Critical Ethnomusicology Pedagogy with Migrant Youth in Edmonton, Canada: Promoting Cultural Empowerment and Intercultural Learning through Music

by

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Abstract

Given the globally accelerating patterns of voluntary and forced migration, Canadian schools are currently serving the most culturally, religiously, and linguistically diverse student cohort in the country's history. Many Canadian schools have responded by instituting culturally responsive curricula and diverse programming models; however, there is still a considerable gap in the provision of programs that effectively facilitate migrant students' adaptation and success in their new social and educational environment. Despite some recent attempts at making Alberta's provincially mandated curriculum more inclusive of Aboriginal and French Canadian perspectives, it continues to be dominated by Anglo-Saxon ideals. Furthermore, many scholars argue that Canadian education is heavily influenced by *official* multicultural policy, which downplays difference and treats ethnic and cultural groups as monolithic, static entities, thus reinforcing cultural stereotypes and reproducing social inequities within schools. This combination communicates a tacit yet palpable cultural hierarchy, which can disempower students of non-dominant cultures and alienate them from learning and social contexts.

Given music's established importance as a vehicle for children and young people's construction and negotiation of individual, cultural, and group identities, I was interested in investigating the following questions: What are some alternative ways of applying critical pedagogy theory within ethnomusicology, such that it specifically validates the non-dominant musico-cultural knowledges of migrant youth? What are some of the methodological challenges that one might face when practicing critical ethnomusicology pedagogy with junior high migrant students in Canada? And how might these challenges be addressed? By utilizing a critical pedagogy framework, I sought to

explore how migrant youth might utilize participatory music making and ethnomusicological tools to: a) counter the "subtractive," arguably colonizing effects of Canadian mainstream schooling; b) promote a more critical understanding and practice of multiculturalism within their schools; and c) formulate more positive social interactions and friendships with students of other linguistic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. This led me to conduct three cycles of praxis with a total of 50 junior high migrant students, their parents, and teachers at a faith-based school and at a public school in Edmonton, Alberta.

My dissertation ethnographically documents and comparatively analyzes these cycles, which took place between 2012 and 2014. Specifically, it recounts young students' experiences of migration and schooling through the lens of music. It first reveals their challenges and their social agency as they negotiate different facets of their fluid identities, express and pursue their interests, and navigate a variety of relationships within the constraints of two contrastive school contexts. Second, my dissertation comparatively discusses the methodological challenges and resultant design features used in three cycles of ethnomusicological praxis, while citing the different factors at play: school philosophy and culture, school resources and staff support, participating class size, school cultural politics, inter-student social dynamics, and individual student characteristics. My praxis further involved experimenting with various music-based research methodologies that are youth-centered, collaborative, and engaging for migrant youth of diverse backgrounds. Within my dissertation, I critically assess these approaches' apparent strengths and weaknesses through a comparison of the methodological challenges and project outcomes within each cycle of praxis. Finally, I utilize the insights acquired from these three cycles of praxis in order to propose and

evaluate the impacts and limitations of a new pedagogical approach called Critical

Ethnomusicology Pedagogy (CEP). I argue that, unlike critical pedagogy's usual focus on

verbal dialogue as an avenue towards critical thinking and conscientization, this

approach's focus on music and dance performance is capable of transcending barriers that

may render traditional critical pedagogy ineffective within multicultural migrant

classrooms.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Rana El Kadi. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, under the following project name: "Newcomer Youth Empowerment and Global Citizenship Programs in Canada: Evaluating Existent Initiatives and Implementing New Ethnomusicological Curricular Interventions," No. Pro00030436, June 6, 2012.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

A. Introductory vignette

<div align="right">May 13, 2014</div>

I leave my downtown Edmonton[1] apartment shortly after 8 am, hoping to catch the earliest bus, so as not to miss the fastest connection to my destination. The whole trip takes approximately fifty minutes, and it is imperative that I arrive before the start of period 2 at Liberty School, so as not to disrupt the English Language Learning (ELL) class as I enter the room. At about 9:05 am, I am comfortably seated on the second bus, but I keep my eyes peeled for the intersection at which I should press the button to request a stop. I have just recently become familiar with this area and bus route. Since moving to Edmonton in 2007, my social world has been confined to the University of Alberta campus, and only recently have I ventured out of this figurative cloister to volunteer and conduct research within Edmonton's junior high schools.[2]

Within eight minutes, I step off the bus and walk the two remaining blocks towards Liberty School, about ten minutes before the bell rings to signal the end of period 2. Established about forty years ago, the junior high school is a relatively old single-story brick building that annually serves around 300 students from the neighbouring areas; many of these students actually live within the direct vicinity of the school. I approach the front door and open it. A white hallway stretches ahead of me, doors lining both sides. The school is quiet, apart from the occasional voice of a teacher, raised to scold a misbehaving student. As I make my way down the hallway towards Ms. Jane Lewis's ELL classroom, the school bell starts to ring, setting off a boisterous chain reaction; teenage students dart out of their classrooms, buzzing with excitement. Taken aback by this sudden flurry of energy that seems to be hurtling straight towards me, I cautiously begin to maneuver my way through the throngs, unsuccessfully trying to

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[1] Edmonton is a medium-sized northern city in the oil-rich Canadian province of Alberta.

[2] Having grown up sheltered in a small, relatively privileged social circle in Beirut, Lebanon, I had found it most sensible and convenient to live within the safe enclave of the university campus. This decision seemed particularly prudent for a lone student from Lebanon, given Edmonton's shockingly frigid winters and its relatively underdeveloped public transportation system.

remember whether school hallways were this chaotic when I was a teenager… In the moments during which the students rush to their lockers on the sidewalls to grab their books and binders, I hear a cacophony of voices conversing in myriad languages, gossiping and whispering and bursting into laughter, before their figures rush past me and into different classrooms.

This is one of the early days of "Cultural Ambassadors," an ethnomusicological project I am leading with a number of ELL students at Liberty School. My project assistant and I accompany the two newly formed student groups to the Music Room for a brainstorming session. We each sit with a group and endeavour to facilitate dialogue among the students about their project performance interests.

My group includes four Indian students (Kavita, Diya, Madhu, and Falak), one Somali student (Ameena), and one Mexican student (Adelina). I recognize that some of the students do not feel comfortable about opening up because the group is a far cry from their usual social circles.[3] So, I begin by trying to draw on their common intercultural experiences. I bring up the school's talent show in which some students participated the day before. This leads Ameena to compliment the beautiful Gujarati garments that the Indian girls wore during their Bollywood dance performance. She also states that Adelina's performance of the song "Let it go" (from the popular Disney movie "Frozen") made her cry.

The Indian girls previously expressed interest in teaching their classmates about their Hindu religious festivals and dances, but I also know that Ameena's Muslim family has reservations about music and dance performance. Therefore, I decide to bring up religious celebrations and feasts - instead of music or dance - as a shared practice. The conversation that ensues is worth quoting at length:

- *Rana [addressing Ameena]: Do you have anything in your culture where you celebrate God?*
- *Ameena: Eid.*
- *Rana: So let's see if maybe there's something similar here… Ok, so tell me, in your culture, in your religion, what's Eid?... Can you tell us a little?*

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[3] In fact, in an earlier conversation with me, Ameena privately expressed her annoyance about being in the same group with Kavita.

- *Ameena: It's where we go pray, and we celebrate the day of God…*
- *Rana: Is that when you eat […] sheep?*
- *Ameena: Yeah, we kill sheeps, then we…*
- *Some of the Indian girls express shock: Oh!!*
- *Rana: Yeah, it's a feast. They all eat… A lot of people come, right?*
- *Ameena [barely audible over a student's sudden clash on the drum set's crash cymbal behind us]: And sometimes they kill cows and stuff.*
- *Rana: They do what?*
- *Ameena: They kill cows.*
- *Falak [in disbelief]: Oh no!! [Kavita gasps and covers her face with her hands in horror, and Adelina bursts out laughing.]*
- *Rana [addressing Kavita]: Ok, so… Why did you do that reaction here? Tell them…*
- *Kavita: In our culture, cows are god.*
- *Diya: Yeah.*
- *Rana [addressing Ameena]: Cows are godly to them.*
- *Kavita and Diya: Yeah.*
- *Ameena [laughing in disbelief]: Noooo… seriously?!*
- *Rana: That's why a lot of them are vegetarian.*
- *Kavita: They're a vehicle for a god… Like, which god…?*
- *Ameena: I cut a head off a cow!*

[Upon hearing Ameena interject with this gruesome statement, the four Indian girls' faces visibly contort with pain, and they urge her to stop talking. But Ameena is clearly amused at the extreme reaction her words are having on her classmates. She takes this opportunity to boast.]

- *Ameena: It was so awesome! … It was awesome!!*
- *Rana [addressing Ameena while trying to mediate the rapidly escalating conversation]: Ok, so we need to be very respectful here.*
- *Ameena [catching herself]: Oh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.*
- *Diya [scoldingly]: Ok, Ameena!*

- *Rana: Ameena, we need to… Just like they're respectful that you have one God, and you know, you have certain traditions, you need to be respectful… but this shows you how sometimes it's difficult to understand other cultures because… look at this: you kill cows and eat them, and they never…*
- *Diya: We wouldn't do that!*
- *Rana: They pray to them! Why do you pray to cows? Why are they important?*
- *One of the students: It's a vehicle of god […].*
- *Ameena [earnestly]: But cow meat is so tasty! I have a lot of it! [This is met with stunned silence]*
- *Diya [adamantly]: Ok – stop it!*
- *Rana: Ok let's go beyond that – there are other things we can eat in the world…*
- *Ameena: Ok. A goat.*
- *Rana [addressing the Indian girls]: What did you say? It's a vehicle.*
- *Kavita: Yeah, it's a vehicle for a god.*

[The other Indian girls scramble to explain the concept to me, while Ameena starts to lose interest and asks if we could learn about Mexico from Adelina.]

- *Rana [addressing Ameena]: Ok, so did you hear this? Cows are important because that's where the gods sit. […]*
- *Ameena [confused, crudely inquires]: There's a god for a cow??*
- *Rana: No, no, no - wait.*
- *Ameena [now visibly exhausted and annoyed]: This is weird…*
- *Rana: It is! It is weird when you're from a different culture, just like maybe it's weird for them that you believe in just one god. […] Listen, if we try to get beyond the fact that 'Oh my God!' you know, 'You eat cows, and you think they are vehicles for god…' If we go beyond that a little – right? – we can start to see how incredible it is that each culture has its own amazing beliefs, and everything makes sense. Like why do you have these festivals? Why do you have Eid? […] the food… everything comes together! It's all part of a bigger thing which is cultural values. […] Well, listen, not everyone necessarily believes in gods, right?*
- *Diya: Yeah.*
- *Ameena: In my culture, you have to believe in God, or they call you Christian.*

- *Rana: Oh… well, see that's not right to say. You know why? Because in a way, they're saying if you're Christian, then you're not really believing in God! But you realize, they should call them 'atheist.'*
- *Ameena [sounding more exhausted than ever at this point]: What's that?*
- *Rana [addressing the whole group]: You know what 'atheist' means?*
- *The group: No.*
- *Rana: Someone who doesn't believe in any god.*
- *The group: Oh…*
- *Rana: So that is the correct term, which is not insulting. If you're saying you're Christian if you're not Muslim, like 'Oh, you don't believe in God,' I mean that's…*
- *Ameena: It's not practically that – they just call it haram. They mean it is bad […], like God will bring you to hell.*
- *Rana [in an effort to voice what the other students were probably thinking]: So let's say I'm Christian, are you saying that [that's] haram because I don't believe in [Islam]? [Ameena shook her head no.]*
- *Rana: Ok… So we need to be careful sometimes… just because we're in a very multicultural society, and it's hard for us to make friends if we keep saying things like that. (Liberty School project session, May 13, 2014)*

I must admit I was taken aback by the way this discussion unfolded, particularly because I knew that Ameena had one of the most culturally diverse social circles in the ELL class. When I mentioned this to the ELL teacher Miss Lewis, she did not seem at all surprised. In a matter-of-fact tone, she told me that junior high friendships tend to be rather superficial, as they usually centre on style and pop culture. She explained that students rarely sit down to have discussions about culture and religious beliefs, and they do not necessarily know much about each other's family values or practices. In fact, filling out a Social Circle activity sheet two weeks earlier had made Ameena realize that she does not necessarily know the national cultures to which her friends belong (Group 2 session, April 28, 2014). This definitely explains why she had so much trouble engaging in intercultural dialogue that day.

Interestingly, Miss Lewis said that, even though junior high students in Canada rarely engage in intercultural dialogue, they need to learn to be polite and respectful of other cultures and beliefs because Canadian society is multicultural (Conversation with Jane Lewis, May 13, 2014). I remember finding the teacher's statement perplexing; for how can young people in Canada - whether migrant or otherwise - be expected to "be respectful" of others' cultures and beliefs when they do not even possess a minimal understanding of the latter? And whose interests does this arguably superficial, depoliticized approach to multiculturalism actually serve? My ethnomusicological praxis within Edmontonian schools rested on the assumption that such uncritical views of intercultural relations obfuscate the history and contemporary reality of cultural and racial inequity in Canada, rendering the topics of cultural difference and racial discrimination taboo within schools and society. Instead of providing migrant and racialized students with a space to critically and constructively engage with issues that will impact their social lives as they grow up in Canada, such official views lead students into strategies of avoidance.

B. Research aim and value

Western society has long perceived children and youth as incomplete beings, in need of training and guidance from adults in order to develop into "rational and civilized adult citizens" (Kehily 2004), and more recently, viable economic actors within national and global capitalist systems. At the same time, children and youth have long been marginalized within the social sciences and cultural studies; and even when they were the *object* of study, their own views have generally been neglected (Knorr and Nunes 2005). Within this adult-centered world, schools have been tasked with socializing and enculturating children and youth into dominant systems of knowledge through the promotion of rigid curricular material that represents adult perspectives and concerns. In particular, adult teachers have traditionally utilized top-down "information delivery" pedagogical styles that regard children as passive "empty vessels" (or blank slates) whose responsibility is merely to receive, recall, and regurgitate official knowledge. As critical pedagogues argue, such approaches are not only incapable of adapting to the divergent subject-positions in each classroom, but they also frequently disengage students from the learning process (Darder, Baltodano, and Torres 2009).

Given the globally accelerating patterns of voluntary and forced migration, Canadian schools are currently serving the most culturally, religiously, and linguistically diverse student cohort in the country's history. Since the school is expected to play an important role in migrant children and youth's settlement, language learning, and social integration processes (Knight et al. 2012), many scholars have discussed the importance of transforming educational programming in order to meet the needs of these increasingly multicultural cohorts. Besides the surge in studies on culturally responsive pedagogy and multiple literacies in multicultural classrooms (Ladson-Billings 1995, May 1999, Sleeter 2002, Johnson 2007, Giampapa 2010, Basu 2011, etc.), a number of studies have advocated culturally-relevant schooling that takes migrant students' prior formal education into consideration, while providing learning activities that cater to their English as a Second Language (ESL) - and more recently, English Language Learner (ELL)[4] - needs (Antrop-Gonzalez 2006, Kanu 2008, Matthews 2008, Ferfolja 2009, McCarthy and Vickers 2012, Nevarez-La Torre 2010, Zhang 2012, Keddie 2012, etc.).

Many Canadian schools have responded by instituting such culturally responsive curricula and diverse programming models that aim to promote cultural diversity and inclusion. However, in Alberta's capital city, Edmonton, there is still a considerable gap in the provision of programs that effectively facilitate migrant students' adaptation and success in their new social and educational environment (Rossiter and Derwing 2012). It is also important to note that, despite some recent attempts at making Alberta's provincially mandated curriculum more inclusive of Aboriginal and French Canadian perspectives, it continues to be dominated by Anglo-Saxon ideals. Furthermore, Dei and Calliste argue that Canadian education is heavily influenced by *official* multicultural policy, which downplays difference and treats ethnic and cultural groups as monolithic, static entities, thus reinforcing cultural stereotypes and reproducing social inequities within schools (2000). This combination communicates a tacit yet palpable cultural hierarchy, which can disempower students of non-dominant cultures and alienate them from learning and social contexts. Critical pedagogues would argue that although the Canadian government has curtailed its overt colonization of Indigenous children through

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[4] Recognizing that many migrant students that enroll in these programs already speak *several* languages other than English, educators have recently started to use the term ELL instead of ESL.

residential schooling, mainstream Canadian education continues to furtively colonize the minds and actions of *all* students that do not belong to the dominant social group - that of heteronormative Anglo-Saxon patriarchy. In particular, scholars of childhood argue that schools that do not value migrant students' cultural backgrounds and knowledges are inherently "subtractive" (Valenzuela 1999); they can create "everyday ruptures" that are characterized by "moments of shock, disconnection, and reiterated dislocation" (Hamann and Zuniga 2011, 143).

Since critical pedagogy ideas, as well as cultural empowerment programs for migrant youth, have most frequently been implemented with students of similar socio-economic or cultural background, I was interested in exploring the shape(s) that critical pedagogy might take within *multicultural* Canadian classrooms. As such, I sought to investigate this praxial issue through my doctoral research. Following are the initial questions that guided my research: How might critical pedagogy be used to validate students' individual cultures without reducing the exercise to a superficial celebration of cultural diversity? How might it acknowledge their common experiences of migration, without isolating them from Canadian-born students? How might critical pedagogy ideas be applied with linguistically diverse groups of migrant youth, given that traditional - verbal - approaches are sometimes impractical due to severe language barriers? And finally, how might such a novel approach recognize the individual agency of migrant students, their intersectional identities, as well as the complex interplay of power in each of their social interactions?

Specifically, I was interested in exploring these issues through the lens of *music*, given the latter's established importance as a vehicle for children and young people's construction and negotiation of individual, cultural, and group identities (Campbell and Wiggins 2013b). The growing influence of socio-cultural theories of childhood and youth has led scholars in the fields of ethnomusicology and music education to increasingly turn their attention towards the musical experiences of children and youth; they are now using child-centered approaches to understand how children and youth learn, teach, consume, and produce music through various channels and within different social and (multi)cultural milieux, including schools (Marsh 2008; Campbell 1998; Campbell and Wiggins 2013a; Emberly 2014; Emberly and Davhula 2016). A few researchers have

specifically investigated *migrant* children and youth's multifaceted musical cultures, intersectional identities, and social interactions, while considering their implications for multicultural music education in various Australian and European contexts (Marsh 2012, 2013, 2015, and 2016; Karlsen 2011 and 2013; Karlsen and Westerlund 2010). However, there is still a gap in the literature on the various roles that music may play within migrant students' processes of settlement and social integration, particularly within the Canadian context. Meanwhile, a number of applied ethnomusicologists have been studying the way that music and music-related processes may be used to bring about positive and sustainable change for various populations, in terms of their livelihoods, social relations, health and well-being, etc. However, there remains a serious gap in the scholarship and practice of ethnomusicology with school-aged children and youth, particularly within migrant multicultural classrooms.

By utilizing a critical pedagogy framework, I sought to explore how migrant youth might utilize participatory music making and ethnomusicological tools to: a) counter the "subtractive," colonizing effects of Canadian mainstream schooling; b) promote a more critical understanding and practice of multiculturalism within their schools; and c) formulate more positive social interactions and friendships with students of other linguistic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. This led me to conduct three cycles of praxis with a total of 50 junior high migrant students, their parents, and teachers at a faith-based school and at a public school in Edmonton, Alberta. My dissertation ethnographically documents and comparatively analyzes these cycles, which took place between 2012 and 2014. It contributes to the literature in a number of ways.

First, by ethnographically investigating young students' experiences of migration and schooling through the lens of music, my dissertation reveals their challenges as well as their social agency as they negotiate different facets of their fluid identities, express and pursue their interests, and navigate a variety of relationships within the constraints of two contrastive school contexts. As such, this research contributes to the children's studies literature on migrant youth's experiences of schooling, as well as migrant youth's musical cultures.

Second, my dissertation ethnographically demonstrates the intricacies of conducting research with migrant youth in a Canadian school setting. Specifically, it

comparatively discusses the methodological challenges and resultant design features used in three cycles of ethnomusicological praxis, while citing the different factors at play: school philosophy and culture, school resources and staff support, participating class size, school cultural politics, inter-student social dynamics, and individual student characteristics (such as status in Canada, family situation and history, socio-economic background, cultural background, gender, language ability, personality, and musical ability). My praxis also involved experimenting with various music-based research methodologies that are youth-centered, collaborative, and engaging for migrant youth of diverse backgrounds. Within my dissertation, I critically assess these approaches' apparent strengths and weaknesses through a comparison of the methodological challenges and project outcomes within each cycle of praxis. My study therefore contributes to the burgeoning discourse on the theoretical and methodological challenges of conducting applied ethnomusicology projects; in particular, it addresses the lacuna in the scholarship and practice of ethnomusicology as a tool within educational programs for migrant children and youth.

Third, my dissertation utilizes the insights acquired from these three cycles of praxis in order to propose a new pedagogical approach called Critical Ethnomusicology Pedagogy (CEP). Within this performative-discursive approach, students use participatory music-making and ethnomusicological research in order to explore their peers' migrant identities as well as their own, while exploring new relationships of teaching and learning with their parents, teachers, and peers. Besides supplementing the current literature on ethnomusicological pedagogy, CEP takes critical pedagogy a step further in order to address the contemporary migrant and multicultural realities of the Canadian classroom. For unlike critical pedagogy's usual focus on *verbal* dialogue as an avenue towards critical thinking and conscientization (even within the theatrical arts), this approach's focus on music and dance performance is capable of transcending barriers that may render traditional critical pedagogy ineffective within multicultural migrant classrooms.

Finally, my dissertation analyzes and interrogates CEP's potential impacts and limitations. My research findings and recommendations thus enable interested parties in Canada and elsewhere to utilize this approach within their own programs, while tailoring

it to the specific needs of their students or youth groups. Considering the promising outcomes of implementing CEP in Edmonton, this new approach constitutes an expedient contribution to the scholarship and practice of migrant education, particularly within multicultural immigrant-receiving countries.

C. Dissertation outline

In this section, I shall briefly describe the contents of each dissertation chapter. Chapter 2 provides a brief survey of the literature within the research area relevant to this study, followed by a description of the research scope and the two school research sites. It also discusses the theoretical paradigm that I utilized within my dissertation; this constitutes a synthesis between Freire's critical pedagogical ideas, Araujo's theory of "sound praxis," ethnomusicological approaches to the study of childhood and youth, and Small's ideas about "musicking" and social relations. This chapter ends with a list of research questions that my dissertation seeks to address, and a brief note about my research methodology. Chapter 3 describes how my research unfolded in terms of ethics and methodology, while pointing to a couple of major challenges that arose throughout the process. It also briefly describes my first cycle of praxis at Piety School, and how this volunteer project led to the development of my doctoral research project at both Piety School and Liberty School. Chapter 4 describes the various programs and supports that the two schools have been instituting in order to provide an academically supportive and culturally inclusive environment for migrant students, while facilitating their social integration into the community. Chapter 5 discusses some of the key migrant student issues that appeared to be partially or wholly unaddressed within the two schools when I was conducting my research there. Chapters 6 and 7 constitute detailed accounts of the second and third cycles of praxis at Piety School and Liberty School, respectively. They discuss each ethnomusicological project's key components, critical ethnographic incidents, and various outcomes. Chapter 8 proposes a new pedagogical approach called Critical Ethnomusicology Pedagogy (CEP); it attempts to theorize this approach based on the insights acquired from three cycles of praxis. Finally, Chapter 9 summarizes my key research findings then discusses the contributions and limitations of my research within various areas of scholarship and practice.

Chapter 2: Research Area, Scope, and Paradigm

A. Research area

My research area, loosely defined as ethnomusicology pedagogy with migrant youth in Canada, lies at the intersection of a number of research fields: the disciplinary fields of (applied) ethnomusicology and education, the social category of children and youth, the disciplinary issue of migration, and the geo-cultural field of Alberta, Canada.

1. Childhood, youth, and music

Children and youth have long been marginalized within the social sciences and cultural studies; and even when they were the *object* of study, their own views have generally been neglected. The interdisciplinary field of "childhood and youth studies" began to emerge only recently, with scholars in sociology, anthropology, education, psychology, and others coming together to define and develop unique methodologies and theoretical paradigms for the study of children and youth's cultures across time and space.

