individual, reliance on ethnophaulisms may reflect incomplete cognitive development; while at the societal level, ethnophaulisms seem to serve in the maintenance of unequal group relations within pluralities.

The sample in this inquiry consisted of members of visible minorities (indigenous and immigrant) residing in Winnipeg whose children had complained about ethnic name-calling when in grade six or lower. Thirty-nine informants, reached via the snowball sampling technique, participated in interviews of one to four hours in duration. The resulting data base contained considerably more grounded information on responses to ethnophaulism than had previously been available on the subject. Eighteen different responses and coping strategies were revealed by informants. The vast majority had advised their children to try a variety of passive and active types of responses. More than half had intervened with some type of incident related action. In addition, most reported having employed various child rearing strategies designed to prepare their children for coping with ethnophaulism and other forms of discrimination, over the long term. Parents observed that this practice seemed to occur most frequently from preschool through grade three, and then again, at the junior high level. Informants also revealed that ethnic derogation is not only a childhood experience, nor is it confined to the school environment. The majority believed that it is an important problem because of its potential to undermine self-esteem.

This inquiry revealed a need for more research on all aspects of ethnophaulism, including stereotypy, especially in its role of social force. More investigation is required on the problem of racial tensions in our schools. As well, the findings of this study call for further examination by means of quantitative research techniques.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Incident

Once riding in old Baltimore,
 Heart-filled, head-filled with glee,
I saw a Baltimorean
 Keep looking straight at me.

Now I was eight and very small,
 And he was no whit bigger,
And so I smiled, but he poked out
 His tongue, and called me, "Nigger".

I saw the whole of Baltimore
 From May until December;
Of all the things that happened there
 That's all that I remember.

                              Countee Cullen
                                      1925

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Ethnic name-calling is a violation of human dignity. It is a form of discrimination aimed at debasing an individual because of national or ethnic origins, colour, or religion. As an attack on an individual's identity, it can have an effect on that person's self-esteem. This is particularly the case when name-calling is aimed at children. As Cooley (1902) and others have stated, definitions from significant others play a part in the development of self-concept and eventually self-esteem. Hence, the manner in which such incidents are handled by parents and how they are interpreted by or to the child becomes an important aspect of socialization. As such the topic warrants some social scientific investigation, if only at the exploratory level.

This work presents the findings of an exploratory study, using the qualitative method, into the variety of responses parents have recommended that their children take when faced with the problem of ethnic derogation. Specifically, the aims of this inquiry have been to discover:

(a) the types of responses parents recommended their children make to ethnophaulism;

(b) the actions, if any, taken by parents on behalf of their children in such situations;

(c) the interpretations or meaning parents attach to ethnic

name-calling;

(d) the significance or importance of ethnophaulism for individual

development from a parental perspective.

Although a great deal of research has been done on the presence of

racist attitudes and behaviours among children, very little research has

been done on the problem of ethnophaulism, particularly in this country.

This inquiry involved library research for information pertaining to

ethnophaulism, the development and display of racist attitudes among

children, relevant literature on symbolic interaction from the field of

social psychology, and a review of Canadian social history from the

perspective of ethnicity and racism. This work presents, therefore, the

results of library research in combination with the findings of field-

work investigation.

The primary source of data in the fieldwork investigation were

parents whose children had complained about ethnic name-calling when in

elementary school. Most of the informants had children currently

attending elementary school, although a small number had children who

were beyond this age group, but who had experienced the problem when

they were under the age of ten or eleven. Since the aim of this inquiry

was to discover what parents had actually done when the problem was

reported to them, it made no difference to the study, whether the

children were presently in grade school. The elementary level was cho-

sen primarily because it was assumed that children within this age range

would be more likely than older children to seek parental guidance in the matter. As it turned out, this assumption proved to be correct. Teenage children in the families of informants admitted to the researcher that they had not reported incidents of ethnic name-calling to their parents after they reached junior high school, or had done so long after the fact.

Ethnophaulism is a problem of ethnic relations, and more specifically, a matter of ethnic discrimination. Therefore the target population for the study was chosen on the basis of respondent's self-identification with a particular ethnic group. The variety of ethnic groups participating in the life of this city is considerable, and this posed a problem in the matter of deciding which groups should be engaged in the research. This problem was resolved on the basis of reviewing the history of ethnic relations in Canada, which indicated that the visible minority category appeared to have been singled out for the most prolonged and sometimes most intense discrimination when compared to the non-visible ethnic groups. The category, visible minorities, normally includes groups of mainly non-European origin such as the Canadian Native population, the Metis, and Caribbean-, African-, and Asian-Canadians. The choice of this category for this inquiry, is not meant to suggest that only members of visible minorities have experienced this kind of verbal abuse. As members of many non-visible minorities in Canada know only too well, that now as well as in the past, they too have been the targets of ethnophaulism, as well as of other forms of discrimination. What is interesting, however, is the

persistence of overt discrimination against members of visible minorities as compared to the gradual lessening of such discrimination against derogated ethnic groups of European origin.

Informants for this inquiry were reached by way of the "snowball technique" in which participants presented the researcher with the names of potential informants. The sample, therefore, is not random.

Chapter II of this work focuses on ethnophaulism. The observations of social scientists from a broad range of disciplines concerning the nature, functions, and sources of ethophaulism are presented here. Moreover, in this chapter the social structures and social processes which sustain the phenomenon of ethnic name-calling are examined, especially as they are manifest in social stereotypes. These are viewed as dynamic forces serving in the maintenance of a society's characteristic socio-political order.

The following chapter deals with the roots of ethnophaulism in the Canadian context; i.e., from the macrosociological perspective. The aim of this chapter is to bring into relief the broad socio-political themes in Canadian social history which seem to have created and encouraged ethnic conflict and discrimination since the early period of colonization to the present time. The position taken here is that no only has there been an historical tendency to differentiate people according to ancestral origin, but that differentiation has processed social groups along two divergent paths since about 1760. This ramification of the

social differentiation process, it is held, has had important repercussions both on the political structure of present-day Canada and on the nature of ethnic group relations and perceptions within the polity. The view taken here is that those groups identified on the basis of cultural criteria have enjoyed higher status and have experience less difficulty in moving out of low status positions than have those groups identified on the basis of phenotypic criteria. This difference in status, in turn, has been echoed in the harsher forms of discrimination and prolonged political exclusion applied to members of visible minorities, as well as in the persistence and greater proliferation of derogatory labels for such groups.

Chapter IV presents the microsociological perspective as it pertains to ethnic name-calling and ethnicity at the individual and interpersonal level. The issues of prejudice, ethnocentrism, and stereotypy as these relate to cognition, self-concept, and self-esteem are presented here in terms of symbolic interaction and social cognition theory. Particular attention is given to those studies which have focused on children's perceptions of ethnic issues, as well as the role of parents in these matters. This review of empirical data includes the findings of both national and international research.

The final three chapters of the work concern themselves with the process of inquiry and the fieldwork. Chapter V includes a detailed explanation of the methodology guiding this inquiry and the procedures

followed in data analysis. The findings are reported in Chapter VI.
The final chapter presents a summary of the research, and offers a
discussion of the findings as well as some implications for future
research.

Chapter II

ETHNOPHAULISM

The term 'ethnophaulism' which means 'foreign disparaging allusion' was coined by Roback (1944) in what was probably the first systematic look at the lexicon of international slurs. The term has not enjoyed widespread usage in the social sciences, partly, it would seem, because the phenomenon itself has received only sporadic attention. In this inquiry, the terms ethnophaulism, ethnic: name-calling, epithets, nicknames, labelling, derogation, and slurs, will be used interchangeably. I would like moreover, to modify Roback's definition of ethnophaulism. Since this study explores the phenomenon in the context of a single plural society, the connotation of 'foreign' is inappropriate. Ethnic groups, as we understand them, are not foreign, but are integral to our internal socio-political landscape. Ethnophaulisms, therefore, will be taken to mean terms of degradation used at the informal, face-to-face level of social life to delimit and downgrade the identity and social location of individuals who belong to discrete ethnic groups within a plurality.

Although there is evidence indicating that the practice of ethnic name-calling is not new, there has actually been very little research done on the problem. Ehrlich (1973:23) comments:

> With the exception of a small study by Palmore (1962), ethnophaulisms have unfortunately received no systematic attention. The potential for such study remains to be tapped.

Another research, Allen (1983:2) makes a similar observation:

> ...whole books are written on stereotype of national character, ethnic prejudice, and intergroup relations with little or no mention of the existence of the world of words spawned by those relations.

Why this is the case is a matter for conjecture. Social scientists from various disciplines have, over the decades, acknowledged the existence of the phenomenon. Some have glanced at it in the course of related research, while others have probed into it, briefly. Unfortunately, most of this information has not been analyzed or discussed under some common heading, nor in a comprehensive text. Allen's (1983) work is a first step in that direction. It is perhaps due to this severality that there has been insufficient movement toward increasingly more systematic and deeper research into the problem. One result is that research into the matter of responses to ethnic name-calling is practically nonexistent. There has been some work done however, on ethnic name-calling, and we will now turn to this.

Ehrlich (1973:22) suggests that there are three types of ethnophaulism:
- disparaging group nicknames

- words or expressions that explicitly devaluate the
  ethnic group

-words or expressions that have no explicit dis-
  paragement but that function as a mild derogation
  by using ethnic names irrelevantly.

Such terms are a form of political talk, serving in the maintenance and perpetuation of a given social order (Burke, 1964; Douglas, 1966; Duncan, 1968; Ehrlich, 1973; Mirande, 1978; St. Clair, 1978; Khleif, 1979; Allen, 1983). They receive their legitimation from the historic centralizing beliefs which generate the policies and guide the actions of the dominant institutions of a society.

However, ethnophaulisms are not a polite form of talk, so the terms themselves, are not officially sanctioned by the governing institutions. They are, instead, part of the prescriptive folklore of the community-at-large (Dundes, 1974). Even so, the notions behind the words, the meanings they convey, and the functions which they serve in daily social intercourse are rooted in the official beliefs and values of the society. As a Sikh-Canadian explained to me recently, "It's not the words themselves, but the intent behind them that's important". According to Allen (1983:2):

> The language of ethnic conflict includes majority
> vocabularies of social control and minority vocabu-
> laries of resentment and protest...Nicknames for
> ethnic groups are clearly a vocabulary of instrument
> by which people and groups in communities express,
> reinforce and redress orders along ethnic lines.

Ethnophaulisms are terms with instrumental purpose serving as evaluative markers and identifiers (Giles, 1978); as verbal weapons - both offensive and defensive (Palmore, 1962); and as rhetoric or suasive tools (Kochman, 1976). As rhetoric or political labels, they function as 'goads to action', that is, action deemed appropriate toward and

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within the category named; and they serve in the creation of attitudes and states of mind with regard to the social object (Duncan, 1968:170). They are definitely not neutral.

This brings us to the matter of stereotypes. A detailed discussion of stereotypes as by-products of cognition at the individual level (Mackie, 1985) will be offered in the third chapter of this text. This traditional interpretation of stereotypes has recently been challenged as being incomplete. The problem, as far as a number of social scientists have observed (Ehrlich, 1973; Tajfel, 1978), derives from their recognition that once any stereotype permeates a culture, it enters the realm of folk belief, and consequently becomes a social force in its own right, playing in the political and economic aspects of inter-group relations in a plural society. From Tajfel's perspective, social stereotypes evolve from the interplay of inherent human cognitive processes and social reality or the social structure and social changes which determine and guide social relations in a particular society. This interpretation of stereotypy accounts for differences in stereotypes from culture to culture (Diab, 1962) and evidence of gradual change in the content of some intra-cultural stereotypes (Allport, 1954; Diab, 1962; Gardner and Taylor, 1969; Anderson and Frideres, 1981:71). The point being made here is that the strictly personal/cognitive interpretation of stereotypy, while not wrong, fails to take into account its socio-political import. Even a cursory glance at what we know about ethnophaulism makes this very clear. Allen (1983:3) explains the connection between ethnophaulism and stereotypy:

> Ethnic slurs and epithets are...the symbolism of
> stereotyping, and they are used ideologically to
> justify discrimination against minorities.

Note the reference to ideology, which draws the entire issue of stereo-
types and their tags from the inner workings of the mind into the poli-
tical realm. It is this aspect of stereotypy which will be discussed in
this section on ethnophaulism.

In terms of group relations, once a stereotype becomes a social
stereotype, it assumes a monolithic quality in a culture, and its con-
tent and bias become quite resistant to change. Part of the reason for
this durability of social stereotypes is due to the fact that they are
partially grounded in truth (Allport, 1954; Mackie, 1974). However,
there is an important element of falsity to social stereotypes. Users
of social stereotypes are most likely to believe that a group which has
been perceived as being a poverty stricken and drunken lot, is either
somehow innately prone to this condition, or its members are habitually
in this condition because of their own irresponsibility and laziness.
The true causes in such a case are not readily apparent and might
require some probing to discover and prove. The social stereotype not
only discourages such probing, but masks the contributing causes
(Campbell, 1967). The linguistic tags attached to such stereotypes
reinforce and abet the continuance of such falacious beliefs in a com-
munity. Furthermore, in common with social stereotypes, ethnophaulisms
also vary from culture to culture. Thus, in some societies, the term
"whiteface" is never heard, or if used, is taken as a meaningless ges-
ture because the majority of the populace happens to sport such faces.

In other societies, the term "whiteface" is a very incisive epithet symbolizing a negative social stereotype deriving from a particular set of demographic facts combined with the effects of social history in that society. In addition, as with social stereotypes, we also know that the lexicon of ethnic slurs in society changes over time. Certain terms fall out of popular usage to be replaced by new terms for customary target groups. Some groups cease to be targets, while new groups are assigned to the role of targets. Furthermore, the number of abusive terms for different ethnic groups varies, and can expand or diminish in concert with changing social conditions. According to Palmore (1962), whose focus was the U.S.A., the degree of prejudice against a particular target group is reflected in the number of terms coined for it. Gardner and Taylor (1969) have shown, on a smaller scale, the same to be true in Canada, where respondents had fewer descriptive labels for the French and English groups than they had for the Canadian Indian group. The rule seems to be that the greater the number of derogatory expressions, the greater and more widespread the prejudice within the populace against that particular group. Finally, in keeping with Tajfel's contention that social stereotypes evolve from the interaction of micro- and macrosociological processes, Worsley (1984:240) offers a pertinent observation:

> Whatever their origin and sponsorship, once such (stereotypes) become grounded in material self interest, justifying differential access to rewards, they take on a new and more powerful significance. Ideas, become significant forces...because they legitimize ideologically, the privileged position of those who profess those beliefs. Over time, the beliefs, and the practices associated with them, harden into a total system of social and not merely

economic relations, often backed by legal discrimi-
nation.

Social stereotypes, thus, have political consequences, and the use of

the linguistic tags attached to them is a form of political action.

The currency of ethnophaulism in an ethnically stratified society

reflects the competitive tensions operating among groups which perceive

the opportunities for or threat of change to their status within the

system (Shibutani and Kwan, 1965; see Wolf on ethnic segmentation and

capitalism, 1982:379-383). In such systems, ethnic epithets informally

assert and reinforce hierarchical relations by directing individuals to

recognize and maintain positions in differentiated, unequal and vying

camps. What is being created is social distance between the users of

the terms and their targets. Lukens (1979:153) describes this as the

distance of disparagement, which, in her view, "is established in situa-

tions in which interethnic conflict and ethnocentrism are extremely

intense". One would suppose however, that in a plural society, conflict

might be more intense between some ethnic groups or categories, and less

intense between others. It is also important to recognize that ethnic

stratification itself, is not always perfectly neatly aligned, nor com-

pletely rigid over time, in the sense that all members of any given

group enjoy the same privileges and power. But, what appears to follow

individuals regardless of their economic and/or educational achievement

quite often, is the prestige or evaluative connotations associated with

their ethnic group.

In Canada, for example, there is evidence that various ethnic

groups have gained an improved status on one or several dimensions over time (Porter, 1965; Clement, 1985; Darroch, 1985; Anderson and Frideres, 1981). But, we also have evidence that with regard to the extremities of the hierarchical order, certain ethnic groups have held constant positions according to Porter (1965), Clement (1985), Darroch (1985) and others. Research findings have recently shown that the salience of ethnicity as a factor in status assignment to be diminishing in Canada (Darroch, 1985); while other findings indicate that ethnicity is still used as a criterion of status evaluation (Goldstein, 1985). Weinfeld (1985) has shown that there appears to be a continuing commitment to ethnicity among Canadians, who, given their individual non-ethnic life-styles, would be expected to discard the hyphenated label in identifying themselves. All these findings suggest contradictory forces at work in our society. Allen (1983:31) observes that ethnic nicknames arise from situations of conflict which occur through intergroup contact and competition during periods of great social change in a pluralistic society.

In Canada, it may be that the contradictory influences of evident change in the status of some groups, but not in others, produces the friction symbolized in the use of ethnic slurs. Such contradictions and tensions are most likely to be evident in the densely populated, ethnically variegated, and intensely competitive environment of cities (Ehrlich, 1973). Such a social climate would be even more exacerbated with the ingress of a new ethnic group or groups into the milieu. Ethnophaulisms would be only one part of the arsenal of discriminatory techniques used in such contexts. The use of ethnic slurs would serve

to entrench and justify intergroup competition, while at the same time reinforcing hierarchical ethnic relations. In such a setting, ethnic labels would serve as guides to social interaction by serving as markers identifying friends and enemies (Khleif, 1979; Goffman, 1959; Barth, 1969). According to Khleif (1979:163):

> Ethnolinguistic labels enable us to see not things, but things in their relationships - how an ingroup cannot be defined apart from an outgroup, how both form a social system, how an outgroup is so necessary for an ingroup to be itself.

Since the dominant ethnic groups in Canada have remained the same historically, it may also be that such ethnophaulisms as are used correspond, in terms of bias, to the prevailing normative views and beliefs which derive from the values of these influential groups. Such values, in the course of time, will have become enduring, shared values of the populace, regardless of ethnic group affiliation (Blishen, 1986; Williams and Pearce, 1978).

Ethnophaulisms serve as handy suasive tools for the population-at-large in delimiting, constraining, and demeaning any segment of the community which is regarded as posing some sort of threat to the status quo (Winslow, 1969; Lukens, 1979). Usage of such terms reminds the audience, which includes the users, that the society of which they are a part is ethnically stratified, and that in the interests of stability, it behooves all concerned to know and stay in their ascribed place (Allen, 1983). Morgan, O'Neill, and Harre (1979), interestingly, found that in the practise of nicknaming among British school children, such labels arose and served functions very similar to those outlined above.

The lexicon of ethnic slurs in any society does not arise from spontaneous generation, but is created from the combined influence of an over-arching belief system or ideology (Williams and Pearce, 1978); the prevailing value system (Blishen, 1986) and past social conditions or social history. While shared values incline citizens toward consensus, the prevailing ideology, which encourages competition and efficiency grounded as it is in the economic and political domains of social life, requires social differentiation. With social differentiation comes identification or labelling. The differentiated groups are evaluated in terms of their conformity (or presumed ability to conform) to the value system. The outcome is a ranking of groups along a scale of comparative prestige. Ranking on the basis of any criteria or constellation of criteria serves in the maintenance of the social order required by the adopted ideology.

In pluralistic systems one of the criteria used in identifying rank is ethnicity. In Canadian society, for example, everyone has an ascribed membership in some ethnic group. According to Barth (1969), Shibutani and Kwan (1965), Tajfel (1981), and many others, the ethnic factor is a device used for the demarcation and setting of social boundaries to facilitate social organization and to strengthen the established social order within a polity. It is an organizational implement by which identity and social location can be assigned to individuals and groups. The tags which result from such divisions provide a code which reflects both the hierarchical structure, and, in abbreviated form, reflects the rules governing intergroup relations in accordance

with rank. Ethnic ranking or stratification grounded in the differential economic attainments and political rights of the various groups, introduces a prestige connotation to each ethnic label (Shils, 1968; Pineo, 1977; Hope, 1982; Goldstein, 1978, 1985). As Goldstein explains (1985:182):

> Prestige is a symbolic reward. It is the "subjective" dimension of social stratification which reflects perceptions of the degree of worthiness of social positions. While prestige is subjective, one can observe concrete acts by which individuals express appreciation or derogation of others.

The ethnic factor, therefore, whenever it is activated serves to establish and perpetuate relations of differential economic status, political influence, and prestige in plural society. Ethnicity is not a necessary factor of social ordering, but it is always a potential factor. Almost any historical, biological, geographical, cultural, or imaginary criteria can be used to impute ethnic origin. Theories of race which combine all of these criteria have been fabricated to justify such differentiation. When cultural criteria are linked with group physical characteristics as the rationale for social differentiation, the result is a powerful mechanism for discrimination because it suggests immutability through its emphasis on biological heredity. In the process easily discernible physical markers become signals for social action (Tajfel, 1981:274).