Within the field of anthropology, for instance, it was not until the 1960s and 1970s that a few scholars such as Margaret Mead, Philippe Aries, and Charlotte Hardman began to make significant strides towards the development of this new field. Specifically, scholars began to advocate a more pluralistic understanding of childhood and propose the adoption of a more diachronic perspective, particularly in the study of childhood across various geo-cultural areas (Knorr and Nunes 2005, 9-10). The 1980s brought about some pioneering work in the field of sociology; an important contribution was made by Chris Jenks who argued that an understanding of childhood could not begin to develop without establishing childhood as an ontological category and a social phenomenon in its own right. Throughout his work, he argued that researchers would have to stop considering childhood as a transitional phase through which individuals had to pass on the path to becoming "complete social beings," or adults. The relationship between adults and children would have to change as well, making children central (as opposed to marginal) within the social world that researchers study (Knorr and Nunes 2005, 10). This was accompanied by a change in academic thought regarding the study of childhood in Europe, and the 1990 publication of a landmark edited volume by sociologists Allison

James and Alan Prout *(Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood).* In their co-authored book *Theorizing Childhood* (1997), James, Jenks, and Prout later highlighted four key approaches that continue to be utilized within current research on children. As anthropologists Knorr and Nunes note, these approaches relate to the broader theoretical discourses of "agency versus structure," "identity versus difference," "continuity versus change," and "local versus global." First, James et al. asserted that childhood is a social construction; this refuted the idea that childhood is universal and apolitical, instead proposing the existence of a plurality of childhoods, each playing a role in society. Second, they stated that childhood is a "world aside," meaning that it is not socially structured in the same way as adulthood; therefore, elucidating it requires that children speak for themselves as opposed to basing it on adults' interpretations of what childhood is. Third, James et al. specified that children be considered a minority group. By acknowledging that adults possess the power to decide on childhood issues in the world, this demonstrated the need for scholars to engage in research that is "in the interest of children rather than just being about them." Finally, James et al. highlighted the fact that childhood must be considered a component of *all* social structures, thus pointing to the universal existence of childhood within all societies (Knorr and Nunes 2005, 11-12). The following statement by Knorr and Nunes effectively sums up the basic premises that currently reign within the field of childhood and youth studies: "Children are considered as complete beings, as social agents able to create a socio-cultural universe with its own particularities and as social agents able to critically reflect upon the adults' world" (Knorr and Nunes 2005, 14).

According to Campbell and Wiggins, ethnomusicology as well has only recently begun to pay serious attention to the study of children's musical cultures; the few scattered studies that ethnomusicologists conducted during the 20th century represented "observational reports of their own making" that did not take children's own views into consideration and treated their musical processes of learning, enculturation, and socialization as solely culture-specific (Campbell and Wiggins 2013b, 3). The following passage from Campbell and Wiggins' literature review shows how recent scholarship provides more child-centered glimpses into the way children grow into their own musical cultures:

"Music happens among children on the far outside of school in peer and mixed age groups, especially between the ages of five and twelve years, whether they are singing together and playing singing games […], dancing to music in the family home […], or listening to the songs supplied by the music industry at home or in family-oriented concerts of children's singer-songwriters […]. As they progress into their middle childhood years, children are increasingly prone to share music via the available technology […], and this activity continues through their adolescent years […]. In their search for identity as adolescents, music becomes them. It sweeps over them, fascinates them, and subsumes them. Children generally graduate from 'childhood' at about age eleven into what is […] sometimes referred to as 'youth,' when the growing pains are as much socioemotional as they are physical. The search for identity intensifies through the teen years, especially ages thirteen to eighteen as they make their ways through junior and senior secondary schools and as they gradually figure out who they are personally and collectively and to which groups they belong" (Campbell and Wiggins 2013b, 16-17).

2. Critical and inclusive approaches to schooling

a. *Child-centered studies of (musical) schooling*

In their volume on children's musical cultures, Campbell and Wiggins describe the way that children are usually situated, treated, and accommodated by the adults in their lives: "Children are in a unique liminal position, one that continues from birth clear through to their achievement of independence from the family in later adolescence, as subjects and objects of enculturation, education, training, induction, consumerism, peer pressure, and exploitation" (Campbell and Wiggins 2013b, 5). Adult treatment of children and youth as incomplete beings in need of moulding through enculturation and socialization is perhaps most vividly portrayed and enacted within the historically dominant theories of schooling that regard children as "blank slates." For, as Campbell and Wiggins state, educators have long perceived children as "recipients of knowledge transmitted to them by adults with training in subject matter and developmentally appropriate delivery techniques and systems" (Campbell and Wiggins 2013b, 4). These

views translate into curricular content that adults believe holds value and universal application; and if the formal curriculum includes the arts, the latter is usually based on national or international canonic standards. As the authors note, such approaches to education do not usually acknowledge or support children's own valued traditions and local knowledges (Campbell and Wiggins 2013b, 8).

Within the field of music education, as in other fields, scholars have only recently begun to view children as agentic beings. In the early 1990s, music education specialists began to use ethnographic fieldwork techniques in order to study children's musical practices beyond the confines of formal schooling (Campbell and Wiggins 2013b, 4). Since then, a number of scholars have studied the roles and meanings of music in young people's lives from a child-centered perspective, specifically by researching children's musical cultures and their processes of musical creation, preservation, and transmission (Boynton and Kock 2006; Campbell 1998; Corso 2003; Lum 2007; Lum and Whiteman 2012; Marsh 2008; McPherson 2006). Some have then considered the ways in which this growing understanding of children's musical cultures may be utilized to make formal music education more equitable, relevant, and engaging to children of different backgrounds and within various geo-cultural contexts (examples include: Campbell 1998; Campbell et al. 2005; Schippers 2010; Schippers and Campbell 2012; Sæther 2012).

b. *Critical pedagogy*

While research in childhood and youth studies has begun to shed light on the marginalization of *all* children within an adult-centered world, critical scholarship on the sociology of education has been calling attention to the way that schooling in itself works to further marginalize children that do not belong to the dominant groups within society. The long-standing view has been that education in Western developed countries and postcolonial areas aims for and achieves "the best possible outcomes for all who partake in it," regardless of how differently these outcomes might be defined within different contexts and historical periods. According to Abdi and Richardson, however, since educational intentions, structures, and contents are usually developed *by* and *for* the dominant economic and political class, schooling ends up perpetuating societal inequities and marginalizing students of minority backgrounds. Here, the authors define 'minority' "not necessarily based on numerical inferiority, but more practically on power relations

where those who come from the dominant economic and political class will possess more socio-cultural capital, not only in the classroom where they are already similar in social status, orientation and perception to their teachers, but also in the school yard, around the sporting events and in the overall competition for status and recognition" (Abdi and Richardson 2008, 3). Schooling may thus be considered "an agent of social reproduction where learning and teaching relations reproduce society as it is." This is why critical education scholars and practitioners in the 20th century saw the need for reconceiving education into a more socially democratic endeavour, by working towards more equitable power relations, horizontal decolonization, and the inclusion of non-dominant ideas, cultures, and knowledges. The work of such scholars paved the way towards the trailblazing sub-disciplines of critical pedagogy, critical multicultural education, and democratic education (Abdi and Richardson 2008, 1-4).

Critical pedagogy is currently an established field of educational research and practice, wherein radical scholars and educators undertake a thorough investigation into societal concerns that traverse the process of schooling, as a path towards achieving more democratic practices and outcomes in education and society as a whole (Darder et al. 2009, 2). According to Peter McLaren: "Critical theorists begin with the premise that *men and women are essentially unfree and inhabit a world rife with contradictions and asymmetries of power and privilege* (McLaren 2009, 61; author's italics).

Critical pedagogy's philosophical principles are deeply influenced by the Frankfurt School's critical theory of society. The latter emerged in Europe during the first half of the 20th century, amidst some major historical, political, and philosophical developments (Darder et al. 2009, 8). The latter emerged in Europe during the first half of the 20th century, amidst some major historical, political, and philosophical developments that propelled the School's members to address the following needs: "(1) the need to develop a new critical social theory within a Marxist framework that could deal with the complex changes arising in industrial-technological, postliberal, capitalist society; and (2) the need to recover the philosophical dimensions of Marxism which had undergone a major economic and materialistic reduction by a new Marxist orthodoxy (Warren, 1984)" (Darder et al. 2009, 8). According to Darder et al., members of the Frankfurt School aimed to challenge the narrow forms of rationality by which the concept of meaning and

knowledge was defined within the Western world (Darder et al. 2009, 7). Central to this project was the use of dialectical theories, which McLaren describes as:

> "[…] theories which recognize the problems of society as more than simply isolated events of individuals or deficiencies in the social structure. Rather, these problems form part of the *interactive context* between individual and society. The individual, a social actor, both creates and is created by the social universe of which he/she is a part. […] Dialectical theory attempts to tease out the histories and relations of accepted meanings and appearances, tracing interactions from the context to the part, from the system inward to the event. In this way, critical theory helps us focus *simultaneously on both sides of a social contradiction*" (McLaren 2009, 61; author's italics).

Darder et al. describe the contemporary field of critical pedagogy as such:

> "Critical pedagogy is fundamentally committed to the development and enactment of a culture of schooling that supports the empowerment of culturally marginalized and economically disenfranchised students. By so doing, this pedagogical perspective seeks to help transform those classroom structures and practices that perpetuate undemocratic life. Of particular importance then is a critical analysis and investigation into the manner in which traditional theories and practices of public schooling thwart or influence the development of a politically emancipatory and humanizing culture of participation, voice, and social action within the classroom. The purpose for this is intricately linked to the fulfillment of what Paulo Freire defined as our 'vocation' - to be truly humanized social (cultural) agents in the world" (Darder et al. 2009, 9-10).

It is important to remember that critical pedagogy constitutes a set of *heterogeneous* ideas with the shared aim of liberating oppressed populations through critical schooling principles and practices. These ideas include cultural politics, the historicity of knowledge, ideology and critique, hegemony, resistance and counter-hegemony, praxis, and dialogue and conscientization. As Darder et al. argue, it is precisely the heterogeneity of critical pedagogy ideas that ensures that their implementation remains critical, and thus democratic and emancipatory (Darder et al.

2009, 9).

3. Migration

c. *Migrant children and youth*

Migration has long represented an important facet of human history. However, the last few decades have brought about an acceleration in migration on a global scale, rendering it a key issue for individuals, societies, and governments around the world. This represents a particularly important issue for Canada, a wealthy developed country with an open immigration policy, and as Bannerji argues, "a liberal democracy with a colonial heart" (Bannerji 2000, 75-76). Drawing on recent developments in the study of childhood and youth experiences, research in the fields of anthropology, sociology, geography, and education has begun to examine the way that children and youth in various geo-cultural locales experience, view, and manage different facets of migration in an increasingly transnational world. Some of the key issues currently debated in the literature include agency and identity, emotion and affect, social and cultural reproduction, and the role of the state and its institutions in the processes of migration and integration.

However, the fact remains that a large number of academics, policy makers, and social workers still utilize the externally imposed, and as I shall demonstrate, highly detrimental concept of "youth-at-risk," when approaching a number of issues that children and youth face. In fact, the field of crime prevention studies in a number of countries (including Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) has identified a set of personal and family "risk factors" that allegedly make youth more prone to engage in substance abuse and criminal activity. The most prevalent definition of "youth-at-risk" was set forth in 1995 by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which is concerned with "[promoting] policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world" (http://www.oecd.org/about/). This definition links the concept of "youth-at-risk" to a variety of "risk factors:" structural factors (including "poverty, ethnic minority status, domestic issues, language deficiencies, local community factors and education quality"), individual factors (including "disability,

pregnancy, drug use or illness"), and psychological factors (such as low self-esteem) (Life Skills evaluation report 2012).

In their study of migrant youth in Edmonton, Knight et al. note that immigrant and refugee youth are almost always guaranteed the "at-risk" label, since they are often marked by a number of these factors (Knight et al. 2012, 42). An unpublished evaluation report of Life Skills, an intensive development pilot program for "at-risk" youth, discusses the additional challenges that migrant youth face.[5] The report states that immigrant and refugee families further have to deal with "multiple stressors, stemming from a loss of status, language and cultural differences, post-traumatic stress, and challenging economic conditions" (2012, 6). Additionally, many disadvantaged migrant youth (especially refugees) arrive in Canada with poor language and literacy skills, which makes their academic progress particularly challenging. This is often coupled with experiences of discrimination within their school and community, due to their skin colour, difficulty speaking English, as well as cultural and religious differences (2012, 7).

b. *Education for migrant children*

Within our modern-day culture, schools represent central sites for youth integration into society and the economy. As Knight et al. note: "Educational outcomes may dictate whether individuals possess the linguistic tools necessary for employment and building social networks outside of their own first language community. A high school diploma, college diploma or trades certificate may mean the difference between creating productive participants in the Canadian economy or economic dependents reliant on state resources" (Knight et al. 2012, 12). This is no different in the case of migrant youth, whose social and economic integration into the host society is largely dependent on their education outcomes. Unfortunately, migrant youth often face difficulties at Canadian schools, due to academic struggles, cultural alienation, social stigmatization, and/or racial discrimination. As the Life Skills evaluation report states, if these issues are not addressed effectively, youth may slip into social isolation, mental health problems, and high-risk behaviour, or even drop out of school altogether (2012). Dropping out of school is especially problematic for migrant youth because, as Knight et al. argue, schools may

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[5] In an effort to protect the privacy of the migrant youth involved in this program, I have used a pseudonym for the program name and refrained from mentioning the report's name or author.

act as "arenas of acculturation where … youth adapt to societal norms and build lifelong inter-community social bonds," and are "one of the few spaces in Canadian society where our pluralistic values, our commitment to a multicultural society, can be passed on to our young people" (Knight et al. 2012, 12).[6]

Due to the tremendous increase in worldwide migration to Western developed nations over the past few decades, the issue of making education more equitable and inclusive for migrant children has become particularly pressing. As Knight et al. argue, "understanding the challenges faced by immigrant and refugee youth in education requires an examination of both the formal and informal structures of education" (Knight et al. 2012, 13). Since Canadian schools are currently serving the most culturally, religiously, and linguistically diverse student cohort in the country's history, they have had to seriously reexamine their approach to the provision of education. Recognizing the complexity of the issues that migrant youth face, schools in Canada have gradually been developing supports for these students. However, despite the presence of basic school settlement services for young migrant students, there is still a huge gap in social integration programs that facilitate their adaptation and success in their new educational environment.

In response to these grave problems, many scholars have argued that North American schools need to transform their programming in order to meet the needs of their increasingly multicultural cohorts. Researchers have been turning their attention to the various kinds of programs employed by the state, its institutions, and civil society organizations in order to provide "equitable" services to children that participate in and are affected by migration. Besides the surge in studies on culturally responsive pedagogy and multiple literacies in multicultural classrooms (Ladson-Billings 1995; May 1999; Sleeter 2002; Johnson 2007; Giampapa 2010; Basu 2011), a number of studies have advocated culturally-relevant schooling that takes migrant students' prior formal education into consideration, while providing learning activities that cater to their ELL needs (Trueba 1999; Short 2002; Hay et al. 2004; Hek 2005b; Antrop-Gonzalez 2006; Kanu 2008; Matthews 2008; Ferfolja 2009; McCarthy and Vickers 2012; Nevarez-La

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[6] In their study of high school students' negotiation of their external classroom environment, Tupper et al. additionally note: "In these spaces students often negotiate their emerging identities, peer group affiliations, and a burgeoning sense of citizenship" (Tupper et al. 2008, 1066).

Torre 2010; Zhang 2012; Keddie 2012). Others have demonstrated the need for learning from non-dominant groups, who are now being recognized as having a "wealth of knowledges" (Kirova 2012, 25).

Unfortunately, as Kirova argues, the linguistic and cultural capital of minority children and their families continues to be systematically invalidated (Kirova 2012, 24). In immigrant-receiving countries such as Canada, the presence of this "deficit framework" within schools progressively disengages minority students from the learning process and leads many to drop out of school (Kirova 2012, 21). As scholars of childhood argue, schools that do not value migrant students' cultural backgrounds and knowledges are inherently "subtractive" (Valenzuela 1999); they can create "everyday ruptures" that are characterized by "moments of shock, disconnection, and reiterated dislocation," and this is associated with an increase in school failure (Hamann and Zuniga 2011, 143). This is a serious issue despite, or arguably *because*, of Canada's long-standing focus on "multicultural" policy.

c. *Canadian multicultural policy and education*

The notion of "multiculturalism" initially emerged in Canadian policy during the second half of the 20th century. For most of its history, Canada has claimed to be a "two-nation" state – British and the French – with an English dominance; however, according to political scientists Abu-Laban and Gabriel, this notion began to shift in the 1970s. Following protests from the "third force" (non-English, non-French, and non-Aboriginal) in 1971, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau established a new policy called "multiculturalism" within a bilingual framework; this was meant to recognize the country's "third force" as Canadian (Abu-Laban and Gabriel 2002, 105). However, this led to the "song-and-dance" critique, as the policy's superficial focus on folklore and cultural maintenance was denounced for failing to stop the stereotyping and racial discrimination that ethnic minority groups were facing. This concern led the Multiculturalism Directorate to create a race relations unit in 1981, which then helped to institute employment equity legislation in 1986, the Multiculturalism Act in 1988, and a Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship, which was later disbanded in 1993 (Abu-Laban and Gabriel 2002, 108-111). During that year, the incoming federal Liberals created the Department of Canadian Heritage and commissioned a review of the

multiculturalism program. Based on the report's recommendations, the Liberals announced the following three goals for the new program: (diverse) identity, civic participation, and social justice. The aim was to create active citizens and attachment to Canada instead of maintaining diverse cultures; unfortunately, this was accompanied by decreased funding which was to be provided on a project-by-project basis. According to Abu-Laban and Gabriel, multiculturalism has since been framed within a globalization discourse, where it would aid in enhancing Canada's global competitiveness, cost-effectiveness, and international trade (Abu-Laban and Gabriel 2002, 113-117). The authors argue that the influence of neo-liberal ideals on recent multicultural policy in Canada has perpetuated English-French dominance, aggravated class and gender inequalities among ethnic minorities, and emphasized national and global competitiveness at the expense of national inclusion and belonging (Abu-Laban and Gabriel 2002, 123-124).

In *The Dark Side of the Nation*, sociologist Himani Bannerji provides a powerful analysis of multicultural policy through a critical reading of Canadian settler nationalism. She argues that the notion of Canadianness has been constructed upon a long history of colonialism and racism and continues to be equated with white skin and a European North American origin. According to her, the white constituency in power propagates exclusive notions of an "imagined community" and national belonging, reinforcing them through labeling practices (such as immigrant, refugee, visible minority, ESL speaker, etc.) that perpetuate symbolic and structural violence, all while remaining cloaked under the deceptive rubric of "multiculturalism." Bannerji contends that these labeling practices are inherently reductionist since they help to organize state policy towards different groups. For these externally given names effectively become "codes for political subjectivities and ideological/pedagogical possibilities," leading the way to a belonging/alienation dualism and a general "crisis in citizenship" (Bannerji 2000, 64-66). Bannerji also argues: "Due to its selective modes of ethnicization, multiculturalism is itself a vehicle for racialization. It establishes anglo-Canadian culture as the ethnic core culture while 'tolerating' and hierarchically arranging others around its as 'multiculture.'" This has grave consequences, including the demonization of entire communities based on their non-white ethnic origin (Bannerji 2000, 78). Finally,

Bannerji asserts that despite its sexist-racist construction, Canada is presently able to bolster its claim of liberal democracy and multiculturalism by having an equitable Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the slogan "unity in diversity"[7] (Bannerji 2000, 72-74). The country utilizes these strategies in order to manage the "crisis in citizenship" and maintain anglo-Canada's hegemony over the First Nations, the Quebecois, and non-white citizens (Bannerji 2000, 77). Consequently, while the discourse of multiculturalism has come under severe critique within Canada, politicians have been portraying the country as a world leader in multiculturalism (Abu-Laban and Gabriel 2002, 121).

Unsurprisingly, Canadian education has not escaped multicultural policy's grasp; as George Sefa Dei and Agnes Calliste argue, Canadian education today is heavily influenced by *official* [liberal] multiculturalism. They argue that the latter downplays difference and treats ethnic and cultural groups as monolithic, static entities, thus reinforcing cultural stereotypes and reproducing social inequities within schools (Dei and Calliste 2000, 21). According to Mackey, under Canada's official policies of multiculturalism, "… despite the proliferation of cultural difference, the power to define, limit and tolerate differences still lies in the hands of the dominant group. Further, the degree and forms of *tolerable* differences are defined by the everchanging needs of the project of nation-building" (Mackey 1999, 83). This is highly visible in the generally superficial treatment of cultural diversity within the school curriculum.

d. *Migrant children, music, and education*

Ethnomusicological studies of migration have generally focused on the role of music in cultural continuity and change or bi-cultural identity negotiation within single ethno-cultural, diasporic communities. Applied ethnomusicologists[8] have recently begun to research the role of music in strengthening diasporic communities (Landau and Topp Fargion 2012; Brinkhurst 2012), breaking barriers among refugees of previously warring factions (Reyes 2010), initiating intercultural dialogue and learning between marginalized

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[7] Bannerji adds that before the notion of multiculturalism came to be, the white settler colonial entity justified its hegemony by creating a "threatened identity" for itself, where its "survival" was threatened by the wilderness (including the allegedly primal indigenous peoples) and the United States (Bannerji 2000, 80).

[8] Applied ethnomusicology has been defined as "the approach guided by principles of social responsibility, which extends the usual academic goal of broadening and deepening knowledge and understanding toward solving concrete problems and toward working both inside and beyond typical academic contexts" (Harrison et al. 2010, 1).

ethno-cultural populations and mainstream European societies (Hemetek 2006 and 2010; Pettan 2010), and combatting fascist, anti-migrant sentiments through antiracism curricula in Germany (Sweers 2010).

Meanwhile, as a key context for migrant youth socialization and integration, the public school represents a particularly important ethnographic context that has generally been overlooked within ethnomusicological studies of migration. Notable exceptions include ethnomusicologist and music education specialist Kathryn Marsh's recent research on children's informal music learning processes in Australian schoolyards (2012; 2013; 2015; 2016; 2016 with Dieckmann). A few music education scholars have also begun to study migrant children's musical interests; however, they mainly focus on students within the music class context (Karlsen and Westerlund 2010; Karlsen 2011 and 2013). Given the hyper-diverse reality of immigrant-receiving countries today, it is important that ethnomusicologists start paying more attention to the potentially empowering and socially integrative role that music can play within migrant children's experiences of schooling. I believe that ethnomusicologists have much to offer to the multitude of schools that are currently facing challenges in catering to migrant and multicultural needs. For they possess rigorous cross-cultural training in music and are thus uniquely qualified to study and engage with the complexities of cultural diversity through a socio-artistic medium that is often central to the human processes of self-identification, social connection, and community-building (MacDonald et al. 2012).

B. Research scope

1. Immigration and education in Alberta

Alberta is a resource-rich province located in western Canada; it is bordered by British Columbia, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories, and Montana. Knight et al. note that the province's birth rate is below the rate required for population replacement, and there are projections of "future labour shortage and strained public services;" this has made Alberta a "labour hungry" province that creates policies and programs to attract and retain immigrants seeking economic success (Knight et al. 2012, 7, 10-11). At the time that I conducted my doctoral research, Alberta's immigrant population had been progressively increasing; in fact, the immigration rate to Alberta between 2012 and 2014

was one of the highest among Canada's provinces and territories (Martel and d'Aoust 2016, 3).

In order to better contextualize the case of Alberta, I shall briefly discuss Canada's contemporary immigration system, which is based on three primary streams. The economic class includes a number of sub-categories, including "the skilled workers program, economic programs, the Canadian experience category, investors, provincial candidates, live-in caregivers and dependents of the applicant." The family class reunites families; therefore, it includes "married spouses, common-law partners, dependent children, parents or grandparents and other immediate family members of a permanent resident." The refugee class includes "refugees admitted to Canada, refugees sponsored by the government or the private sector, and their dependents." Between 2012 and 2014, 61% of all immigrants to Canada belonged to the economic class, 27% belonged to the family class, and 11.9% belonged to the refugee class (Martel and d'Aoust 2016, 4-5). Notably, Canada introduced the Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act in 2001, which shifted the government's refugee selection criteria to those with the greatest need. While refugees were previously chosen on the basis of adaptability (in terms of education levels, health, and age), this change in policy has led to the emergence of a different Canadian refugee population - namely one with "complex needs." According to Rossiter and Derwing: "Often refugees have significant education gaps and may not be literate in their first language. These issues place further demands on some refugee youth, who have a limited period of time to learn English and catch up with their peers on curriculum subject content" (Rossiter and Derwing 2012, 91).