Individuals acquire an ethnic identity as a consequence of entering or being drawn into a society in which ethnicity has been activated as a political device for the justification and maintenance of the established social order. As a political device, it is used not only by

the official or governing institutions of the society, but is 'acted out' in political talk throughout all the strata of the community. Through political talk, such as ethnophaulism, individuals at all levels of the ethnic hierarchy are persuaded that maintenance of ethnic differences is for the common good, while the dominant group or groups recognize that preservation of these differences is of particular value in safeguarding their own interests. Even though ethnicity is not necessary for the maintenance of social order, it has figured prominently in history, especially modern history, as an instrument of social control (Sibutani and Kwan, 1965). As far as Canadian political history is concerned, the ethnic device has always been a conspicuous feature of group relations and has served effectively in the maintenance of social order. Thus, ethnicity is not simply a matter of primordial ties, but as Epstein observes (in Lian, 1982:50):

> ...ethnicity quickly becomes intimately interwoven
> with questions of hierarchy, stratification and the
> pursuit of political interests.

In the context of plural society, ethnic identity is in small part a matter of voluntary self-identification. It is to a greater extent, the outcome of value-laden ascription by others in the system who appraise each ethnic group in terms of the prevailing social norms determined by the dominant group or groups in society. When an ethnic group is customarily appraised as having few or no positive attributes it is quite probable that its real status, in terms of political influence and economic condition, is constrained to the lower echelons of the hierarchy. Low placement in the hierarchy, in turn, provides

proof of the relative worthlessness and deviance of individuals belonging to that ethnic group, creating a situation ripe for the genesis of ethnic slurs. What is more, it does not appear to have been a feature of the prevailing ideology of modern western pluralism to condone low status on the social totem. The notion, for example, that the 'poor shall inherit the earth', would, in terms of our social norms and values, most likely be interpreted as a threat to those enjoying privileged status. Ethnophaulisms are a response to the perceived threat, and once coined, stick like glue to the referent group, to be eroded only by small degrees as a society adjusts to social change.

Chapter III

THE CANADIAN CONTEXT

The use of ethnic slurs in Canada reflects both the historic and present stance of the ruling elite toward subordinate groups in the polity, concommitant with the insecurity which intergroup competitive tensions raise in a stratified society. Of course some immigrant groups have met their historic, old world enemies on settling in Canada, and have brought with them more than a few choice and disparaging opinions of their old enemies. However, any such derogations would neither thrive, nor survive, were they not nurtured or encouraged by the norms prevailing in the new society. The discriminatory perspective of the dominant group or groups is rooted in the view that ethnic origin determines the inherent qualities of individuals, and that these justify group status within the hierarchy; and, for that matter, justify the existence of the hierarchy itself. Generally, the rationale for any such view can be traced to the ideas of Social Darwinism, or, less euphemistically, to the ideology of racism. To be sure, ethnophaulisms and other forms of verbal derogation connected with social status existed before the articulation of pseudo-scientific rationales for racism.

However, within the framework of Canadian history, and especially in terms of its modern history, the influence of Social Darwinism has

probably been more pervasive throughout the populace than any other rationale for differentiation on the basis of ancestry. This is due to the convergence, in the mid 1800's of an articulated 'scientifically' based racist ideology with the development of rapid information transmission media such as cheap newspapers combined with the growth in mass literacy during an era of massive worldwide migration (Carney and Zajac, 1975:v.2:103). Furthermore, Social Darwinism was promulgated around the time this territory was forging itself into self-conscious nationhood. Racist ideology and the deliberations immediately prior to Confederation were not only contemporary phenomena, but their drift was confluent. The themes of Social Darwinism and the events which had led to Confederation emerged from the interplay of the same powerful forces.

It was during the pre-Confederation era, the period of colonization, settlement, and westward expansion, that the political and economic groundwork, foreshadowing the social structure of modern Canada, was laid. The pre-Confederation era was profoundly moulded as a consequence of western European (in our case, primarily French and British) expansion and colonization. This, in turn, had been fueled first by mercantile interests, to be followed by the demands of industrialization and burgeoning capitalism. The nature of western European and colonized societies was dramatically changed as a consequence. Success in territorial expansion, technological innovation, and the accumulation of wealth served to convince these invasive European nations of their own cultural and inherent superiority vis-a-vis other groups, and most especially vis-a-vis those whom they subjugated. Although Social Darwinism

as we know it was not presented until the 1850's, the exclusionary social relations it endorsed were already a fact of life in those regions of the world touched by industrialization, colonization, and the spread of capitalism. Therefore, Social Darwinism introduced no shock to the already existing systems of social relations in these places. What it did was legitimate discriminatory practises and beliefs through its imputed grounding in the evidence of science. It conveniently rationalized social practise and provided authoritative sanction to the racism which was already an active and integral element of colonial life. Thus, massive social forces not only led to the setting of the building blocks of this nation, but also influenced the shape of the future structure, long before 1867. By 1867, when we embarked on nationhood, holding our baggage of social inequities, fabricated out of the stuff of folklore and theology, it was a rational step to carry it with us into the future, once the 'objective' evidence of science showed that stratification on the basis of ancestral origin was natural, permissible, and desirable in the operation of a civilized society. Hence, a tradition of inequality based on lineage was already the norm when the rules and regulations of the fledgling nation were being formulated. This norm was to colour our rules on immigration, our attitudes toward the various immigrant groups, and the distribution of civil and political rights within the polity well into the 20th century. Because ethnic name-calling is part of this tradition of differentiation, I shall now turn for a brief look at the supporting evidence of social history.

It has been suggested (Anderson and Frideres, 1981) that racism was

not a factor of group relations during the early period of French settlement in what was to become Canada. If this judgment is being made with reference to the period between 1534, when Cartier first arrived in this region, and 1606, when the first successful settlement was established in New France by Champlain, it may be true, insofar as it was in the interests of French mercantile ambitions to maintain co-operative relations with the indigenous peoples. However, the main problem with this claim is that during this period, there were actually no real French settlements in this region, although a few unsuccessful attempts at establishing colonies had been made. Anderson and Frideres also point out that in addition to developing friendly relations with the Indians, miscegenation between the French and the Indians was encouraged. It is further claimed by these authors, that two important characteristics of early French settlers hindered the emergence of racism (1981:218):

> "First of all, the French were not colonists in the
> true sense. Secondly, they were Catholic in their
> religious ideology. These two factors are extremely
> important to explaining why the French were able
> (and still are to this day) to establish better
> relationships with the Native and non-White peoples
> of Canada."

I would submit, however, that notwithstanding the original emphasis of France on commercial/strategic goals in this region; notwithstanding the enveloping tendencies of Catholicism; and for that matter, notwithstanding the desire of France to encourage the formation of a 'new race' through miscegenation, elements of racism were present from the beginning.

One cannot overlook, for example, the implicit racism in the act of laying claim to an already peopled region by virtue of having 'discovered' it. Nor can one fail to recognize the arrogance in acts of peremptory establishment of French settlements with a goal to colonization of this region. Furthermore, once a colony took root, the French government's plan for social engineering was also tinged with something akin to racism. Their's was a general policy of assimilation, whereby the Natives and the offspring of miscegenation would use the French language, adopt French-Catholicism, adhere to French laws, and adapt to a settled way of life. Such actions and policies were rooted in a belief in French cultural superiority (Trigger, 1987). Furthermore, this two-pronged strategy of cultural assimilation and miscegenation was to serve in enhancing France's presence in the region while at the same time disarming the potential local threat to the security of the French settlers. As for claims that relations between the French and the Indians were amicable, historical evidence (McInnis, 1960) shows that this was not entirely the case. For example, their most important allies in French skirmishes with various Indian tribes were the Huron. The term Huron derives from the French word "hure" which means "boor, ruffian, savage" (Wolf, 1982:163). How's that for an ethnophaulism! Such co-operative relations as did exist between the French and the native peoples were probably motivated more by interests of self-preservation and ascendancy, than from a French commitment to egalitarianism. Granted, the elitism displayed by the French may have been more paternalistic than racist. But, important in terms of this discussion, is the fact that the spadework for the cultivation of racism in

Canada, seems to have been started during this period in our history. This groundwork would be further developed with the arrival of the British.

British interests in the northern regions of the continent were spurred primarily by a growing market for beaver pelts in Europe. From the mid 17th century the French and the British were bent on an increasingly competitive course of northern and western expansion, motivated by both the fur trade and imperialistic goals (McInnis, 1960:91-92; Reid, McNaught, Crowe, 1959:36). In the process numerous Indian tribes were drawn, through the fur trade and the competitive territorial interests of the colonizing powers, into the race. They functioned, for some time as trade partners, as allies, and as pawns of both France and England. Both the search for new beaver populations in the North and West, and the politics of the fur trade itself pushed native peoples into new tribal configurations, and into alien fields. The changes caused in the lives of native peoples as a consequence of these intrusive forces were rapid and long-lasting. Wolf (1982:194-5) describes some of these consequences:

> (The fur trade)...led to the decimation of whole populations and in the displacement of others from their previous habitats...Remnant populations sought refuge with allies or grouped together with other populations, often under new names and ethnic identities. A few, like the Iroquois, expanded at the expense of their neighbours...as the European traders consolidated their economic and political position, the balanced relations between native trappers and Europeans gave way to imbalance...and ultimately to complete subordination.

Concurrently, relations between the French and the British became

increasingly hostile, and would culminate in the conquest of New France by the British in 1758. New France, by this time had suffered numerous calamities and setbacks, while the British, in their colonies to the south were vigorous and thriving. By the time Wolfe struck the decisive blow on Quebec, the colony had been undermined by corrosive circumstances beyond its control (Parkman, 1984:405). The victors, therefore, came upon a French colony sorely in need of help.

The British, imbued with the Protestant ethic and a belief in their own inherent physical, moral, intellectual, and political superiority were inclined to view the unfortunate circumstances of the French as indicative of their hereditary shortcomings (Arnoupolos and Clift, 1980:9). At the same time, the British were cognizant of the fact that they had won a colony of long standing, with a sizeable population, which functioned on the basis of laws, customs, and beliefs of a familiar European ally and foe. In due course, the decision was made to allow the French to maintain their linguistic, religious, and tradi-tional practises, but under British law and government (Quebec Act, 1774). The French were to enjoy the status of equals before the laws of the realm, were to be equal partners with British settlers in governing the internal affairs of the colony, but would become British subjects. The result was a de facto subordination of the French ethnic group in the colony (Stanley, 1968:267-274).

In contrast, the British attitude toward the native peoples was markedly different. Not only were they viewed as being culturally

inferior to Europeans, in general, but their skin colour, from the perspective of the British, indicated their inherent inferiority as human beings. They were increasingly viewed as a menace and a nuisance to the British project of empire building in North America. Their lot was not to be political subordination to British might; it was to be complete subjugation. They were in fact, not recognized in any legal way as members of the evolving society, but were viewed more as an incongruity hovering on the fringes of that society (Trigger, 1987). From this perspective, the native peoples could not qualify, and were therefore ineligible for participation in the emerging polity or to a respected place in civilized society.

Thus, by the second half of the 18th century, slightly over a hundred years before Confederation, certain patterns of group relations had already taken root. Group boundaries were identified with lineage or stock, while the resulting groups were evaluated in terms of their cultural and phenotypical similarity to the British. Because it was customary, at this time, to refer to both national and tribal collectivities as "races", the social hierarchy which emerged as a consequence of the British conquest was understood as a rank ordering of races. In fact, it was an ordering which functioned on the basis of two distinct modes of group identification: culture and physiognomy. This dichotomy was evident in the realpolitik of the newly acquired British colony in which the dominant position was assumed by the British; the ethnic or secondary status was accorded the French; while the Amerind population was consigned to the outcast state (Grove, 1974; Kallen, 1982:105-129;

Wolf, 1982:380).

During the following decades the boundaries between each stratum were to become sharper as differences in political clout, economic condition, and prestige became manifest among the constituent groups. Even though these relations of inequality did not proceed from decade to decade without tension and conflict, the strata or categories themselves, remained intact. Pre-Confederation society was composed of three social spheres in which the superordinate level was congruent with the right to rule, the intermediate level was associated with civil and certain political rights which allowed the possibility for negotiation, while the subordinate level was marked by powerlessness; and in which membership in any level was determined by ancestry (Kallen, 1982).

By the turn of the 19th century various racist ideologies had been devised in Western Europe to explain and justify the power of the various colonizing nations. The most influential of these was Social Darwinism. The central thesis of such ideologies was that physical and cultural differences among various peoples of the world were due to inherent differences of superiority and inferiority among the discernible groups. On the basis of such theories, it was held, in Canada for example, that the most superior in every way were those of Northern European, but especially, of British stock (Palmer, 1985). From this apogee of natural creation, all other peoples were ranked on a descending scale, with the most phenotypically and culturally different from the Northern European 'type' being nominated as the most inferior

and incompetent. In 1867 this view and the socio-political reality in the British colony were mutually reinforcing. Implicitly and explicitly, during the decades of nation-building after Confederation, racist ideology would inform the actions of the state in its rules and dealings with the various groups within its system. It would also influence immigration policies. This official perspective would, in turn, have a considerable effect on the kinds of social stereotypes which would percolate through Canadian society, and would influence the spirit of class relations as well as intergroup relations within any given level.

It was out of these conditions that we inherited our social stereo-types of the three original groups. British Canadians were unequivo-cally presented as being 'the Canadians' - proud, wise, and very stable. It was generally understood that the responsibility was theirs, as white men good and true, to ensure that the superior peoples remained geneti-cally uncontaminated and in control for the good of this country. I use the term 'white' advisedly for it has special meaning in the context of this discussion on ethnic name-calling and ethnic relations in Canada. The term 'white' in this context is congruent with Anglo-Saxon origin and British culture. In an essay on the history of nativism in the Canadian West, Harold Palmer explains who the real 'whites' were (1985:312):

> ...the elite, whatever their ethnic origin, birth-
> place, or religion, had been taught to believe that
> the Anglo-Saxon peoples were the apex of both bio-
> logical evolution and human achievement and they
> believed Canada's greatness was due in large part to
> its Anglo-Saxon heritage.

In comparison, French-Canadians acquired the image of being religious, poor, but sturdy peasants or 'habitants' who were inclined to be irascible and wily, and therefore needed careful watching. The Indians, on the other hand, were perceived as being naive and sullen; a generally bad and hopelessly primitive lot. It was held that the miserable condition of their lives was due entirely to their lack of initiative and their inability to adapt to progressive change. For evidence of these social stereotypes, I think it would be safe to recommend any Canadian history text, written in English, and first published before 1955. For example, see McInnis (1947, 1959, 1960), from cover to cover, noting both content and telling omissions. Such images determined the public's attitudes toward and relations with each of these groups well into the 20th century. Only in the mid-1960's did the popular stereotype of the French-Canadians begin to alter. The strongly negative image of the native peoples, however, is still with us today (Asch, 1984:13). What's more, the condition of their lives remains a testimony to their continued outcast status (Gibbins and Ponting, 1986:173; Bienvenue, 1985; Krotz and Paskievich, 1980). So many negative connotations have become attached to the social stereotype of the natives, that the term 'Indian' itself serves as a derogatory epithet in many contexts.

It is my contention that the persistence of the negative attitudes toward the aboriginal peoples and the recent readjustment of our popular image of the French-Canadians is significantly tied to the socio-political categorization of the first group on the basis of predominantly physical criteria and the categorization of the latter on the

basis of predominantly cultural criteria. This particular bifurcation of the differentiating mechanism has, in turn, had tremendous impact on the experience of the various immigrant groups which arrived later. Until recent times, it has been a pivotal element in our immigration policies. Within the modern Canadian polity, it has become the ascendant force of change in the political arena, particularly through the ethnic trajectory which is steadily gaining ground in the transformation of the traditional image of Canada as an essentially British polity, to that of an essentially multicultural polity. In this process, the French have advanced to the elite "charter group" status, which allows them, along with the British, certain national rights and privileges denied to all other ethnic and native groups within the polity (Kallen, 1982). The ethnic stratum has now been completely taken over by the other ethnic minorities, whose roots are mostly European. Their position in the matter of power distribution in Canada is that all minorities, including the English and French, are ethnic, and that therefore, no group or groups are entitled to an elite status because of their ethnicity or for any other reason.

In contrast, minorities of non-European origin, and notably the native peoples, as a group, have yet to achieve the political influence and social gains of the ethnic body (Kallen, 1982). It is within the realm of possibility that the multicultural movement may expand and engulf these minorities into its dynamic ken. There is some evidence that this may be happening, at least with respect to some visible minorities within the system (see Report of the Standing Committee on

Multiculturalism, 1987). At present, however, visible minorities, whether indigenous or immigrant, continue to experience considerably more discrimination in all spheres of social life, than do members of other ethnic groups.

For most of its history, the Canadian government has been ambivalent toward the issue of immigration. On the one hand, it has long been a recognized fact that this vast territory needs more people - for a number of very good and practical reasons. On the other hand, Canadians have traditionally reacted to newcomers with more than a touch of xenophobia, particularly if the newcomers happened to arrive in large numbers from a single region of the world within a relatively short space of time. Along with the general xenophobia, which Palmer (1982) defines as Nativism, the racist ideology of Anglo dominance has played a major role in orientating the government on immigration issues. In accordance with this perspective, immigration policies have tended to discourage the settlement of non-European groups in Canada. Although some Blacks, Chinese, Sikhs, and other non-European groups did settle in Canada during the period between Confederation and the 1950's, their numbers were small when compared to the massive influx of European immigrants during the same period. The flow of such immigration was carefully controlled through provincial and federal government legislation.

Those non-Europeans who did manage to come into the country were to experience shabby, callous, and sometimes brutal treatment at the hands

of the population-at-large, employers, and government officials. Regardless whether they arrived as refugees, or were imported as cheap labour, or came as settlers, non-Europeans in Canada were subjected to formal and informal discrimination on a large, and ofttimes dramatic scale (Tarlo, 1968; Winks, 1971; Ferguson, 1975; Sugimoto, 1978; Buchignani, 1979; Anderson and Frideres, 1981; Li and Bolaria, 1983; Walker, 1985; Palmer, 1985; Baureiss, 1985; Barrett, 1987). Such discrimination delimited the educational and economic opportunities of these people. The social and economic realities of their lives nurtured and confirmed the negative social stereotypes of these groups held by Canadians. The blatant racism which marked the posture of the Canadian government and public toward peoples of non-European origins is recorded not only in history books, but is held in the special vocabulary of derogatory labels coined as terms of reference and address for people of these groups. Thus, as well as having a lexicon of obnoxious terms for indigenous peoples, we have also invented, in the course of our history, a repertoire of taunts and slurs to be used against phenotypically distinct immigrant groups in our midst.

It wasn't until the 1960's that the policy of exclusion with regard to non-European immigration changed. By this time, Canada had set itself the task of developing a respected role in international peace-keeping, and consequently needed to establish an humanitarian image. During this period also, economic conditions in Canada signalled the need for more skilled and unskilled labour. The traditional European sources had dried up for various reasons, so Canada opened its doors to

immigrants from the Third World. As a consequence, unprecedented numbers of non-European immigrants settled in Canada during recent decades, mostly in urban centers. The Department of the Secretary of State, in a paper focusing on so-called race relations (1984:12-13) offers the following observation:

> The largest portion (of immigrants in 1983), about 65 percent, was contributed by Asia and the Pacific, with smaller numbers arriving from South and Central America, plus the Middle East. In this context, India was the second largest source of immigrants in 1983 providing some 7,000 arrivals, and...six of the top ten source countries belong to the Third World.

Important in this context is the fact that a considerable proportion of those immigrants arriving from the Third World since 1967 have been well educated people. This is in contrast to earlier immigrants from similar sources, who were for the most part unskilled labourers. Walker (1985:18) explains the social significance of this:

> ...Because of the high skill levels possessed by the new immigrants, Canada was experiencing not only a novel increase in black citizens...but a substantial shift in occupational distribution of a skin colour associated with lower skills and income.

As a consequence of this combination of factors, when Canada slid into a period of severe unemployment, which peaked in 1978, incidents of violence and tensions rooted in racist ideology began to surface dramatically in cities across the country (Henry and Tator, 1985). It also became apparent that visible minorities were being discriminated against by potential employers (Henry and Ginzberg, 1985). Conditions such as these exacerbated the antagonistic relations between visible minorities and the predominantly white population, heightening perceptions of inequality and unfair competition on both sides. As a result slurs and

taunts against visible minorities gained widespread currency in casual discourse throughout the country.

Concurrent with this wave of immigration and the economic swings of the sixties and seventies, Canada was also experiencing a rural to urban population shift. Joining this flow of internal migration have been increasing numbers of Canadian Indians, determined on escaping the harsh conditions of life in the hinterland and hoping to improve their circumstances in the cities. According to various studies (Bienvenue, 1985), Canadian Indians, upon their arrival in urban centers such as Winnipeg, have run into a hard and virtually impregnable wall of discrimination at every level of social life. This state of affairs has forced them into lives of welfare dependence, humiliation, and destitution. Derogatory epithets represent only one kind of discrimination meted out to these people on a daily basis in our cities.