Returning to the case of Alberta, I shall summarize the key findings in the provincial government's most recent immigrant progress report (2011), which covers immigration trends between 2006 and 2010. During this period of time, Alberta was the fourth largest immigrant-receiving province in Canada; for it had received 20,716 immigrants in 2006, in comparison with 32,640 immigrants in 2010.[9] People who immigrated to Alberta during that period came from over 160 countries, the highest

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[9] According to this report: "Averaging 25,087 new immigrants annually, immigration to Alberta has been increasing over the period 2006-2010. Most new immigrants were of the Economic Class which accounted for 60.5%, on average. Sponsored family members accounted for 28.4% and refugees accounted for 8.6%, on average. The number of immigrants arriving in Alberta each year increased 57.6% over the period" (Government of Alberta 2011, 15).

proportion being from China, India, the Philippines, and U.K. and Colonies. They spoke over 130 languages, the top mother tongues being English, Tagalog, Punjabi, Mandarin, and Spanish. Finally, about half of these immigrants were between the ages of 25 and 44 (Government of Alberta 2011, 2 and 15-17). This undoubtedly contributed to Alberta having the youngest population among all Canadian provinces in 2011, with a median age of 36 (Knight et al. 2012, 7).

In Alberta, children's education is publicly funded from kindergarten until grade 12 (ages 6 till 18). The capital city, Edmonton, provides children and youth with a variety of educational options. In addition to charter and private schools, the city has three distinctive school boards: the Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB), which accepts all students; the Edmonton Catholic School District (ECSD), which is targeted towards Catholic students but accepts students of all faiths; and the North Central Francophone School Board, which is a smaller school board meant for students whose first or primary language is French. Although the school curriculum is provincially mandated, different schools may provide unique programs, electives, and extra-curricular activities, and teachers usually have some flexibility in implementing the curriculum. According to Rossiter and Derwing, the public and Catholic school boards in particular have student populations of great ethnic diversity; however, their programs and practices for ELLs differ: "The Edmonton Catholic School District has long had a coherent strategy and has devoted considerable resources to its ESL programming, whereas schools in the Edmonton public system received reduced funding and support for ESL throughout the 1990s and early 2000s and have started only recently to rebuild their programming" (Rossiter and Derwing 2012, 93).

Rossiter and Derwing state that many stakeholders are involved in providing educational services for migrant children and youth in Edmonton: namely the federal and provincial governments, local university education faculties, school boards, and non-governmental organizations (Rossiter and Derwing 2012, 89-90). Throughout my exploratory research in Edmonton, I discovered that such programs range from family settlement and aid programs to in-class curricula, homework clubs, one-on-one mentorships, and after-school programs. A few programs go over and beyond basic settlement within communities and schools – these are often referred to as "social

integration programs." Despite the wide variety of trajectories that the latter make take, such programs usually teach newcomer youth "life skills," while aiming to enhance their sense of self-worth, confidence in their own abilities, and hope for a bright future. Some short-term programs even go so far as to deliver empowerment and antiracism programs that aim at educating youth about the dangers of racial stereotyping, the subtle operation of systemic racism, and ways of combatting such issues in the hopes of achieving some level of racial equity. According to Rossiter and Derwing, however, despite the well-intentioned efforts of various stakeholders, "there is very little evidence that, overall, these initiatives have increased linguistic, academic, and integration success" (Rossiter and Derwing 2012, 90). The authors attribute this to a lack in systematicity and coordination when it comes to programming for this student population. Therefore, although Edmonton's schools receive additional funding to provide language instruction to ELL students, many of their needs are not met, which in turn leads to an increase in dropout rates (Rossiter and Derwing 2012, 89).

2. School research sites

For the purposes of my research, it was important that I select schools with highly multicultural student populations and relatively well-developed programs for the integration of migrant students. Throughout my volunteer experiences with an immigrant-serving organization in 2012, I was able to build professional relationships that eventually provided me with access to conduct my doctoral research at two junior high schools in Edmonton. In the spirit of anonymity, I will hereon in refer to the two participating schools as "Piety School" and "Liberty School." Furthermore, in order to protect the privacy and identity of my interlocutors, I shall refrain from mentioning any information that might identify the schools or the students that participated in my research; this includes any unique programs or publications that explicitly mention the school names. I will utilize pseudonyms when needed, especially when referring to any student, staff member, or parent who took part in my research.

Besides their divergent locations, the two sites were able to provide my research with comparative breadth because the first was a faith-based school, while the second was a secular public school; this translated into distinctive school philosophies and approaches to integrating migrant students. Furthermore, working with these two

different schools allowed me the opportunity to conduct research with students from a wider variety of cultural, socioeconomic, and migration backgrounds. Although both schools were required to teach the Alberta Education curriculum and meet Alberta Education requirements, each one possessed a radically divergent set of characteristics. Therefore, based on my project needs, I found it helpful to employ the following etic characteristics to distinguish between the two sites: student population and school philosophy. These official characteristics will be discussed in this section.

a. Student population

Proclaiming itself "a place of welcome" to all of its students and their parents or caregivers, Piety School served an increasingly culturally diverse student population; due to the prevalence of inexpensive apartment rentals within the surrounding neighbourhoods, this school attracted incoming waves of immigrant and refugee families that chose to reside within these apartment complexes when they first arrived in Edmonton.[10] According to the Vice Principal, Angela Smith, this has led to a very high percentage of English Language Learner (ELL) students at Piety School, particularly with the recent influx of migrants from the Philippines, Indonesia, Nepal, the Horn of Africa, Mexico, Columbia, and El Salvador. A large proportion of the student population practiced the Christian faith, while some had other religious backgrounds but did not practice. In 2013, only one student in the school was a practicing Muslim who wore the *hijab* (Angela's interview with the author, May 29, 2013).

Liberty School served around three hundred junior high students annually, and its student population was extremely culturally diverse, to the extent that there were usually about thirty different languages spoken within the school. According to Vice Principal Marco Moustaki, new migrant families usually gravitated towards this residential area for a number of reasons, such as the presence of large immigrant communities of similar ethnic backgrounds, as well a mosque and a Hindu temple. Although the school's priority was to serve children from its immediate catchment area, Liberty School welcomed students from all over the city when space allowed. Marco stated that families are usually drawn to the school because of its diverse programs, which is why the student population

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[10] In Edmonton, elementary and junior high schools are required to give enrollment priority to students that live in their immediate catchment area.

usually belongs a variety of socio-economic situations, "from families that experience significant poverty, all the way to […] some families that are fairly wealthy." In the 2013-2014 school year, about eight students were categorized as "refugees," and they were mainly of Somali or Sudanese origin (Marco's interview with the author, January 31, 2014).

b. School mission and philosophy

In terms of its mission, Piety School was deeply grounded in religion; it aimed to provide a faith-based education that inspired student learning and prepared them for a life ultimately dedicated to serving God. According to its official website, the school sought to implement eight key characters in its faith-based education (community, tradition, humanness, sacramentality, rationality, spirituality, justice, and hospitality), while instilling five fundamental values in its students (dignity and respect, honesty, loyalty, fairness, and personal and communal growth).

Throughout my research and volunteer experiences at Piety School, I caught glimpses of the school's faith-based learning environment. Physical evidence included the presence of Christian objects and symbols (such as crucifixes and rosaries) in every classroom, in addition to a prayer table situated outside the administrative office. Piety's literature also provided numerous instances of the school's faith-based focus. For example, the school website and brochures were replete with verses from the Holy Bible. Verses such as the following argued for the importance of pursuing faith-based learning within Christian families: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him" (Luke 2:40). Meanwhile, besides including practical reminders and invitations for parents, the monthly school newsletter usually commenced with a Christian prayer from the administration and a one-page sermon written by a local member of the clergy. Moreover, the newsletter reminded parents about their children's involvement in the rites, liturgies, and celebrations at the neighbouring church, and urged families to donate to local non-profit organizations.

Because Piety School aimed to provide a faith-based education that inspired student learning and prepared them for a life ultimately dedicated to serving God, the teachers and administrators worked hard to ensure that the Gospel teachings "permeated" every aspect of the school experience.

For instance, the curricular subject of Religion represented a key component that was appended to the provincially mandated junior high curriculum. The Transition classroom teacher Katia Zelinski stated: "We have three Religion blocks a week. So you're pulling from other subjects, so you might have one less Language Arts, or one less Math [than other schools do]... to teach that religious component" (Katia's interview with the author, May 28, 2013). Besides these mandatory Religion classes, all students were required to attend frequent liturgical rites and celebrations that were led by the school chaplain or held at a neighbouring partner church. Furthermore, teachers were tasked with the duty to incorporate Gospel teachings into the curriculum and their everyday classroom practices.

During our conversation, Angela explicated the complex and intentional process that teachers and administrators utilized in order to ensure that the Gospel teachings "permeated" every aspect of the school experience at Piety School, thus creating a truly faith-based learning environment for students. As she put it, it is not always a "God is good, God is great" environment; it is more "this is what the Gospel teaches us, this is what it looks like in the classroom, and this is how you are expected to conduct yourself." In other words, Piety School teachers and administrators were always mindful that their students learn to uphold the teachings of the church in their daily lives, particularly by following the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule of "do to others what you would have them do to you" (Angela's interview with the author, May 29, 2013).

Angela Smith provided a thorough explanation of this process by citing examples from her own experiences, both as a Vice Principal and a Social Studies teacher: "One of the things that I feel really strongly about is I like being able to start my day with a prayer publicly, with […] kids who want to be in the environment, parents who wanna be in the environment. Because for them, it's a form of tradition, or point of tradition. And it's a part of their identity, which I think is pretty important. I also want them to know that this is a place of welcome, because Jesus welcomed everyone… Jesus was accepting of everyone, so that's one of the first things – that's where the Golden Rule comes in in terms of what I find acceptable and unacceptable in my classroom. Then I'll move into 'this is what the Ten Commandments looks like.' So, when you're honouring your mother or your father, you're not talking back to them. You're also at school, you're

applying that to your teachers. That's what it looks like, right? So […] your having respect for your elders is basically what the Fifth Commandment is, and in turn, we give you respect back because you're learning how to treat others; so again you're tying it back to the Golden Rule. So then, in the curriculum, how I might do it when I'm in Social Studies […] - we're talking about the environment, or we're talking about political systems and politicians. Well, how can they behave in one way but yet spew off something else?" (Angela's interview with the author, May 29, 2013)

In addition to its strong focus on faith-based education, Piety School was committed to preparing its students for a globalized world replete with human and technological innovation. As such, it actively sought to make its students creative, critical-thinking, and digitally aware global citizens by utilizing a *21-century learning approach*. According to Angela, one method that the school used to achieve this goal was embracing technology within the learning process, while teaching students appropriate ways of utilizing it: "We don't tell the kids: 'No, no, no, you can't bring your iPad, your iPhone [...].' We say: 'No, you can – it's *how* you choose to use the device.' So we're teaching them digital citizenship" (Angela's interview with the author, May 29, 2013). In fact, Piety School was recently extolled for its effective use of technology as a learning tool in comparison with a large number of schools across Canada.

On the other hand, Liberty School's website stated that the school had high standards for student achievement and behaviour, but was equally concerned with providing a safe, caring, and respectful environment. Marco stated that the school's philosophy was "making sure that every student will be as successful as they can be;" therefore, it used diverse, proven methodologies and practices to "meet the learner at the level they're at" and "get them to as high a level as possible." For instance, it offered a wide range of alternative programs and supports in order to meet the diverse needs of its students, all the way from programs for high performing students to those for students performing at lower levels. In addition, Liberty School worked in partnership with students, their families, various agencies, and the community in order to achieve its aforementioned mission. For example, it had instituted a mental health program that brings in success coaches, counselors, mental health therapists and nurses, particularly in order to support students facing mental health issues due to poverty or trauma. At the same time, Liberty School benefitted from the social support services and

after-school programming provided by several social service organizations. According to Marco, this diversity in alternative programming demonstrates the Edmonton Public School Board's (EPSB) slogan as a "district of choice," where the aim is to provide families and children with the programs they desire or need, thus retaining them within the public school system (Marco's interview with the author, January 31, 2014).

Furthermore, many EPSB schools, including Liberty, had begun implementing an approach to character and citizenship education called the *Leader in Me* (http://www.theleaderinme.org/). This method is a whole-school transformation model that has been proven to help improve the performance of all its programs. Based on the book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (and more recently, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*), and a transformational experiment at an American school, the *Leader in Me* model has been replicated with purportedly similar results in over 2,000 North American schools since 2006. According to its creators, "the *Leader in Me* equips students with the self-confidence and skills they need to thrive in the 21st-century economy," including leadership, accountability, adaptability, initiative and self-direction, cross-cultural skills, responsibility, problem solving, communication, creativity, and teamwork (http://www.theleaderinme.org/what-is-the-leader-in-me/). This is done by incorporating the "7 habits of highly effective teens" into the school curriculum and expectations of student behaviour: (1) Be proactive; (2) Begin with the end in mind; (3) Put first things first; (4) Think win-win; (5) Seek first to understand, then to be understood; (6) Synergize; and (7) Sharpen the saw (Covey 1998; http://www.theleaderinme.org/the-7-habits-for-kids).

Liberty School encouraged student leadership and a culture of community service through the *Leader in Me* and the *7 Habits* model. According to Marco: "… kids here […] get a lot from the school community, their teachers, their families, so [they] give back through service areas" (Marco's interview with the author, January 31, 2014). These local community service areas ranged all the way from reading the morning announcements or creating yearbook content, to cooking dinner for parent meetings and gym cleanup. Furthermore, like other EPSB schools, Liberty School participated in Free the Children's *Me to We* program, which allows schools to pick one of its *We Create Change* international development campaigns to work on each year. The school focused on

raising money to build a school in rural India during the 2013-14 schoolyear (Marco and Jane's interview, June 27, 2014). Although the whole school usually participated in the fundraising effort for a specific goal, a small group of students - *We Day* Service Area members - usually took the lead by organizing creative fundraising events and inviting guest speakers to *We Day* school assemblies in order to raise awareness and inspire students to get involved in global issues.

C. Research paradigm

1. Research theory

Within my doctoral research, I sought to investigate the way that ethnomusicological tools may be utilized to legitimize non-dominant migrant cultures and knowledges, while promoting critical intercultural learning among culturally diverse youth in Canadian schools. In this section, I shall discuss the theories that I used in order to frame my research in Edmonton.

a. *Critical pedagogy and Freire*

First, I developed my research in dialogue with critical pedagogy theories, specifically the writings of Brazilian philosopher and educator Paulo Freire, whose work has greatly influenced critical pedagogical thought and practice in Latin America, North America, and beyond. Here, it is important to note that my synthesis of various critical pedagogical ideas merely represents my personal take on the latter, as a Lebanese immigrant ethnomusicologist working in Canadian multicultural schools.

Freire asserted that culturally marginalized and economically disenfranchised students ("the oppressed") in his native country were being *mis*-educated - that they were being indoctrinated with a "*false* consciousness" and a sense of *inferiority* through hegemonic processes similar to those of colonization. According to Abdi and Richardson, "colonial experiences greatly damage people's existentialities by, among other things, de-authenticating people's identities, and rendering them misrecognized. With the physical forces of imperialism complemented by colonial languages and education, the colonized eventually adapt to their imposed identities, which continually stunt their capacity to define themselves and develop their societies" (2008, 8).

In his seminal work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire presents an emancipatory pedagogy that hinges on two interrelated ideas. First, this pedagogy aims to reconcile the so-called *teacher-student contradiction* present within the conventional *banking* practice of education. In banking education, the teacher-student relationship is unidirectional. It is one of narration between an *all-knowing* Subject (the teacher) and a *passive and ignorant* object, or empty vessel (the student). The teacher chooses the program content, and the student must adapt to it even if it conflicts with his or her personal experiences. However, Freire argues that, "apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis, men cannot be truly human. Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry men pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (Freire 2009[11], 52-53).

In response, he puts forth the concept of *problem-posing education,* which seeks to engage the student in acts of *cognition* as opposed to mere transferals of information (Freire 2009, 56). Whereas banking education deceptively fortifies students' *hopeless* perception of their situation, problem-posing education presents their current situation as a *problem*, or as Freire puts it, "as an historical reality susceptible of transformation" (Freire 2009, 59). Within this pedagogy, students are no longer passive "objects of the teacher's knowledge transference" (Araujo and Grupo Musicultura 2010, 224). Instead, teacher-students and student-teachers engage in critical inquiry and reflection about problems relating to themselves "in the world and with the world" and employ a horizontal dialogic process of knowledge production. According to Freire, by becoming *Subjects* of their own cognitive operations, students begin to develop a *critical consciousness* (or *conscientization*) that paves the way towards transformative action and an emancipatory praxis (Freire 2009, 57-60). This relates to Freire's assertion that there is a distinct difference between the *adaptive* person and the *integrated* person. He argues that the adaptive person is person as *object*, for adaptation is symptomatic of one's dehumanization as one gives in to their reality and believes all the myths fed to them by their oppressors. On the other hand, Freire believes that the integrated person is person as *Subject,* since "integration results from the capacity to adapt oneself to reality *plus* the

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[11] This chapter is a reprint of Chapter Two from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, originally published in 1970 by Continuum Press.

critical capacity to make choices and to transform that reality" (Freire 1973, 4). Therefore, as Abdi and Richardson argue, Freire's project of democratic literacy and education provides a means of "first decolonizing the *imagination* and later the *actions* of the internally colonized" (Abdi and Richardson 2008, 5; authors' italics).

I also based my ethnomusicological praxis on a dialectical view of schooling, which as I mentioned earlier, had a great influence on critical pedagogy theories. According to McLaren: "A dialectical understanding of schooling permits us to see schools as sites of *both* domination and liberation" (McLaren 2009, 62). Specifically, my praxis drew on Foucault's conceptualization of power as a complex grid, emphasizing individual acts of resistance and shifting nexuses of power instead of a strict dichotomy between the dominant and the dominated. Darder et al. discuss the impact of Michel Foucault's theories of power on critical pedagogical thought:

> "… for Foucault, power did not represent a static entity, but rather an active process constantly at work on our bodies, our relationships, our sexuality, as well as on the ways we construct knowledge and meaning in the world. Power, in Foucault's conceptualization, is not solely at play in the context of domination, but also in the context of creative acts of resistance - creative acts that are produced as human beings interact across the dynamic of relationships, shaped by moments of dominance and autonomy" (Darder et al. 2009, 7).

This paradigm was particularly useful because it aligns well with the focus in recent sociocultural theories of childhood on young people's agency and methods of resistance within our generally adult-dominated world.

b. *Music, childhood, and social relations*

In their volume on children's musical cultures, Campbell and Wiggins put forth two arguments that are central to my dissertation. First, they argue that children exercise agency in choosing the music that they prefer; as such, they actively *interact* with their surroundings as they develop musically: "Children develop their musical sensibilities as their surroundings allow it, and from their innate instinct to be musical they grow more musical through cultural interaction and education. Yet they are not passive recipients of the music they value but active agents in choosing the music they will take time to listen and respond to, to make, and to choose to preserve, reinvent, or discard" (Campbell and

Wiggins 2013b, 1). The authors add that we must begin to recognize the ability of children to *change* adult culture and align it more with their interests instead of merely imitating it (Campbell and Wiggins 2013b, 10). Furthermore, Campbell and Wiggins argue for the importance of considering both the differences and the commonalities among children's experiences with music: "… in ethnomusicology as in anthropology, the emphasis given to diversity over commonality has prevented the examination of patterns of children's practices (Minks 2006, 217) when in fact childhood may be best viewed for its global as well as cultural-specific entities" (Campbell and Wiggins 2013b, 3).

This point is particularly important in the context of my dissertation; for, in working with a culturally diverse group of migrant students, I needed to ensure that my ethnomusicological praxis gave equal consideration to various facets of their intersectional identities, including but not limited to: a) their social status as children and their resultant children's cultures; b) their shared experiences of migration, marginalization, and/or integration; c) their linguistic, ethnic, racial, or cultural backgrounds; and d) a variety of other personal identifications. For as Campbell and Wiggins argue: "An important element in the journey through childhood and adolescence is the development of a conscious identity. This personal identity is shaped and defined by language, ethnicity, and religious beliefs and is often publicly expressed (and personally determined from tween-age, or even earlier) through dress, music, and dance. […] As young as they are, children make their own identities, and these are not purely *one* thing. They are familiar with and sensitive to labels, and they learn early on their power to include, exclude, and cause hurt" (Campbell and Wiggins 2013b, 11-12).

Finally, my dissertation seeks to further develop Christopher Small's concept of "musicking."[12] Small argues that "when we perform, we bring into existence, for the duration of the performance, a set of relationships, between the sounds and between the participants, that model ideal relationships as we imagine them to be and allow us to learn about them by experiencing them" (Small 1998, 218). Within my research, I interrogate

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[12] Small defines "musicking" as such: "to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, or by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing" (Small 1998, 9).

this concept within the context of migrant youth schooling. Specifically, I consider how such a theorization of participatory music-making may constitute a "testing ground" for new relationships of knowledge production and sociality among migrant youth and between youth and adults within Canadian multicultural schools.

2. Research questions

Utilizing the aforementioned theoretical ideas, I aim to investigate the following research questions:

- What are some alternative ways of applying critical pedagogy theory within ethnomusicology such that it specifically validates the non-dominant musico-cultural knowledges of migrant youth?
- What are some of the methodological challenges that one might face when practicing critical ethnomusicology pedagogy with junior high migrant students in Canada? How might these challenges be addressed?

3. Research method

My research draws on, and seeks to expand, Samuel Araujo's Freirean-inspired ethnomusicological ideas into the realm of migrant and multicultural classrooms in Canada. According to Grande, the Freirean notion of "praxis" may be understood as "action and reflection upon the world in order to change it or simply as intentional action" (Grande 2009, 206).

Through their applied ethnomusicological research in Brazil, Araujo and members of the Grupo Musicultura powerfully engage with Freire's notions of critical pedagogy with disenfranchised communities. Araujo et al.'s collaborative study involved teams of university ethnomusicology students and instructors working dialogically with residents from communities in the Mare district - a socially marginalized, violent-ridden area in Rio de Janeiro. The goal was: (a) to produce knowledge about the meanings of musical practices for these communities by involving members as co-researchers; and (b) to discuss the role which community-conceived sound archives may play in social transformation. In their article, Araujo and members of the Grupo Musicultura argue for the omnipresence of violence in society, declaring that social forms are inherently violent in structure. They propose that violence must be theorized instead of being considered an

instance of societal disorder or a rule-breaking exception. In addition, the authors argue that scholars need to question the premises of their academic disciplines, thus unearthing the top-down - and symbolically violent - neo-colonial processes of knowledge production (Araujo and Grupo Musicultura 2010, 219).

Araujo et al. call for the combat of symbolic violence through "sound praxis;" this is chiefly based on Freire's notion of "praxis," which considers theory and practice to be anchored in each other (Araujo and Grupo Musicultura 2010, 219-220). Situating their sound praxis within the larger framework of participatory action research (PAR)[13], Araujo and Grupo Musicultura engaged in a process of dialogic knowledge building:

> "Following participatory action models, particularly the one proposed by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, the project has emphasized dialogic knowledge building in which 'foreign actors' mediate conversations between 'local actors' about the knowledge that informs their daily lives [...]. On the one hand, the student remains the self-conscious subject of the cognitive operations, making possible the emergence of liberating knowledge. Here the teacher acts as a mediator in the process" (Araujo and Grupo Musicultura 2010, 224).

As they later state, the most important objective behind this kind of approach is to help the community to reflect upon itself through dialogue and mediation (Araujo and Grupo Musicultura 2010, 229). Ideally, such an approach would constitute the first step towards combating symbolic violence; for not only does it highlight the voice and agency of marginalized groups, but it also transforms the subaltern groups into self-conscious *Subjects* who actively engage in the production and consumption of musical knowledge and discourses about their community, instead of being mere *objects* of macro neo-colonial discourses about social marginalization.

Methodologically, my research draws on, and seeks to expand, Samuel Araujo's

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[13] According to Baum et al., participatory action research "seeks to understand and improve the world by changing it. At its heart is collective, self-reflective inquiry that researchers and participants undertake, so they can understand and improve upon the practices in which they participate and the situations in which they find themselves. The reflective process is directly linked to action, influenced by understanding of history, culture, and local context and embedded in social relationships. The process of PAR should be empowering and lead to people having increased control over their lives (adapted from Minkler and Wallerstein and Grbich)" (Baum et al. 2006, 854).

ideas regarding ethnomusicological research into the realm of young migrant-centered research and dialogic knowledge production. Araujo and members of the Grupo Musicultura advance an alternative ethnographic methodology that they believe should replace traditional forms of ethnography in the discipline of ethnomusicology as a whole:

> "... we argue that it is imperative to scrutinize more carefully forms of musical research still based on the modes of 'conventional' ethnography conducted in the colonial world, or even those of the so-called reflexive work done in the postcolonial context. This questionable legacy, which entails legitimizing the discourse of academic interpreters while reducing the power of people to resist their transformation into objects of study, has resulted in the fetishization of musical products and processes. These are defined and naturalized in terms of ideologies that are usually foreign to the focused communities" (Araujo and Grupo Musicultura 2010, 230).