Evidence indicates that in Winnipeg, as well as in other urban centers members of visible minorities have been experiencing a wide range of discriminatory actions for many years - despite the dearly held myth that racism does not exist in this city (Scott, 1971). There is also evidence that such minorities in Winnipeg do not always receive the same wages as their white counterparts, nor are they always treated as equal competitors for various kinds of work (MARL, 1987). In response to such evidence of inequities and racial strife, both here and elsewhere in Canada, municipal, provincial, and federal bodies have been formed to forestall and to find ways of resolving these problems. Among

such formations are municipal Race Relations Committees, Human Rights
Commissions, Native Rights advocacy groups, curriculum planning units
within provincial Departments of Education, and federally appointed
research committees reviewing all aspects of the problem. If nothing
else, the existence of such bodies attests to the presence of racism in
present-day Canada.

From the macroscopic perspective then, racist ideology, in one form
or another has been influential in the structuring of social relations
in Canada since the onset of colonization. Because racist ideologies
have been so important in the shaping of the Canadian polity during the
entire span of its history, the values and attitudes which such theories
uphold have permeated social life. Such values and attitudes have
delimited the conditions of life for members of many ethnic and visible
groups in the system over the years, and in the process have contributed
to the variety and content of nationally held social stereotypes.

Of the two subordinating categories, the social stereotypes of
visible minorities have been more consistently negative, and discrimina-
tion against them has been, historically, more persistent, overt and
entrenched than it has been against various ethnic minority target
groups. The body of negative stereotypes of visible minorities shared
by Canadians has often surfaced in the form of derogatory group epithets
used in the course of interpersonal relations between members of dif-
ferent groups in our society. A dominant belief system, the structure
of socio-political relations in this country, demographic factors,

economic inequalities, and competitive tensions between constituent groups, in combination, have encouraged the proliferation and use of ethnophaulism in Canada. But acts of ethnic name-calling are committed by individuals against individuals. In the following chapter the discussion will focus on the microsociological aspects of this phenomenon.

Chapter IV

THE MICROSOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The dominant theory in microsociology is the Symbolic Interactionism first proposed by G. H. Mead (1934), and elaborated by scholars such as Duncan (1962, 1968), Berger and Luckmann (1967), and Langer (1968). The works of these theorists are the primary source for the discussion on language and social relations, immediately following. However, language as we know it, exists only because of the cognitive ability peculiar to human beings. This ability develops as the human being matures. In this process, linguistic skills and reasoning strategies become more complex and sophisticated and serve to transform the human being into a social being. Cognitive development and social cognition will be discussed from the perspective of Piaget's theories. This will be followed with a review of relevant research concerning children and parenting in the context of ethnic relations.

4.1 LANGUAGE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL REALITY

Language serves as both a boundary defining tool in the maintenance of cognitive and social order, as well as being the integrating medium for cognition and social life. In the process of creating some kind of order of the world around us, we engage in sorting what we perceive into

units of similar, or related objects and events, that is, we create categories. Categories arise through the complementary processes of comparison and differentiation, which bring into play judgment or evaluation, and hierarchical ordering. The array of criteria or markers taken into account for the placement of any object into a particular category is customarily streamlined for efficiency. As a consequence, the most immediately perceptible markers are generally taken as sufficient information for identifying an object with a conceptual category. Ehrlich (1973:39) observes that the placement process is contingent on the joint effects of:

- the object's characteristics
- criteria of classification
- object's eligibility for other social categories
- context in which the object appears

All objects in the environment are categorized, be they human or otherwise. By categorizing all we meet and experience into fields of similar or related objects, we narrow down the disparate stimuli encountered in daily life to a more manageable range of stimuli for action. Davey (1983:43-47) notes that categorization simplifies our social world; equips us with a rapid identification system; and provides us with cues for appropriate action in familiar and new situations. In addition, it has been observed that we regulate our classification schemes by exaggerating the differences between categories and minimizing the differences within categories (Ehrlich, 1973; Davey, 1983). The result, in Allport's (1954) view is that each category is in fact a generalization whose inferences are not absolutely true for each element clustered around it, but which allows people to act as if the inferences

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were true for each member of the category.

Each category is coded with a label or name. A name symbolizes all
objects associated with a category and serves as the key to a particular
conceptual or semantic field (Ehrlich, 1973). There is nothing univer-
sally rational about the content or the bias of most of the category
systems developed by the various societies or human groups in the world.
The array of categories, their content and specific biases are primarily
a function of consensus, custom, and culture. Categories are meaningful
to those who create and use them, and these meanings are held in lan-
guage in the form of names.

Names are significant symbols, and they are first and foremost
denotative. They are simply names of things, persons, or relationships,
which serve to differentiate particular phenomena from other phenomena
(Ehrlich, 1973). A symbol becomes significant when there is a general
consensus as to its meaning within a linguistic community (Mead, 1934).
Once a thing is named, it becomes a social object; i.e., something on
which individuals can act, or to which they can respond (Duncan, 1968).
Until a thing is named, it has no special meaning, for it cannot be
discussed. Names, therefore, are indicators of some knowledge or
familiarity with their referents. The aggregate of such meaningful
word-structures, held in language, represents a community's social
knowledge (Berger and Luckmann, 1967).

Once the concept of a social object becomes generalized, the

object, the concept, and the significant symbol become susceptible to evaluative connotations. An object, concept, or symbol is intrinsically neither good nor bad, but the processes of differentiation and comparison which engender them also appraise them for relative worth and function within the established social framework (Langer, 1969). The products of such appraisal, the connotations, may be temporary and specific to a particular object, or they may be long-lived and widespread, affecting all objects of a certain type. Significant symbols or names may also be more or less 'loaded' with connotations - it is not an either/or thing.

If the social object is not a human being or a human group, there are generally no reciprocal effects between the namer and the social object regardless of the connotations attached to its name. Thus, the name 'Monday' may accumulate predominantly good or bad connotations, but the block of time which is represented by that name will not be affected one way or another by such connotations. Any effects that do occur will be on the human being, or the namer. Similarly, the name 'squirrel' may accumulate a set of good or bad connotations in a human community, but the little beast itself will not alter its ways because we choose to think of it as either cute or pesky. We, on the other hand, may create effects in ourselves as a consequence of the connotations we attach to the name 'squirrel'. When the social objects named are human beings, either as individuals or as groups, the impact of connotations is dramatically different because as Ehrlich (1973:57-58) explains:

> People...unlike other objects of cognition react to
> the beliefs and disbeliefs that others hold of them.

> Their own beliefs and disbeliefs are determined
> partly by their reactions. In turn, their reactions
> partly determine how they are cognized.

Categorization of human beings or groups, and codification by names which carry complexes of connotations produces mutually reinforcing conceptions between the namers and the named for they evolve from a common source. All parties to such interactions engage in and are affected by the same cognitive processes. Meanings, including all elaborations of particular meanings, are shared in social knowledge (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). Meanings in their turn, propel behaviour along socially sanctioned trajectories (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). Thus both namers and named are cognizant of being called upon to display behaviours or to perform actions culturally deemed appropriate to either using or to being identified by a particular name (Duncan, 1968).

In connotation, a retinue of associated meanings becomes attached to a word or term, and this comes to mind whenever the word is used in the absence of the object of its denotation (Langer, 1969). The conception conveyed involves descriptive, evaluative, and emotive qualities which become associated with the object to which the term refers. These connotations may or may not be true or correct, but they become bonded, through repeated association, with the symbol for a given object, and eventually, it is assumed by the public-at-large, that the connotations are accurate or true depictions of the object itself. In this manner, rightly or wrongly, a social object or a category acquires a particular status or value within the social scheme of things (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). It is through such a process that plural societies

produce ethnophaulisms.

Connotations are elaborations of meaning, and are of primary impor-
tance to the creation and maintenance of social order (Berger and
Luckmann, 1967). Significant symbols, in their combined denotative and
connotative aspects, not only allow for the emergence of social order,
but it is through them that patterns of social relations or cultures are
sustained. The use of such symbols or names by community members,
brings to mind, or at least implies, both the social order as a coherent
system, the location of the symbol's referent within the social order,
and the esteem in which the object is held by the members of the
community (Duncan, 1968).

The connotations associated with a name indicate the appropriate
attitudes and behaviour toward the object, and give rise to certain pat-
terns of relations with the object (Duncan, 1968). Such connotations
may hold for a single object within a category, or for each member of
the set. When the connotations are held to be true for all members of a
category, especially a human category, the result is the class of
generalizations known as stereotypes (Ehrlich, 1973). Stereotypes allow
and encourage prejudgment by inclining us to accept as true whatever
they infer about the members of a group. Because of the evaluation
process, stereotypes may have either a positive or a negative bias when
they represent human groups. In plural societies, when the group
stereotypes are tinged with a negative bias, the verbal tags or names
that are attached to them are ethnophaulisms. The language of ethnic

conflict, to use Allen's (1983) phrase, is a vocabulary of negatively loaded terms referring to the various human populations whose members interact within a single society.

Names always stimulate some kind of behaviour in both users and referents. Duncan (1968:23) describes names as "goads to action". Ethnic labels are names which carry both denotative and connotative meanings, and serve as goads to political action. Ethnic labels are used to identify individuals with a particular stratum within a social hierarchy by informing, directing, reminding, and admonishing. All these actions are aimed at provoking a desired response, either of comprehension or of behaviour in the referent.

Although human beings have an innate compulsion to differentiate, compare, and evaluate, they are not innately compelled to use symbols of ethnic derogation, no more than they are compelled to refrain from probing into and assessing the elaborated meaning networks from which stereotypes and ethnolinguistic tags are derived. Social conditions may encourage individuals to rely on stereotypes, but whether an individual takes a stereotype as irrefutable, or whether he or she takes the position that it's too much of generalization to hold true for all members of a category or group, seems to be a function of cognitive development.

4.2 SOCIAL COGNITION AND ETHNOCENTRISM

In the field of psychology there are two broad areas. One branch
focuses on the social context of human relations, while the other is
concerned with issues and problems pertaining to individual mental/
emotional perception and development. George Herbert Mead (1934) whose
perspective on symbolic interaction and social relations is central to
the discussion in the preceding section was one of the first social
psychologists to introduce the concept of social role-taking, or taking
the role of another in social relations. In like manner, Piaget (1896-
1980), was one of the first psychologists to use this notion, particu-
larly in his work on egocentrism and decentering. As a consequence of
his observations, ensuing research and findings of others, most notably
Robert Selman, David Elkind, and Lawrence Kohlberg, have evolved into a
theoretical model known as Social Cognition. Research in this area has
concerned itself with the relationship between level or stage of indivi-
dual cognitive development (reasoning strategies) and the process by
which individuals become social beings.

Social cognition, according to Muus (1982:232):

> ...can be defined as "how people think about other
> people and about themselves", or how people come to
> know their social world...implied in this concept of
> social cognition is an ability to make inferences
> about other people's capabilities, attributes,
> expectations, feelings and potential reactions.
> These inferential processes of social cognition are
> referred to as role taking or perspective taking.

Most of the research in social cognition has concentrated on children
and adolescents. Because of this and its affinity to the symbolic

interactionism theories in social psychology, social cognition is pertinent to this discussion of ethnic relations and ethnic name-calling.

In Piaget's model of cognitive development there are three stages. The first stage, egocentrism, involves a form of reasoning in which interpretations of reality are very subjective and concrete. As Muus (1982:254) explains:

> "Egocentrism" refers to the inability to clearly differentiate the nature of the subject-object interaction, or the subject-object relationship... Egocentric children...are unable to put themselves phenomenologically into the situation or the position of someone else because they are unaware that other people have a different point of view.

It is assumed, from the egocentric perspective, that whatever is perceived can be interpreted in only one way, which is the 'right' way as far as the egocentric is concerned. Environmental phenomena, whether physical or social, are assessed on the basis of the most obvious and tangible criteria from the perspective of ego. Relationships are interpreted in terms of their bearing on or relevance to ego, and in terms of their immediately apparent form. The egocentric is either unable or unwilling to delve beyond superficial evidence in understanding and explaining environmental phenomena. Such probing and analysis requires the greater subtlety of a higher order of reasoning.

Although most of the recent research has indicated that egocentric thinking seems to be peculiar to children and adolescents, Piaget's theories imply that this kind of reasoning is possible not only at the concrete operations level, but can re-emerge in a slightly more

sophisticated form at the higher level of formal operations, which involves perspective taking and abstract evaluation. However, according to Wegner (1977) most of the findings indicate that the movement from concrete to abstract evaluation is accompanied by an equivalent shift from egocentrism to non-egocentrism. Whether there is anything to the notion that cognitive development is tied to chronological age during the average life span, is currently a matter of great controversy in this field. At present there is insufficient evidence to conclusively prove any particular position (see Loevinger, 1976). My own casual observations would incline me to support Piaget's view, that egocentric reasoning can re-emerge even after individuals have acquired some formal operational reasoning strategies. In any case, the process of change from egocentrism to non-egocentrism was described by Piaget as 'decentering'.

As an individual decenters, he or she moves from the assumption that his/her view or interpretation of reality is the only right way of knowing things, to the recognition that different, yet equally valid interpretations of phenomena and events can be and are held by other individuals. In this process, the individual becomes conscious of the possibility that he or she can, and should, take such other points of view into account when making assessments and interpretations. When the individual begins to reason in this manner, he or she has begun to take the role of the other, and has begun to perceive social reality as a multi-dimensional, inter-personal construct. Decentering can be described as a recurring process by which individuals move from states

of narrower to more open-mindedness.

When new information or stimuli cannot be integrated satisfactorily into the individual's conceptual framework, he or she is thrown into a state of disequilibrium, and is moved to find another framework within which all perceived stimuli can be integrated. In moving from a limited conceptual framework to something more accommodating, the individual is forced to develop new and more sophisticated reasoning strategies. Piaget describes this as the process of equilibration. The end result of equilibration is the state of equilibrium. However, as Piaget conceives it, equilibrium is never a permanent condition, for, ever and always, new and more challenging stimuli are perceived, confronting the individual as he or she moves through life, which plunge the person into successive cycles of equilibration and temporary phases of equilibrium. Through such a process, the individual slowly moves from preoperational, to concrete operational, to advanced formal operational thinking, with previous modes of reasoning becoming integrated components of the more sophisticated reasoning strategies. The dominant mode of reasoning at any period of the individual's life affects interpretation of reality and behaviour. Thus, both prejudice, stereotyping and ethnocentrism, as well as discrimination such as ethnic name-calling can be viewed as functions of achieved level of cognitive development. In this manner individuals move from nondifferentiation, to differentiation, to coordination, and from egocentrism, by degrees, to sociocentrism. This developmental progression emerges from the dialectic between the developing organism (individual) and the challenges thrown forth by his

or her social and physical environment.

In her very illuminating article, Kathleen Metz (1980) explains how an individual's social cognition is a function of achieved level of cognitive development. She also shows that there is empirical evidence from research into social cognition of children which supports Piaget's model. Thus, according to her analysis, there appears to be evidence of correspondence between egocentrism and the two least sophisticated types of thinking strategies: preoperational thinking and concrete operations. In terms of social cognition, preoperational thinking is characterized by naive sociocentrism in which the young child seems to be unconcerned or unaware of social groups, and is inclined to believe that everybody is the same as self. In concrete operations, the next level, social cognition, involves unsophisticated differentiation on the basis of readily apparent criteria such as skin colour, clothing styles, accents, etc., which differ from one's own group.

Ethnocentrism, according to Metz, is a reflection of early formal operations thinking which seems to consist of two slightly different outgroup perceptions. These are intra-group correspondence and inter-group correspondence. At this stage the individual begins to perceive that various attributes tend to correspond, or occur together. This leads the individual to recognize that a social group can be identified by more than one attribute, allowing for the perception of own and other groups in terms of complexes of criteria rather than in terms of unidimensional characteristics used in concrete operations. At this stage

there is a greater reliance on stereotypes, both for own and other group identification and evaluation, and there is a conscious emphasis on own group superiority. Toward the end of the ethnocentric stage the individual appears to begin discerning that separate groups might have some attributes in common. At this end of the ethnocentric stage, also, perceptions of outgroups become less rigid, although there still remains an inclination toward ingroup bias.

Following Metz's analysis, the final stage is sociocentrism which requires advanced formal operations thinking. At this stage the individual is aware of shared attributes among all social groups. In Metz's words (1980:13), at this stage the individual recognizes "that one's own group is one among many" and that "otherness is relative". At this stage there would be increasingly less credibility given to and reliance upon group stereotypes.

It should be noted here, that neither Piaget nor Metz claims that the transition from one cognitive level to another is sudden, but rather, that it occurs through a gradual process of decentering. Because most of the empirical evidence supporting this model has been derived from studies of children, and because this particular research is concerned with ethnic conflict among children, the following section will focus on international and national findings in the matter of children's perceptions of issues related to ethnicity.

4.3 INTERNATIONAL FINDINGS

According to Pushkin and Veness (1973), the results of various studies in the U.S., Britain, and New Zealand done between 1929 and 1971, indicate that among children between the ages of three and seven, there seems to be an increasing ability to identify racial differences accurately. The age of four seems to be a pivotal year, when most children show a marked improvement in this kind of differentiation. With the exception of the Laishley (1971) study in England, it has been found that white children in this age range were more often correct in recognizing their group membership than were children of visible minorities. These tended to identify themselves as 'white' in significant numbers until about the age of seven when this trend corrected itself (Clark and Clark, 1947; Stevenson and Stewart, 1958; Morland, 1958; Judith Porter, 1971; Vaughan, 1964). It would seem, therefore, that in noting racial differences, children engage in simple evaluation even at an early age (Goodman, 1952). However, this kind of differentiation is not consistently apparent among children until about four and a half years of age. Before that time, most children are inclined to identify themselves by their given name, rather than by ethnicity. In general, after this age, in young children the process of self-identification seems to be significantly influenced by the attitudes prevailing in the larger society toward their particular group. Overall, the findings between 1929 and 1971 have suggested that the phenomenon of self-rejection indicated by a preference of visible minority group children for white playmates and dolls, and mis-self-identification is a

consequence of the prevailing social attitudes and evaluations of the various minority groups within a society. It appears that even very young children assimilate such norms, even though they may not really comprehend the reasons for them.

However, since the late 1960's, a growing number of researches have cast doubt on the self-rejection phenomenon. Laishley (1971), for example, found no evidence of racial awareness in children between the ages of three and five plus. She noted, however, that these children all lived in an area with no significant inter-racial tension. Similarly, Morland (1969) found that in Hong Kong, where there is no racially distinct dominant majority, children of various racially diverse groups in the population had no problem with self-identification.

On the issue of preference, in Haifa, Tajfel et al. (1972) discovered that despite official efforts to discourage status distinctions between the Sephardim and the Ashkenazim, children, nevertheless, were tuned into the subtle evaluations of these two groups in the society. They revealed this in their preference, increasing with age, for the European 'type'. Yet Marsh (1970) in a study of West Indian children fostered in white middle class British homes found that group differentiation in children was not necessarily congruent with negative stereotyping. In such homes both white and West Indian foster-siblings indicated that they would quite like to possess each other's skin colour. These various findings suggest that along with differentiation as a

natural outcome of cognitive development, the attitudes and emotions which a child associates with different groups will be a function of what he or she learns or hears about them from others, including the various mentors in the environment.

Pushkin and Veness (1973) also note, on the basis of their review of several decades of findings in various parts of the world, that intergroup attitudes seem to be a function of cognitive development; that as children mature they display a notable integration of their views vis-a-vis outgroups in general, and specific outgroups, in particular. Furthermore, youngsters seem to become more entrenched in their opinions on these matters as they age. Since most of the studies reviewed by Pushkin and Veness focused on children up to about the age of eight, it is interesting that similar researches of adolescent and undergraduate university subjects show the same trend of increasing consistency in ethnic attitudes (Blake and Dennis, 1943; Frenkel-Brunswick, 1953; Goodnow and Tagiuri, 1952; Triandis and Triandis, 1960; Vaughan, 1962). Allport (1954:79) observed that there seemed to be a connection between college education and more tolerant intergroup attitudes.

On the issue of self-acceptance and self-esteem, it appears that, as Louden (1981) explains:

> ...an individual secure in his own group may find the majority group evaluations irrelevant, but (this) does not imply that he feels his ethnic group to be superior.

This also implies that given certain social conditions, self-concept,

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and therefore self-esteem need not be negative even if one's group is negatively stereotyped in the system (Ray, 1974; Louden, 1981; Davey, 1983; Heaven et al., 1984; Clark, 1986).

On the matter of inter-group contact, the results are controversial. Vaughan and Thompson (1961) found in New Zealand, that in a sample of twelve to sixteen year olds, low interethnic contact seemed to increase unfavourable outgroup attitudes. This would support Allport's (1954) suggestion that prejudice may be reduced between groups of similar status when they had certain goals in common. Yet, Das (1962) in India, and Ray (1983) in Australia did not find that contact made any substantial difference to negative outgroup attitudes. In these later studies, the subjects were adults. Therefore there may be generational and situational influences bearing upon inter-group perceptions.