Chapter 3: Sound Praxis at Two Schools: Research Ethics and Pragmatics

In this chapter, I recount the way in which my research unfolded by: (a) describing the three cycles of ethnomusicological praxis that I undertook at two schools in Edmonton; and (b) discussing two of the major challenges that arose throughout the process, and the way they were addressed. The aim is to provide an understanding of the structural, circumstantial, and personal factors that led me to challenge traditional ethnographic methodologies in ethnomusicology, as well as adapt critical pedagogy approaches to fit the context under study. As such, I examine how ethnomusicological praxis may work within two educational contexts; I discuss the impact of each school's philosophy and culture, level of school resources and staff support, participating class size, inter-student social dynamics, and students' English language levels. I additionally highlight the methodological and ethical challenges of conducting sound praxis with a culturally diverse group of migrant youth, parents, and teachers in a Canadian city like Edmonton. In this way, my research aims to contribute to the burgeoning discourse on the theoretical and methodological challenges of conducting applied ethnomusicology projects.

A. Volunteering and building research relationships

1. The instigator: A school fieldtrip

My ethnomusicological praxis in Edmonton emerged out of an opportune volunteer experience I had in 2011. In his position as Director of the University of Alberta's Canadian Centre for Ethnomusicology (CCE), my thesis advisor Dr. Michael Frishkopf frequently organized university outreach activities that made the institution's ethnomusicological offerings more accessible to the wider Edmonton community. In 2011, he decided to deliver an interactive ethnomusicology workshop to the Piety Junior High School's so-called Transition program, which is a literacy program that caters to refugee students between the ages of twelve and fifteen. Michael had learned about this class through his connection with Ella Clarke; as a staff member at an immigrant-serving organization, she was working on coordinating and delivering Life Skills, an intensive youth development pilot program for students of marginalized communities.

On December 15, 2011, eleven refugee students from a variety of cultural backgrounds (Karen, Ugandan, Tanzanian, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Sudanese, Iraqi, and Somali)[14] visited the CCE. They were accompanied by Ella, their Transition classroom teacher Katia, and a volunteer from the University of Alberta's Faculty of Education. Michael and some of his ethnomusicology graduate students (including myself) delivered a two and a half hour program of lecture demonstrations, each centered on an instrument, song, or dance from a range of musico-cultural traditions and practices; these included Roma violin, Middle Eastern song and dance, and Liberian hip hop and gospel.

I had prepared to teach the students the first verse of the famous Egyptian song *"Il hilwa di"* (This beautiful girl). I began by teaching them to clap and drum the *maqsum* rhythm. Next, I helped them to correctly pronounce the transliterated Arabic words of the first verse so we may sing it together while Michael accompanied us on his keyboard. I could see the Iraqi student's eyes light up when she heard me singing in Arabic. Finally, I showed the students some basic hip movements characteristic of *raqs sharqi* (Middle Eastern dance); most of them made a few giggling attempts despite their evident timidity.

All in all, the program seemed successful; Ella later told us that the students had a great time discovering musical practices from around the world. As the group was leaving the university campus, one student had apparently asked: "What *is* this place? How do I get to come here?" Later, another student told Ella that the workshop made him realize that he did not know anything about his own culture's music; this pushed him to search online for musical recordings and information. As for me, this was the first time I had worked with youth; given my positive experience with this group, I became eager to volunteer with the Life Skills program, particularly after learning about the complex issues that refugee students usually face with regards to language learning, academics, and social integration in Canada. Fortunately, Ella was always seeking exciting new projects in which to get her students involved; therefore, she was more than happy to support me in envisioning an ethnomusicology pedagogy project that could potentially

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[14] Here, it is important to note that while most of the students identified themselves primarily in terms of their national culture, a few students identified themselves as belonging to the Karen ethnic minority group, which does not possess a country of its own.

empower her migrant students in their own cultures. Thus began my exciting project with Ella.

2. The first cycle of praxis: "Weddings from my Culture"

The month of January 2012 included hours of lively conversation at a campus teahouse, as I sought to understand migrant, and particularly refugee, students' backgrounds and experiences through Ella's lens of educator, protector, and dedicated mentor. Throughout our collaborations, I came to see that her deep moral convictions and well-defined teaching philosophy clearly carried over into her vision for Piety School's Life Skills program. Furthermore, her approach to working with migrant students was deeply influenced by her experiences as a Canadian who grew up in Jamaica and later moved to Edmonton with her young children. During one of our interviews, she stated: "Our children growing up here – and it doesn't matter what race, what creed, whatever – they're missing […] the wisdom of the [right] elders." That is why she believed that the kind of programming and guidance she was offering through Life Skills was important for children even if they were not migrants: "… parents are not God, and parents can only do the best of what they can do. But when you have somebody in your life showing you even more, *more* than what your parents can show you, […] and doing it from a systematic kind of view of trying to get particular results, it's a *really* valuable thing in a child's life." In fact, Ella compared the role she played in her students' lives to the clearly designated and significant roles of extended family members (such as the uncle, aunt, or grandmother). She stated that she generally worked with people and parents in this way because, on some level, she wished that she had had people in her life to be supportive, teach her these things, guide her, give her a "roadmap," and help protect her from certain things while she was growing up. She believed that if nothing else, her students would at least learn that "even if I don't think my mother is right, even if I don't think my mother is fair, I'm gonna play it her way. Because I *know* that she loves me. And I *know* that her love is a love that says 'I want you to get a good education, I want you to be a strong woman, I want you to walk tall and be independent. I want you to have people respect you. That's the bottom line" (Ella's interview with the author, June 29, 2012).

This month also provided us with an opportunity to discuss our teaching philosophies and find a way to merge my ethnomusicology approach with her education

and social work approach, in an effort to develop a basic ethnomusicology fieldwork methods course for a junior high migrant class. While working with the Transition class, Ella had apparently noticed that the students did not know much about their cultures, mainly because they had been born and/or raised in refugee camps far from their parents' homelands. Even worse, it seemed to her that many of them were ashamed of being immigrants, to the extent that some would avoid bringing homemade food to school because it would identify them as "other." The challenges of social integration within a Canadian environment would later emerge in some Transition students' responses about their shifting musical tastes. For instance, in response to the question "When do you listen to music from your culture?" a student called Grace wrote: "I do not. Only hip hop music. I come to Canada and things have changed." And in response to the question "Do you want to keep your own culture when you become an adult?" she wrote: "I do want to keep my culture, but when you come to a new place you want to blend in" (Grace's student survey, April 2013). Throughout my conversations with Ella, I came to learn that these refugee students' lack of cultural knowledge (and in some cases, pride), social alienation, and resultant identity crisis were not addressed, and in some cases, were arguably *produced*, by the regular school curriculum.

Because of the diversity of the students' backgrounds, it was evident that we could not create a fixed curriculum that would teach students about all their musical cultures in such a short time. More importantly, we were obviously not experts in their musical cultures. Therefore, we decided it would be wise to send them to their own communities to learn more about their cultures. This is how the idea for an ethnomusicology-based cultural empowerment project developed, where students would become music researchers who could contribute to the class curriculum based on their own research and fieldwork experiences. Delivered within a critical pedagogy framework, this project aimed to enhance the migrant students' cultural pride, increase their critical understanding of bi-cultural identity, and improve their peer relationships. The organization delivering the Life Skills program worded it as such in one of its community newsletters: "This project is all around the theme of Building Peer Relationships – being confident in one's own culture and learning that other people have their own cultures and deserve respect from us." However, due the students' young age, it

did not seem viable to ask them to conduct research, however basic, with adults who were not their relatives, even if they were members of their cultural communities in Edmonton. Thus, the most logical solution was to ask them to interview their parents.

By the end of January, Ella and I had created modules for a six-week ethnomusicology project called "Traditional Weddings in my Culture[15]." Over the next two months, we set about implementing the project with the help of Katia. We helped the migrant students acquire basic research skills, namely interviewing their parents about "traditional" weddings in their cultures using a tape recorder, conducting online research about music, dance, clothing, and food from their cultures, creating research posters, and finally presenting their material and sharing songs and dances with their classmates, school administrators, and guests.

All in all, the students seemed to thoroughly enjoy this project. Furthermore, they and their families seemed to benefit from the process in a number of ways, as is evident from different stakeholders' feedback. The immediate and expected outcome of the project was that students learned about their families' cultural backgrounds, through the lens of "traditional" weddings. Following are some direct quotes from the students about the project:

> "I got to learn more [about my culture]. I appreciate it now because I never went there – only when I was a kid, when I was like three or four."
>
> "I learn about the music, and the clothes, and the weddings. I never learnt about the music, and I never went to a wedding… I only have been to a wedding back when I was small, so I don't remember very much. And I didn't know how they dance."
>
> "It makes me to be proud and open (sic)."
>
> "I learned about myself."
>
> (Life Skills program evaluation report, 2012)

As such, the wedding project succeeded in achieving its key goal: to make the students realize that despite the deficit framework within which they are generally described in Canada (for instance: newcomer, refugee, illiterate, ELL), their cultural backgrounds,

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[15] We chose this theme because the wedding is a central event in all cultures, and it brings together a number of culturally distinctive elements including religious rituals, music, dance, food, clothing, etc.

traditions, and practices are important, and they are actually valued in their Canadian school context. As Ella put it: "I think the whole idea of giving them a chance to speak about their own cultures was excellent because it sorta helped them more to think about the wealth that they have, rather than 'Oh, I can't speak English. Oh I don't know how to do this. [On the contrary,] I know all these things'" (Ella's interview with the author, June 29, 2012). In fact, although Ella and I tried to help the students to find online photos and videos for their presentations, they were very serious about correcting our mistakes and rejecting material that they did not consider representative of their particular cultural or family background. The students' increased commitment to their projects signaled a growing interest in learning about their own cultures, a mounting pride in their traditions and practices, and a serious commitment to the latter's proper representation to others. The students had embraced their role as experts who educate adult "teachers" about their own cultures.

The wedding project was academically challenging for the students, due to their low levels of literacy in their first language and their limited knowledge of English. As their written reflections revealed, the final presentations represented a particularly large hurdle, since this was their first experience in public speaking. However, as Ella explained, overcoming this challenge contributed to increasing their self-confidence: "… having to do those presentations – *all* the kids said 'I've never done this before, I was scared of doing this. But then now that I've done it, I realize I can actually do this.' [...] They learnt that they have the ability to do all those different things. And that was really fantastic, to see them come through that process, and at the end of the process, feel proud of what they'd accomplished. [...] And I think it moved them to a different level of 'Wow! I am capable of great things – it actually showed them, *in fact,* that they are" (Ella's interview with the author, June 29, 2012).

Furthermore, the wedding project seemed to have a considerable impact on students' perceptions of their classmates. Ella claims that they "started to see each other more as individuals of value because everybody was coming from something that was valuable, that was beautiful. And I think it shifted a little bit of the tone in the class. [...] And also just that whole atmosphere of mutual respect – I mean, those kids get on each other's nerves a lot – I think that it helped with the respect" (Ella's interview with the

author, June 29, 2012). Concurrently, throughout the teachers' efforts as mediators, the students learned to inquire about each other's cultures and values in a respectful manner. I was pleasantly surprised by the students' incessant questions to the presenters; the teachers had never actually required them to ask any post-presentation questions, so this spontaneous occurrence revealed the students' genuine intrigue in their peers' cultures. I also noticed that the students were utilizing some of the interview questions and techniques we had trained them to use in preparation for their parent interviews. This represented an unexpected but welcome occurrence; their articulation of thoughtful questions and comments demonstrated that they were thinking critically about cultural traditions and making connections across cultures through the comparative lens of ethnomusicology.

Finally, a major unexpected outcome of this project related to family relationships. As I mentioned earlier, asking the students to interview their own parents began as a logistical compromise; however, it eventually became evident that the family element was central to the success of this empowerment project, particularly by opening up child-parent exchanges that had rarely (if ever) taken place and allowing students to view their parents as *sources of knowledge*. Following are some direct quotes from the students about the project:

> "I actually don't get to see them that much; they're always busy. They go to work a lot, so I don't get to see them except on the weekends. And my dad now works on the weekends."

> "My mom always wanted to tell me about that stuff, and I was like 'I don't want to learn it.' But when I asked her, she was happy and stuff."

> (Life Skills program evaluation report, 2012)

During an interview, Ella confirmed this observation by stating: "I think [the wedding project] was very successful [...] in the sense that it opened up a discussion between children and their parents that had not existed before. It sort of put the relationship in a different place and helped the children to [...] at least to begin to recognize the package and limitations of the package that their parents bring to them in this new culture... It sort of just brought it to the forefront" (Ella's interview with the author, June 29, 2012). I would add that this project began to address the confusion resulting from the often-

conflicting messages that students receive from home and school. It was able to temporarily create a united front between the two socializing institutions; this in turn facilitated and strengthened the process of cultural valuation and legitimacy that ultimately led all students to publicly express unabashed pride in their cultures during their presentations. "Sanctioning" cultural pride within their school evidently decreased students' cognitive dissonance (what is usually referred to as migrants' "double consciousness"), leading them to express sentiments such as the following during their final presentations: "I love my culture" and "I don't want to change it. I want to pass it on to the new generation."

Due to the perceived success of the wedding project in 2012, the immigrant-serving organization that delivered Life Skills asked me to lead a similar project the following year. At the same time, my various experiences in refugee youth empowerment and anti-racism education in Edmonton had increased my interest in young people's lived experiences of migration and integration into the Canadian school system. I therefore decided to use this project as a doctoral research opportunity to explore how migrant youth might utilize participatory music-making and ethnomusicological tools to: a) counter the "subtractive" effects of Canadian mainstream schooling; b) promote a more critical understanding and practice of multiculturalism within their schools; and c) formulate more positive social interactions and friendships with students of other linguistic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. In this section, I shall discuss the major issues that I had to navigate in order to gain access to the two research sites and successfully conduct my applied research with migrant students, teachers, and parents.

B.   School access and research environments

1. School board approval, student consent, and privacy

Ethnomusicologists are familiar with the research ethics considerations and applications that need to be approved in order to conduct research with human participants. However, ethical considerations become exponentially more stringent once one crosses into the realm of research with children and youth. For example, research ethics boards in Canada presume anyone under the age of eighteen incapable of granting informed consent to participate in a research project; parental consent must therefore be

sought, and in many cases, this is succeeded by "assent" from the child or young person. In such cases, both consent and assent need to be obtained in order for research to be conducted with children and youth. Within the context of school research, one would need to subsequently seek approval from the relevant school(s) and school board(s).

Here it must be noted that, as a doctoral student in ethnomusicology - a field wherein training for working with children is not usually provided - my research within two different school boards would likely have been denied approval were it not for the strong letters of support that were sent by Ella's organization and administrative leaders from both schools. Usually, it is no easy feat to gain research access to children at Canadian schools, especially if the researcher is proposing to enter the classroom context, and further, if she plans to deliver her own program during school hours. If I had decided to individually approach the schools and school boards through official channels, it is possible that I would not have been permitted any research access whatsoever. Alternatively, I might have been allowed access, but only in terms of holding interviews with students and staff and conducting ethnographic research of *public* events. Fortunately, however, I was able to bypass some of these research restrictions because of the faith that Ella Clarke had placed in my ideas and abilities and the time she had invested in mentoring me during my volunteer experience in 2012. The success of this first cycle of praxis cemented her trust in my ability to connect with and work ethically with migrant youth. It also demonstrated the potential benefits of critical ethnomusicology pedagogy to Piety's classroom teacher and the immigrant-serving organization involved, leading the latter to instigate a cycle of support for my research. This resulted in letters of support from Piety's principal and Liberty's Vice Principal, which in turn facilitated school board approval for my research project.

These barriers to access have been put in place to protect the privacy and confidentiality of children and youth; for they are considered a vulnerable social group that can easily be exploited by adults because of the significant power differential between the two. As such, it is the researcher's legal and moral responsibility to ensure that her young research participants are not harmed in any way during the research process or through research dissemination. As I mentioned earlier, one strategy I use is to ensure that the young students are not identified - directly or indirectly - throughout my

dissertation. I accomplish this by referring to the participating schools, students, teachers, staff members, and parents by pseudonyms. I also refrain from mentioning any information that might identify the schools or the students; this includes any location-specific information or unique programs or publications that might easily be traced back to the schools under study. With regards to audio-visual material, Piety's administration required that I not share any material that shows the students' faces or speaking voices (this excludes their singing voices, *if* they consent to me sharing their recorded songs). Meanwhile, Liberty's administration did not have an issue with sharing such audio-visual material, as long as both the child and their parent(s) have provide their consent for this. As such, I shall not be including any images of Piety students in this dissertation. I will be sharing images and transcriptions of their creative materials produced for this project (including songs, poetry, posters, and class presentations) only when they have consented to this. For Liberty School, I will be including photos and video stills from the project, while blurring the faces of students who did not wish their faces to be seen in my dissertation.

2. School research environment

Within the context of these two junior high schools, I had initially hoped to equally involve migrant students, teachers, and parents within the process of ethnomusicological praxis. However, the comparative nature of my study alerted me to the extent to which stakeholder engagement is contingent on various contextual constraints. In this section, I shall compare the different ways in which my praxis unfolded within the two school environments.

At Piety School, I was strongly championed by Ella. As a staff member at an immigrant-serving organization in charge of administering the Life Skills program, she could devote the time needed to collaboratively develop and deliver the ethnomusicology project with me. However, the school itself had very strict rules about access to researchers as well as volunteers; consequently, I was only allowed to interact with students when they were in the Transition classroom, and even then, only when I was working with them on my *own* project. In fact, I only had a single opportunity to observe Katia, the classroom teacher, in action; she had made an exception for me when she realized that I needed to learn some effective communication strategies to overcome the

language barrier with her students. Therefore, I did not have the opportunity to conduct any pre-project participant-observation within the classroom or school, as was the case at Liberty School. However, despite this apparently narrow lens, I greatly benefited from my volunteer experiences as a workshop and project facilitator for the wedding project (January-March, 2012) and an anti-racism education project (May-June, 2012), to the extent that volunteering with the Transition class constituted a variant of the anthropological methodology of participant-observation. Coupled with my school staff consultations and close collaboration with Ella, this allowed me to formulate a deeper understanding of the issues that may be addressed through my ethnomusicological praxis. In contrast, Liberty School exercised an open door policy to researchers and provided me with greater access to students as well as parents; this allowed me to build relationships and personally assess the school's issues before commencing my ethnomusicological praxis. However, the school's lax policies, coupled with funding cuts, translated into limited staff support in the planning and execution process of the project, as well as varying levels of student commitment (unlike the case at Piety, their involvement in the project was made optional).

C. Research method, challenges, and considerations

In this section, I shall discuss the methodological challenges of conducting ethnomusicological praxis with two groups of migrant youth, parents, and teachers in Edmonton. Specifically, I shall tackle the limitations of employing youth-centered participatory research methodologies given the constraints of language and student intergroup conflict, while also discussing the special case of students of Karen background.

1. Language and communication barriers

My praxis at Piety School met with a number of challenges, the most significant of which was the language and communication barriers. Most of the Transition students had just begun to learn English six months or so earlier, so it was a struggle for me to communicate with them. However, after consulting with Ella and Katia and taking the project one step at a time, we were able to tackle this issue on a number of levels. For example, I drew on some of Katia's ELL-responsive instructional strategies in order to

bridge the English language barrier. Specifically, I began to speak more slowly and in simpler terms during project sessions, and I took to using a lot of visuals when providing the students with general guidelines for conducting interviews and preparing final presentations. On occasion, we found it necessary to employ the services of a few language interpreters in order to hear the voices of two or three students who would have otherwise not been able to communicate in English. However, one crucial, youth-empowering strategy was that of placing students in language support groups during class and encouraging the more advanced students to help their peers understand and share their ideas whenever possible. As some students noted, they would not have been able to participate in the project to the same extent were it not for these language support groups (Piety School Sharing session 1, May 14, 2013).

Besides concretizing and simplifying project activities in order to transcend the sometimes-severe language barrier, the teachers and I encouraged students to each pick a preferred creative or performative medium(s) for the final presentations. During the project evaluation segment, many students noted how this strategy increased their engagement in the process and allowed them to present their research findings in a way that worked for them on an individual level (Piety School Sharing session 1, May 14, 2013).

2. Intergroup conflict

A second factor that presented a challenge to my ethnomusicological praxis related specifically to some Liberty students' pre-existent relationships and social dynamics.

Throughout my pre-project participant-observation of Liberty School's ELL class, I had noticed that the South Asian (mostly Gujarati Indian) students were always physically segregated in the classroom based on gender. I had assumed that this was merely because they would prefer to spend their time with their friends who happened to be of the same gender. With time, however, this gender-based segregation became more pronounced; in fact, it transferred into the ethnomusicological project and created barriers for student participation, as collaborative intergroup activities were met with resounding resistance. It became evident that the South Asian students found it immensely problematic to work with members of the other gender, to the extent that I began to

wonder whether this attitude had a cultural basis. It was not until the last few weeks of the project that I began to realize my error in observing and analyzing student interactions solely through the lens of race, culture, and gender.

This intergroup conflict seems to have escalated towards the end of the school year. On June 16, 2014, for example, the substitute ELL teacher Ms. Dennis followed the students rehearsing for a Bollywood song into Liberty School's Drama Room; she had come to warn me that Falak and Daakshi had been fighting and throwing things at each other earlier. Daakshi maintained a sullen expression throughout the whole rehearsal, and he kept muttering things under his breath to his Gujarati friend Deepak. During an afterschool conversation we had that day, three of the female South Asian students (Falak, Madhu, and Aisha) expressed how angry they were at Daakshi; apparently, he had been in the habit of calling them "bad names." During a female post-project sharing session a week later, this issue organically came up during a discussion about student groupings and collaborative project performances. The students were initially hesitant to reveal why they felt so strongly about inter-gender teamwork. However, they eventually opened up about their friendships and social circles.

Aisha began by saying: "We don't want to work with boys." Ameena, a Somali student, stated that the boys do not like her because she acts like a boy. To her surprise, however, Aisha responded by telling her: "Even they say bad words to *you*!" This accusation did not seem all that far-fetched, given the fact that Ameena would not be able to understand any Hindi words she might hear. I attempted to understand *why* the South Asian boys might be bullying the girls. Falak adamantly responded: "They're just like that. Nobody likes them, and we don't like any boys." Madhu explained that they say "bad things" to them, and Falak and the others concurred that Daakshi is especially "bad." Dalisay, a Filipino student, then said: "He's nice." To this, all the South Asian girls exclaimed in disbelief: "What?!!" This was followed by a long discussion about the "girl/boy" fights, wherein Ameena suggested that Daakshi might be acting like this because he likes one of the girls… The others did not seem convinced by her logic. I even took the opportunity to ask if the girl/boy issues might relate in any way to culturally prescribed inter-gender socialization practices. However, Aisha assured me that this was not the case, saying that it is absolutely fine for boys and girls to work together, but the

problem was with specific people in the ELL class that were always saying bad words and even shoving the girls during dodge ball games (Liberty School Post-project sharing session 3, June 24, 2014).

This extended, candid conversation revealed that the gender-based segregation I had observed was in fact the result of some deep-rooted personality conflicts that in turn had influenced social interactions among the South Asian students during my ethnomusicological praxis. It seems that this segregation had emerged after a few individual inter-gender conflicts had become protracted, as each of the feuding students' friends took their side. When I inquired about this intergroup feud during a post-project interview, Ms. Lewis, the ELL teacher, stated that "the boys and girls" were always fighting. She explained that this is what happens when there are "strong personalities;" but the students should not be fighting in class (Post-project interview with Jane Lewis and Marco Moustaki, June 27, 2014).

3. Specific cultural considerations

Throughout my ethnomusicological praxis at Edmontonian schools, I consistently encouraged students to represent and mobilize their cultural (and other) identifications as they see fit. Most project participants chose to highlight their national (for instance, Indian) or regional (for instance, Gujurati) cultures. Religious identity was often as equally important as national identity, as is usually the case with the children of particularly devout families. However, one group stood out from the rest; unlike the other students who primarily identified in terms of nationality, a few students chose to identify as Karen, which is an ethno-cultural group. These students belonged to a group with an arguably unique experience of refuge, mainly due to this group's long history of political and cultural persecution, forced displacement, and statelessness. In what follows, I shall provide a brief overview of the Karen people's history, so as to better situate my Karen students' project experiences throughout the upcoming chapters.

The Karen people are a loosely defined ethnic group that has lived in villages in central and eastern Burma and western Thailand for centuries. In Burma, they are considered an ethnic minority group, and they predominantly practice the Buddhist or Christian faiths (MacLachlan 2014, 61). When Burma gained its independence from Great Britain in 1947, the country's various ethnic minority groups - or "national races" -

negotiated for control, and the Karen leaders asked for autonomy. The British, however, tried to turn Burma into a federal union of states and divisions, which angered the various "national races;" this resulted in the formation of dozens of ethnically based insurgent groups, including the Karen National Union (KNU) (MacLachlan 2014, 66). According to MacLachlan, as civil war raged on for decades:

> "[…] the military junta that controlled the central government of Burma targeted not just the soldiers in revolt but also the civilians in the areas where the insurgents were believed to operate, in a repressive program called the 'Four Cuts' (Smith 1999, 259). Under this policy, Sgaw [mainly Christian] and Pwo [mainly Buddhist][16] Karen villagers were forcibly relocated into government-controlled areas, were forced to work as porters for the Burmese army, and saw their homes burned and their family members raped and killed" (MacLachlan 2014, 66-7).

Since the 1960's, the Karen-Burmese (and subsequently Buddhist-Christian) battles have forced many Karen people to flee to neighbouring Thailand. This led to the establishment of elaborate refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border in the early 1980s (MacLachlan 2014, 67).[17] However, since 2006, the government of Thailand and the UN High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) have been helping hundreds of thousands of Karen refugees to move and resettle in communities all over the world, including Canada, the United States, Europe, and Australia (Farrugia et al. 2015, 3). For the purposes of this study, it is important to note that the Karen people generally possess strong political solidarity in the diaspora, as well as a strong attachment and commitment to the survival of what they perceive and construct as their unique ethnic culture (MacLachlan 2014).

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[16] According to MacLachlan, "most Christian Karens speak Sgaw Karen, and most Buddhist Karens speak Pwo Karen" (MacLachlan 2014, 61).

[17] These Karen refugee camps were housing more than 150,000 residents by 2010 (MacLachlan 2014, 67).

Chapter 4: Comparative Student Issues and School Supports

Migrant youth often face difficulties at Canadian schools, due to academic struggles, cultural alienation, social stigmatization, and/or racial discrimination. As I shall demonstrate in this chapter, these issues can negatively impact their self-esteem, cultural continuity, academic success, as well as their intergenerational and peer relationships. Fortunately, schools across Canada have increasingly been recognizing the complexity of these issues; armed with a growing body of research on ELL teaching and learning strategies, multicultural education, refugee education, and other areas, schools have gradually been improving their supports for migrant students. The following field note provides an account of my initial glimpse into Liberty School's ELL class, which provides many such supports for its migrant students.

Liberty School

Arriving at Room 16, I poke my head in and spot Ms. Lewis at the front of the classroom, about to address her students. Canadian-born and raised, she is a petite, middle-aged Caucasian woman with incredible energy and a cheerful demeanor. She waves hello, inviting me inside. I cross the room and settle into an empty seat, smiling at the students as they boisterously take out their school binders. Some of them regard me curiously. I notice that they are all wearing western-style clothing, except for one student who is wearing a green, red, and gold Indian-style shirt with her jeans. Two female students are wearing black headscarves. I had apparently walked in on a Social Studies (SS) class; however, only about half of the thirty-eight ELL students are present. I later learn that since the class serves as a pullout program for ELL students in grades 7, 8, and 9, Ms. Lewis rarely takes on her full homeroom constituency.

I look around, taking in my surroundings. The classroom is large, windowless, but bright, with about forty wooden desks and chairs facing two large white boards. The teacher's desk is located in the back of the room, and the walls are decorated with a variety of artistic and educational posters. A large, colourful cloth map catches my eye – seemingly a staple in Edmonton's ELL classrooms. Hung on a wall that is within the students' reach, the map is covered with plastic pins that mark the countries from which the current students originate; these include the United States, Canada, the Philippines, North Korea, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Djibouti. The class walls additionally boast

vivid educational posters: while some are meant to assist students in learning the English terms for everyday items, others highlight study skills or feature positive character traits based on the Leader in Me model. Furthermore, the classroom ceiling is covered with student art: paintings of historic world monuments and symbols cover some of the rectangular panels, and large paper crafts hang from the ceiling.

Ms. Lewis offers me her copy of the Social Studies textbook so I may familiarize myself with the contents of the curriculum. Published by Nelson Education, the grade nine textbook is entitled "Issues for Canadians" and is written by Patricia Lychak et al. I note the chapter titles:

1. *How effectively does Canada's federal political system govern Canada for all Canadians?*
2. *To what extent is the justice system fair and equitable for youth?*
3. *How effectively does Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms protect your individual rights?*
4. *To what extent has Canada affirmed collective rights? (First Nations, Metis, and official language group rights)*
5. *How well do Canada's immigration laws and policies respond to immigration issues?*
6. *To what extent do different economic systems affect quality of life?*
7. *What role should consumerism play in our economy?*
8. *To what extent should Canadians support social programs and taxation?*
9. *How should governments in Canada respond to political and economic issues?[18]*

Today, Ms. Lewis is covering a section from the second chapter, specifically discussing "justice" and "injustice." She begins by recapping the concepts presented in the previous lesson, then moves on to discuss a fundamental tenet of the Canadian judicial system: that every person is considered innocent until proven guilty. Ms. Lewis projects an image of Lady Justice, blindfolded while holding a set of balanced scales; she states that the image is significant because it represents the principle that every person must receive a fair trial regardless of gender, age, wealth, and so on. Subsequently, the

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[18] http://mrsharriswebberacademy.wikispaces.com/Issues+for+Canadians+Textbook

teacher places a sheet of the lesson handout on the overhead projector and begins highlighting key ideas and writing short notes when needed. The students follow suit, marking their own copies with highlighters and pencils. Ms. Lewis provides the class with several examples in order to clarify the issue of balancing individual and collective rights. She also emphasizes the importance of understanding one's legal rights and living up to one's legal responsibilities.

Throughout the lesson, I notice that Ms. Lewis utilizes some rather difficult words like "precepts," "custom," and "morality," because they appear in the textbook. However, besides providing many examples to clarify their meaning, she always engagingly acts them out so that the students will understand the lesson content. Furthermore, Ms. Lewis appears to make a concerted effort to make the arguably dry subject matter more relevant to her young students. For instance, at one point, she says: "Laws are usually based on common sense, but because Canada is a multicultural country, common sense about behaviour might differ among different cultures. In other words, it's not so 'common.'" She proceeds to recount anecdotes from her years of residing and teaching in Thailand and Laos in order to illustrate her point. Ms. Lewis even provides an example more palpable to the migrant students in her class: although in India and other countries hand-holding between two people of the same sex in public might merely signify friendship, it is usually associated with a homosexual relationship in Canada. Interestingly, she concludes by saying that the students' "moral compass" should be guided by the following notion: "If you can't do it in front of your parents, then it's probably not ok to do."

In what follows, I shall describe the various programs and supports that Piety School and Liberty School had been instituting between 2012 and 2014 in order to address their migrant students' needs. I have divided these initiatives into the following categories: academic supports, cultural inclusion supports, and social integration supports.

A. Academic supports

According to ELL teacher Jane Lewis[19]:

"[…] some people really don't get the complexity of the English Language Learner, and they don't understand the challenges of learning in English, and they don't understand that just because the kid can carry on a basic conversation, that they're not completely fluent. And so there's a lot of misunderstanding about why kids don't smile, why kids don't interact, why kids don't come to school, why kids don't get the kind of marks you think they should get on their assignments because... they can carry on a conversation, they *seem* to be understanding what you're talking about in class… But they don't, no. And so there are lots of additional supports that need to be put in place to support those kids as they go through their academics" (Jane's interview with the author, May 28, 2013).

For refugee students in particular, it can be extremely challenging to integrate into Canadian schools, particularly because many of them have low literacy levels in their first language. As soon as they arrive in the country, they are pushed to learn a new language while being socialized into the strict structure of the school and classroom, often after being outside the system for years. During an interview, Marco Moustaki, the Greek-Canadian Vice Principal at Liberty School, explained the process by which these students are integrated into the Canadian school system. Upon their arrival in Canada as "refugees," the government allocates up to five years of special funding for them to attend school under that coding. In addition to the individual base instruction grant, a "refugee" coding ensures that students receive special program and staff support that would eventually allow them to transition into the so-called regular (or mainstream) classes (Marco's interview with the author, January 31, 2014). Research has shown that the acquisition of a new language usually takes five to seven years, and for refugee students that are not literate in their native language, the challenges are exponential since they need to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills while simultaneously learning a new language. According to Marco: "… it's nice to have those extra resources so that you could do some really intensive literacy training for example. Or, if a student comes in,

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[19] Jane Lewis grew up in Calgary, a major city in Alberta, and has had decades of experience in teaching English to non-native speakers.

let's say in grade 9, and they've never been in school before, to try and catch them up on those first eight years. Quite often, I've also seen refugee students end up in high school in grade 11 or 12 for the first time in their life they're being in school, and that's really difficult" (Marco's interview with the author, January 31, 2014).

Since migrant students usually arrive with a unique set of abilities and needs, the two schools I worked with had instituted a broad range of programs and supports to cater to this population. First and foremost, both schools focused heavily on providing appropriate academic programming for the diverse literacy and English language levels of their immigrant and refugee student populations. On the one hand, Piety School delivered a Transition program that catered specifically to junior high-aged students (grades 7 through 9) who had had very limited (or large gaps in their) formal schooling in their native language; this was usually because they and their families had been fleeing dangerous situations or moving from one refugee camp to another. The school also provided ELL pullout sessions for migrant students who were literate in their native languages and therefore only required English language training. On the other hand, Liberty School had one large class that catered to junior high-aged students of *all* literacy and ELL levels; it was called the ELL class.

At the time that I conducted my research at Piety School (between January and June 2013), the Transition class was comprised of fifteen refugee students and one temporary foreign worker's son[20]. Originating from Eritrean, Karen, Mexican, Somali, Iraqi, and Sudanese cultures, these students lived in various areas in Edmonton. On the other hand, between January and June 2014, the thirty-six students in Liberty School's ELL class had a variety of migrant statuses: twenty-eight students belonged to families who arrived under the economic immigrant classification, five under the refugee classification, and three under the temporary foreign worker classification. Although the class was quite culturally diverse, there was a clear dominance of Indian students, particularly from the province of Gujarat. In fact, as their teacher informed me, most of the Gujarati students had immigrated at the same time, as their fathers had been transferred to Canada when the company they all worked for relocated to Edmonton (Jane's interview with the author, May 28, 2013).

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[20] This student did not fit the "refugee" student profile and had not had gaps in his formal education; however, he was placed in the Transition class because his cognitive abilities precluded him from succeeding within the mainstream class.

The ultimate goal of both the Transition and the ELL programs was to integrate students into mainstream classes; however, that usually took several years. Therefore, Piety School slowly raised its expectations as the student progressed, getting stronger and more confident in the English language; the student was then slowly exited into the mainstream program one curricular subject at a time, starting with Language Arts (Katia's interview with the author, June 25, 2012). In contrast, Liberty School's ELL program used the slightly different "rubber-band approach." Jane Lewis explained:

"[students] go out into the real world and it doesn't work, so we yank on the rubber band and they bounce back in, and they stay [in the ELL class] for a little while longer. And then once they get a little stronger, we send them back out into the world, and they try it again, and if they're ready and it's working this time, they can stay. And if it's not working, they come back, so it's a really fluid approach. […] *This* is the growing ground, *high school* is where the rubber hits the road. […] Nothing really counts in elementary and junior high – that's the training ground. […] You should spend more time in ESL and junior high, developing that knowledge and your grammar and your focus and your speaking skills, so that when you get to your courses in high school, you're gonna be better able to articulate your knowledge and your learning" (Jane's interview with the author, May 28, 2013).

According to Katia, there was no set curriculum in Piety School's Transition class, because students usually had varying levels of prior formal schooling and were at different levels of English language acquisition. Furthermore, Transition students were generally illiterate in their native languages, which made basic learning (as well as learning English) exponentially harder because they lacked a language base upon which to build (Katia's interview with the author, June 25, 2012). As such, Katia utilized a "balanced literacy" approach to teach basic English reading, writing, and phonics skills, in addition to a major Math component that catered to the students' varying levels. She also brought in some simplified Science, Health, and Social Studies units so her students could begin to learn some academic vocabulary (Katia's interview with the author, May 28, 2013). Students with a few years of prior formal schooling usually left her classroom for a "leveled" Language Arts class, meaning that the curriculum had been adapted based

on language (as opposed to cognitive) ability. The Vice Principal Angela Smith stated that Piety School would soon be instituting a leveled Math class as well. According to her, leveled classes are much more effective than ELL pullout classes; for they provide migrant students with a middle ground between the basic literacy and numeracy focus of the Transition class and the more advanced nature of mainstream Language Arts and Math classes. As Angela put it, the process of setting goals and progressing from ELL Level 1 to Level 4[21] provides students with stepping stones that increase their pride and motivate them to work harder, which aligns well with educators' recent turn towards teaching students to the best of their ability (Angela's interview with the author, May 29, 2013).

Liberty's ELL class had to cater even more to individual needs due to the students' extremely diverse schooling backgrounds; while some of them started by learning basic literacy and numeracy skills, others only had to work on learning day-to-day English communication skills. Concurrently, the teacher focused heavily on improving all students' academic vocabulary because it apparently took about seven years for this vocabulary to develop to the extent needed for a student to function well in a mainstream classroom (Marco's interview with the author, January 31, 2014). During an interview, Jane told me that based on the students' various language levels, she focused on literacy, reading, writing, and speaking skills, which in turn improved their reading comprehension skills and prepared them for the mainstream Language Arts and Social Studies classes. Meanwhile, she taught a sheltered Math and Science class to the grade 7 students; those in grades 8 and 9 took mainstream Math and Science classes. The ultimate aim of this ELL program was to introduce students to the academic vocabulary and structures that they would need to complete their assignments in mainstream classes. Therefore, there was no fixed curriculum per se; instead, as Jane explained: "it's taking every teachable moment and capitalizing on it" (Jane's interview with the author, May 28, 2013).

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[21] The ESL Department Head at an Edmonton high school explained that current English-language proficiency benchmarks are comprised of five levels: Level 1 (No English), Level 2 (Immersion English), Level 3 (Writing simple essays and reading abridged short stories), Level 4 (Writing academic essays), and Level 5 (Almost at English grade level). She added that by the time they finish high school, ELL students with a refugee background have usually reached Level 4 (comparable with the grade 10 English level).

According to Rossiter and Derwing, although Edmonton's school boards decide how ESL (or ELL) is delivered across districts, they having been facing "severe funding constraints" within Alberta's current economic climate (Rossiter and Derwing 2012, 89). Therefore, although the two schools' academic supports for migrant students might appear sufficient, there often seemed to be a shortage in funds to hire enough ELL teachers, teachers' aids, or invest in other kinds of specialized support, particularly given the high proportion of migrant students at Piety and Liberty.[22] At one point, the latter's ELL class even had to serve forty-five students, which is almost double the usual student-teacher ratio in public junior high schools. This was particularly the case around the time I conducted my fieldwork research, as the Alberta government was in the midst of instituting a round of highly contested funding cuts to educational and social programs in the province. Rossiter and Derwing argue that, although Edmonton's schools receive additional funding to provide language instruction to ELL students, many of their needs are not met, and this leads to an increase in dropout rates (Rossiter and Derwing 2012, 89).

Rossiter and Derwing also claim that school principals ultimately decide how to spend the ESL funds assigned to their school, and they are not required to use the funds directly for ESL instructional purposes: "a child can be put in a mainstream classroom with no additional support if the principal feels that the teacher can accommodate the linguistic needs of the student" (Rossiter and Derwing 2012, 94). And even when migrant students have access to classes with ELL teachers, they always take a number of additional mainstream classes with teachers that are not trained in ELL strategies. This is particularly a struggle for refugee students. During the project sharing sessions at Piety, many Transition students expressed their frustration with their mainstream and Option classes[23] because teachers "talk too much" or "go too fast," or because the class material only caters to mainstream students' more academically advanced levels. It became evident that way too often, Transition students get bored and disengaged in these classes simply because they do not understand the language (Piety School Sharing session 1,

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[22] In fact, as an EPSB Diversity Education professional informed me, the number of ELL students in Edmonton public schools doubled to at least 16,000 students between 2008 and 2013 (conversation with the author, April 9, 2013).

[23] Examples of such classes include Health, Drama, Music, Art, Industrial Arts, and Physical Education.

May 14, 2013; Piety School Sharing session 2, May 21, 2013). As Rossiter and Derwing state, Edmonton's schools still have a long way to go in terms of mainstream (non-ELL) teachers' ability to engage with migrant students. According to them, the University of Alberta has only recently begun to require pre-service teachers to take a course in literacy, and opportunities for them to learn about ESL issues are usually ad hoc (Rossiter and Derwing 2012, 89 and 104).

B. Cultural inclusion supports

1. Accommodations for diversity

After consulting with a number of staff members at the two schools, it became evident that both Piety School and Liberty School were making a conscious effort to be welcoming and accommodating to cultural and religious diversity within their student bodies. On the most basic level, both schools respected and accommodated their students' various faith-related dietary restrictions and fasting practices; Liberty School even provided its Muslim students with gender-segregated rooms for daily prayer. In Katia's opinion, despite its focus on Christianity, Piety School did a really good job of accommodating religious diversity. For instance, the principal had been striving to highlight different Christian sects by representing the students' local parishes and communities in the school's periodical religious celebrations; in fact, a local Ethiopian Orthodox minister had been asked to lead one of the religious celebrations in 2013. And although all students were required to attend Religion classes and celebrations, those who practiced other faiths did not have to participate in certain parts of the liturgy (Katia's interview with the author, May 28, 2013).

However, Liberty School seemed to provide even more accommodations for religious and cultural diversity. As Marco stated, besides working closely with the students' families in order to ensure that children observed their religious requirements when in school, Liberty School worked hard to understand and address any cultural or faith-related concerns that parents might have with their children's schooling. For instance, Muslim parents had sometimes objected to their children taking Music classes or their daughters participating in sports or co-ed activities. Apparently, after consulting with local Muslim religious authorities (*sheikhs*), Liberty School had realized that these

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are often culture- or family-specific beliefs that are interpreted as religious ones. However, Marco stated that the school deeply respects families' various belief systems and tries to accommodate them as best as possible, so much so that students usually feel comfortable voicing their concerns regarding culturally and religiously acceptable modes of behaviour. Marco provided the following example to demonstrate his point:

> "… a while ago is, in one of our French classes, the kids were doing presentations in terms of some of their cultural customs and some of the music that's involved in their culture […]. And a group of kids approached the teacher and said: 'You know, we are not allowed to have music in our culture. Can we do a presentation on why that is?' And it was a really neat presentation, and the kids basically explained that there are certain types of songs that they are allowed to perform, but it's only to honour God, and that's the only time they can participate in any kind of music" (Marco's interview with the author, January 31, 2014).

2. School curriculum

Liberty School

Monday February 24, 2014

Since Ms. Jane Lewis had developed a severe ear infection back in October 2013, a teacher called Ms. Dennis had been assigned to take over half of the teaching load until the former makes a fully recovery. Today, Ms. Dennis is teaching the ELL Social Studies class; she is a middle-aged Canadian teacher of Ukrainian heritage. Ms. Lewis takes a seat at her desk at the back of the classroom and begins typing at her desktop computer; meanwhile, Ms. Dennis turns her attention to Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the third chapter in the grade nine Social Studies textbook.

Ms. Dennis begins by explaining how Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms was created in order to ensure a good quality of life for all Canadians. Turning her attention towards the students, she asks them: "Do you have freedom and rights in your country?" Ameena, an outspoken thirteen-year-old Somali girl, half-jokingly exclaims: "No – we have the right to be beaten up!" This is followed by student laughter. And with this vivid preface, the teacher commences her lesson on the Charter.

She projects a sheet of paper onto the white board; it includes a simplified summary of the textbook section entitled "Quality of Life." After choosing a student to read the first paragraph out loud, Ms. Dennis underlines the main ideas on the projected paper, and the students collectively replicate her selection on their own paper handouts. She then explains the paragraph thoroughly; for instance, she clarifies why Canadians are generally thought to possess a high standard of living: "A high standard of living implies that the four basic human needs – water, food, shelter, and clothing – are met, and people also possess extra money to donate to charitable organizations." Interestingly, several students express surprise when they learn that some people do not have enough food to survive. In response, Ms. Dennis explains the colloquial use of the term "first world" nation: "In first world countries, people can satisfy their basic needs on their own." She then distinguishes between first, second, and third world nations, asking the students to give examples of basic needs that are not met in their third world home countries. Amisha, a thirteen-year-old student, states that she used to walk for a long time every day in order to access potable water in Gujarat. Returning to the Charter, Ms. Dennis explains that although Canadians' basic needs are usually met, wealthy people sometimes exploit others in order to obtain luxuries. This is where the Charter comes in, ensuring that people are protected from such injustices.

Liberty School
Friday Jan. 24, 2014

The bell rings precisely at 11:12 am, and most of the students leave for other classes; only eleven stay behind for ELL Math. I take my leave and head towards the Music Room in order to observe the grade 7 General Music class. A science teacher and part-time electric bass player, Mr. Green has additionally been teaching music at this school for the last couple of years. I enter a room lined with musical instruments: classical guitars hung on wall stands; a black upright piano and electric keyboard; a drum set, electric guitar, and several amplifiers; a few xylophones… A young Caucasian man, Mr. Green stands tall in front of a white board, addressing about twenty students who sit restlessly on their plastic chairs. The teacher invites me to take a seat before commencing the lesson. I gather that the class is rehearsing a rendition of Bobby McFerrin's a cappella song "Don't worry, be happy;" apparently the grade 7 students will be

performing it next week with their grade 8 compatriots, during the school-wide Chinese New Year Celebration on Friday January 31st.

I watch attentively as Mr. Green divides the students into several groups, in reference to the song's melodic, harmonic, and percussive lines. While some of the students begin the rehearsal by drumming out the rhythm on empty guitar hard cases, a group of boys enter with the bass line, followed by a group "chirping" the high-pitched vocables then singing the song's lyrics, while yet another group provides harmonic accompaniment.[24] The combination sounds terrible to me. Some students are clearly singing out of tune, others are mixing up their entrances, and many seem altogether lost - or worse, simply disengaged. This is my first time observing a junior high music class as an adult, so I wonder if I am being too idealistic. I find it strange that Mr. Green would pick such a complex a cappella piece for a General Music class. How will the students be able to pull it together in time for Friday's performance if they only have two rehearsals left?

Once the bell rings, I stay in class to speak with Mr. Green. He seems more concerned with the students' lack of team spirit than the quality of their musical performance: "I have to keep urging them to have team spirit. And if someone laughs when a student sings a wrong note, I reprimand the first student because the second one will never sing again," he explains. I nod then say: "Do all the students know each other?" Mr. Green replies: "Mostly… but it's hard when ELL students keep trickling in at different times of the year because then they don't get to learn instruments." I thank the teacher for his time and head out wondering about the possible reasons for students' low levels of engagement in music class. Is it because many do not know each other well and thus do not feel comfortable singing together? Is it because some of them do not identify with English songs due to their cultural backgrounds? Later, I run into one of the Gujarati ELL students who says she recognizes me from the music class. She openly says that she hates music class, so I ask her why, and she replies: "Because we only do drumming on the guitar cases."

In this section, I shall discuss different stakeholders' opinions regarding the school curriculum's degree of cultural inclusivity and demonstrate the way different individuals

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[24] See http://bobbymcferrin.com/flash/dwbh_loader.swf

were working on this issue within their own teaching practices. Katia explained: "Each province in Canada has their own curriculum. So they're similar across the board, but there are some major differences. [...] Every teacher in Alberta - public, Catholic, private, doesn't matter - you have to follow the Alberta curriculum. [...] And there's objectives within each subject that you *have* to complete by the end of the year" (Katia's interview with the author, May 28, 2013). However, there is always some room for differentiation, whether through overall school philosophy and culture, locally developed courses, or teachers' individual practices.