With regard to conceptual criteria, evidence from the bulk of the studies indicates that the most popular criteria of differentiation, across all age groups, appears to be distinctive physical markers such as skin colour, and the paraphernalia of social class, such as quality of housing, clothing, and other material economic manifestations. These are all concrete criteria in that they are readily perceived by the senses.

As individuals mature it appears that concrete criteria, already established as markers of differentiation and evaluation, are combined with abstract criteria such as religion and nationality, to buttress the

outgroup attitudes held by individuals. In general, it seems that the inclusion of abstract criteria as a factor of group differentiation and outgroup attitude is not successfully engaged until somewhere between the ages of nine and eleven (Piaget and Weil, 1951; Lambert and Klineberg, 1959; Jahoda, 1962; Tajfel, 1966). An interesting finding in this matter of abstract criteria was found by Radke et al. (1949), who noted that as early as age six and a half, simple abstractions such as the name or label of ethnic groups was shown to be sufficient for arousing negative reactions among children toward certain groups. The authors assumed that such labels brought to the children's minds the social stereotypes of the various groups named.

Alfred Davey's (1983) research in England is the most recent large scale international study pertinent to this discussion. This focused on prejudice among children in various parts of the country. The aim of this study was to discover the ethnic criteria used by white, West Indian, and Asian children, aged between seven and ten-plus, in group differentiation, group comparison, and in self-identification, as well as assessing the role of parents in the development of intergroup attitudes of their children. The subjects were located in three areas: one of high contact among the three aforementioned groups; one of some inter-group contact; and one area in which there were no visible minority groups resident.

In contrast to evidence of self rejection or mis-self-identification found in other studies (cited earlier in this chapter), Davey

found that visible minority children in his sample had no problem with correct self-identification as far as group membership was concerned. Preference test results showed that visible minority children in the sample recognized that white children held the most favoured position "in the social pecking order" (Davey, 1983:99). All children, significantly, preferred their own group. But, while white children were more exclusive in their preference for whites, both West Indian and Asian children included white children in their preference assignments, that is, they were less exclusive in their choice of preferred playmates. Yet, children of both visible minorities did not include members of each other's groups in their preference assignments. It would appear, therefore, that white children in this sample were more ethnocentric than the children of either of the two visible minority groups (Davey, 1983:117-119).

In the matter of stereotypes, all children assigned favourable stereotypes to their own group. White children were more inclined to see their own group in a favourable light, exclusively. The children of the two visible minorities in the sample "described whites and their own group in complimentary terms, but were reciprocally derogatory to each other" (Davey, 1983:121). In all tests white children were significantly more ethnocentric than minority group children, while the children of both minority groups tended "to favour the white group at the expense of each other" (Davey, 1983:130). Finally, Davey (1983:118) found that:

> Despite a few minor variations, neither the sex or
> age of the children, the ethnic composition of the

schools or their location in the north or the sourth
of the country significantly change(d) the overall
rank order for any of the three groups.

In summary, although all children recognized that being white was more socially desirable than being a member of a visible minority, all children were ethnocentric. White children were inclined to be more ethnocentric than the others. No children had problems with correct self-identification. Children of both visible minority groups were more positively inclined toward white children than they were toward each other. In the matters of self-identification, preference assignment and in stereotyping, Davey (1983:173) found that the children made "extensive use of ethnic distinctions in their attempts to structure the social world and to understand their place in it".

The indications from this study and those discussed earlier in this chapter are that children make social differentiations on the basis of visible criteria such as skin colour from a young age, and that their attitudes toward outgroups reflect the stereotypes prevailing in the society of which they are a part. The ethnocentrism and rank ordering of groups displayed by the children in Davey's (1983) sample seem to reflect the competitive tensions among the groups in their society.

The foregoing studies appear to support the notion that social structure, symbolic interaction, and cognitive development, in combination, encourage the growth and persistence of ethnic conflict in plural societies. The research findings suggest that reliance on customary

rules of differentiation and evaluation of ethnic groups is tied to the first two levels of social cognition; i.e., egocentrism and ethnocentrism. Research also indicates that ethnocentric cognition emerges at the preadolescent stage (Shantz, 1975), but that this mode of perception continues to influence attitudes and behaviour in adolescents and some proportion of adults (Flavell, 1963; Elkind, 1967; Kohlberg; Selman; in Muus, 1984). The research data also indicates that youngsters at both the egocentric and ethnocentric stage of cognition are significantly influenced in their evaluations of own and outgroups by prevailing social norms and mentors, especially their parents.

4.4   CANADIAN DATA

In a study of ethnocentrism among grade five to grade thirteen students Kalin (1979) discovered that this type of centrism appeared to decrease with grade level, while sociocentrism increased accordingly. He also noted that children were more open than adults to the official multicultural ideology promulgated in 1971 by the federal government. Taylor et al. (1971) researched the outgroup attitudes among sample populations of adults in Montreal, Kingston, and Edmonton. Their findings supported Louden's (1981) conclusion that self-esteem and own group pride are conducive to the development of positive outgroup evaluations. This study also revealed that cultural insecurity was evident among less educated residents of Kingston, Ontario as well as among well educated Francophone Montrealers and similarly educated, ethnically

diverse, Edmontonians. Since this was at the beginning of a period of national re-orientation on ethnic and linguistic issues, it would seem that Canadians from all walks of life were sensitive to the political and economic implications of bilingualism and multiculturalism. These sentiments are still heard across the country despite official proclamations and instrumental policies over the past decade and a half (e.g., Manitoba Languages Debate, 1984; Saskatchewan Bilingualism Policy, 1988; Quebec: Bill 101, pending; Alberta Languages Bill, pending). One would assume, therefore, that the cultural insecurity noted by Taylor et al., still colours Canadian perceptions of each other.

In 1982, Kehoe analyzed the responses of 700 grade five students with regard to matters of ethnocentrism, self-esteem, and attitudes toward cultural diversity in Canada. Once again Louden's findings were corroborated. The higher the subject's self-esteem, the more accommodating the outgroup attitude and the greater the appreciation of cultural diversity.

In 1981, Driedger and Mezoff published findings of a 1971 study which had looked at perceptions of ethnic conflict and tension among Winnipeg high school students. The results of this study showed that although reports of outright discrimination were low, some students were inclined to negatively stereotype other ethnic groups in general, and some ethnic groups in particular. Further, Jewish and Italian students reported being the targets of ethnic derogation. Visible minorities were not included in this sample because their numbers, at that time,

were small.

Ten years later, at the time of the Hryniuk et al. (1982) study, the visible minority population in Winnipeg had increased substantially. This study involved a sample of 520 junior high school students in the city. A number of the findings are pertinent to this discussion. First, there seemed to be a general consensus among the students that their ethnicity was congruent to Canadian identity. In addition students had comparably positive evaluations of their own group, and of outgroups. This was interpreted by the authors of the study as an indication of a general acceptance of the multicultural ideology. However, although outgroup and ingroup evaluations were generally positive across the board, there were some variations which are relevant to this study. Most positive in self-esteem were the British and the French students. Outgroup evaluations of these two ethnic groups differed in that the French were perceived in slightly less positive terms than they perceived themselves, and somewhat less favourably than the British were perceived. These findings support the evidence of many of the studies mentioned earlier, that a healthy self-esteem and positive attitudes about one's own group seem to be coupled with favourable attitudes toward cultural diversity. However, despite this atmosphere of amicability, there was a sour note. Members of visible minorities, including Canadian Indians were viewed less favourably than other ethnic groups, and their own group self-evaluations were somewhat less positive than the same kinds of evaluations within other groups. The authors were led to conclude that negative sentiments seemed to have

increased toward certain elements in the ethnic spectrum in Winnipeg.

In 1985, Clifton and Perry used the findings of the Hryniuk et al. study and the earlier Driedger and Mezoff study for comparative analysis. Their findings indicated that the difference in the rise of ethnic prejudice from 1971 to 1981 appeared to be a function of a general increase of ethnocentrism in this city, rather than to the difference in age between the high school and junior high school students. They also noted that favoured target groups were visible minorities, Jews and Russians.

Finally, the findings of the 1981 study were used again in 1986, by Clifton et al., to assess the relationship (if any) between teachers' prejudgments of students' abilities and ethnic identity or gender. It was found that social stereotypes, both ethnic and gender based influenced teachers' expectations of student performance. Among the ethnic groups to be negatively stereotyped were French, Canadian Indian and Portuguese students. The results of these Canadian investigations support the findings of international studies mentioned earlier in this text. Of particular interest in the Canadian context is the evidence pointing to the presence of ethnocentrism and racism in inter-group perceptions among young and not-so-young Canadians, despite official decrees and claims to the contrary. At the same time, the multicultural ideology seems to have been an active agent in encouraging acceptance of diverse groups in the cultural milieu and in influencing positive ingroup evaluations. All this bonhommie seems to hit an invisible wall,

however, when it comes to changing the traditional attitudes toward visible minorities.

4.5   PARENTING

It should be evident by now, that children do not concoct ethnic attitudes on their own. Their perceptions and evaluations of own and other groups are tremendously influenced by their social environment. Most notable in this environment are the parents, who until children reach a cognitive level which allows them to doubt, assess and interpret for themselves, serve as the primary sources of wisdom, guidance and security. Such abstractions as social norms, values, political relations and moral alternatives are introduced to the child by the parents first, and later, in places outside the home. The important question here is whether children learn social attitudes as a consequence of parental style of discipline, direct instruction by the parents, or through all the subtle and overt cues about social relations parents transmit to children in the course of generally minding them.

Although much has been written on the subject of socialization, Alfred Davey's (1982) study seems to relate better than others to this discussion, on this and other issues. From his perspective, although parents are primary socializers in a child's life, they are not the only source of important socialization for the youngster. Once the child's world expands to include the playground and school, in whatever form,

the importance of parents in the socialization process diminishes some-
what. It should be noted here, that many of our children begin nursery
school around the age of three. Therefore, they are exposed to multiple
social influences from a early age. Television is yet another source of
influence on the child's development. Even so, the parents in the
child's world represent a steady beacon, and therefore, probably still
remain influential despite the competition.

Much of past research in the field of ethnic relations on the issue
of parental influence has held that children who are ethnocentric have
parents who are strict, domineering, and harsh when it comes to dis-
pensing discipline (Adorno et al., 1950). Such types of parents are
described in the literature as authoritarian. It has been held for some
time now, that authoritarian parents tend to raise children who develop
ethnocentric, frustrated personalities. Such children, in turn, may go
out looking for scapegoats on whom they might vent their frustrations.
In due course, these children grow up to be adult authoritarians with,
for example, rigid views on the proper placement of various groups with
the social hierarchy. Their narrow views on who belongs where and why
cause them to treat their offspring as they were treated, and the cycle
repeats itself. Thus, according to this view, plural societies are
saddled with new ethnocentrics or racists in each generation. Whether
this theory sufficiently explains the roots of ethnocentrism still
remains a matter of debate. Even Frenkel-Brunswick (1953:135), a
notable advocate and researcher of this theory, observed that not only
psychological, but sociological and economic influences need to be taken

into account in the study of ethnocentrism.

More germane to this discussion, as the preceding chapters have indicated, is the notion that the individual is swayed toward certain attitudes and opinions about various social groups by assimilating the prevailing belief system of society. A child's primary source of such information is the parents, who transmit social norms to the child in the course of daily interaction. Children, on their part, assimilate the views of their parents without necessarily being aware that they are doing so, and without much formal instruction on the matter. In other words, ethnocentrism is part of the general social learning process which begins in the home. Within the home children are exposed to particular patterns of social differentiation and evaluation, which include social stereotypes. This generally ad hoc information provides youngsters with their first set of behavioural repertoires for situations of inter-ethnic contact. Davey (1983:147-148) observes that:

> ...even in the absence of deliberate attempts to
> inculcate in children a particular point of view,
> ...children's attitudes towards minority groups will
> be fashioned indirectly through the kind of social
> education in human relationships provided by paren-
> tal example, and the beliefs and sentiments implicit
> in their reactions to various cultural differences.

This knowledge does not preclude the possibility for change in a child's interpretation of experience. What this approach suggests is that the beginning of social cognition is stimulated by parental example, and that this example is most influential until the child begins to think for itself. Prior to that achievement, parental attitudes, advice, and behaviour in the face of ethnic problems will be most important in the

development of social cognition. Since the data indicates that children don't begin to move into formal operational thinking until early adolescence, as a rule, it would seem that the elementary grades include children who would generally rely on their parents as role models in the matter of own group evaluation, outgroup evaluation, and in the matter of resolving problems of ethnic conflict, such as ethnic name-calling.

Davey's (1983) study, as noted earlier on, also sought interviews with parents on issues related to ethnic relations and their children. Among the various matters parents were asked to discuss, were queries about how they would respond in the event their children were involved in incidents that smacked of racism. The parents were presented with three types of incidents, and were asked to describe what they would do in the event of each circumstance. The three situations were:

   a) The child of the parent refuses to sit beside a
       child from a different ethnic group in class.
       What should the teacher do in such a situation, as
       far as the parent is concerned.

   b) The child comes home and reports being taunted
       with ethnic slurs. How would the parent deal with
       this problem?

   c) The parent learns that his/her child has been
       taunting others with ethnic slurs. What action
       would the parent take in such a circumstance.

Through these questions, Davey and his team were hoping to (1983:157):

       ...learn how much support parents were likely to
       give a teacher confronting discriminatory behaviour,
       and how they might use the incidents to impart some
       understanding of intergroup relations.

On the matter of the classroom incident, the white parents were

slightly divided, in that those living in the 'no contact' area expected the teacher to take firm, insistent action in such a case. Those white parents living in the two contact areas felt that the teacher should use persuasion rather than calling for immediate compliance. Asian parents in the high contact area were similar to the white parents in the 'no contact' area, in that they felt that the teacher should take firm charge of the situation, while those Asian parents living in the medium contact area were not sure about this, and felt that it was up to the teacher's discretion how the situation should be handled. The West Indian parents were the most unanimous of all three ethnic groups in their opinion that the classroom incident should be handled quickly and unequivocally by the teacher.

With regard to their children's reports of experiencing ethnic name-calling, white parents would counsel their children to ignore this; Asian parents would not encourage their children to reciprocate, but would investigate the incident in some way. The West Indian parents were divided on this issue. Half would instruct their children to ignore such incidents, while the other half would instruct their children to retaliate in kind. In the situation where their own children were doing the name-calling, all parents would reproach their children. Twenty-five percent of the Asian parents also said that they would punish their children in some way for such behaviour.

These three questions were only a part of the parental interview in this study. Overall, Davey and his team found that parents across the

board disapproved of discriminatory behaviour and attitudes in their children and were aware that they were responsible for providing some kind of guidance to their children on matters of inter-group relations. However, Davey noted that across all groups parents were handicapped in their skills and knowledge of how to go about this kind of instruction, and he also noted that they were aware of their shortcomings in this area. Many parents looked to the school to make up for their short-comings in this area of learning, and when faced with questions about inter-ethnic matters, would instruct their children to read a book about it or find out at school. The majority of parents supported the notion that schools should offer more instruction on multicultural issues. Thus, although parents discouraged ethnocentric behaviour and attitudes in their children, many parents admitted to not knowing enough about ethnic issues to feel confident in discussing and guiding their children in these matters.

4.6 SUMMARY

In conclusion, individuals are compelled to make sense of their world by categorizing all phenomena in the environment on the basis of the classification system of the culture in which they are brought up. Categorization is a normal and necessary human activity. Names for things, events, and people, either as individuals or as groups are part of this cultural classification scheme. Such terms accumulate conno-tations as a consequence of social history, and not all of these

connotations leave a favourable image in the minds of individuals. Ethnic group names, for example, can, for a wide range of reasons acquire negative connotations. The bias of such terms informs the individual with regard to appropriate attitude and action, toward, for example, a derogated ethnic group. The derogatory terms, also inform the members of the referent ethnic group, how others perceive them and how they are appraised in the society. Thus terms of ethnic derogation have reciprocal effects on users and targets in the society. However, central to the linguistic and social aspect of inter-personal relations is the matter of cognitive development. Although, theoretically at least, it seems that we all can eventually achieve a higher order of reasoning, which would cause us to become disinclined to rely on gross generalizations or to take stereotypes at their face value, it appears that most children, many adolescents and some proportion of adults function on the basis of more narrow minded and facile reasoning strategies when it comes to generalizations and social stereotypes. Furthermore, at this level of reasoning, criteria of identification and differentiation are most commonly concrete, such as skin colour, quality of clothing, quality of housing, etc. Researchers have dubbed the less mature social perspectives, respectively, as egocentrism and ethnocentrism. Thus, from the view of social cognition, it is not only what is already floating around in the cultural environment in terms of social stereotypes that causes individuals to behave in ethnocentric, or racist ways, but it is that in combination with individual level of cognitive development which causes people to discriminate on the basis of group membership. However, the social cognition model of cognitive

development is optimistic in that it holds that the individual can be stimulated to move beyond ethnocentric thinking by challenges which arise in the social environment.

A review of the research on children's views on ethnicity indicates that children can become aware of ethnic differences at a very early age and that this awareness is generally a consequence of what they hear, see, and observe in the attitudes and behaviours of the mentors in their world, including parents, regardless whether there is any attempt at formal instruction on these matters or not, or perhaps despite formal instruction. From the Davey report we learned that although parents do not want their children to hold or to act on the basis of negative outgroup attitudes, they are generally at a loss as to how to best go about teaching intergroup understanding in their young charges.

With regard to the problem of ethnic name-calling, the parents interviewed in Davey's study indicated that they would either tell their children to ignore the incident; to reciprocate in kind or retaliate; or they would proceed with some sort of investigation into the reported incident. The aim of this study was to re-examine this issue of responses to ethnophaulism by interviewing parents.

It should be mentioned here that Davey's study differs from this inquiry in many important ways. This is a qualitative study, whereas his was quantitative. The sample in this study consisted of thirty-nine informants, with reference made by parents to a total of fifty-three

children. In Davey's research the sample consisted of five hundred and twenty-three parents, and included five hundred and forty-four children, all of whom were directly involved in the study. With regard to the types of questions asked, in this inquiry parents were asked to describe and explain what they did when their children complained about being a target of ethnic name-calling. In Davey's survey of prejudice in Great Britain, parents were asked, among other things, what they would say if their child reported being called names by a child of a different skin colour to their own (Davey, 1983:190). In Davey's study, therefore, the parents were asked to comment on an hypothetical situation, while in this inquiry, parents were asked to report the measures they had actually taken in connection with their child's report of a name-calling incident. Given these dissimilarities, the two studies cannot be compared at all points. But, differences notwithstanding, Davey's findings in the area of parental responses to ethnic name-calling provide a useful standard for assessing the results of this inquiry.

Chapter V

METHODOLOGY

Since so little is known at present about responses to ethnic dero-
gation, this study has been, necessarily, an exploratory one. Given the
exploratory nature of the inquiry, and given the intrinsically symbolic
and interactive nature of ethnic name-calling, the qualitative research
method was chosen as being most appropriate for this study. From the
beginning of research this inquiry has been guided by the qualitative
research method known as "grounded theory" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967,
1970).

Qualitative research is intimately linked with notions of symbolic
interactionism which hold that social reality is constructed through the
singular style of human communication via which social objects are
defined and represented by symbols or words. As a consequence, human
beings interact on the basis of the meanings which they hold in common
in the language of a culture. One important tenet of qualitative
research holds that to truly know and understand what people do and why
they do it, the social scientist must take into account what the actors,
themselves, have to say on the subject of inquiry based on their own
experiences and comprehensions. The goal of qualitative research is not
necessarily to prove theory, as much as it is to enhance our under-
standing and awareness of social phenomena by discovering patterns

of social behaviour. The findings of such research are presented through ideographic accounts of the data which are faithful to the meaning system of their sources. In this process, the researcher functions as a conduit through which information on a particular topic is channeled by informants at one end, and from which such information emerges in an integrated form at the other, as a report, for example, presenting the findings of a particular study.

In addition to stressing symbolic interaction, qualitative research emphasizes cultural and historic context, holism and subjectivity. These are held to be important and inseparable features of any indepth study of human social phenomena, such as ethnophaulism. To this end, data is collected from an eclectic range of sources, for it is assumed that the broader the range, the better the data base. By taking into account the findings and interpretations of the subject of inquiry from interdisciplinary sources, the researcher acquires an holistic perspective on a given problem, and the validity of any generalizations which may emerge from the study is enhanced because they will be grounded im empirical reality as well as being bolstered by the knowledge accumulated on the matter in a number of disciplines. This approach to data collection has been described in the literature as theoretical sampling (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, 1970).