During an interview, Marco Moustaki stated that over the last ten years, there has been considerable effort to make the provincial curriculum more culturally inclusive - more specifically, less Anglo-Saxon-dominated: "Like even if you look at Math word problems. When I was a kid going through school [in Canada], it was either Bob or Jim or Jane. And now you'll see that there's names used from very different cultural groups and ethnicities… And even the problems themselves aren't necessarily geared only towards Canadian culture - [they] might involve items and things that would be used in other cultures as well. So I think there's been a really big effort, whether it's Science or Math or Social Studies, to include a wide variety of groups" (Marco's interview with the author, January 31, 2014). At Piety School, both Katia and Angela seemed to agree with this perspective; apparently, in addition to its focus on Canadian mainstream (European colonial) history, Alberta's current Social Studies curriculum includes a "huge component" on Aboriginal rights and treaties in Alberta, and students get to learn about one new country or culture each year. Drawing on her extensive experience as a Social Studies teacher, Angela discussed the way she tries to make connections across cultures while teaching this curriculum to mainstream grade 8 and 9 students: "… you talk about the other ethnic groups because the kids are taught it right up from grade 2 up through grade 12. [Every year in Social Studies,] you get something different. [...] Grade 8, they learn about Japan. And they learn about the Aztec, they learn about the Renaissance, so we tie in. And current events, it says so right there in the curriculum: 'Bring in as much current events [as possible]. Incorporate it in.' So then, whenever we talked about Japan - 'cause a lot of it is about imperialism - 'Well, what does that look like?' Right? And we

bring in the Aboriginal dynamic, 'cause when you have FNMI[25] students sitting there in your classroom, [...] one of the things you bring in is: 'Here's what's going on with the Aboriginals in Japan, and the Ainu in Japan versus this particular group here. What do you see?' And it's actually the Aboriginal kids who start speaking up. [...] And it just sets the tone. And when we do the youth criminal justice system in grade 9, they're the ones who speak out because they believe that it's the Aboriginal kids who are being targeted. 'Ok, let's explore that…'" (Angela's interview with the author, May 29, 2013)

From a critical multiculturalism perspective, however, one thing is evident: apart from a single unit on a "world culture" per year, Alberta's Social Studies curriculum strictly discusses what is officially considered Canadian history; this mainly includes the history of British and French Canada, a component on European-Aboriginal relations, and a single chapter about multicultural immigration in grade nine. And although teachers like Angela make an effort to encourage critical thinking about the Aboriginal component of the curriculum (particularly for the benefit of their FNMI students), there is only so much a teacher can do to integrate additional cultural histories and issues into the official Social Studies and Religion curricula. As Katia puts it, the Social Studies and Religion curricula can be a little restrictive, because teachers have a number of curricular objectives that they "have to get through by the end of the year" (Katia's interview with the author, May 28, 2013). In other words, as long as cultural diversity is not a focal aim of the provincial curriculum, incorporating various cultures into one's teaching requires the existence of relevant resources, can only be done to the extent that time allows, and depends on the curricular expectations set up for each grade level. This is particularly the case in Transition and ELL classes, where there is a focus on literacy and language acquisition within a "must catch up with the regular class" framework. As the example below shows, migrant students usually only receive marginal acknowledgements of (or arguably tokenistic nods to) their cultures and/or religious traditions within the classroom, and no time is devoted to critical thinking about social issues and their own community and cultural experiences: "… when we're teaching Religion, we try to connect it to [...] the faiths of all the students. So even in [the Transition class, when] we talk about certain things, I'll say 'Ok, [...] how would you relate that to your traditions,

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[25] In the local education system, FNMI stands for "First Nations, Metis, Inuit."

Leila? Your Muslim traditions.' And then the [Eritrean] Orthodox boys will say 'Oh! I do that! We do this!'" (Katia's interview with the author, May 28, 2013) Based on my conversations with migrant students in 2013 and 2014, it was evident that many of them, and particularly refugee students, longed to learn more about their own native cultures because, as one refugee student put it: "… you don't know a lot of your culture. […] of my country, I don't really know everything" (Piety School Sharing session 2, May 21, 2013). In reference to their leveled Language Arts classes, some Piety School Transition students stated that they would like to read stories about their own countries and cultures; one of them added that it would be nice for her classmates to learn about her culture that way (Piety School Sharing session 1, May 14, 2013). In contrast, many immigrant students in Liberty School's ELL class, and in particular the Gujarati students, stated that they were not interested in learning about their native country's histories and societies during Social Studies class because they "already know everything about it." However, some were enthusiastic about learning and performing songs from their native cultures and languages (Liberty School Sharing session 1, March 24, 2014). And others said they would appreciate having instruments from their native cultures in the Music classroom, such as *tabla* and *dhol* (Liberty School Sharing session 4, April 7, 2014).

Another issue that came up was Liberty students' lack of engagement with the Social Studies curriculum as a whole. Within the large ELL class at that school, students all the way from grade seven to grade nine studied from the grade nine Social Studies textbook. As Jane Lewis explained, the aim was to prepare grade seven and grade eight students with the academic vocabulary they will encounter in grade nine, so that they will be more prepared to tackle the Social Studies content when they reach their final year of junior high school. During our sharing session discussions, the ELL students expressed a variety of opinions about the Social Studies curriculum, but all of them were variants of the same perspective. Most students said that they "hated" Social Studies because it was boring: it involved too much reading, writing, and talking. As one student put it: "Make the thing more funner, instead of just talking all day, boring you to sleep…" (Liberty School Sharing session 3, March 26, 2014). Notably, a number of students stated that Social Studies was all about remembering when people were born and died; besides finding it difficult to remember all the details, some of them could not understand why it

was important to learn (political) history. As one student thoughtfully inquired, "I'm wondering, why do they teach history? We need to learn from right now – present tense" (Liberty School Sharing session 4, April 7, 2014). That is why many of the students seemed to enjoy the textbook unit on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. They said they found it interesting because they learned which right or freedom would apply to them *personally*, and given different contingencies (Liberty School Sharing session 1, March 24, 2014).

C. Social integration supports

1. Internal initiatives

Liberty School

Friday Jan. 31, 2014

Ms. Lewis asks me to randomly pick a name from the ELL class list; the student whose name I pick will carry their homeroom class's representative Chinese lantern on a stick and lead their classmates into the school gym for this afternoon's much-anticipated Chinese New Year celebration. The teacher then asks the students who are interested in supporting the Me to We campaign to place their donations in the envelopes she has provided. Each envelope is stamped with good wishes for the New Year ("love," "happiness," "joy") in Mandarin characters that are translated into English underneath. After all the envelopes are sealed, Ms. Lewis and I accompany the students to the gym, where student volunteers are waiting to take our envelopes and provide us with tickets for lottery prizes in return.

The gym is lined with chairs facing a large stage. Each two rows of chairs designate a homeroom class, which is accented by a dimly lit Chinese lantern in the aisle. Once all attendees arrive and settle down, the school principal walks onto the stage to join a representative of the Confucius Institute in Edmonton (CIE). Part of a global network of institutes, the CIE is a non-profit organization "dedicated to strengthening the educational, cultural and economic ties between China and Canada" (http://confuciusedmonton.ca/about-cie/). The CIE representative welcomes the audience on this joyous occasion, then expresses his excitement at the growing number of "Confucius classrooms" that teach Mandarin in Edmonton. He also discusses the

importance of learning Mandarin in this day and age and presents a slide show highlighting the CIE's summer study trips to China. Following these introductions, a few mainstream students take over the microphones to perform the daunting task of MC'ing; they present different parts of the event program and successfully entertain the audience throughout, occasionally making good-humoured jokes about the school and their teachers.

The program commences with poignant solo performances on the guzheng (Chinese zither) and the Chinese drums, and is followed by a small musical ensemble performance. In between these adult guest performances, Liberty School students interject with their own oral demonstrations of the elementary Mandarin language skills they have acquired within the Confucius Classroom. Mr. Green, the music teacher, subsequently leads his students through a flawless rendition of the multiple interlocking melodies within Bobby McFerrin's a cappella song "Don't worry, be happy."

Throughout the celebration, ticket numbers are drawn in order to give away prizes presented by the CIE. There are about six prizes, including large Chinese calendars and pairs of tickets for a Chinese musical event that will be held in Edmonton. The students' levels of excitement rise with every prize draw, and their cheers become progressively more boisterous. The celebration ends two hours later with a few songs from a Chinese opera singer. Despite her apparent vocal prowess, the amateur sound system in the gym distorts most of her high-pitched notes and turns them into earsplitting screeches; this causes many of the students around me to cover their ears with their hands and stare at the singer in agony. I slip out about ten minutes before the end of the show because my head is also pounding. Ms. Lewis later tells me that the show was too long, and she is annoyed with some of the teachers who had "abandoned" their homeroom classes at the gym, because this had apparently led to student unruliness.

a. School culture

Based on my observations and interviews with staff members, it appears that both schools were making a concerted effort to move beyond mere accommodations of cultural diversity and towards creating a welcoming and culturally inclusive environment for all their students.

On the one hand, the staff members I interviewed were unanimous in their assertion that Piety School is unique in its culture of welcome and care. The Transition teacher Katia Zelinski stated: "I've honestly never been in a school where the kids are so welcoming and so loving and so non-judgmental with each other […]. A lot of our kids may not be of migrant status but are immigrant children who have been through some of or a lot of or even most of what […] some of the kids in the Transition program have. So they have a lot to relate to" (Katia's interview with the author, June 25, 2012). Angela Smith, the Vice Principal, claims that there is very limited, if any, bullying, and if it does occur, it is addressed with age-appropriate disciplinary action right away (Angela's interview with the author, May 29, 2013).

On the other hand, Vice Principal Marco Moustaki states that Liberty School's administration had been working on an intentional change in school culture and environment since 2010. Through the *Leader in Me* program (described in Chapter 2), modeling by staff, and school-wide behavioural expectations, students were given the message that Liberty School is "a very safe, respectful, and caring environment, [where] everyone is welcome […] regardless of their background, their beliefs, anything like that." According to him, the *Leader in Me* program encouraged everyone at the school to work together while giving back to the community; he added that the focus on teamwork emerged in the 7 habits of a highly successful teenager: "… it's a win-win situation, and it's not an attitude of 'I win, you lose.' […] we can all work together to be successful together" (Marco's interview with the author, January 31, 2014). Furthermore, in addition to establishing a multilingual and multicultural family literacy library project through external funding, Liberty School had recently begun to hold a variety of annual events that promote multiculturalism and celebrate festivities from various cultures and faiths (Multicultural Day, Chinese New Year, etc.). According to Marco, students understood that the school is almost like a big family, and there had not been any significant discipline issues: "I don't think kids really see colour, religion, ethnic background, when they interact with each other. Like if you actually spend time in the hallways, you'll probably see that there's groups of kids that are quite mixed" (Marco's interview with the author, January 31, 2014).

b. *Connecting with peers*

Despite both schools' emphasis on creating a welcoming, inclusive environment, staff members stated that migrant students often needed additional supports that help them integrate into the social fabric of the school and the community. As I shall demonstrate here, Piety School and Liberty School employed similar methods to achieve this goal.

Piety School appeared to be making a constant effort to integrate students within the wider school context. It seems that when the Transition program was established about a decade ago, migrant students had received all their academic training and extracurricular activities separately, only leaving their classroom for Physical Education. However, teachers had begun to realize that the Transition students were becoming too socially isolated; in response, they had started to increase the students' opportunities to participate in the mainstream program through Option[26], Health, and Religion classes. Additionally, Katia noted that migrant students almost always found one or more students from their own cultural backgrounds at school; even if they did not end up being friends, the migrant student would know they can seek out that person if they ever needed help (Katia's interview with the author, May 28, 2013). Furthermore, since she began teaching the Transition class in 2011, Katia had been pairing up her new Transition students with responsible, welcoming, and loving classmates so they could be "a bit of an instant friend for them." According to her, the students did not mind doing this; however, she did admit that such contrived friendships eventually faded, leaving some new students feeling a little isolated. That is why Piety School was considering establishing a "welcoming committee" for *all* students new to the school; this committee of veteran students would introduce new students to the school, its culture and activities, then set them up with "buddies" so they would feel more welcome (Katia's interview with the author, May 28, 2013).

Similarly, Liberty School staff members stressed the benefits of the school's culturally diverse population in helping to support newly arriving migrant students. Marco Moustaki stated that migrant students quite often found school peers who spoke

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[26] Transition students usually took two Option classes: Option A included a choice among Drama, Art, Computers, Ceramics, Music, and Film Studies, and Option B included a choice among Home Economics, Industrial Arts, and Outdoor Arts (Katia's interview with the author, May 28, 2013).

their native language; because these peers were able to provide them with information about school expectations and how things work, migrant students usually felt more comfortable and settled in within two or three days of their arrival (Marco's interview with the author, January 31, 2014). Jane Lewis added that common interests and hobbies sometimes provide migrant students from linguistic minorities with a platform to engage with peers in a way that transcends the language barrier:

> "Hwan plays baseball. If we didn't have a baseball team, he'd be dying right now. […] I wouldn't see him at school. He's the only Korean-speaker we have in this school... One! And he loves baseball. It's his passion. So […] as soon as this [baseball] season took off, the kids were all out there, he went out and he tried out for the team. He knows very little English - people talk to him, he has not a clue what they're saying. But, they're so happy to have him 'cause he's a great baseball player, and they're starting to try to make a little more effort talking to him because they have a common game" (Jane's interview with the author, May 28, 2013).

Jane Lewis also stressed the centrality of acquiring "Canadian cultural competency" within the process of social integration. According to her:

> "… our [ELL] students often try to hide […]. Because their experiences in other classrooms where there aren't as many peers will be... It's this jumbling block for some of them, right? In here, they are who they are. When they go to other classes, they may be the only Indian kid in the room [...]. They just sink in. They try to be that wallpaper child that sort of gets looked past instead of engaging with others, and they don't feel comfortable sometimes with the other kids in their class, and they don't know how to [position themselves]. I mean, there's a lot of cultural dynamic around how to get into and out of a conversation or a group. There's cultural norms around that. So if you're new, and everybody is chitter-chattering and having a great old time in their language, and you're not really confident, and you wanna make friends, how do you do that??" (Jane's interview with the author, May 28, 2013)

As such, when Jane was not helping her ELL students catch up academically with their mainstream peers, she was busy teaching them how to navigate and make sense of their

new Canadian environment, so they would not be blind-sighted when attempting to "fit in." As I mentioned earlier, Jane claimed that there is no fixed curriculum for the ELL class; instead, it is about "taking every teachable moment and capitalizing on it:"

> "When it's this holiday or you hear something like this, this is what you need to maybe think about. […] just so you know, 'cause it's probably different from home. […] This is what we do at Valentine's Day. This is what Christmas is all about. This is what Easter is about. This is the secular version, this is the religious version – I know you don't believe in this religious version, but I just want you to know so that if somebody says something, you kinda go 'Oh, ok' instead of going 'Huh??'" (Jane's interview with the author, May 28, 2013)

Concurrently, Jane tried to teach her ELL students to be accepting of their classmates' different cultural and religious traditions: "… you have to kinda recognize we don't bug anybody about the way they dress or how they look. We're just... we have to be, in here, the best citizens that we can because we're different. […] we have all these different religious and cultural perspectives, and they have to get along together. They have to work it out" (Jane's interview with the author, May 28, 2013).

2. External initiatives: Crime prevention

a. *The emergence of "crime prevention" programming*

Throughout my conversations and interviews with staff members at both schools, I could detect an underlying discourse of "crime prevention" within their work with migrant youth. For example, Jane Lewis stated that Liberty School students usually had a few options during recess time: they could either go to the school library, or sit in the Foods Room, or else play sports such as dodge ball or basketball in the school gym or playground once the weather warmed up. She explains that "it's important to keep them on the school premises because if they go on the street or to the mall nearby, they'll get involved in gangs or drugs" (Jane's conversation with the author, January 20, 2014). Meanwhile, Katia Zelinski stated that one major settlement issue for migrant youth is trying to fit into their peer group "appropriately and safely," and their parents usually do not have access to or knowledge of such opportunities, particularly ones that are inexpensive or subsidized (Katia's interview with the author, June 25, 2012).

But how did the idea of "crime prevention" first gain currency in Edmonton's schools? One significant contributor seems to have been a relatively recent move in Edmonton towards instituting so-called "crime prevention" programs for youth perceived to be "at-risk" or "high-risk." According to an Innoweave case study (2008), "residents of Edmonton had become increasingly concerned with rising levels of crime. With a high crime rate and a rising tide of criminal activity among younger generations, something had to be done to address root causes of crime so that all residents were safe in their own community." In response, Edmonton City Council had established a 25-member city taskforce that was required to produce an action plan for community safety. In September 2009, following extensive consultations with various stakeholders and community partners, the taskforce had put forward a set of recommendations, which included a new model of family and community safety focusing on Schools as Neighbourhood Community Hubs for social support services, the development of a "turn away from gangs" initiative focused on "at-risk" youth, and programs to support ethno-cultural communities. Particularly relevant to the study at hand, the report had recommended that strengthening the role of schools as community hubs would decrease crime in the city. Entitled the REACH Report, the taskforce's agenda was unanimously adopted by Edmonton City Council and supported in the community, and REACH Edmonton Council for Safe Communities was established in 2010 as a community-driven coordinating council for community safety (Innoweave case study, http://www.innoweave.ca/en/modules/collective-impact/case-studies/reach-edmonton).

With a grant from Safe Community Innovation Fund, the REACH Edmonton Council had initiated a three-year (2011-2013) crime prevention pilot project called *Schools as Community Hubs (SACH)* (Rossiter and Derwing 2012, 100). This project was initially implemented within two EPSB schools and one ECSD school, but by the second year, it had expanded to three additional sites. The 2013 program evaluation report cited the project's rationale, or theory of change, as such: "If at-risk children, youth and families are connected to services, programs and opportunities through Schools as Community Hubs they will become more actively involved as leaders in their communities or cultural groups. They will experience greater success and an enhanced

sense of belonging. They will have a strong sense of identity and they will be less likely to be involved in the justice system" (REACH Edmonton Evaluation Report 2013, 8).

As Knight et al. note, immigrant and refugee youth are almost always guaranteed the "at-risk" label, for they are often marked by a number of the "risk factors" that OECD uses to refer to risk to youth. These include: structural factors (including "poverty, ethnic minority status, domestic issues, language deficiencies, local community factors and education quality"), individual factors (including "disability, pregnancy, drug use or illness), and psychological factors (such as low self-esteem) (Knight et al. 2012, 42). Based on this logic, it is unsurprising that SACH's focus on high-needs areas in the city (known as "hot spots") had translated into "neighbourhoods characterized by concentration of commercial land and by demographic factors such as communities with large populations of Aboriginal, *immigrant, refugee* and single-parent households" (REACH Edmonton Evaluation Report 2013, 3; my italics). Following is a table listing the risk factors that SACH aimed to address in "at-risk" children, youth, and their families:

Risk Factors YOUTH	Risk Factors FAMILIES & PARENTS
- Lack of adult supervision	- Feeling of isolation and lack of connection
- Negative peer influences or peer rejection	- Fear of crime and lack of pride in the community or neighbourhood
- Alcohol and substance use	- Lack of awareness or understanding of support services available
- Involvement in general offences	- Poor access to support services
- Aggression	- Lack of ownership or empowerment to make changes over community and family issues
- Poverty	
- Neglect and poor parent child relationships	- Low parental involvement in community
- Low self-esteem and problem behaviours	- Poverty
- Low parental involvement	- Lack of education, social and parental skills
- Violence and physical abuse	- Language barriers to employment and connection with the community
- Poor school performance and poor attitude	
- Low bonding to school	
- Gang membership, crime and violence	
- Homelessness	

A table listing the risk factors for at-risk children, youth, and their families, to be addressed through REACH Edmonton Council's SACH project (REACH Edmonton Evaluation Report 2013, 4)

By coordinating and providing "wrap-around services" (developing individualized plans for care through a collaborative team-planning process), SACH intended to "reduce risk

factors and strengthen protective factors[27] of vulnerable families while building a sense of community in the process." Liberty School became one of the SACH sites since it was identified as a high-needs school.

Interestingly, this language of "crime prevention" and "youth-at-risk" was also prevalent in the Life Skills program that was implemented within Piety School's Transition class. Between 2009 and 2013, one of Edmonton's immigrant-serving organizations delivered an intensive youth development pilot program called Life Skills within several junior high schools in Edmonton. The Life Skills program represented a primary and secondary prevention project targeting "at-risk" and "high-risk" immigrant, refugee, and Aboriginal youth and their families (Life Skills Evaluation Report, October 2012). Notably, and similarly to the SACH case, this multi-year pilot project was substantially funded by crime prevention government initiatives.[28]

The SACH and Life Skills programs were founded upon a couple of shared principles: first, that the successful socio-economic integration of immigrant and refugee children, youth, and families into Canadian society is closely correlated with the prevention and reduction of substance abuse and criminal activity within this population; second, that this population's successful socio-economic integration begins with their feeling connected and engaged within their local school, neighbourhood, and/or community. Interestingly, this rationale is intimately linked with the crime prevention discourse that is currently prevalent in Canada and elsewhere, thereby leading governmental bodies (such as the aforementioned Public Safety Canada's National Crime Prevention Strategy and the Safe Communities Innovation Fund) to invest considerable amounts of money in so-called crime prevention initiatives in order to forego the much higher cost of crime to society. The logic appears to be straightforward enough; according to Rossiter and Rossiter, "some scholars argue that investment in at-risk youth

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[27] The SACH evaluation report listed a number of "protective factors" that are believed to contribute to sustaining healthy "at-risk" youth, parents, and families. Examples of youth protective factors included: "access to support services, reduced fear of crime and sense of safety and connection in the neighbourhood, commitment and connection to school, learning and community and sense of achievement, and enhanced resiliency factors including positive peer and mentor relationships, opportunities to develop social skills, self-esteem, empowerment and a sense of belonging" (REACH Edmonton Evaluation Report 2013, 4).
[28] On the federal level, the Life Skills pilot project was funded by Public Safety Canada's National Crime Prevention Strategy and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), now known as Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). On the provincial level, it was funded by the Safe Communities Innovation Fund (SCIF) and the Alberta Human Rights Education and Multiculturalism Fund.

is more cost-effective than other responses, such as punishment or increased funding for police and the justice system"[29] (Rossiter and Rossiter 2009, 411). Meanwhile, as the two programs above clearly demonstrate, there seems to be a strong focus on connecting children and youth to school as a crime-prevention strategy. This stems from the widely held belief that high-school completion is an important protective factor for "at-risk" children and youth: "Hankivsky (2008) has estimated that the annual cost to Canadians of high school non-completion (excluding public health care) is over 37 billion dollars. Although this number includes Canadian-born drop-outs, the percentage of immigrant and refugee youth who drop out or are pushed out is generally higher than that of their Canadian-born counterparts (Howard, 2006)" (Rossiter and Derwing 2012, 102).

Given the overwhelmingly economic terms within which the Canadian government generally views different classes of immigrants and citizens,[30] it is unsurprising that social development projects and programs for youth often try to articulate their impact in economic terms. In fact, it was the economic value of the program that was highlighted when an external party independently evaluated REACH Edmonton's three-year SACH project. As the SACH Evaluation document explains, Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a method that first identifies "indicators of value that can be monetized" (Sands 2014), then "examines the social and economic benefits arising from the work that was done, and estimates a [monetary] value for its impacts, using the same methods that are used to determine financial value" (REACH Edmonton 2013, 10). Utilizing this framework, the independent evaluation found that each dollar invested in the SACH program returned $4.60 in value, with the savings estimated at $7.6 million for children who stayed in school, $4.3 million for parents' increase in income, and $155,232 for the decrease in shoplifting and vandalism (Sands 2014).

b. *The two programs' offerings*

Despite the similarity in their rationales, each of the two pilot projects offered a unique set of programs to the migrant populations under study.

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[29] The authors explain: "Data compiled by the Rand Corporation in the USA reveal that the cost of incarceration is seven times greater than the promotion of school completion and five times greater than parent training (Waller 2006). In Canada, the cost to incarcerate a youth for 1 year is approximately $100,000 (Clapham 2008)" (Rossiter and Rossiter 2009, 411).

[30] This is evident in the Alberta Social Studies' textbook chapter on Immigration.

Unlike the SACH program, the Life Skills program was based on handpicked lessons from Lions Quest, a school-based positive youth development and preventive program that is used internationally to guide youth considered "at risk" (http://www.lions-quest.org/).[31] The Life Skills program was designed to promote drug awareness and prevention, crime prevention, cross-cultural education, healthy peer and family relationships, and service learning for teenage youth that had grown up in challenging circumstances. In the context of Piety's Transition class, it aimed to empower and integrate migrant students into Canadian society through a diverse set of educational workshops, recreational programs, and field trips, while exposing them to as many issues as possible with which Canadian youth their age usually deal. The program's expected outcomes for youth were to: "feel comfortable in who they are and where they come from, learn new skills and knowledge to help them be successful, and become comfortable in reaching for success in school and the community" (text from the program's youth mentorship signup form). Between Spring 2011 and Spring 2013, Ella Clarke was coordinating the Life Skills program at Piety School. However, instead of implementing the Lions Quest lesson plans as is, Ella used her own immigration experiences and past teaching expertise to customize lessons to her students' cultural backgrounds and settlement experiences.

The two "crime prevention" programs focused heavily on engaging migrant students in a variety of activities. The SACH program, for instance, allowed Liberty School to provide an unprecedented number of "critical hours" activities[32] up until December 2013. These included five days of after-school programming, as well as spring and summer camps. Activities ranged from sports (badminton, basketball, baseball, dodge ball, cricket) and music classes (drumming circle, Bollywood dance), to educational workshops (human rights, health topics, business leadership) and field trips (science exhibitions, college campuses, recreation centres). Furthermore, during the 2013-2014 school year, two school settlement workers made themselves available to help

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[31] According to the official website: "Lions Quest helps young people develop the skills to deal with emotions constructively, make responsible decisions, and set positive goals that lead to healthy, responsible lives free from the harm of drug abuse, bullying and violence" (http://www.lions-quest.org/mission.php).

[32] The SACH evaluation report defines "critical hours" activities as "healthy activity during identified hours of risk (the critical afterschool hours, 3 to 6 p.m.), within their own community" (REACH Edmonton Evaluation Report 2013, 3).

ELL students with their homework three times a week during the Learning Strategies class and twice a week during after-school programs. These social workers spoke some of the students' native languages, such as Arabic, Somali, French, Swahili, and Urdu.

According to Jane Lewis, the after-school program approach was particularly valuable; for it helped Liberty to keep its struggling students engaged with school, and gave teachers the opportunity to build trust and offer guidance to them, while reducing their isolation and providing services that tackle their issues head on. She stated that "… if we can connect [migrant students] to the school, and their parents to the school, then we'll have a *way* better chance of getting that child through to fruition at the end. […] We have lots of amazing programs here after school. […] And that's amazing! I've never had that in any other school [in Edmonton]. And it keeps the kids completely engaged in school. And we see them all the time. So […] we have an opportunity for a lot more dialogue, and we've an opportunity for a lot more connection. And so I can say to a kid 'Wow, buddy! Today in class – that can't happen again! What are we gonna do?' And we can *have* a conversation [...]. They know that I'm paying attention, that it's not gonna go over very well, and it's got to stop, and then you have an opportunity to work with that student more" (Jane's interview with the author, May 28, 2013). Another important outcome of the program was that students were engaged in safe activities under adult supervision during "critical hours;" this meant that their parents could work for three extra hours a day, thus increasing their income without worrying about the whereabouts of their children.

According to Katia Zelinski, trying to fit into their peer group "appropriately and safely" represents a major settlement issue for migrant youth, and their parents usually do not have access to or knowledge of any opportunities, particularly ones that are inexpensive or subsidized:

> "[In some situations,] Mum and Dad are working, Mum is going to school during the day and maybe working at night, and Dad's working two jobs. And we have students who go home at three o'clock, [...] cook for their younger brothers and sisters, and they may not see Mum and Dad until they wake up in the morning. And then, they do it all again. So they're raising their younger siblings, but they don't have any exposure to anything else going on in the community" (Katia's interview with the author, June 25, 2012).

This is why the Life Skills program focused on providing migrant (in this case, refugee) students with opportunities that would otherwise be inaccessible to them because of their families' economic hardship and limited knowledge of the new environment. Such opportunities included invited school performances, complimentary tickets to performances at world-class venues, field trips to cultural centres, universities, botanical gardens, and ranches, free swimming and private music lessons, and membership within sports teams and youth groups. These opportunities were meant to broaden the students' horizons and interests, while allowing them to see themselves reaching places they never thought imaginable. According to Katia, these were also opportunities for migrant students to continue to enjoy their childhood, become more familiar with the local community, and build relationships with youth outside of school. As such, she worked on securing suitable volunteer opportunities for some of them; these were situations where they could feel that they belong and are useful, while learning more about Canadian culture and feeling a sense of pride in what they are contributing (Katia's interview with the author, June 25, 2012). The Life Skills program also teamed struggling migrant students up with university student volunteers who provided one-on-one tutoring and mentorship in reading and communication skills. As Ella Clarke explained: "… we look for mentors who [have preferably] had similar, if not same, experience as them, and come through." She believes these are the best people to motivate new refugee students, because they see themselves in them (Ella's interview with the author, June 29, 2012).

One innovative initiative that had greatly improved the migrant students' social image at Piety School was the snack program, which Ella had created and implemented as part of the Life Skills program during the 2012-2013 school year. Under her guidance, Transition students were essentially put in charge of buying, preparing, and distributing healthy snacks to all Piety classes on a daily basis. The program aimed to improve the migrant students' English and social skills, while teaching them wise shopping and healthy food preparation skills that they could share with their parents and eventually utilize to secure a part-time job. At the end of the school year, the Vice Principal claimed that the snack program had visibly enhanced the participating students' confidence and sociability levels, particularly since their peers had begun to respect them and commend them on their thoughtful snack choices. In fact, this confidence boost had led two

previously timid migrant students to join the school's morning broadcast that year; while one took charge of presenting the weather report, another took charge of broadcasting the daily news on camera. Angela referred to these as "leadership positions;" the students' peers appreciated what they were doing for the school community and began to consider them an important part of Piety School even though they belonged to the Transition program (Angela's interview with the author, May 29, 2013).

Finally, both schools recognized the importance of engaging with migrant parents in order to improve the likelihood that their children will succeed in terms of academics and social integration. They had been employing the services of cultural liaisons and interpreters in order to bridge the linguistic and cultural gap between teachers and parents regarding student academic issues. At Piety, a family-school liaison of Eritrean background was responsible for communicating with migrant parents over the phone and even making home visits when necessary (Katia's interview with the author, June 25, 2012). During the Life Skills pilot project, Ella Clarke had tried to build relationships with the refugee parents through her work as the program coordinator; however, she had encountered many challenges because she could not communicate well with the parents who did not speak much English. On the other hand, Liberty School was able to develop a much more intricate system for communicating and engaging with parents, particularly because the SACH program had provided the school with regular access to a large number of social workers from a variety of community organizations. As Marco Moustaki told me, besides the school's access to interpreters who spoke a number of the students' languages, the school often pre-recorded phone messages in a variety of languages to ensure that important information was effectively communicated to parents of all cultural-linguistic backgrounds. Unlike the situation at Piety, Liberty School was able to develop a strong relationship with migrant families, where parents were comfortable walking into the school at any time to express any concerns or ask for assistance. I believe this was largely due to the SACH project's focus on connecting with families, particularly through after-school programming. Key initiatives for parent engagement at Liberty School included monthly ELL parents' information nights, evening ELL classes for parents, and end of year celebration events. According to the SACH coordinator Lina Dirksen, these events and classes were successful and well-attended because the school was able to cater to the

needs of migrant parents by providing free culturally-appropriate food, interpreters in all languages, and free on-site child care.

Chapter 5: Divergent Foci for the Ethnomusicology Project

As this dissertation shall demonstrate, the migrant students at Piety and Liberty possessed incredible talents, personal strength, and resilience, all of which they employed strategically in order to pursue their dreams. However, "culture" is an important issue with which all migrants grapple, regardless of their socio-economic background, migrantion experience, or age. The broad, critical issue of adjusting and adapting to a new culture is of particular importance to my study because as I shall demonstrate, it is one that may be addressed, at least partially, through ethnomusicological means. According to public health practitioner Sofia Cruz, who is a second-generation Filipino immigrant living in Edmonton, "culture" does not merely signify surface customs and modes of behaviour; it also encompasses a myriad of unwritten rules about culture to which migrants are not given an orientation. For example: What are the gender roles in Canada? What are one's support systems? Whom do you go to for help? Who makes decisions within the family? In Sofia's words: "... you may have come from a community where decisions were made communally with you and your sister etc., then you come here, you don't have that support system. And not only that, but everyone expects you to make decisions individually! [...] so, how do you make those adjustments?" (Sofia's interview with the author, July 5, 2012) During our interview, she told me that it is equally important to remember that junior high-aged youth are usually in the process of negotiating their individual identity; for migrants, this is compounded by the additional "burden" of culture, which represents yet another aspect that marks them as different. This presents a significant challenge for migrants because, as Sofia stated, "when you're in junior high, all you wanna do is be the same. [Canadian] culture doesn't really tend to support diversity as much in junior high – junior high people wanna blend, they wanna fit in. […] in junior high it's not cool to be different. And that value gets imposed upon pretty quickly" (Sofia's interview with the author, July 5, 2012).

The previous chapter described the myriad initiatives that Piety School and Liberty School had taken in order to provide an academically supportive and culturally inclusive environment for migrant students, while facilitating their social integration into the community. However, as Rossiter and Derwing argue, Edmonton's programming for migrant students still has "far to go," mainly due to a general lack of systematicity and

coordination among various stakeholders (Rossiter and Derwing 2012, 89-90). Notwithstanding their best intentions, schools in Edmonton run up against a number of structural and operational issues, including funding constraints, the slow pace of government bureaucracy and educational policy implementation, a lack of programming systematicity, and a shortage of teachers trained in culturally responsive teaching or ELL student engagement. This was arguably the case at Piety and Liberty; despite various stakeholders' efforts, different programs' shortcomings emerged in the disjunctures between official discourses on the one hand, and the perspectives of individual stakeholders on the other. In this chapter, I shall highlight some of the key migrant student issues that appeared to be partially or wholly unaddressed within the two schools during that period. These issues represented the impetus for a unique ethnomusicological project at each site.

A. Piety School: Unaddressed culture-related issues

Piety School's Transition class provided a shelter of sorts, where a limited number of newly arriving refugee students were received into a welcoming environment and a supportive "buddy system." This class had also recently benefited greatly from the Life Skills program; led by a teacher/coordinator who herself is a racialized immigrant, this program had been able to provide learning and community service experiences that widened students' interests and opportunities, while arming them with critical and practical tools to navigate the socio-cultural challenges they were likely to face in their new environment. This was mainly because Ella possessed firsthand knowledge of the severe barriers that migrant students would face as they tried to integrate into the Canadian school system, workforce, and overall society. However, despite Piety School's efforts at cultural inclusion, the fact remains that the Canadian school usually acts as a socialization site that reproduces broader social inequities, including Anglo-Saxon cultural hegemony.

As I shall demonstrate in this section, Transition students faced unique family, educational, and settlement circumstances that challenged their cultural continuity in the Edmontonian context; this became evident through a basic survey of their musico-cultural practices and knowledge. Within this context, cultural difference represented a barrier to peer interaction and friendship, particularly for migrant students. And as the

previous section demonstrated, peer interaction and friendship already represented a struggle for refugee students because of their severe language barriers. Drawing on private conversations and sharing session discussions, this section shall elucidate the various culture-related issues that Piety's Transition students faced as they navigated their multiple interconnected social worlds: family, local ethno-cultural community, school, and Canadian society. In particular, I shall focus on the issues of low self-esteem, double consciousness, and identity struggles, in addition to social marginalization and intergenerational conflict, while demonstrating the way they manifested through the lens of music. Consequently, through a musical frame of reference, I shall attempt to portray some of the major issues that these new refugee youth faced while attempting to straddle two different cultures, or as Ella put it, "live between two cultures."

1. Challenges to musico-cultural learning and continuity

Most refugee youth arrive in Canada having spent years escaping war or political persecution; some of them have never lived in their homelands, and most of them have spent time in refugee camps, resulting in significant gaps in their formal education. My research with Piety School Transition students shows that protracted displacement may additionally leave refugee youth with little socialization in their native cultures, while presenting challenges to cultural continuity. My conversations with these students revealed myriad factors that play a role in this process. In this section, I shall discuss the various challenges to cultural continuity that the refugee students described during our sharing sessions. I have divided the students' processes of musico-cultural learning into five main categories (informal community learning, formal learning, family learning, peer learning, and individual learning), while comparing and contrasting their access to such opportunities throughout three geo-temporal stages (homeland, displacement, and settlement and integration). I will also try to portray how various factors interact given different personal histories and migration circumstances, while highlighting different individuals' strategic approaches to maintaining cultural continuity in Edmonton.

a. *Homeland*

I will first discuss the students' opportunities for musico-cultural learning and continuity in their homelands. Within their countries of origin, they were generally

afforded numerous opportunities for informal community learning and socialization through community interactions, gatherings, and events. Many of the students stated that they used to experience music of their native cultures during festival, concert, and wedding contexts in their homelands. That is also where they were socialized into song and dance traditions - like the Sudanese *dalluka* that is performed by Sudanese women at weddings (Leila's class presentation, May 7, 2013).

Since religion played an important role in their families' lives, these students were also quite heavily exposed to culturally specific religious songs and Christian liturgy at Karen, Assyrian, Eritrean Orthodox, and Ugandan Catholic churches. The students were further able to learn musico-cultural traditions and practices through their families, particularly from older members of their extended families. For instance, Leila stated that she used to listen to her grandfather reciting Arabic poetry and singing songs that he had composed about himself and his country Sudan. On the other hand, Grace mentioned how her grandmother in Somalia used to tell her "traditional" stories and sing to her songs that she had learned from her own mother. It seems that her family constituted a central means of learning at that point, for her father homeschooled her and taught her English. Grace's family practiced Christian Catholicism within Somalia's predominantly Muslim environment; as Grace explained: "… if you don't believe in Allah, you're [...] not supposed to learn about the Quran. [...] So like, my family, we like, didn't believe in Allah, we just believed like, Jesus was the son [of God] and stuff - we were like Christians, and then we were like different from the other people, so yeah" (Piety School Sharing session 1, May 14, 2013).

b. *Displacement*

With one exception[33], all of the Transition students had been forcibly displaced from their homelands at an early age, and had subsequently spent a number of years moving from one country to another until they made it to Canada. Evidently, frequent displacement can have a significant impact on children's linguistic, cultural, and musical continuity, particularly when displacement occurs at an early age. For example, although

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[33] Unlike his classmates who had arrived in Canada as "refugees," Franco had moved to Canada from his home country Mexico on his parents' temporary foreign worker visa.

Zahra was born in Eritrea, she explained how she progressively began to forget her native language when she and her family moved to Sudan when she was seven:

> "When I went to Sudan and I did four years, I just talk Arabic Arabic, I was almost forgetting my language. So it was like mix! [...] And then when I talk with my family, I talk to them with Tygrinia, but like I start forgetting it a little... I start putting Arabic in it" (Zahra's interview with the author, May 28, 2013).

In order to counter the alienating effects of living in exile, individuals and communities often seek refuge in music. This can be seen in Grace's portrayal of the role of music in her family's life in Kenya. She stated that although she had been exposed to some "traditional" songs from her mother and grandmother when she was about four years old in Somalia, she had been too young to sing them herself. However, once she moved to Kenya, she would listen to her mother singing these songs in an attempt to remember her culture (Grace's presentation, May 2, 2013). Conversely, although migrating to Kenya had involved learning a new language (Swahili), it had apparently allowed Grace to attend school in a religiously congruent environment, since the country's predominant religion is Christianity; it was there that she began to learn Swahili Christian songs at school (Piety School Sharing session 1, May 14, 2013).

c. *Settlement and integration*

- **Informal community learning**

The Transition students were all officially considered "newcomers" in Canada, as they had been living in the country for a relatively short period of time when I commenced my research project with them; in this case, this was anywhere between two months and four years and a half. Notably, it was the students who had spent at least a year and a half in Canada that were vocal about the existence of challenges to cultural continuity during their conversations with me. First, these challenges were manifested through the near absence of informal community learning experiences. For example, when I asked Zahra whether she knew any Tygrinian songs, she told me that she had forgotten them all. Elaborating on the progressive language loss she had experienced while living in Sudan, she explained why she found issue with having to resort to code switching in her Canadian environment:

"… everything is like mixed. So like, Arabic, English, and Tygrinia *together*. [...] I'd like to know my language better, so I can talk to everyone that speaks my language. And when I go back to my country, I can talk to them, so I don't have to talk to another language and then have to explain it to them" (Zahra's interview with the author, May 28, 2013).

During a class discussion about the experience of migration, Grace communicated an additional layer to this issue by demonstrating the challenges of balancing cultural continuity with one-way social integration. In particular, she noted the sometimes-contradictory impact of parental pressures on linguistic continuity and intergenerational communication:

- Grace [solemnly]: I forgot half of my language.

- Rana: You did?... How long have you been here [in Canada]?

- Grace: Mmmm... Two years, almost. Two years.

- Rana: Wow. And why do you think that happened?

- Grace: 'Cause I speak more English at home, to my brothers, and...

- Rana: Really? Why do you do that? Are your brothers younger?

- Grace: Yeah.

- Rana: Okay...

- Grace: And my Dad.

- Rana: Does your Dad tell you to speak English so you can learn it better?

- Grace: Yeah… He tells me to practice it so that I could like learn it more better. And my Mom doesn't speak English, so I try to mix them...

- Rana: See, that's what I do! [...] When I speak Arabic, I put in English words - it's crazy! [laughing] So I know what you're saying. […] my opinion is it's really important to try to keep both, because it's hard when... you know, like your Mom, if you just stopped talking to her in her language - if you forget the language, how can you talk to her then? Imagine, you know?

- Grace: Yeah, I know! Like that's why my Dad can sometime to tell my Mom to go to school to learn stuff.

- Rana: Yeah.

- Grace: But she's like 'I'm too old, I'm gonna stay with my language...'

- Rana: It's hard! See, that's the thing: it's much harder for our parents, for older people, to fit in and learn all these new things. It's *much* easier for you when you come here at this age. (Piety School Class Discussion, April 18, 2013)

Other students noted that their exposure to music from their native cultures largely decreased in their new Canadian environment due to the dearth of informal community events. Yasmine, for instance, was an Assyrian Christian of Iraqi origin who was displaced to Syria with her family. When I asked her and a few of her classmates if they still listened to the same music in Canada, she commenced the discussion:

- Yasmine: Not really, because Assyrian songs and stuff, I used to listen to them like in celebration or parties, but here there's like… not really parties and stuff… So, no.
- Grace: It's just like, Canadian, like umm…
- Yasmine: I listen to Arabic music, yeah.
- Grace: … you can listen to all, like on Youtube, but like when you're *in* your country, you like… usually what I did was I go to weddings to listen to like special songs from my country. When I come here, they're not on YouTube. You just like, you just like have - they don't have my people - well, in Toronto, they do, like some… they have like Somalian -
- Rana: There's a bigger community.
- Grace: Yeah, community Somalians there, but in Edmonton they're not…(Piety School Sharing session 1, May 14, 2013)

- **Formal learning**

Since religion was central to all of these students and their families, our conversations regarding cultural continuity often revolved around their opportunities to learn about and practice their respective faiths, often through culturally specific linguistic and musical means. Many migrant families in Edmonton do not find an exact linguistic and cultural match for their Christian church denomination, so they may change their church affiliation based on availability. As Ella Clarke informed me, Grace and her family attended services at the English-speaking Ethiopian church (Ella Clarke's conversation with the author, May 23, 2013). Meanwhile, the Karen students were very involved with their local church, particularly because Thiri Aung's father and Aye Myat

and May Su's grandmother served as members of the clergy for the Karen congregation in Edmonton. I learned that they gathered the congregation for a Karen-language mass at a local church every Sunday. Besides singing Karen church songs during religious services, choir members gathered regularly at a member's home in order to practice their repertoire. However, May Su told me that she did not know the church songs well because she had trouble with the Karen language (May Su's conversation with the author, May 13, 2013). The issue of religious education and community seemed particularly pertinent for Tesfalem and Zahra, two thirteen-year-old Eritrean students who had arrived in Canada a year and a half earlier. According to Ella Clarke, although both students practiced Christian Orthodoxy, Tesfalem hailed from a particularly devout family and had been placed on the path to become a deacon.[34] This was partly why he had to follow a much stricter fasting ritual than other Eritrean students of that religion (Ella's conversation with the author, April 26, 2013). Following is a conversation that transpired amongst the two Eritrean students during one of our sharing sessions.

- Rana: How has your life been since you came to Canada?
- Tesfalem: It's bad.
- Rana: It's bad?
- Tesfalem: It's bad - sometimes good.
- Rana: Ok... So what's bad?
- Tesfalem: You know, the bad is like, I forgot all the *mezmurs* [...], and I miss my friends [...]. But in here, I like when you go to store, or with your class,[35] like, or play soccer with your friends, I like that. But it's bad for me.
- Rana: So how did you forget the *mezmur*? Don't you do it at church [in Edmonton]?
- Tesfalem: We do it. But...
- Rana: It's not the same?
- Tesfalem: Yeah, yeah, it's the same - the church - but we can forget the *mezmur*... It's like, when we were in Eritrea, there is a teacher.
- Rana: Oh, so you have more lessons?

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[34] The deacon represents the third and lowest order of the major clergy in the Orthodox Church.
[35] Here, Tesfalem is likely referring to the Life Skills shopping and snack program.

- Tesfalem: So he's in every[day]. So we can't like 'We forgot them'... That's why.
- Zahra: The bad thing - the most bad thing - is like in Canada, your family don't let you go by yourself. But when I was in my country, I went by myself to church. And I used to go a lot to church - more than in here. But now, like I stopped going to church because if my family didn't go, I have to stay at home.
- Rana: Right...
- Zahra: So it's like, a lot of different, and I start forgetting everything about God, and like… everything that I learned.
- Rana: Really? Wow! Because you only go once a week...
- Zahra: Yeah. But in there, you have a day that you *learn* - it's not just Sunday Sunday. (Piety School Sharing session 2, May 21, 2013)

I later learned that, given his training to be a deacon, Tesfalem had been teaching the children Tygrinian *mezmur* at the local Eritrean church. Apparently, Zahra's mother attended services at that church because she could understand the language. However, Zahra herself preferred to attend the local Ethiopian Orthodox church with her friends; since she had progressively been forgetting Tygrinian and learning more English, she found she understands better and thus can learn more there because the language of instruction is English. Interestingly, she did mention that frequent displacement had equally impacted her knowledge of *mezmur*. Zahra explained that back in Eritrea, she used to learn Tygrinian *mezmur* at church, but she had begun to forget it when she moved to Sudan; apparently, the Sudanese church only taught *mezmur* to adults, while the children were usually sent upstairs to watch movies about God. In Edmonton, the Ethiopian church she attended taught *mezmur* in Amharic, so she said she had begun to learn the language in order to sing along (Zahra's interview with the author, May 28, 2013).

- **Family learning**

Throughout my conversations with the Transition students, it became evident that they considered older family members a key avenue for cultural learning. However, according to these students' narratives, it seems that migration and settlement in Canada

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had had profound effects on family membership, as well as on income-earning, homemaking, and parenting roles. As I shall argue, these changes in family structure and individual roles represent additional challenges to refugee students' cultural continuity in Canada.

Firstly, several students stated that they had lost family members, and particularly siblings. This topic emerged spontaneously while some students and I were discussing bi-cultural identity and migration during a sharing session:

- Rana: Are there any cultural values that you wouldn't like to keep at all?
- Thiri Aung: I think me, I would like to keep all of it - it's like all important for me... But some it's not [laughing]... *some*.
- May Su: All I wanna keep is my older sister. [...] My older sister, I never seen her before.
- Rana [unsuspectingly]: Where is she?
- May Su [ponders]: She... [points to the sky and smiles] Heaven!
- Thiri Aung [explaining]: She passed away...
- Rana: I'm so sorry…
- May Su [smiling]: It's ok.
- Thiri Aung: I think like *every* family - like my brother too, he's a far away. So he passed away too.
- Others: M-hem.
- Grace: I have two brothers who were like, supposed to be older - the oldest - but they're both dead. [...] One died in war, and the other one, [laughing] this crazy fox bite him, and it had like some disease, and he had to get the needles, right? He got the injection, like one, but he was supposed to get more, but he just liked playing soccer, so he went on a trip, left the injection, and then, after one night, he died. It was like 'Agh!!' [frustratedly] (Piety School Sharing session 1, May 21, 2013)

In some cases, a few members of the students' families had been granted refuge in Canada while others had stayed behind; this was usually the case for extended members of the family, such as grandparents. For Zahra, however, her mother, uncle, and siblings had moved to Edmonton, but her father had not. During an interview, she divulged that

her father was either in Ethiopia or a refugee camp in Israel; and although his relatives were trying to bring him over, she did not know when he might be able to join them in Canada (Zahra's interview with the author, May 28, 2013). I also learned that Mukasa and Mary's father regularly travelled back and forth between Canada and Uganda. Meanwhile, Yasmine's mother had been suffering from a life-threatening illness that usually left her bed-ridden or at the hospital.