Once a researcher embarks on data collection, whether this be review of relevant literature or actual fieldwork, the inquiry has begun. From this perspective, therefore, the data base for this

particular study began to develop with the review and analysis of published materials on ethnophaulism, stereotypy, symbolic interaction, social cognition, prejudice and discrimination among children, and the history of ethnic relations in Canada. This information, in turn, directed the fieldwork in such matters as choosing the target population, deciding on sampling procedure, devising the interview schedule, and determining interview procedures. Hence, the fieldwork aspect of this inquiry represents only one of several sources of information in this study. However, from the perspective of grounded theory, the empirical data produced by the fieldwork can serve to affirm or to challenge the findings of other scientific ventures on the same subject matter, and should contribute to the enhancement of knowledge and understanding of a given social phenomenon. In fact, the fieldwork in this inquiry both confirms the views advanced on ethnophaulism by a number of social scientists, and goes beyond the findings of Davey's (1983) research, as will be shown in the next chapter.

The review of past and current ethnic relations in Canada indicated that the most appropriate target population for this inquiry would be the category "visible minorities" which includes natives as well as immigrants. The relevant literature on discrimination and prejudice among children revealed that youngsters tend to begin identifying and assessing others on the basis of easily discernible criteria such as skin colour, accents, customary dress, and other tangible indicators of ethnic identity from about the age of four and one-half years. This implies that from about this age, children might likely begin to engage

in or become the targets of ethnic derogation. It was assumed that children up to, but not including, the adolescent level would be most likely to report such experiences to their parents, or would be most in-clined to seek the advice or assistance of their parents in dealing with ethnic name-calling. It was therefore decided that the phenomenal group for this inquiry would be parents who identified themselves as being members of a visible minority, whose children had reported experiencing ethnic name-calling when in grade six or below.

A target figure of thirty to forty interviews had been set as being reasonable in terms of manageability and sufficient in terms of provid-ing an acceptable data base for the fieldwork. If at all possible, the sample was to include an even representation of middle and working class families, or a fairly widespread range of residential areas in the city of Winnipeg, the premise being that with a more inclusive representation of socio economic levels, there would be a greater likelihood of dis-covering a broad range of responses and attitudes toward ethnophaulism.

The sample was reached using the snowballing technique, whereby informants put the researcher in touch with new informants. In addition to using this method for creating the sample several other strategies were used. On two occasions the researcher simply walked into ethnic social service agencies, described the research objectives, and asked for assistance. In both instances group interviews were granted and arranged. Members of the Thesis Advisory Committee, and the researcher's relatives were another source of names of potential

informants. The chairman of the municipal Race Relations committee provided a useful list of contacts, some of whom, in their turn, suggested names of potential interviewees within their own ethnic communities, or actually arranged interviews. The targeted quota of interviews was reached, therefore, through the co-operation and assistance of many people.

Fieldwork commenced at the beginning of June, 1988, and was completed during the last week of August, 1988. During this period there were weeks during which no interviews took place either because of severe weather conditions (heatwave), or because of the public's preoccupation and involvement with Folklorama, a city-wide ethnic festival. About four weeks were lost due to these impediments, leaving about eight weeks during which the desired number of interviews was completed.

The list of potential informants which evolved during the course of the fieldwork included one hundred and twenty-five names. As a rule, three attempts were made to contact each name on the list by telephone over a span of two weeks. If there was no response after three tries, the name was deleted from the list. Ninety-eight people were actually reached by this method. Of this group, thirty-five refused to grant an interview. An additional eleven people, who for various reasons could not give an interview assisted by offering names of potential informants. In two cases, individuals were willing to participate, but it was not possible to find a mutually convenient time for meeting.

Thus, of the ninety-eight people actually contacted, fifty granted interviews. Eleven interviews were not included in the final sample because for a variety of reasons, they fell short of satisfying the aims of this inquiry. Thus, for the purposes of data analysis, the final sample consisted of thirty-nine informants.

Reasons for non-participation varied. Some people simply did not have time for an interview even though they admitted that their children had complained about ethnic name-calling. Others were unable to assist because their children had not complained to them about ethnic name-calling, although they suspected their children might have had such experiences. Still other parents, most of whom seemed to be in the upper middle class claimed that their children had never experienced this problem because they attended private schools. This claim was actually disproved by a number of informants who did grant interviews.

Certain ethnic groups proved difficult to engage in the research. Among the groups characterized by a large proportion of refugees, for example, the researcher was first informed that their children had never experienced ethnic derogation. Later, members of such groups pointed out that even if their children had had such experiences, it would be difficult to conduct interviews with parents because their English was limited. The researcher suggested that some young person might be engaged to serve as interpreter, but this idea did not appeal to community representatives. Finally, after some persistence, the researcher was granted interviews with carefully selected members of such communities.

It was pointed out by such informants that, as refugees, they were so grateful for the opportunity of settling in this country, that the last thing they wanted to do was to engage in negative criticism of this society. Several informants also pointed out that children of refugees usually speak better English than their parents and that such parents are often preoccupied with the various practical and cultural problems of adjusting to this society. In such circumstances children are often expected to sort out their own problems, and are generally not encouraged to complain about things like ethnic name-calling at home. As a result, such children often do not seek out their parents in these matters, leaving the parents to assume that the children are having no problems of this sort.

Another state of affairs which made it difficult to engage informants from certain groups was the practice of moonlighting where both parents are occupied with holding down more than one job at a time. In such situations, not only are the opportunities for communication between parents and children more limited than they would be in families where moonlighting is not a factor, but such parents also tend to have less time to spare for interviews. Where this was a tendency, the researcher succeeded in locating informants only through the assistance of community leaders. In fact, it needs to be emphasized that many individual members of the various ethnic groups represented in this study generously expended a great deal of time and effort toward the recruitment of informants.

Most interviews took place at informants' homes which were located all over the city. No particular area of the city was notably over represented in the sample. Informants resided in all four geographic regions of Winnipeg and there was representation from each of the municipal communities; i.e., Assiniboine Park-Fort Garry; City Centre-Fort Rouge; East Kildonan-Transcona; Lord Selkirk-West Kildonan; St. Boniface -St. Vital; and St. James-Assiniboia. Residential areas included long established districts such as the Core Area and the North End, as well as the very new, middle class areas in St. Vital, Fort Richmond, and the Maples. Given this residential spread, one would have to conclude that the problem of ethnic name-calling in this city knows no class boundaries, for informants were more or less evenly distributed across the city. As well as interviewing people in their homes, the researcher held interviews in a variety of other settings such as ethnic community halls, informants' places of work, restaurants, and a hotel lobby. No particular setting was significantly better or worse than any other as far as quality of interviews was concerned.

Participants in the study varied in terms of age, educational backgrounds, and occupations. Parental ages ranged from twenty-five to over forty-five. With regard to educational backgrounds, the sample included parents with high school or less through to parents who had either completed or were in the process of completing post secondary technical training or advanced university studies. In the matter of occupations, parents represented the full range, from casual labour to highly skilled professionals. Included in the sample were people who were engaged in

janitorial and factory work, hairdressing, postal services, child care work, office work, and various types and levels of social work. Among informants were highly skilled individuals engaged in the communications and transportation industries, such as computer technicians and mechanics connected with the production of automotive and aeronautical equipment. Some informants were occupied in the field of education, from elementary school to the university level. As well, the sample included workers and highly skilled professionals in the fields of medicine and engineering. A few parents were retired; about a quarter of the sample were mothers who were not employed outside the home; and a small number of informants functioned as single parents. About half of the sample reported a family income of less than forty thousand dollars per annum.

The sample represents a fairly broad range of visible minorities residing in this city. Ten informants identified themselves as Native or Metis. Of these, half had grown up on Indian reserves and had moved to the city as young adults. Twelve informants identified themselves as Black. Included in this group were people from the Caribbean, Africa, as well as fourth generation Black-Canadians. Seventeen informants, were members of the Asian community. Among them were refugees, immigrants, and fourth generation Canadians. In this category were people of East Indian, including Sikh descent, in addition to people of Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, and Vietnamese origin.

Of the thirty-nine interviews used in the sample, five sessions

involved both parents. In the balance of interviews, either the mother or the father served as the primary informant for the family. During four sessions, the parents or parent chose to involve the children in the interview. Whenever this happened the children were quite informative and added much of value to the data base. In all, nine children, varying in age from nine to nineteen contributed to the discussions. Over all, the experiences of fifty-three children were reported by the parents in this sample. On two occasions the interviews involved groups of five to nine parents who had been brought together for the occasion by community leaders.

The first contact with a potential informant was usually by telephone. During this initial conversation, the goals of the research were explained, and the person was asked if they would be interested in granting an interview. In the case of interviews arranged by an ethnic community leader, the focus of inquiry was explained by such an individual to the potential informant. At this preliminary stage of the process, the interview approach was described; e.g., informal and unstructured as opposed to a rigid questionnaire format. Potential informants were also advised that they would be asked to respond to a few queries of a demographic nature. The fact that empirical data on the topic of inquiry was virtually nonexistent, and that the only experts on the matter, at present, appeared to be parents, was emphasized. Most of the people contacted were quick to appreciate that their input might serve toward the improvement of ethnic relations in and outside of the school system, and were therefore quite ready to assist the research in some

way.

Usually about three days elapsed between the initial discussion and the interview proper. At the beginning of each interview the goals of the study were explained again. Thus, all participants were fully aware of the research aims and the subject of discussion in advance of the interview. This gave each person time to collect their thoughts and memories on the subject of inquiry, as well as allowing ample opportunity for anyone to withdraw from the project should they so desire.

Informants were asked to sign a consent form indicating their willingness to participate in the study, and were offered a summary of the findings which would be sent out to them once the project was completed (Appendix C). The consent form included a brief statement about the research, assurance of complete anonymity, and an acknowledgment of the voluntary nature of informant participation. All participants endorsed the consent form. In addition to those who participated in interviews, a number of ethnic community leaders and individuals who assisted in recruiting informants requested a summary of the findings. All participants were asked to respond to a short demographic questionnaire (Appendix B). With the exception of one person who chose not to reveal family income bracket, all respondents completed the demographic questionnaire in full.

The interview approach used was the informal, unstructured open-ended style of the ethnographic interview. Thus, although the topic of

discussion was pre-established, the organization of the "story" was left to the informants, themselves. Following Spradley (1979), an interview schedule had been prepared in advance to serve as a general guide for the researcher, or for probing, if and when required (Appendix A). The interview schedule was not intended to be used, nor was it used as a questionnaire. This is in accordance with Spradley's (1979:59) inter-pretation of the ethnographic interview process as a friendly conversa-tion with an explicit purpose in which the informant is the expert. In almost all cases, because they had been informed of the research topic in advance, informants simply embarked on a detailed monologue during the interview, dealing with most of the areas of inquiry outlined in the interview schedule without having to be asked direct questions. Of the set of queries in the interview schedule, one or more of questions twelve to fifteen, inclusive, had to be asked directly (Appendix A). These questions concerned the importance of ethnic name-calling on the individual over the long term; the importance of ethnic name-calling as a social problem; and the roots of ethnophaulism.

Interviews lasted from one to four hours, with most averaging a little over an hour. Since more informants were involved at one sit-ting, group interviews were more time consuming and slightly more formal than individual interviews, because it was necessary to ensure that each participant had an opportunity to comment on all areas of the discus-sion. In general, there appeared to be no difference as far as what people said or revealed in either the individual or group settings. They were generally quite frank and open in all interviews with similar

types of observations and experiences being revealed in both settings. From the perspective of the researcher, and judging by the comments of participants, interviews were a stimulating and enjoyable experience for all concerned.

At the outset of fieldwork, the tape recorder was taken along to interview sessions. However, it was dispensed with after the first few interviews when it became apparent that informants were often uncomfortable with the idea of being recorded. With the exception of group interviews, which were taped, most of the individual interviews were recorded by note-taking. Each interview was transcribed immediately, or as soon as possible, after the session. There was very little time lag between an interview session and the transcribing process.

Information gathered during the fieldwork was unravelled through a form of content analysis described by Glaser (1969) as "constant comparison". This is a form of data examination which involves continual and systematic differentiation and organization of incoming data throughout the research process. The goal of constant comparison is the discernment of relationships, themes, and patterns within the expanding data base.

The first step in the analytic procedure began with the breaking down of a transcript into an inventory of separate points of relevant or noteworthy information. This was done immediately after the transcript was completed. The inventory, the completed demographic questionnaire,

and the transcript were then set aside for more indepth scrutiny after the fieldwork was completed. At this stage, no direct attempt was made to correlate the points isolated from one transcript with those of any other in the data base. However, because this procedure occurred in tandem with the data gathering process, the researcher did begin to notice related clusters of information both within and across inventories during fieldwork. These perceived relationships were noted for future reference, and were considered and evaluated during later stages of the data analysis.

When the fieldwork was completed, each point noted in the inventories was double checked in the transcripts to ascertain that informants' intended meanings had been accurately represented and interpreted. This review often led to the expansion of transcript inventories. Following this, each inventory was studied for areas of semantic or conceptual overlap or similarity among the points abstracted from a transcript. The same procedure was next applied across all inventories. The result of this exercise was a set of categories representing the fusion of related points in the inventories. This process of comparison and differentiation was repeated several times, leading to a reduction of the number, but an increase in the scope, of categories. At each stage of content analysis, results were tabulated, so that at the end of the process, the category titles in combination with the tabulations allowed for the emergence of types of responses to ethnophaulism.

Content analysis was also applied to the demographic information supplied by informants. The results of this were interconnected or crossed, at each stage, with those raised from the transcript analysis. The object here was to discover whether any particular types of conditions were connected with any particular types of responses to ethnophaulism. This correlation of the two types of data made it possible for any significant relationships existing within the entire data base to rise to the surface.

The results of content analysis were then compared with, and studied for their relevance to the four questions guiding this inquiry:

(a) types of responses parents recommended their children make to ethnophaulism;

(b) actions, if any, taken by parents on behalf of their children in such situations;

(c) interpretations of, or meaning attached to ethnic name-calling by parents;

(d) significance or importance of ethnophaulism on individual development from the parental perspective.

Chapter VI

THE FINDINGS

As indicated by the four questions listed on the previous page, the aims of this inquiry were twofold. One objective, explicated in the first two questions, was to discover what parents had actually done to assist their children or to help them cope with the problem of ethnic name-calling. The findings pertaining to this objective will be presented in section two of this chapter. The other objective, represented by the last two questions in the aims, was to discover how parents interpreted ethnophaulism, both in terms of its impact on the developing individual, and in terms of its role or significance within the context of our multicultural society. This chapter will begin with the presentation of findings concerning the effects of ethnic derogation on the individual, and those findings concerning its social significance, as interpreted by informants.

6.1 Ethnophaulisms and Parental Definitions

In this study, ethnophaulisms were defined as terms of degradation used at the informal, face-to-face level of social life to delimit and downgrade the identity and social location of individuals who belong to discrete ethnic groups within a plurality. According to Ehrlich (1973),

such terms can take one of several forms, such as group nicknames, disparaging phrases, and figures of speech containing negative allusions to specific ethnic groups. Although it was not an aim of this inquiry to produce a lexicon of ethnic slurs used in our society, a number of such terms was mentioned by informants. Some derogatory terms reported by participants in this study were: paki, nigger, chink, jap, stupid or dirty Indian, squaw, the last of the Mohicans, blackie, chocolate, fudge face, tar baby, brown skin, black ass, slit eyes, flat nose, and black whore. Other types of ethnophaulism included teasing about scalps, mentioned by Native informants, and the intentional distortion of given names into irritating or offensive homonyms in English. Some informants stated that, in their view, ethnic jokes were included in this genre of verbal discrimination, and were felt to be equally as offensive as ethnic nicknames and derogatory phrases.

Participants in this study often went into detail in describing the incidents of ethnic derogation experienced by their children, and the effects such situations had on the behaviour of their children. Fifty-three children were referred to during these discussions, and of these, nine children actually contributed to the interviews. The vast majority (forty-nine) of the children showed that they had felt hurt or humiliated. Many cried, others became moody, irritable, or withdrawn. Some children tried to avoid going to school, or were 'sick' quite often when the harassment was going on, using this as an excuse for staying away from school. In addition, some children became behaviour problems both at home and at school while the problem persisted.

Once something had been done to put an end to the verbal abuse they were receiving from school mates, the parents noticed that their children returned to their normal behaviour, as it had been before the trouble started. When asked to describe how they had felt when they were being teased like this, children stated:

- when they called me names, I felt confused and felt like crying.

- when they keep bugging you like that, it makes you feel lower, worthless. You try to block it out.

- I didn't like my skin colour then, because they were making fun of it. They were calling me names. So I didn't like it. I felt really bad, and I didn't like myself.

Over half (thirty-five) of the fifty-three children discussed by informants did ask about the meaning of the words being used in the name-calling, or sought advice on how to deal with the problem. The rest of the children tried to keep it from their parents, but displayed signs of unusual behaviour such as described earlier. Such behaviour aroused parental suspicions, and usually after persistent probing, which sometimes entailed the parent asking the child's sibling to do some sleuthing, or the parent going to the school, the child revealed the source of its anxiety. On their part, children were often unwilling to report such problems to their parents because they didn't want the parents to make a scene at school, as a ten year old informant explained:

We don't like to tell our parents about these things because we don't want them starting anything. The kids kept beating me up because I was different, but I didn't tell my parents. But one time I did tell

my father, and he came to do something. After that
the kids called me sissy. Still, I was glad my Dad
found out about it then. But, after, whenever
something happened, I didn't tell, because I didn't
want the kids to call me sissy.

Sometimes, children did not report the problem to their parents because

they had been instructed not to fight, as an Asian informant explained:

When my son was in grade one, the kids were teasing
him and starting fights with him. I didn't know
this was going on for a while. Since I had taught
him not to fight, he didn't tell us about this
because he thought we would be annoyed with him for
being involved in fights.

An informant in her late teens revealed another reason why some children

might not report the problem to their parents:

When I was in junior high school, my parents weren't
able to help me much with this problem, because we
were new in the country, and they were getting it
too. So I didn't tell them about it, and tried to
deal with it myself.

However, most of the children eventually did discuss the problem with

their parents.

Children had reported incidents of ethnophaulism in all school

grades. However, according to informants, such incidents seemed to be

most common in the early school years of pre-school and primary grades,

and then, at the junior high school level. The following type of

incident was reported by several parents:

It started in kindergarten. Not long after the
school year began, my daughter started saying that
she didn't want to go to school, but wouldn't tell
us why. Finally, after a great deal of effort, I
managed to get out of her that some of the other
children were pushing her around and teasing her
every day. Some had also told her that her skin
colour was not as nice as the white skin colour. We

also began receiving complaints about her behaviour
from her teacher. One day she locked herself in the
school washroom and wouldn't come out. She had been
getting this kind of thing from the kids almost
daily at school, but she had never told anyone at
home. Her solution was to defy the teacher, hide in
the washroom, or run away.

Another type of incident, variations of which had occurred in several

school levels, is exemplified in this quotation:

Around the time she was in grade one, my daughter
came home one day and asked about her skin colour.
She had been receiving bad notes in school from some
of the other kids. They told her that if she didn't
get out or go to another school, they would beat her
up. They also said things like "your food has germs
on it" and "I hate your skin colour". At about the
same time, a neighbourhood boy, about a year older
than her, called her names like "paki" and tripped
her. She ran home crying. That boy was from
another visible minority.

Many Native parents reported that their children had been harassed

during recess and outside of school hours by groups of children circling

them, making Indian Pow Wow chanting imitations, and casting ethnic

slurs. Such incidents were reported by children in all grade levels,

from kindergarten through junior high school.

But informants pointed out that ethnic name-calling did not only

occur in the playgrounds or schools, not was it solely an experience of

childhood. A concerned mother related the following experience:

When my son was in grade three, we were living in an
apartment block. Two brothers in the neighbourhood
started to pick on my son. They were older than he
was. They were calling him "paki" and chasing him.
They used to chase him right to our apartment block,
so I became aware of this problem. I reported this

to the school principal, but it didn't help. In
fact, these two boys started following me around
whenever they saw me, and were calling me names.
This spread, and other kids began throwing snowballs
at our apartment windows. This harassment was
constant, and continued for about three years.

The majority (thirty) of the parents said that ethnic derogation happens

everywhere. Informants described incidents which had occurred on city

buses, in retail outlets, restaurants, on the street, and even at

community meetings. For example, a Native informant described one such

incident:

My friend and I decided to attend the annual general
meeting of the local Home and School Association.
The first time we walked in, one of the parents
present said out loud, "Look, we're even getting
them off the street now!"

Another parent reported:

In my line of work, I used to have to use the city
buses quite a bit. In some areas of the city, for
example, the North End, or the West End, or
St. James, people treated me the same as everyone
else. But in some areas, like River Heights, for
example, things were quite different. Sometimes
there would be this bunch of teenagers sitting at
the back of the bus, and they'd start calling out
things or saying things about niggers or black
whores or something like that. I just ignored them,
I would just sit there, and pretend I didn't hear
them. A couple of times the bus driver, if he heard
it, would stop the bus and tell them to behave or
get off the bus.

Several informants commented that among adolescents, it was often a

group activity, as one teenage informant explained:

Name-calling provides a group, or a gang of kids
with entertainment. What they're doing is making
themselves feel superior. Like in a Mall, if
they're not in a group, they are not likely to do it
but if they're in a group, that's when they call out
names.

According to informants, Euro-Canadians were not the only perpetrators of such deeds. Many parents and their children reported having been harassed in this manner by members of other visible minorities. Finally, there was a consensus among the informants that ethnic name-calling could happen at any time in a person's life, that it did not end with childhood, and the knowledge that this was so had its effect on the individual psyche, as well as colouring the individual's perception of society. One informant explained:

> The long-term effect results from the fact that you know it can crop up anytime in your life. The detrimental part of it comes from the fact that it continues to bother a person, that you remain sensitive to it. The problem is, that if you don't remain sensitive to it, if you let it pass all the time, or pretend to yourself that it hasn't happened, you lose some of your self-respect. So you have to continue being sensitive to it if you want to hang on to your self-respect. I'm fifty-five years old, and it would bother me at my age. It is still not something that I find acceptable. It can also nurture hate if you allow it to become too important, if you brood over it, for example. That can be destructive.

Although about a third of the sample indicated that for themselves and their children, ethnic derogation was not an important problem, the vast majority (thirty-eight) of the informants agreed that incidents of ethnic name-calling had the potential for long-term negative effects on individual self-esteem. A Filipino parent, in discussing the long-term effects of ethnophaulism said:

> I think the long-term effect is there, because no matter where you go, or what you do, it's still there in your mind. Like myself, I experienced those things when I was young. Now, that I'm getting to middle age, I still experience those same things. And I still have in my mind what I

experienced before. And every time I hear something
like that or someone calling me names, I am haunted
in my mind by those experiences when I was young.

Commenting on the effects of ethnic derogation, a Native parent
revealed:

> Well, it had a long-term effect on me. I had
> experiences with discrimination and verbal abuse in
> school. It was everything from being called "stupid
> Indian", to learning that people thought we were no
> good. Then there was the problem of being Metis -
> neither white, nor French, nor Indian. So I had an
> identity problem. All this gave me a lot of trouble
> and confusion for many years.

An Asian parent stated:

> Ethnic name-calling always bothers a person, because
> you feel humiliated. It's also important. The same
> is true for ethnic jokes, they also hurt. They
> cause internal pressure, and a person who gets a lot
> of this might eventually react violently. I don't
> think anybody should be subjected to this. Every-
> body has the right to live with some grace.

Many informants stated that this negative effect was more likely
when such incidents were frequent, and when the individual, particularly
a child, had no social support network; i.e., stable access to people
with whom to socialize and discuss problems. The majority (thirty-one)
of parents in the sample stressed that children should be encouraged to
talk about incidents of ethnic name-calling with siblings, friends, and
parents. Informants also mentioned that it was important for these
children to feel that they could tell their parents about such incidents
and that their parents would listen. Parents agreed that when a child
does not have anyone to share this kind of problem with, ethnic
name-calling would most likely succeed in its intended purpose of
sapping the child's self-esteem. Furthermore, such informants believed

that the best countermeasure to ethnic name-calling was continual

nurturance of the child's self-esteem by the parents. An Asian parent

observed that:

> When children experience ethnic name-calling they
> grow up with a feeling of insecurity with regard to
> their place in society. It will remain in their
> memory and will lower their self-esteem to some
> extent. But I try to counteract this by telling
> them my own stories of experiences as a young man,
> and how I and my friends handled it, to show that we
> wouldn't let these things get us down. I emphasize
> the importance of self-respect.

In fact, many informants were of the opinion that the impact of

ethnic name-calling on the individual would be great if the incident was

not discussed with someone, immediately or soon after the event. An

Asian informant, who had acted as interpreter for an immigrant teenager

who had been the victim of persistent ethnic derogation describes what

can happen when a child has no one to discuss this problem with:

> At school the other kids called him names. He told
> me that he didn't respond to them, that he kept it
> all inside. This went on continuously for quite
> some time. Also, he told me that his parents were
> working all the time. His Mum works two jobs, and
> his father also works nights and days. When he goes
> to school, there's nobody home, and when he comes
> home from school, there's nobody home, and he has
> nobody to eat with, nobody to talk with. When he
> wants to go to our church, there's nobody to take
> him. So this harassment by the kids at school, and
> having nobody to talk with at home pushed him to a
> point where he went "Bang"! He lost control at
> school, started punching people around the school,
> apparently for no reason. As a consequence, he
> ended up being sent to the psychiatric ward at the
> hospital. He had nobody to talk to at all, and all
> this built up inside him.

An informant from the Black community observed:

> The kids who are called names like this, well, their
> parents should spend time listening to them, really
> talking with them, building up their self-esteem,
> their self-image. The trouble with a lot of these
> kids who are experiencing this problem, is that
> their parents don't have time to spend with the kids
> when they need them. They're often working two or
> three jobs at a time, and the kids have no one to
> discuss it with. So the kids become bitter, angry,
> there's no one to boost their ego, and so they
> become a social or behaviour problem.

An East Indian parent also emphasized the importance of social supports

in dealing with this problem at the individual level:

> The problem with ethnic name-calling is that it can
> lead to an inferiority complex if the person is not
> helped to deal with the experiences either by
> parents or friends. The young person can become
> withdrawn, and might even turn against his or her
> parents because of their ethnic background.

Parents did tend to agree, however, that ethnic name-calling was

not important if it was a rare occurrence. In the view of the majority

of informants ethnic derogation could eventually have a powerful,

negative impact on the individual if it had not been resolved

immediately, when it occurred in childhood; if it was persistent, or if

it involved violence.

There was no consensus about the age in childhood when such an

incident or incidents might be felt more strongly. Some parents pointed

out that this would depend on the sensitivity of the individual child,

so that there would be variations at any age. As one parent put it:

> It's important because it occurs when children's
> perceptions of society are being formed. It can
> have long-term social and psychological effects.
> How great an impact this kind of thing will have on

the individual depends on how delicate and fragile
the personality of the child is. It can have a
devastating effect on the personality of some
people.

As well as having the potential to undermine self-esteem, slightly
over half (twenty) of the informants pointed out that ethnic
name-calling can cause an individual to experience feelings of long-term
alienation, and could contribute to generating or perpetuating
intergroup social tensions. One parent stated that:

There can be long-term consequences from this kind
of experience in childhood, such as an increase in
racial tensions, because it hadn't been resolved
peacefully at school, when it happened.

A middle-aged parent, whose family has been in Canada for several
generations described the effects of ethnic derogation on himself:

When I was growing up, I experienced it a number of
times. I felt alienated. I didn't feel as if I
belonged to Canada. I think there is some
sensitivity still in me, as far as prejudice is
concerned. Although, because the situation for my
ethnic group has improved, I no longer feel
alienated.

The majority of parents (twenty-seven) mentioned that ethnophaulism
is always hurtful or annoying, and that one does not become indifferent
to it with age. Less than a quarter (nine) of the informants stated
that in the long term, sensitivity to ethnic slurs would depend on the
individual. It was suggested that people with very good self-esteem,
and those who are "thick-skinned" would not be bothered by
ethnophaulism. A Black parent, in his sixties, offered this
perspective:

If you have good self-esteem, if you think

positively about yourself, then chances are that
your meetings with prejudice or discrimination, such
as name-calling will be minimized. That's because
you don't take on their definition of you. If you
have good self-esteem, you can walk down a street,
and every person on that street could call you
"nigger", and it wouldn't bother you...you'd likely
turn around, look at those people, and say something
like, "Don't you people have something better to
do?"

When it came to explaining the presence and persistence of
ethnophaulism in society, informants proposed a variety of reasons,
which converged at three levels of abstraction: the socio-historic
level; the social psychological level; and the psychological level.

In terms of the socio-historic context, informants felt that
Canadians were motivated to target certain ethnic groups for such verbal
abuse either because of xenophobia, racism, and the influence of
negative social stereotypes; or because of perceptions of political or
economic competition. Informants explained that political competition,
such as a desire to deny visible minorities equal status in this
country; the desire to put down, repress, and inferiorize certain ethnic
groups, the desire to control and dominate various groups within the
plurality, the desire to assert own group superiority and elite status
by maintaining social distance from and tension among the various ethnic
groups lay at the root of ethnophaulism. One informant used this
perspective to explain that those who use ethnic slurs do it:

To let you know that you don't belong in this
country, that it's for white people only. Maybe
they think they're superior; that we don't have the
same status as them, and that we don't have the
right to equal status - that they're the elite.

A native informant offered this explanation:

> The goal of people who do ethnic name-calling and engage in other types of discrimination is to disempower the Natives by trying to prove that they themselves are better than the Natives. They are trying to make themselves feel better by disempowering another person or group.

This observation was made by a teenage informant:

> Well, ethnic name-calling comes out of a 'pack rat mentality'. If you want to be part of a group you have to do certain things, and I guess one of the things people end up doing is calling other people names, to show that they belong to a group and you are on the outside. It shows you fit into the group you want to fit in.

Finally, on the political roots of ethnophaulism, a Black informant made this statement:

> People do it to show some superiority, or to maintain distance, conflict or tension. This makes a lot of people feel good, builds up their ego. It's basically one-upmanship. They make themselves feel more important by making the other person feel lower.

Many informants also believed that economic competition was at the root of ethnophaulism. In their view, this grew out of insecurity and the perception of threat and competition from visible minorities among those in the lower socio-economic levels of our society. Such people, especially Euro-Canadians, envious at the material successes of people from visible minorities, would therefore be inclined to scapegoat people of non-European origins in this manner. One informant expressed it in this way:

> I think you find name-calling more in lower socio-economic groups. That's a fact. There is a burning jealousy that you have a nice house, job, car - it makes them feel insecure.

Another informant suggested that ethnic name-calling occurred for the following reasons:

> Maybe you figure we're taking away your jobs; maybe
> you're not doing well, you're depressed, unemployed,
> so you take it out on someone else.

A large majority (thirty-one) of the informants attributed ethnophaulism to the political and economic competition or tension existing in our stratified society.

The other socio-historic set of reasons used to explain the persistence of ethnic name-calling in our society combined xenophobia, racism, and the influence of prevailing negative social stereotypes. Informants felt that people used ethnic slurs to make newcomers leave this country; to assert that this country is only for whites; to make certain people feel like outcasts, aliens; because of prejudice, narrow mindedness, intolerance; and because of racism. Informants also pointed to ingrained social stereotypes, historic European attitudes toward colonized peoples, negative media depictions of visible minorities, and even multiculturalism's emphasis on group differences as contributing to the persistence of ethnophaulism. Over half (twenty-three) of the informants felt that xenophobia, racism, and social stereotypes were behind the use of ethnic slurs in this country. As one informant put it:

> People don't appreciate differences because they
> haven't been taught to accept differences. They
> have learned stereotypes in school, and these are
> ingrained in their minds. History books present
> negative stereotypes of many groups, as does
> television. It's a symptom of racism.

Another informant offered this explanation for the persistence of ethnophaulism:

> It's part of the colonial mentality to do that - the goal is to put people down, to dominate or control - it's part of the divide and conquer thing, where they put you at the bottom of the hierarchy. To make themselves feel good about themselves, people find or nominate someone to be inferior. This is part of the colonial system's power game. The impact of this is most dramatic among colonized peoples in the world.

A number of informants also felt that ethnic name-calling was a symptom of unfamiliarity with certain groups and cultures, as an Asian informant explained:

> If something or someone looks different, then people will call names to them. The message is that they're not comfortable with the way the strangers look or the way they live, and they don't like to see it. In fact, sometimes, they're just wondering what these strangers are doing here, anyway.

Social psychological explanations for ethnophaulism emphasized the role of socialization in the development of negative attitudes in children toward various ethnic groups. Some informants believed that children were influenced by their parents, either through formal instruction, or by informal example, to hold negative attitudes toward certain groups. This view is exemplified in the following comments and observations:

> Children sometimes imitate their parents. Maybe parents might come out and say something that the kids overhear, about some person. And the kids feel, well, if my Daddy is my hero, and he feels that way about this Black man down the street, maybe that's the way he feels about all Black people. So that's okay if I say nasty things to them and about them. Often, that kid's parents don't even realize that their kid has interpreted their comments that way.

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An Asian informant stated:

> Children engage in ethnic name-calling because they
> learn and hear such things from their parents. The
> parents may resent immigrants because they see them
> as competition in jobs and things like that.
> Children learn their attitudes toward others, at
> home, by absorbing their parents' attitudes. They
> will think that their parents' beliefs are the right
> beliefs, and then will take this outside.

A Black informant had a similar comment:

> In part, kids hear and pick up these attitudes from
> their parents without any formal instruction, for
> example from hearing ethnic jokes at home. That, in
> addition to actual instruction from parents which
> encourages discrimination. For example, formal
> instruction might be in the form of the kinds of
> people that one's own people do not marry, or do not
> associate with in various settings.

Informants who presented this view, also pointed out that children

absorb their attitudes toward outgroups from negative and stereotypical

depictions of various ethnic groups presented in school textbooks and

communications media, such as television. In addition, children pick up

ethnic slurs from their peers and from older children. More than half

(twenty-three) of the parents believed that socialization played an

important role in the perpetuation of ethnophaulism.

In addition to the socio-historic and socio-psychological explana-

tions for the presence of ethnophaulism in society, the vast majority

(thirty-six) of parents proposed psychological explanations for ethno-

phaulism, particularly among children. Many parents held the view that

it was simply one version of the natural juvenile activity of teasing,

taunting, and name-calling. The object of such behaviour, according to

informants, is to exclude, put down or hurt the target; to censure the

distinct or unfamiliar; or to retaliate or pay back another child for past transgressions. Informants mentioned that, in their opinion, children who used ethnic slurs often did not know their meaning, and rather than consciously maligning an ethnic group, were simply engaging in mindless imitation or repetition of terms heard from others. In such situations, the value of the terms to the users would be their ability to provoke reactions in the targets. One informant described it as "small kid against small kid stuff, which they usually work out for themselves". At the adolescent stage, informants believed that ethnic name-calling was usually the outcome of the need and pressure to conform. Informants pointed out that they, themselves, had either witnessed or experienced such incidents during their own youth, in other countries. On the basis of this experience, they assumed that such events were a natural part of learning and growing up and were generally harmless, if they were not too frequent and if they did not degenerate to violence.

To summarize, the experiences of fifty-three children with the problem of ethnic derogation were described by informants. Slightly less than two-thirds of these children did approach their parents for advice about the problem. Many children tried to keep the problem from their parents, attempting to resolve it themselves. Most of the children showed, in one way or another, that they had been hurt or felt humiliated by the taunting. Those children who did not immediately report such incidents to their parents often showed signs of distress such as moodiness, feigning sickness, or anti-social behaviour both at

home and at school. Children reported disliking themselves, their skin colour, and their religious or cultural heritage as a consequence of such incidents.

Children had often tried to resolve such problems, on their own initiative, through a variety of approaches. Slightly more than half had retaliated with verbal or physical violence. About a quarter had approached the problem by trying to conform to peer dress, grooming and behavioural codes, or through some form of ingratiation. Nearly a quarter of the children had simply withdrawn into a small circle of friends, or had become introverted and withdrawn. About one-fifth of the children had generally ignored such incidents and didn't dwell on them. About one-tenth of the children determined to excel and outrank others in school activities; while a similar number of children took it upon themselves to enlighten, inform, or correct others about their ethnic group, either informally, or through more formal presentations in class.

According to informants, incidents of ethnic derogation had occurred in all school grades, although the flashpoints for this kind of behaviour seemed to be the early school grades and the junior high school level. As well as occurring in playgrounds and schools, informants reported incidents which had occurred in a wide range of other settings. Moreover, both children and adults had been the targets of this kind of discrimination. Informants stated that in their experiences, as well as that of their children, the name-callers

included both children and adults from other visible minorities, as well as from Euro-Canadian ethnic groups.

Although a small number of informants stated that for themselves and their children ethnic derogation was not an important problem, the vast majority of informants stressed that such incidents had the potential for long-term detrimental effects on individual self-esteem, particularly if the harassment was frequent, if it was accompanied by violence, and if it had not been resolved immediately. Similarly, a vast majority of informants agreed that the most effective antidote to incidents of ethnic derogation was talking about the problem with someone. A significant majority (thirty-one) of the informants believed that it was the responsibility of parents to make themselves available and approachable for such discussions, and that it was incumbent upon parents to encourage and to create opportunities for their children to become part of a stable network of friends and acquaintances. These informants believed that their most important function in counteracting the potentially harmful effects of ethnic derogation, was to nurture good self-esteem in their children. Informants were generally of the opinion, that although ethnophaulism was always hurtful or annoying, its toxic strength would be neutralized considerably, if the target had good self-esteem.

Parents attributed the rise and persistence of ethnophaulism in society to several sources. Socio-historic causes, such as political and economic competition in our stratified society, as well as racism,

xenophobia, and social stereotypes were cited as reasons for the phenomenon. Socio-psychological causes, which included both primary and secondary socialization were also mentioned as probably being responsible for the perpetuation of negative outgroup attitudes and the use of ethnic slurs among young people. In addition, psychological causes, such as the tendency among children to tease, imitate, censure, and retaliate to settle scores, were put forth by most parents as being at the root of some of the ethnic name-calling incidents reported by their children. Many informants stated that unless such incidents took the form of continual and/or violent harassment, young people would be able to resolve the problem on their own, and would not experience any important long-term effects from such an experience. Even so, a significant number of parents in the sample did intervene on behalf of their child or children when a situation of ethnic derogation came to their attention. The kinds of actions parents reported actually taking in response to their children's complaints about this problem, will be presented in the next section.

6.2 Parental Advice and Action

Most informants employed more than one strategy in helping their children cope with ethnic name-calling. Although parents had devised quite a variety of measures to remedy the problem, all these methods were basically variations of three basic approaches. Parental action in situations where their children were victims of ethnophaulism,

therefore, took the form of: incident related advice; incident related assistance; and/or inculcation of certain values and attitudes.

All parents gave their children incident related advice. The types of responses parents advised their children to make to ethnic derogation were of two sorts: passive and active. Both of these response categories contained a variety of parental injunctions and suggestions for behaviour. Of the thirty-nine informants, five did not recommend any passive responses, and four parents did not counsel their children to engage in active responses.

Parents who advised their children to try a passive response, suggested that they: ignore the name-calling (twenty-four informants); show no reaction when it happened (two informants); not call back any names (ten informants); try to avoid such situations, if possible (two informants); and refrain from fighting over it with the name-callers (twelve informants). Thirteen informants told their child not to let it bother them. One Native informant gave this advice:

> I told my daughter that the best thing to do, in the end, is to just ignore it; that people who do it are ignorant, and that she will always meet some ignorant people, but that's their problem, not hers. I told her that she shouldn't let it bother her.

An Asian informant gave another example of a passive response:

> I told my children not to show they've made you mad or sad. If you don't show this, they'll leave you alone, but if they see they've made you mad or sad, they'll keep going on and on.

A Black parent gave the following advice:

> One of the things we instilled in all of our

children was that we don't like to be called names,
so we don't call people names either. Name-calling,
in our family, was not acceptable behaviour under
any circumstances.

Significant in the set of findings concerning passive responses, is

that approximately two-thirds (twenty-four) of the parents in the sample

advised their children to ignore the name-calling, and a significant

majority (thirty-four) of the parents did suggest to their children that

they try some sort of passive response to the problem.

In the category of active responses, thirty-five informants did

suggest to their children to take some kind of action to discourage the

verbal abuse. Many parents encouraged their children to first try a

passive response, but if this did not help, to proceed with some course

of action. There was quite a range of active responses recommended by

parents. The majority of parents (thirty-four) told their children

never to brood about such incidents, but always to tell or talk with

someone about it. This informant expressed what many parents told their

children:

In general, we instructed our children to ignore it
when people did call them names; not to call back
any names, but to report such incidents to us,
especially when it became violent, or to report it
to the teacher or school principal.

Some parents advised their children to report such events

immediately, either to them, or to a school authority, particularly when

the name-calling was accompanied by violence. Of the sample,

twenty-four parents told their children to report such incidents without

hesitation.   One parent explained why he felt that immediate action was

necessary:

> I think if the name-calling is not recognized for
> what it is, and nothing is done about it when it
> happens, it can have a lasting effect on children.
> It can kill ambition, and make a person feel that
> they're a nobody, inferior, not equal to the rest.
> It can be very debilitating in the long term, if it
> isn't caught right away.   For my children, we've
> been watching out for this kind of thing, and we've
> encouraged them to report it right away, so I don't
> think they'll have any problems because of any such
> experiences.

Of this group, twenty of the parents informed their children that

once told of such incidents, the parents, themselves, would take some

action on behalf of the child.

Differing slightly from those parents who encouraged immediate

reporting, was a small group, consisting of a third of the sample, who

advised their children to use an active response only after the ethnic

derogation had become persistent.   In this category, children were told

to inform a school authority if it kept happening in school, or to fight

back physically or verbally, if the same person or persons kept up the

harassment.

In contrast to the parents who advised initial restraint, were the

parents who instructed their children to retaliate immediately, by

confronting the name-caller in some way.   These parents instructed their

children to respond with witty retorts, or to respond with verbal or

physical violence. Nine parents encouraged their children to engage in immediate confrontation or retaliation to ethnic derogation. An Asian informant explained:

> My husband and I always instructed our children that when you meet a racist incident, you must confront it, not physically, but verbally, to put an immediate stop to it.

Another parent described his approach:

> My son started having problems with name-calling in junior high school. He was a big boy, quite strong and athletic. So I taught him to fight if someone teased him. At that level, the boys respect physical force. I taught him how to fight quickly and neatly - a punch in the right place where it wouldn't do much damage, but would show them who the better fighter was. So he would use the techniques I showed him, and then he would tell the boy who might be teasing him to beat it. This was an effective way of putting an end to the teasing.

Finally, a large minority of parents (sixteen) advised their children to take action of a positive sort, to correct the problem. These parents suggested that their children be friendly, go halfway to adapt to the new culture or the social milieu, or they told them to be outgoing and to try correcting, enlightening, and instructing those who teased them, because such people were doing this out of ignorance, lack of information, and unfamiliarity with the ethnic group and its culture. Thus the sensible thing to do would be to make friends with the name callers, or to tell them the correct name of the ethnic group and to give them some information about the group's origins and its ways. Among this group of parents were also those who encouraged their children to look up the offending term in the dictionary, discuss its

meaning with the parents, and then to treat it as nonsense. A parent who emphasized this positive approach explained:

> I discouraged my son from fighting, because I think it leads to a negative self-image. I encouraged him to talk and use his mind. That's the better way of dealing with such problems. I have also encouraged him to try to understand why they do this, see their side, and be open with them. Most of the time he has ended up making friends with some of the kids who teased him the most.

Thus, in the category of incident related advice, the vast majority of parents in the sample told their children to try both passive and active responses to ethnic derogation. Thirty-four parents advised trying passive responses, at least initially, while thirty-five parents instructed their children to use active responses, either immediately, or when the harassment was unrelenting. Passive types of responses recommended by parents included such advice as: ignore it, don't let it bother you; ignore it, don't show any reaction; don't call back names; and do not fight. A very small number of parents suggested avoidance of such situations, if at all possible. There was also a similar number of active responses advocated by parents. These included: immediate reporting, confrontation, or retaliation; taking action only when the problem was persistent; instructing children to inform the parents, who would take some action in the matter; and encouraging children to be outgoing and informative. Regardless which category of response was emphasized, the vast majority of parents also advised their children to discuss such experiences with someone, rather than keeping it to themselves.

As well as giving incident related advice, more than half (twenty-three) of the parents actually intervened on behalf of their children in such situations. There were four types of actions taken by parents outside the home. Some parents took one or more of these external measures, either immediately on being informed of the problem, or at a later stage, after all other avenues to a solution had been attempted. Parents intervened in one or several of the following ways:

(a) by discussing or reporting the problem to someone in authority connected with the school, if the problem occurred there. Parents talked with the classroom teacher, the school administrators, or voiced their concerns at the Home and School Association. In one case a parent spoke with the provincial Minister of Education;

(b) by approaching the parents of the name-caller about the problem;

(c) by talking with the child who was doing the name-calling;

(d) by moving their child to another school, or by moving the family to a new location.

Slightly less than half (eighteen) of the parents contacted someone in authority at school, either in person, or by telephone and requested that something be done to put an end to the problem. Sometimes, the victimized child had been instructed to report the problem to the teacher or principal first. When this brought no assistance from the school authority, the parents followed up with a demand that something be done about the problem. In some cases, a parent would talk directly with the classroom teacher; in others, the discussion would be with a school administrator; and in still other cases, the parent felt that

there was sufficient cause to call for a meeting which included the classroom teacher, the administrators, and sometimes, certain other school personnel. Another route followed by parents was to contact the classroom teacher first, and if necessary, to follow this with a discussion with a school administrator. Some parents pursued this even further by presenting their concerns to parental bodies and/or to higher levels of school or educational administration. More than half of the parents who talked with someone connected with the school were satisfied with the response they received. But, twenty-six parents did comment that teachers should be quicker in responding to children's reports of such problems; that there should be more instruction in the schools on matters pertaining to multiculturalism and human equality; and that they believed teachers themselves need better training to prepare them to deal with problems of racism among students.

Nine of the informants approached the parents of the name-caller about the problem. Although this was a successful strategy for some of the informants, more than half of these parents pointed out that it couldn't be relied on because some parents had no control over their children, and because there was also the danger of increasing tensions. About half of the informants who had tried this approach found that it had contributed to an increase in the name-calling and harassment. One informant revealed the following:

> One time I went to the neighbours on account of my
> daughter or my son being called names. But the
> neighbours told me, "Don't tell me, tell our kids
> not to do it". So my husband and I tried to talk
> with some of those kids, but sometimes it made
> things worse — they would pick on my kids more.

Other informants who tried to discuss the problem with the name-caller's parents were met with rudeness and denial, as illustrated by the following quotation:

> I was very surprised by the response from this girl's mother. This mother denied everything, and even accused me of being racist. She said that "You people are the racists, looking for problems and making things up!"

A very small number of parents talked with the child or children who had done the name-calling. As indicated in the first quotation on the previous page, this was not always effective in bringing an end to the problem. When the perpetrators were small children, this approach seemed to have the desired effect. One informant described taking such action:

> Even when my son had just started school, there were some little children who called him names. They were doing this outside of school, not actually in the classroom. He would constantly come home crying from school. Well, one day I decided to be around just after they were let out of school, to see about this. Well, I caught them at it, and cautioned them to stop doing that. Those kindergarten youngsters stopped picking on him after that.

Finally, in a small number of cases, the parents either moved their child to a new school, or moved the family to a new location, after trying to solve the problem in other ways without success. In most cases, the change of school seemed to solve the problem. One parent explained his decision to take this course of action:

> When my daughter began school, some of the other children in her class teased her and pushed her around continuously. Then we started to get

complaints from her teacher that she was a behaviour problem. We became very concerned about this, so I decided to find out what was going on there, since my daughter refused to tell us the details. I found out, after talking with some of the children, the principal, and the teacher, that my daughter was being unmercifully harassed by some of the children because of her skin colour, and that her 'problem' behaviour was simply an attempt to cope with this teasing. I also found out from talking with some of the parents that, not long before, there had been a similar problem with a Black child. I was not convinced that the people at the school would put a stop to this, and I didn't want my daughter's schooling to be affected, so I had her transferred to another school. She had no problems after that.

To summarize, parents in the sample tried to help their children deal with incidents of ethnic name-calling by offering incident related advice, which advocated both passive and active types of responses to the verbal abuse; and more than half of the parents provided incident related assistance such as contacting school authorities; contacting parents of name-callers; talking with name-callers; or removal of children from the abusive setting. The vast majority of parents had combined a variety of methods in their efforts to assist their children with this problem.

In addition to advice and action directly connected with incidents of ethnic derogation, many parents also employed indirect methods, which were aimed at developing children's abilities to cope with problems of racial discrimination, including ethnic derogation, in the long term. Such measures involved emphasis and exposure to certain values and attitudes, as well as development of particular life skills. This

approach included promotion of certain kinds of social relations; and

the encouragement of specific attitudes toward discrimination.

In the area of social relations, parental measures to counteract

the effects of ethnic name-calling and other forms of discrimination

included:

> (a) emphasis on ethnic group pride and ethnic
>   community involvement;
>
> (b) emphasis on good citizenship through
>   participation in neighbourhood and
>   community activities beyond the ethnic
>   group.

The majority (twenty-five) of the parents in the sample emphasized

ethnic group pride by instructing their children about group history and

culture, and by involving the family in ethnic group activities. Many

of these parents were themselves active in ethnic community

organizations. One informant explained the value of this:

> If the parents nurture group pride, and the group
> and community gives you good support, as well as
> providing an outlet for you to vent your frustra-
> tions, a place where you can share your problems and
> experiences, and discuss them, then it gives you a
> sense of belonging and bolsters your self-esteem.
> So probably, there won't be any long-term effects
> from problems such as name-calling.

A large minority (sixteen) of the parents in the sample put

emphasis on good citizenship and involvement with the community at

large. Such parents were often themselves active in neighbourhood or

municipal associations, or were members of clubs with no particular
ethnic orientation. As well as socializing in multicultural milieus,
themselves, such parents tended to encourage their children to follow
suit. Such parents emphasized the importance of making friends with
others on the basis of their individual attributes, rather than on the
basis of such criteria as ethnic identity.

To counteract the negative effects of discrimination, such as
ethnic name-calling, some parents directed their efforts toward
encouraging certain kinds of characteristics in their children. Such
parents:

> (a) emphasized personal achievement, such as
> getting top marks in school, winning awards,
> etc. Children were taught that incidents like
> ethnic derogation should be used as a spur to
> personal achievement, excellence, and success;
>
> (b) gradually encouraged self-sufficiency in
> problem solving, by nurturing self-reliance in
> children as they gained experience in social
> relations, or by varying the extent of parental
> involvement and assistance by gauging each
> child's strengths and weaknesses.

The majority (twenty-nine) of the parents in the sample reported
using this approach in helping their children learn how to deal with
discrimination. Those who encouraged excellence in school activities
felt that by proving one's worth to one's self, a child would not only
develop good self-esteem, but would, in the process, be creating
evidence which challenged and undermined the negative group stereotype.
In addition, the child would be surpassing those who had tried to put

them down. As one parent put it:

> We have taught our children to work extra hard to
> prove themselves. We tell them they have the
> potential to do well. We have also taught them that
> the best way to fight back in adversity of any kind
> is by responding constructively by doing well in
> school, and by entering the professions.

Many parents who encouraged the gradual development of self-sufficiency in problem solving, pointed out that some children were better able to cope with problems on their own, than others. They also pointed out that younger children usually required more assistance in dealing with problems than did older children, and that even siblings varied in their ability to cope on their own, and in their methods of coping with ethnic name-calling. For these reasons, many parents tailored their advice and assistance to the individual child, while at the same time decreasing the degree of their involvement in resolving the child's problems as the child matured. In connection with this perspective, one informant made this observation:

> In our case, we had three different children, all of
> whom experienced ethnic name-calling and other
> problems because of their skin colour. But, we
> counselled each of them differently, depending on
> their personality, strengths and weaknesses.

Another parent made this statement:

> When each of my children reported having trouble
> with ethnic name-calling, I considered each of their
> abilities, and how these could be used to allow the
> child to sort out the problem for him or herself.
> Then I pointed out these strengths to each child,
> and showed them how they could use these to deal
> with the teasing. The children were then able to
> work this problem out for themselves, without my
> having to get into the fray. I would say that an
> appropriate response to incidents of ethnic
> name-calling has to take into account the nature of

the child, his or her abilities, and age.

Finally, a third of the parents in the sample, were of the opinion that the effects of ethnic name-calling could be neutralized if the name-callers and the ethnic slurs were interpreted as being pathetic and unseemly. When children reported incidents of ethnic derogation, therefore, such parents made light of ethnic slurs and of those who had used them. Children were told, for example, that those who did the name-calling were either ignorant, or had a problem. The terms were discussed calmly with regard to their origins and meaning, and sometimes, with the aid of a dictionary. Generally, these parents would point out that nice and/or most people did not use that kind of language, and that those who did were an ill-bred minority. One parent explained, that by using this approach the problem "just fizzles out instead of getting to be too important". Another parent believed that because such incidents had been discussed calmly and objectively in their home, and since they had always been minimized, the effects on her son had been temporary. She described her son's attitude to such teasing:

> He treats it as a joke. He looks at it positively.
> His attitude is that those who do it aren't sure of
> themselves, and that's why they try to put him down,
> or try to get him to lose his temper, or do badly in
> a hockey game. But he doesn't let it get to him, or
> distract him. He's outgoing, has a lot of friends,
> does well in school, and helps others. It doesn't
> interfere with how he feels about himself, or with
> any goals he sets for himself.

All parents in the sample had mentioned using some combination of

these child-rearing practises when reporting their responses to ethno-

phaulism. In the view of informants, although these practises were not

directly related to incidents of ethnic name-calling, they were, never-

theless, playing an important role in enhancing a child's self-esteem,

and in reinforcing a child's sense of personal dignity. This perspec-

tive is reflected in the following quotation:

> In the long term a person will not be bothered by
> such incidents, if he or she understands where it's
> coming from, that name-callers learn it from their
> parents, and that their knowledge is based on
> ignorance or lack of knowledge about different
> people. Furthermore, if a young person is raised in
> a family where there is strong reinforcement of
> ethnic culture and heritage, he or she develops
> self-esteem. Then ethnic name-calling will not
> bother him or her. As well, parents should
> encourage their children to get to know children
> from different ethnic groups, they should encourage
> visits to each other's homes, so that they learn
> that people are basically the same underneath. If
> you give them all this, they should be strong enough
> to handle any kind of discrimination easily. But if
> this groundwork hasn't been done, the person will
> always be bothered, hurt or sensitive to this.

In conclusion, informants felt that incidents of ethnic derogation

in childhood had the potential for harmful long-term effects on an

individual's self-esteem, if the child had no one to turn to for advice

and assistance with this problem. Parents in the sample were generally

of the opinion that it was their responsibility to encourage their

children to come to them with such problems, and that the primary

antidote to ethnic derogation among children, was the continual

nurturance of good self-esteem in their offspring. Although most

parents felt that the odd incident of ethnic name-calling was not

important, and was something children, themselves, would be able to

deal with without parental assistance, many parents did actually intervene on behalf of their children in such situations. The majority of parents believed that direct parental intervention was called for when ethnic derogation was persistent or was accompanied by violence. Parental action in such matters took the form of one or a combination of these approaches: incident related advice; incident related assistance; and/or inculcation of certain values and attitudes in the child. Each of these approaches contained a variety of strategies which parents had devised either in response to their children's complaints about this problem, or in anticipation of racial discrimination in some form. The majority of parents reported using a variety of measures to help their children cope with ethnic derogation and related abuse.

Chapter VII

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The goal of this inquiry was to discover the measures taken by parents in response to their children's reports of ethnic derogation. Because this study was exploratory, the objective was not so much to prove anything as it was to raise grounded data for future examination and testing. This investigation has brought to light new information about responses to ethnophaulism; it has verified the findings of a British probe into the same problem (Davey, 1983); and the results of this research offer a grounded starting point for more rigorous scrutiny, not only of responses, but of ethnophaulism in its several aspects. The study began with a review of the literature on terms of ethnic derogation.

Most research in this area has focused on the instrumental, rather than the response aspects of the phenomenon. Viewed as a preceptive device, social scientists have theorized that ethnophaulism is a form of political or suasive talk, serving in the maintenance and perpetuation of social order in plural societies (Allen, 1983). As political talk, ethnophaulisms serve as evaluative markers and identifiers (Giles, 1978); as verbal weapons, both offensive and defensive (Palmore, 1962); and as rhetoric, influencing the attitudes of the public at large toward specific ethnic groups within a plurality (Kochman, 1976). There is

some evidence indicating that ethnophaulism increases during periods of great social change or stress within a plurality, appearing most often in the competitive environment of urban centers (Palmore, 1962). Historical evidence suggests that the greater the number of disparaging terms for any particular group in a society, the greater the degree of prejudice and discrimination against that group by the populace (Allen, 1983).

Duncan (1968); Khleif (1979); Lukens (1979) and others have theorized that ethnic epithets reflect the negative outgroup evaluations by the dominant group or groups within a plurality; and that the set of ethnic labels in a given society functions as a code which profiles the differing status or prestige of the constituent groups. From this perspective, the use of ethnophaulisms in plural society would serve to reinforce the inequality among the member groups, while the semantic content of such terms or phrases would offer justification for the rank held by each group. In this manner, ethnic epithets would contribute toward maintaining the social distance which the hierarchical ordering of ethnic groups requires (Lukens, 1979).

Hierarchical ordering, in turn, produces competitive tensions among ethnic groups, as individuals perceive opportunities for or threats of change to their own status within the social order. Tensions created by such social relations might give rise to ethnophaulisms, which are used at the face-to-face level of social life to delimit and downgrade the identity and social location of individuals who belong to discrete

ethnic groups within a plurality. By way of example, the following

comment made by an Asian informant participating in this study aptly

demonstrates the foregoing theory:

Informant: As far as I'm concerned, most of the
               troublemakers with discrimination and name-
               calling are the "ten-dollar Canadians".

Interviewer: Who are "ten-dollar Canadians"?

Informant: They're people from other ethnic minori-
               ties, not really Canadians...Ukrainians,
               for example. The English are the real
               Canadians, the rest are "ten-dollar
               Canadians". They might have been born
               here, but their parents came from somewhere
               else. The English are in charge of things
               here, and they don't discriminate, but
               people from other ethnic minorities do.

Many social scientists (Allen, 1983; Allport, 1954; Ehrlich, 1973;

Tajfel, 1978) believe that ethnic slurs are the verbal tags for social

stereotypes. In their view, social stereotypes serve an important poli-

tical function by exerting a powerful influence on the attitudes and

perceptions of the citizenry toward various groups in a society. The

results of such portrayals and evaluations are ultimately concrete;

e.g., negatively stereotyped groups may have unequal or restricted

employment opportunities, inferior educational or inadequate medical

services, etc. Stigmatized groups may, and often do, remain in their

appointed social niches over long periods of time, for once stereotypes

percolate throughout a society, becoming social stereotypes, they are

remarkably impervious to change. This tenacity is due in part to the

fact that social stereotypes contain some elements of truth, encouraging

people to assume that they are completely based on fact. The durability

of social stereotypes is further reinforced by the fact that they are shared and transmitted among large numbers of people across generations. There is some evidence showing that the content of such stereotypes and their retinue of verbal tags does change (Palmore, 1962; Gardner and Taylor, 1969), but that such change seems to be infrequent. Although ethnophaulism appears to serve similar functions across societies, the target groups, the content of social stereotypes, and the linguistic tags vary from society to society (Diab, 1962) because they arise out of different historic, cultural, and demographic conditions.

Despite the fact that the primary aim of this inquiry was not to collect further data on the instrumental aspects of ethnophaulism, it is interesting to note that informants' explanations for the presence and persistence of ethnic slurs generally support much of the foregoing theory on the phenomenon. The majority of informants attributed the appearance and use of ethnic slurs to tensions arising from political and economic competition among the ethnic groups in our society. More than half of the participants in this study also believed that ethno-phaulisms were spawned by xenophobia, racism, and the influence of social stereotypes.

A profile of Canadian social history, as it pertains to matters of ethnic relations, revealed that although many different groups have been the victims of racism, members of visible minorities, indigenous as well as immigrant, seem to have been the perennial targets. Furthermore, as a consequence of recent internal migration patterns, and a rise in

immigration from Third World countries during the past two decades, resulting in growing concentrations of visible minorities within many of our urban centers, the problem of racism seems to have surfaced once again in Canada (Bienvenue, 1985; Henry and Tator, 1985). Recent studies of race relations in Winnipeg have indicated that this city has not been exempt from these rising tensions (Clifton and Perry, 1985). On the basis of these indications, it was decided that members of visible minorities residing in this city would probably be the most fruitful source of information regarding responses to ethnophaulism. This proved to be a valid assumption. There was no difficulty in locating residents from a range of visible minorities who had had first hand experience with this problem. The final sample included informants from the Native, Black, and Asian communities in this city.

A review of the research into cognitive development, social cognition, and the development of ethnic awareness and outgroup evaluations indicated that children as young as four and one-half years of age could be involved in incidents of ethnic conflict such as ethnic name-calling, either as instigators or as targets. On the assumption that adolescents might be less inclined to seek out their parents for help with such incidents than would younger children, it was decided that the phenomenal group for this inquiry would be members of visible minorities whose children had complained about ethnic name-calling when in grade six or lower; i.e., roughly to about the age of twelve.

The final sample, for the purposes of data analysis consisted of

thirty-nine informants. This group of parents referred to the experiences of fifty-three children in the matter of ethnic derogation. The original assumption that young children would be likely targets of ethnic name-calling was correct, for most of the parents reported that their children had had such experiences either in nursery school, kindergarten, or the primary grades. However, adolescents who contributed to interviews with their parents' permission or encouragement, and informants employed as school administrators or teachers, observed that junior high school seemed to be the other school level at which there is a notable degree of ethnic name-calling among students. This information lends support to social cognition theory, which suggests that, for different reasons, young children and early adolescents would be most likely to display negative outgroup behaviours. Adolescent informants also revealed that they had been less inclined to report such incidents to their parents upon entering junior high school, preferring to work things out for themselves. Therefore, the choice of the phenomenal group for this study, based on the indications provided by the review of historical, sociological, and psychological literature, proved to be adequate for the purposes of this inquiry.

With the exception of one segment of Davey's (1983) study, most of the research on ethnophaulism has focused on the instrumental aspects of ethnic name-calling. Davey's research into prejudice among school children in Britain did include a brief inquiry into responses. However, in that study, parents were presented with an hypothetical case of ethnic name-calling, involving their child and a child from another

ethnic minority. The parents were then asked what they might do when such an incident was brought to their attention. In contrast, the intention of this study was to compile data on parental responses to the problem based on the actual experiences of informants. Specifically, the aims of this inquiry were to discover:

(a) the types of responses parents recommended their children make to ethnophaulism;

(b) actions, if any, taken by parents on behalf of their children in such situations;

(c) interpretations of, or meaning attached to, ethnic name-calling by parents;

(d) significance or importance of ethnophaulism on individual development, from the parental perspective.

The majority of parents who participated in this study reported encouraging their children to employ a combination of passive and active responses for discouraging or bringing an end to such harassment. In a significant number of cases, parents took personal action outside the home to correct the situation. As well, the majority of parents employed indirect methods for preparing their children to cope with racial discrimination over the long term, and to offset the negative effects of discrimination on their children. All four procedures: the passive and the active responses recommended for incidents of ethnic name-calling; the direct parental intervention in such situations; and the indirect methods included a variety of approaches and tactics. In all, the four procedures included eighteen different ways of dealing with the problem.

Passive type responses suggested by parents to children included such advice as: ignore it, don't let it bother you; ignore it, don't show any reaction; do not call back any names; do not fight over it; and try to avoid such situations, if possible. Very few parents in the sample advised using only passive responses. Most informants had also presented their children with the choice of several active responses to the problem. Active type responses recommended by parents included: confront the problem immediately by retorting, reporting, or retaliating; be outgoing, enlighten the name-callers about your ethnic group; confront only after the problem has become persistent, then either retort, report or retaliate; or, report the incident to parents, who will take some action in the matter. A majority of parents stressed the importance of urging children to talk with someone about such incidents rather than brooding, on the belief that bringing the problem out into the open was critical for the prevention of long term negative effects on the developing personality.

More than half of the parents in the sample reported having taken some action on behalf of their children in connection with incidents of ethnic derogation. Although some parents intervened immediately upon learning about the problem, most parents did not take any action outside the home unless the harassment had become persistent, or when it became evident that it was affecting the child's behaviour, schoolwork, or that the child was unable to cope with the problem, alone. Parental actions included: taking up the matter with school personnel; talking with the parents of the name-caller; talking directly with the name-caller; or

removal of their child from the school and/or community. More than half of the parents who had contacted someone within the school system were satisfied with the results of their efforts, although many reported that their initial reception by school personnel in the matter, had left something to be desired. Even though many reported being satisfied in the end, a significant minority of parents who had taken this course of action reported that the ethnic derogation had continued despite efforts of school authorities to discourage it. In the view of these informants the problem was of such complexity that it would require more than simple admonishment by the teacher or principal to solve it. Those who had approached either the parents of the name-caller, or the name-callers, themselves reported about a fifty percent success rate. Young children seemed to be the most likely to be discouraged from ethnic name-calling when approached by the victim's parents. Parent-to-parent consultations, on the other hand, often led to increased harassment by name-callers, and was, therefore, not recommended as a reliable method for solving the problem. Those parents who had chosen to remove their child from the abusive setting usually took this course of action after unsuccessfully trying to correct the problem using other methods. In the majority of cases, when either the child or the family had been moved to a new setting, the ethnic derogation ceased to be a problem.

Aside from revealing the various ways in which parents interceded on behalf of their children in the matter of ethnophaulism, this set of findings brings to light a number of additional points about the problem of ethnic name-calling among children. For example, it would seem that

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in the view of most informants, children who engage in ethnic derogation are not likely to desist from this activity unless they are admonished by some adult in authority, whether that be their own parents, the parents of the victim, or school personnel. This might also indicate that informants were of the opinion that adults transmit negative out-group attitudes to children, and should therefore, be held responsible for correcting the problem. Furthermore, since most parents had not intervened outside the home until their child's behaviour had become noticeably affected by the harassment, or unless the child had made several attempts to resolve the problem, to no avail, these findings might also indicate that parents had considered the effects of the name-calling and related harassment to have been serious enough to warrant their intervention. This may mean that, when left unchecked, ethnic name-calling can escalate to more vicious or relentless harassment. Another matter raised by this set of findings is connected with the school environment. Given the fact that close to half of the parents had intervened in response to incidents of ethnic derogation in the schools, it would seem that some study of the frequency and seriousness of this problem within the school system might be in order. More specifically, since both parents and children reported that the flash-points for ethnic name-calling seem to be the pre- and primary school level (play school through grade three); and the junior high school level, such a study should focus on either one or both of these school levels. Further to the school environment, these findings also suggest the need for more information about the speed with which school authorities respond to student reports of such harassment. Since a significant

proportion of the parents in the sample did feel compelled to take some action in response to their children's continuing problems with ethnic derogation in school, it would seem that there is some dissatisfaction with the manner in which student complaints are dealt with by school authorities. In discussing the school setting, more than half of the parents in the sample mentioned that, in their view, teachers seemed to be inadequately trained to deal with racial tensions among students. Many informants also stated that all teachers should be given formal training in ethnic relations and multiculturalism. In addition, many informants believed that there should be more instruction on issues such as multiculturalism, human equality, and good citizenship in the schools as a method for discouraging racist attitudes and behaviour among young people.

While most informants criticized the school system's unpreparedness and inadequacy in dealing with incidents of ethnic name-calling and related problems, the parents in this sample were not placing the entire responsibility for helping children cope with this onto the laps of school authorities. In fact, while informants did point out that school authorities should act on such problems when they occurred in school, both competently and quickly, the parents in this sample were equally as firm about stressing the importance of parenting in this matter.

In their view, parents had an equal, if not more important, role in preparing their children to cope with ethnic name-calling and other forms of discrimination over the long term. As well as providing advice

and assistance directly in response to complaints about ethnic name-calling, parents reported engaging indirect methods to counteract the effects of discrimination and to nurture their children's self-esteem. These methods generally involved inculcating certain attitudes, values and behaviours in their young charges through emphasis on ethnic group pride and ethnic community involvement; or, encouragement of good citizenship and intercultural social relations; or, advocating competitiveness and personal achievement; or, fostering self-sufficiency in problem solving; or, intellectualizing incidents of discrimination. Some parents stressed only one of the foregoing perspectives, while others cultivated a blend of several. These perspectives were transmitted to children in a number of different ways, and sometimes through a combination of methods. Parents encouraged their children to adopt these attitudes and perspectives by setting an example through their own activities and social connections; by enrolling their children in, or persuading them, to participate in activities which would instil the desired views; and/or through personal communication, both formal and informal.

The parents who emphasized ethnic pride and heritage, believed this approach served to counteract the harmful effects of ethnic derogation in several ways. First, it was felt that a child who was informed about its ethnic history and heritage would know immediately that inferences carried by ethnic slurs were based on misconceptions and inaccuracies, and would, therefore, not likely be seriously wounded by such incidents. Secondly, involvement in ethnic community activities and familiarity

with group history and heritage would, in the view of these parents, give the child a sense of belonging and identity, thus counteracting the alienating effects of ethnophaulism. Thirdly, such parents believed that involvement in ethnic community activities would provide a child with a network of friends and acquaintances, interaction with whom would serve to bolster a child's self-esteem as far as peer group relations were concerned. Since the vast majority of informants believed that ethnic name-calling had the potential to undermine the target's self-esteem and to alienate, emphasis on ethnic group pride seems to have been a rational countermeasure to the problem. Among parents who used this parenting approach, were also parents who had advised their children to discourage ethnic name-calling by using such incidents to enlighten the name-callers about their ethnic group, either at the time of the incident, or later, through class presentations in subjects such as Social Studies. Such parents assumed that their children were sufficiently well enough informed about their heritage to be able to share this knowledge with the uninitiated.

In contrast to, and sometimes in combination with the inculcation of ethnic group pride in children, some parents emphasized the importance of good citizenship and cross cultural friendships by setting an example with their own participation in neighbourhood activities; holding public office; or through non-ethnic volunteer work; and by encouraging their children to take part in similar types of activities in the community or at school. The purpose of this strategy seemed to be the erosion of social distance among ethnic groups by asserting our

common Canadian identity. The emphasis in this approach seemed to be good fellowship, equality regardless of ethnic ancestry, and collective responsibility for creating a good society. The aim of parents who used this approach with their children appeared to be the strengthening of the youngsters' sense of membership in this society, as well as giving the children opportunities to learn from example and experience that not all Canadians are prejudiced. This kind of involvement would, in the view of informants, also serve to enhance a child's self-esteem and would provide the child with a social network of congenial peers. These in turn, could lead the child to interpret ethnic name-calling as a social aberration, not really representative of majority opinion, and nothing to take too seriously on their own behalf. It's possible that such children might be inclined to do something generally about such incidents, such as correcting and enlightening name-callers about human equality. Such children might also feel compelled to assist victims, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. Whether this approach indicates an emphasis on assimilation, or whether this perspective endorses the notion of human equality and commonality regardless of ethnic origin is difficult to ascertain from the data base. More probing would be required to answer these questions.

Another method used by parents to prepare their children to cope with discrimination over the long term involved emphasis on personal achievement and competitiveness. Success and outstanding performance in both academic and extracurricular school activities for example, was seen as a good way to discourage ethnic derogation, to disprove the

intended meanings carried in ethnic slurs, and to challenge the validity of the social stereotype attached to the ethnic group. In the view of parents who encouraged this attitude in their children, the youngsters would not only develop a strong sense of personal worth through their achievements, becoming immune to the stings of ethnic derogation, but would, in the process be developing the competitive skills necessary for success in our society. About one-fifth of the sample mentioned using this long-term nurturing strategy. Similarly, a small number of parents stated that they tended to counteract the effects of discrimination by minimizing them, and by encouraging their children to intellectualize about them. Such parents advised their children that incidents of name-calling were not worth worrying about, and that generally, people who engaged in this kind of behaviour were backward, pathetic, and beneath contempt. The terms, themselves, were often discussed in a calm fashion, sometimes with the aid of a dictionary, and sometimes as humorous or silly words. The aim of parents using this approach seemed to be to neutralize the effects of ethnic derogation by guiding their children to view such incidents as nonsense. In both these approaches; i.e., competitiveness and intellectualization, the intention on the part of parents seemed to be to discourage emotional, unrestrained responses to discrimination, and to use such incidents as aids for developing self-assurance and a sense of personal dignity in their children. These two perspectives also put less emphasis on the group and more on the individual, in contrast to the approaches which emphasized ethnic community pride or good citizenship and good neighbourliness.

Finally, in this category of indirect methods used to counteract the effects of ethnic derogation and discrimination, over the long term, was the approach by which parents consciously steered their children toward greater self-sufficiency in resolving such problems. In the view of these parents, decreasing reliance on parental assistance in such matters would not only contribute to an increase in a child's sense of personal worth and accomplishment, but would also lead to greater self-reliance. Such parents were of the opinion that they would be doing more harm than good if they were always ready to intervene on behalf of their children when problems arose. In their view, as parents, they were unable to control or change every unpleasant thing their child might meet outside the home, so the child needed to learn how to deal with such events on its own. In addition, such parents felt that, in the long term, self-sufficiency in problem solving would serve their offspring well in a wide range of situations, and was therefore a quality to be nurtured. Most of the parents who used this approach tended to lessen their personal assistance gradually, as each child matured.

To summarize, the data indicates that the vast majority of parents in the sample did not consider ethnic name-calling to be a trivial problem, and that most believed that in some situations, their children required parental assistance to cope with ethnic derogation. Parents participating in this study reported using a broad range of methods in aiding their children with the problem of ethnic name-calling.

In comparison to these findings, Davey's (1983) survey indicated that his informants would take the following actions in the event their child complained about ethnophaulism:

    (a) tell their children to ignore the incident;

    (b) tell their children to reciprocate in kind, or retaliate;

    (c) proceed, at the parental level, with some sort of investigation into the incident.

The results of this study, therefore, confirm and elaborate on Davey's (1983) probe into the same problem. As well, the current investigation has increased the state of knowledge about this aspect of ethnophaulism since it has brought to the surface a considerable array of previously undetected parental responses to the problem.

There was some indication in the data base that certain types of response strategies were connected with certain parental educational achievement levels. However, in view of the limited sample size, these patterns can be only considered as incipient. What is needed at this stage is quantitative research involving a large sample of variously educated respondents from a representative range of visible and non-visible minorities, to bring any such patterns clearly to the surface.

There are, of course, limitations to this study. The most notable shortcoming of the data derived from the fieldwork is in the matter of bias. Most, although not all, of the informants believed that ethnic

name-calling is an important problem, or that it can have a long-term detrimental effect on children who are targets of such abuse. However, there may be many people who believe that this is not an important problem in our society, or that its effects on the individual are minimal or transitory. This study does not reflect both perspectives on the matter. There is yet another problem of bias with this inquiry. Given our multicultural population, it may appear, from the presentation in this text, that only members of visible minorities have been or are currently the targets of ethnophaulism. This is far from the truth as Canadians of Ukrainian, Italian, Irish, Polish, Jewish, and other descents would be quick to point out. For that matter, Newfoundlanders, although not an ethnic minority, could be quite justified in claiming membership among the targeted. Therefore, to forestall any misinterpretations of the intentions of this work, it needs to be stated that the goal of this research was simply to enhance our understanding of ethnophaulism, particularly in the matter of responses, because it is something many Canadians have experienced in the past, and continue to experience in the present. The findings of this study should be of some interest to parents, regardless of their ethnic affiliation; to educators and those who work with young people; and to social scientists from a variety of disciplines.

In conclusion, although this study did answer the questions it had set out to answer, it also raised many questions about the problems of ethnophaulism, stereotypy, and discrimination. Some of the avenues for future research, indicated by this study, have been noted earlier in

this chapter, others will be mentioned here. One interesting condition revealed by this study is in the area of parenting. It seems that members of targeted groups in our society have, in addition to the usual child-rearing responsibilities of all parents, the extra challenge of preparing their children to cope with discrimination, while at the same time guiding them away from becoming embittered and suspicious individuals. We know that not all parents manage to achieve this. A study focusing on this problem might bring to light some useful information for educators, as well as for parents.

This research has also indicated that within our urban school system Native children undergo rough treatment from their peers. More empirical research is needed, not only of the extent of such discrimination within the school environment, but also of effective methods for correcting the problem. As well, we need more grounded data revealing what actually happens when students do report such problems to school authorities.

The findings also indicate that among school children, ethnic derogation seems to crop up most frequently during the preschool through grade three level, and then later, at the junior high school level. This particular finding offers scope for several inquiries, among them being, a comparative study of the practise at both school levels, or a study focusing on only one of these two age groups. In addition, this finding brings to the fore questions about name-callers, themselves. A study could be undertaken, for example, to discover the kinds of factors

which motivate young children and adolescents to engage in ethnic dero-
gation. These might be the same, or perhaps, as recent research in
developmental psychology has indicated, and as informants in this study
have suggested, the motivations differ between the two age groups.

Then there is the matter of effects. It would be useful to parents
and educators to know, for example, whether young children and adoles-
cents are affected differently by such incidents, or whether their
feelings, interpretations, and behaviours are essentially the same. As
well, it would be useful for those dealing with children to know how to
recognize the various signs used by young people to indicate distress
caused by this type of discrimination. Further to effects, informants
in this study were of the opinion that incidents of ethnic derogation
could have a long-term negative impact on the victim's self-esteem.
Some also suggested that another long-term consequence of such harass-
ment could be an increase in tensions among ethnic groups in our
society. Either of these suggested outcomes of ethnophaulism could pro-
vide a challenging research topic in which psychological, historical,
and sociological perspectives might be combined fruitfully.

With regard to ethnophaulisms, there is very little data on
Canadian terms of ethnic derogation. A study of such terms, taken from
an historical perspective might provide some interesting insights about
past and present ethnic relations in Canada. We also need to know more
about social stereotypes. Most Canadian research in this area seems to
have focused on the traditional view of stereotypy as a psychological

phenomenon. It is time we moved on to studying stereotypes in their role of social force. To end this catalogue of directions for future research, I suggest, as a first next step, a quantitative study aimed at verifying the findings of this inquiry.

Appendix A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Since we're talking about living in a multicultural society, let's
   start with your identity. How would you identify yourself (e.g.,
   to which ethnic group do you belong)?

   _____

2. Your children, then, would also be _____?

   What else can you tell me about your child(ren)?

   Girl/Boy   _____   _____   _____   _____   _____

   Age   _____   _____   _____   _____   _____

   Grade   _____   _____   _____   _____   _____

3. Now about the ethnic name-calling,...your child(ren) have reported
   having this kind of experience...Can you tell me about it?

   - what was the situation? (Discuss only one situation at a
     time.)

     _____

   - where and when did this happen?

     _____

   - who was doing the name-calling (same age boy/girl/other)?

     _____

   - what was the term (word, name, phrase) used?

     _____

   - what did your child do?

     _____

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (Cont'd)

4. In your opinion, how do you think your child felt about this:

    - How did the child interpret the incident?

5. When your child reported the incident to you, what did you tell him or her?

6. In thinking about what to tell them, what did you consider (what did you think was important to take into account)? Why? Anything else?

7. How did you advise them to respond in such situations?

    - What did you advise them to do if this happens again?

8. Did you or your spouse personally take any action on your child's behalf?

    - What did you do - go into detail.

    - What prompted you to do this - explain why.

9. Do you think your actions were effective? Can you tell me why you think so?

    - Are you satisfied with the way you handled the problem? Explain.

    - Is there anything you would have done differently?

10. In thinking about how to deal with the situation, or what action to take, what did you consider? Why? Anything else? (Go into detail.)

11. Has this happened more than once?

    - If so, did you say or do anything different when such incidents recurred? Any reason you can think of to explain why?

12. Do you think a person can eventually not be bothered about being called names like this? Why do you think so?

13. Do you have any ideas about why people do this kind of thing? Can you explain? (e.g., is there any point or purpose to calling people names like this, do you think?)

14. What effect do you think this kind of thing has had on your child?

   - Do you think it's basically a temporary effect?

   - Do you think such experiences can have some sort of long-term effect? Explain in more detail please.

15. In your opinion, as a parent, do you think ethnic name-calling is an important problem? Why?

   - If important, can you suggest things that can be done:
         - to discourage such behaviour?
         - to help children cope with it?

16. This brings me to the end of my questions. Thinking back over what we've discussed, is there any comment you would like to add on some aspect of the problem we haven't considered, for example?

17. Would you like to ask me any questions about any of this?

18. Can you suggest questions I might include in other interviews?

19. Do you think you might know some other parents who could help me with this? If you happen to think of someone later, please get in touch.

Thank you.

Before we finish up, there's that other form that needs to be completed. I'll let you fill it out yourself, but you can ask me to explain things if there's some question you're not sure about.

Appendix B

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

The answers to these questions will help us to make sense of the whole body of information we get from all the parents participating in this study. Once again, we assure you of complete confidentiality. Names and personal addresses are not important to this study.

1.   In which area of the city do you reside? (e.g., Maples, St. Vital, etc.)

   _____

2.   What is your occupation? (e.g., housewife, cashier, bus driver, elementary school teacher, doctor, bank teller, etc.)

   _____

3.   What is your spouse's (husband/wife) occupation? (Be specific.)

   _____

4.   What level of education have you completed? (If educated in another country, give Canadian equivalent.)

	Husband	Wife
elementary -------------------:	_____	_____
junior high school -----------:	_____	_____
high school ------------------:	_____	_____
post secondary: technical ---:	_____	_____
post secondary: university --:	_____	_____

5.   Where were you born; that is, what country?

   _____

Where was your spouse born?

   _____

How long have you lived in Canada (since which year)?

   _____

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE (Cont'd)

6. To which age group do you belong? (Circle appropriate letter.)

	Husband		Wife
a.		– 19	a.
b.	20	– 24	b.
c.	25	– 29	c.
d.	30	– 34	d.
e.	35	– 39	e.
f.	40	– 45	f.
g.	45+		g.

7. Now I would like to ask you about your total family income. Please look at this list and tell me which category applies to you:

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

1.	0 – 9,999
2.	10,000 – 19,999
3.	20,000 – 29,999
4.	30,000 – 39,999
5.	40,000 – 49,999
6.	50,000 – 59,999
7.	60,000 – 69,999

Thank you for your co-operation.

Appendix C

CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

My participation is entirely voluntary. I understand that I will participate in an interview of approximately one hour on matters related to the problem of ethnic name-calling among children and parental guidance in the matter. I also know that I will be asked a few biographical questions. All of this information will be analyzed along with similar information gathered from other parents in similar situations.

The interviews will be tape-recorded and the tapes transcribed. I am assured that no one but the researcher, her assistant, and her advisors will listen to the tape or read the interview. The information from this interview will be used only in connection with research into the problem of ethnic name-calling. Neither my name nor that of anyone in my immediate family will be used with reference to this study, or in identifying the tape and transcript. When the project is written up, the information will be prepared and described in such a way that it will not be possible to identify me. I am free to withdraw from this study at any time.

At the end of the project a summary of the findings will be available for distribution to participants. If you would like to receive a copy please give your mailing address below. For a detailed description of the entire project, the thesis will be available at the main university library.

_____   _____

Date   _____

                                Signature

Yes, I would like to receive a summary. Please send it to this address:

                    _____

                    _____

                    _____

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