Secondly, my conversations with the students revealed much about their home situation in Canada, particularly in terms of the amount of home responsibilities and time spent with their parents and older relatives or siblings. This is significant for a number of reasons: not only does it have implications on refugee students' cultural continuity through opportunities for family learning, but as I shall demonstrate, it may also reverse traditional child-parent caregiving roles and fuel intergenerational conflict. For instance, I had once asked Zahra if her family would be able to attend her final ethnomusicology project presentation. She had responded by saying that her mother was usually attending ESL class during the day, and her older sister had a job; with her father outside the country and her uncle having just recently finished training in Edmonton, her sister was the only one able to financially support the family. Zahra had then added that even if she were to ask her mother to attend the school presentation, her mother would decline, citing reasons such as homework, housework, or mere exhaustion (Zahra's interview with the author, May 28, 2013).

Meanwhile, Aye Myat and Leila expressed their frustration with the amount of housework and childcare with which they were entrusted. Aye Myat stated that she had two brothers and four sisters that lived with her and her parents in Edmonton. Apparently, she would usually do a lot of the cleaning, cooking, and dishwashing; while her older brother returned home tired from his job, her other brother was too young for housework. However, Aye Myat giggled mischievously as she informed me that she usually charged her older brother $20 when he wanted her to clean his room, even though it only takes her an hour to finish. On the other hand, Leila sounded rather overwhelmed with the amount of home responsibilities with which she was entrusted; the only girl out of four children, she felt like she and her mother did all the housework just because they were women. She

dismayingly explained: "I feel like I'm doing all the work, because my brother, if he eat, he put the stuff anywhere he want... And his room! Oh my Gosh! I have to clean it..." She said her brother was too big for her to fight or ask him to pay her to clean his room like Aye Myat would. As such, Leila and her mother would end up dividing all the housework equally between them, usually alternating between cleaning the house and washing the dishes. Furthermore, Leila stated that she was often charged with taking care of her two-year-old brother; she would feed him and take him to play outside, but apparently, he would often scream and scratch her face. She attempted to articulate her mixed feelings by saying that babysitting made her feel both happy and angry; she would get angry at her mother for making her take her brother outside to play because she does not like going outside (Aye Myat and Leila's interview with the author, May 4, 2013). On another occasion, Leila communicated the stress she sometimes felt when she messed up while trying to help out at home, citing a time when her baby brother had hit a wall while she was babysitting him, and her parents had gotten very mad at her (Leila's conversation with the author, May 8, 2013).

It is important to note that in some cases, however, migrant youth do not only move into caregiving roles for younger siblings but also for their parents, if only due to the discrepancy between parents' and children's knowledge of English. Although many refugee parents try to attend ESL classes in Edmonton in order to facilitate their social integration and chances of finding suitable employment, their children are always at an advantage in terms of acquiring the new language. For refugee youth tend to receive many more hours of ESL training than their parents do; not only are they placed in the school system as soon as they arrive in Canada, but the government essentially pays their way through high school. As Sofia Cruz explains, the parents suddenly begin asking their children to translate doctors' notes, call about the utility bills, and so forth; these new responsibilities eventually move migrant youth into a caregiving role, which in turn reverses parent-child power relations and contributes to intergenerational conflict (Sofia's interview with the author, July 5, 2012). All of these changes in home responsibilities and parent-child roles can decrease children's respect for their parents and strain intergenerational relationships in this new environment, which in turn may severely

jeopardize the role of family learning as a vehicle towards maintaining refugee children's cultural continuity.

- **Peer learning**

As many scholars have noted, sharing and consuming music with peers plays an important role in children's enculturation into different musical and dance traditions and practices (Marsh 2008; Campbell and Wiggins 2013b). During our conversations, many Transition students expressed their frustration with social alienation and the differences they were finding between children's cultures and playing habits in their home countries and in Canada. Following is an example of a discussion that ensued during one of our sharing sessions:

- Rana: How has your life been since you came to Canada?
- Mukasa: Good.
- [Yodit shook his head slowly from side to side, implying a so-so situation.]
- Zahra: Bad.
- [Surprised laughter from the others]
- Rana: How?
- Zahra: I changed a lot, and it's not the same as my country in Sudan...
  There's no kids going outside and playing together, and you don't know your
  neighbours... And it's like different - it's not the same that I wanted, you
  know. It's a lot of difference, so... it's hard. […]
- Mukasa [raising both arms in exasperation]: Boring! You know, it's boring.
- [Other students exclaim in agreement.]
- Tesfalem: I know, boring! Boring!
- Rana: Boring? How is it boring?
- Zahra: There's not a lot of kids that will play outside with you...
- Ephrem: Yeah.
- Rana: What do they do then?
- Zahra: Like, they just stay at home, and the computer and stuff... They're not
  like a kid - they don't go and play. (Piety School Sharing session 2, May 21,
  2013)

For the lucky few who had Transition classmates of the same linguistic-cultural background, learning and keeping in touch with their cultures through peer interaction was possible. This was the case for the Eritrean boys; as Ella Clarke informed me, Fikru, Tesfalem, and Yodit took every opportunity to sing Tygrinian songs together, such as on the schoolbus during a class fieldtrip. On the other hand, some of the students engaged in semi-formal peer teaching and learning arrangements. For instance, May Su informed me that she and her cousin each know how to play a musical instrument, and they planned to each teach the other what they know (May Su's conversation with the author, April 26, 2013).

Meanwhile, Zahra was pursuing music seriously and had longed dreamed of becoming a professional performer who sings in English, Arabic, as well as Tigrinya: "When I was small - small small - I start singing in like the popular music and stuff. I start singing when I was three years old... till now!" As such, she had been attempting to develop her proficiency in vocal performance through the help of family and community contacts; while her brother's friend had apparently been recording her singing for his band, her cousin had introduced her to a famous Eritrean singer who had performed at a concert in Edmonton:

> "… I got a teacher that can helps me [in Canada]. […] My cousin bring him. [...] My family's friend, he sings and go to a concert and sing on a stage. And a famous guy, he was going to help me […]. Him and a famous guy [were recording my singing]. [...] He's from my culture. He lives in America. But he came here and stuff, and I went and sang with him [last month]. So fun! [...] I don't know where was it, but [...] every Eritrean people and stuff come together, and he sings for them and stuff. It was fun. [...] I didn't sing. I was shy, so... There was a lot of people" (Zahra's interview with the author, May 28, 2013).

However, Zahra's musical aspirations had come up against familial constraints; she explained how her mother had developed strict religious beliefs that now stood in Zahra's way. It seems that back in Eritrea, Zahra had been allowed to sing popular songs; but when her family moved to Sudan and later Canada, her mother had begun to study the

Bible and learned that God does not like (popular) music, which is why Zahra was forced to discontinue her musical activities:

> "… I asked another priest from our church, and then they start saying 'No, God doesn't like music, except Gospel music.' And like my dream is to be famous and help [all] poor people [by giving them all the money I make]. That's I always what I dream. But I can't, so…" (Zahra's interview with the author, May 28, 2013)

In a separate interview, Ella Clarke provided some insight about Zahra's mother and why she had become more religiously strict in recent years. She explained that Zahra's mother had decided to live her life differently after having experienced a number of traumatic experiences, including war, displacement, and the death of a child (Ella's interview with the author, June 6, 2013). Zahra seemingly found herself in a particularly difficult predicament because some of her other family members did not find fault in her pursuing popular music: "… my Dad doesn't care. He just want you to follow your dream. He doesn't want to cut it off. [...] My uncle too, he helps me" (Zahra's interview with the author, May 28, 2013).

- **Individual learning**

My conversations with the Transition students made it abundantly clear that, given the various challenges to their cultural continuity in Edmonton, many of them opted to engage in individual musical practice and learning with the help of musical media and the Internet.

During one of our sharing session discussions, a number of female students explained why they spent time listening to music from their native cultures while in Canada. Aye Myat, Chaw Su, and Thiri Aung stated that the frequent consumption of Karen recorded songs helped them to stay in touch with their native language. Yasmine said that she wished to remember songs from her Assyrian culture, so that when she grew up, she could share this knowledge with her own children. On the other hand, Leila stated that she was taking advantage of how easily accessible the Internet is in Canada: "When I came here, I learn more about music from my culture because like, in my culture, we

don't like have the opportunity to like, use Internet or stuff like that. So when I came here, I learn more, and got like to hear other musicians [from my culture]" (Piety School Sharing session 1, May 14, 2013).

Of course, it is important to mention that the students' musical learning and consumption habits could serve other purposes while still aiding in cultural continuity. For instance, Leila stated that listening to music from her native culture helped her to feel better when she was "emotional" (Piety School Sharing session 1, May 14, 2013). Zahra echoed this sentiment in her attempt to explain why music meant so much to her: "… I *love* music. Because like, I'm always with it. Like, when I'm sad and stuff, when I listen to it, I can calm down. It *helps* me with everything" (Zahra's interview with the author, May 28, 2013). Zahra further disclosed that, because she listened to a lot of love songs, she kept hearing new love songs in her head, which she then tried to write down in words. She said she felt that these love songs were for her brother who died when she was eight years old (Zahra's conversation with the author, May 28, 2013).

2. Cultural difference, bullying, and the pressure to conform

Given the culturally hegemonic structures and programs at most Canadian schools today, cultural difference often represents a barrier to peer interaction and friendships within schools. This is a particularly serious issue for newly arriving migrant students, as they experience social marginalization for a number of reasons. And in junior high school, they quickly learn that peer interactions and eventually, friendships, will only develop if they learn to conform to mainstream Canadian culture and the particularities of their school's culture. In this section, I shall discuss some of the challenges that Piety School's Transition students said they were facing in terms of social integration within the school, particularly with regards to cultural difference, bullying, and the pressure to conform to mainstream Canadian culture.

Despite the aforementioned benefits of having a diverse student population and various peer support mechanisms at Piety School, new refugee students still found it difficult to integrate into the general school environment. For example, when asked about these students' relationships outside the Transition classroom, their teacher Katia Zelinski stated that they were generally a tight-knit group. According to her, they tended to

gravitate towards each other and become close friends because they had a lot in common, including their migration background and academic program. She added that some new Transition students also struggled to build relationships with students in other classes because they lacked confidence and language skills, and they did not find the same kind of support network there (Katia's interview with the author, June 25, 2012).

As Sofia Cruz noted, the issue of cultural difference represents a significant barrier to refugee students' social integration within Canadian schools. She stated that the issue of competing cultures is particularly stressful for junior high-aged refugee youth; for they are already in the process of trying to negotiate their individual identity while navigating adolescence, and this is compounded by the additional burden of "culture," which represents yet another aspect that marks them as different (Sofia's interview with the author, July 5, 2012). Given the immense social pressure to conform in junior high school, refugee youth usually find themselves in a particularly difficult position; for not only do they often stand out as a "visible" and a linguistic minority, but they are also arguably subjected to spatial segregation at school. As I mentioned earlier, these students usually need to be transitioned slowly into mainstream classes. Therefore, they are often placed in special Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies classes, only meeting up with non-migrant students during Option classes (such as Music, Art, Foods and Fashion), Physical Education, and the like. According to Katia, students in the mainstream classes might not really understand why migrant students are secluded in their own class, and this may lead to their stigmatization and treatment as outsiders, which in turn increases their social isolation (Katia's interview with the author, June 25, 2012). In a subsequent interview, the teacher was careful to point out that "[Transition students] aren't necessarily stared at in the hallway, laughing and pointing kinda thing, but they *are* set aside" (Katia's interview with the author, May 28, 2013). As such, it seems that some students struggled because they were "almost ashamed by the label of being in the Transition class;" according to Katia, in the end it depended a lot on the child's personality (Katia's interview with the author, June 25, 2012).

The seriousness of this issue became evident during my sharing session conversations with the students themselves. For instance, Zahra told me that her life before coming to Canada was better and much more fun, mainly because she had friends

whom she trusted (Zahra's interview with the author, May 28, 2013): "Even though if you have a friend, you don't really trust them because they sometimes, they can like - they talk after you. Like, they're now with you, and then […] they go and talk behind your back. It's like, different" (Piety School Sharing session 2, May 21, 2013). Many of the students had something to contribute to the conversation about the bullying they had faced at school, as the following excerpt will show:

- Zahra: … it's hard to leave... to leave your friends, your family...

- Mukasa [interjecting quietly]: And they tease you, they tease you...

- Rana: They tease you? Why do they tease you?

- Tesfalem: Sometimes it's laughing.

- Mukasa [staring at the table and absent-mindedly writing on it with a pencil]: When like you're new at school, they tease you - they don't wanna be with you. They just wanna be cool guys.

- Tesfalem: I know!!

- Rana: Yeah - you know, that happens in all schools.... I know it's harder here that you're in a new country, but unfortunately, kids are mean, so don't take it personally. Definitely don't take it personally.

- Zahra: In my country, no one like...

- Rana: They're nice to each other?

- Zahra: They never laugh at you, even if you didn't talk, like, if you did any mistake of talking, they never laugh at you. They help you with it.[36]

- Tesfalem: But in here, like you know, [mimics a mean-spirited child's laughter] especially grade 7, like they wanna be cool...

- Rana: Which grade are you?

- Tesfalem: Grade 8. [...] When I came here, the first one, I just wanna, like you know... They just laugh at me [points at something in the distance, then stares sadly at the floor and sighs]. So I hate them, you know?

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[36] Here, Zahra was referring to the way mainstream students make fun of migrant students who make mistakes while trying to speak or understand English in class.

- Rana: Ok, so do you think that they are mean to you because... just because you're new, or because of the language, because you look different maybe, or your clothes?

- Zahra: Yeah, like... Sometimes they're mean to you because, like, sometimes they boo you how you look, how your clothes like... Your clothes is different than in here. In your country, we're wearing another clothes and then, if you wore like, if you wear like a boy clothes, in here they think you just wanna be a little bit cooler, like a boy and stuff. But like...

- Rana: So, you used to wear skirts and dresses, right?

- Zahra: Yeah, no [laughing]. I wear a boy clothes [pointing to the baggy black T-shirt she was wearing].

- Rana: Oh ok, ok.

- Zahra: So, it, it, it's… I don't know... And I never know how to be, like I never heard someone bullying me and stuff... But yeah, I start knowing it in here.

- Rana: Ok...

- Zahra: I start knowing a lot of bad things and stuff... (Piety School Sharing session 2, May 21, 2013)

Some of the students also spoke about the pressure to conform to Canadian cultural expectations. Grace and Leila's verbal exchange is particularly representative of the internal struggles that migrant students face in their attempts to "fit in" within mainstream Canadian school culture:

- Rana: How has your life been in Canada since you moved here?

- Grace: Awesome!

- Chaw Su: Different…

- Grace: First time, it's difficult, […] when I came here, I know like some English, but like in my country, when you go to a new school, you make friends easy. But when you come to Canada, […] you have to be match, like, the people - you have to like, fit in, […] and you can't be different 'cause if you're different, then…

- Rana: In what way are you different?

- Grace: Like… ok, my culture is different. How I dress is different. And then when you come to Canada, […] you kinda have to get a new style… […] Before I wore like some stuff of my country, but like, after I lived here like few years, then I just changed like my style. […]

- Leila: When you dress your country clothing, they shouldn't like make fun of you...

- Rana: I agree! I agree...

- Yasmine [not understanding what the big deal is]: If it's like your culture clothes, why do you care?? *You're* not wearing it, *I'm* wearing it - just be like this [laughing]. […]

- Grace: My cousin helped me with my clothes. Like, the first day I went to school, and I came home, and I told my Mom, and my Mom's like: 'Uh, that shouldn't be happening.' She's like: 'It's just your clothes, but not everybody knows what country or how you dress like, they don't study stuff like that, they just like Canadian… […] Most of the kids who like make fun of you are Canadian - they're born here. They don't know like other - they don't know like, what country you're from, and… they're just like - just 'cause you don't like look like them, that's how like they make fun of you - you don't wear the same pants. […]

- Rana: So, how do you feel that you had to change these things, to fit in?

- Grace: I felt better.

- Rana: You felt better?

- Grace: Well, yeah. I felt better… much better. Well… the *only* thing I had to change was my clothes - that's all.

- Rana: Ok. What else?

- Aye Myat: I didn't actually change anything. 'Cause, in my country, we just wear skirts, not jean or stuff. And then I came here, I actually wore skirt a lot at school, or going somewhere…

- Rana: Anyone else? […] just generally, how does it make you feel when you have to change something about yourself because you need to fit in? Like food, maybe the music you listen to… what you believe in maybe?

- Leila: I felt much better, but not really, because… you kinda change everything I have.

- Rana: You feel better that you fit in?

- Leila: But not […] better that you like -

- Grace: Change your culture.

- Leila: … you change.

During our sharing session discussions, I tried not to impose the external category of "racism" on the students' experiences, particularly if they did not necessarily categorize the bullying to which they were exposed as such. For example, I posed the following question after a long discussion about the different ways in which the students had been bullied at school:

- Rana: I know here you have people from all different places in this school - do you think they're mean to you because, like, even just because you're from Africa, or like, you know, your skin colour? Do you think they do that?

- Zahra: No... Not a lot of people in here that they do that… They're not really racist...

- Rana: You know what that means.

- Zahra: Yeah. They're just hard to understand you. (Piety School Sharing session 2, May 21, 2013)

Although the students generally did not attribute the "bullying," "talking behind their backs," and pressure to conform, to outright racism, the perspective of Life Skills coordinator Ella Clarke urges one to problematize and reconsider the wider implications of this issue. Based on her personal experience as a dark skinned Jamaican-Canadian, she spoke of the racism that "ethnic" minorities are subjected to in Canada, and how it is particularly damaging when it sets up barriers to individuals' educational and job opportunities. However, Ella took care to explain that "ethnic" minorities have to understand that "not every time a door gets closed it's racism, and that's really difficult for us because we never know what is and what isn't […]. We don't know if this smiling face means we're welcome or 'Good, I get to screw somebody else around again.' […] Everywhere you go, everything you do, you always have this extra little level that you have to be thinking on because... that's just the way it is" (Ella's interview with the

author, June 29, 2012).

Ella further argued that a silent language of racism belies Canadian society's push for newcomer "integration" (arguably read as "assimilation"); however, she added that, because racism is a culture-specific language, it is often difficult for migrants to decrypt. Based on her professional experience, Ella stated that migrant youth are especially vulnerable to the negative impacts of racist treatment and racial discrimination; for in addition to missing racial slurs because of the language barrier, they do not understand the Canadian "silent language of racism":

> "… they don't really have the tools to read situations correctly [...]. They're not reading danger sometimes, they're not reading racism, they're not reading opportunity, they're not reading it for what it is in this context [...]. So they're actually unaware of a lot of the issues that they actually have because of basically what you call social and language illiteracy."

Looking back at her own immigrant experience in Canada, Ella understands why migrants' barriers to integration may be compounded because they do not recognize the subtle nature of racism within Canadian culture:

> "How do you read this society? How do you read this culture? When people do this to you, what does that mean? [...] How do you recognize racism? […] There's a silent language here, [...] and it's not clothed in obviously racial statements, but it's there. And if you understand it, you know when you see it and you know when you hear it" (Ella's interview with the author, June 29, 2012).

Sofia echoed this argument by citing a research study where people were asked whether they had ever witnessed or perceived racial discrimination in Edmonton. The study found that people who perceived racial discrimination the most were "ethnic" minorities *born* in Canada: "... it's because I think when you're born here, you can pick out more when there's discrimination than when there's not" (Sofia's interview with the author, July 9, 2012). This reinforces Ella's claim that migrant individuals' lack of Canadian social and cultural competency may actually blind them to systemic and individual forms of discrimination and further marginalize them within their new home country.

It is precisely because Ella understood the severe barriers that migrants face as ethnic, linguistic, and cultural minorities in Canada that she tried her best to validate her

students' experiences of discrimination and marginalization. When I first met Ella, she had been combining handpicked lessons from the Lion's Quest curriculum with guest workshops, fieldtrips, and recreational activities, all while serving as an empowering role model with whom the migrant students could connect. Furthermore, in June 2012, she had brought in facilitators to deliver an arts-based workshop series entitled "Raise Our Voice" (ROV). The main goals of this project were: to empower youth to raise their voices against racial discrimination and stereotypes and to enhance intercultural understanding and work towards reducing race-based discrimination and social inequities among racialized groups in Edmonton. As their teachers later told me, the Transition students seemed to benefit tremendously from participating in the ROV project. Ella stated that migrant students usually do not understand stereotyping, racism, and negative attitudes towards immigrants and refugees, so this project had been "eye-opening" for them. Additionally, Ella said that if the youth *do* read the situation in a certain way, they usually do not have adult guidance that may confirm what they felt and help them to deal with the reality of racism:

> "Unless they're with somebody to say: 'What was your experience?... That was what that is...' [...] You have different issues that come up at home, and you don't necessarily have discussions like these [with your parents], so it's nice for them to have somewhere like that project where we did have these discussions" (Ella's interview with the author, June 29, 2012).

Meanwhile, Katia Zelinski stated that the ROV project was particularly helpful to students who were struggling with the stigma of being labeled a "newcomer," because it empowered them to speak out against racism, instead of passively accepting and internalizing negative stereotypes (Katia's interview with the author, June 25, 2012). Ella added that the project allowed the students to ponder important questions such as the following: "What are the tools that you need to fight [racism], without ending up in jail over it, or without succumbing to it? […] How do you stop being a victim and start living?" One important lesson that Ella tried to impart on her students was that they needed to identify sources of power in their community; she stated that in Canada, power comes from education and knowledge, so it is important to understand one's legal rights and responsibilities as well as whom to turn to for help. At the same time, she thought

this project was useful because it made students realize that if they themselves had prejudices about people from other cultures, then they were also part of the problem, and they would have to watch themselves (Ella's interview with the author, June 29, 2012).

Despite the relatively critical nature of Ella's pedagogical approach, Life Skills was still set up as a crime prevention program, so it focused on raising students' awareness about the dangers of substance abuse, while equipping them with safe and effective tools to pursue healthy relationships and deal with bullying and negative emotions without resorting to criminal activity. As such, the program did not provide space for critical reflection about individual and cultural identity or the challenges of navigating two cultures. Furthermore, despite Ella's constant efforts to empower her students and increase their sense of self-worth on an individual level, the program itself was not set up to value or validate their cultural knowledges. In this way, then, it reproduced the "hidden curriculum" of Canadian mainstream culture by focusing on the nationally prevalent "one-way integration" approach to multiculturalism. This issue was exemplified in one of the sharing session discussions I had with the students, when I had asked questions like: "Do you feel like your culture is appreciated generally in Canada?" and "Have you ever experienced a time when someone did not respect you or your culture?" The students responded by talking about the way they believed others view their "minority" cultures. Grace, for instance, stated that most people in Canada do not really care about or respect your culture or from where you are. Leila and Chaw Su agreed, and Thiri Aung added that most people in Canada care only about your personality, not your cultural identity. Interestingly, Leila volunteered the following, in an attempt to provide a more balanced portrayal of the situation:

> "Well, they care a little bit, and they [...] want to teach you something else. So, when like... to play like, something else. Or sometimes you can share the same thing. [...] Like playing the playground, so you're like playing game - Canadian game - [...] if they ask you [...] like, how you play in your culture. […] They just like, they love like... stuff that you do" (Piety School Sharing session 1, May 21, 2013).

3. Cultural identity struggles and intergenerational conflict

While the previous section tackled the challenges that migrant, and particularly refugee, youth often face while attempting to navigate Canadian culture within the junior high school context, this section will discuss the way that students' cultural identity struggles may fuel intergenerational conflict. Migrant youth usually experience a pull between their home culture and mainstream Canadian culture, which leads to stress and confusion. Marco Moustaki describes it as "having to live up to the expectations of their family and their ethnic community, based on where they come from, and also trying to balance that out with what the expectations are in Canadian society. […] trying to mesh these two things together sometimes is difficult for our kids, and a little bit stressful" (Marco's interview with the author, January 31, 2014).

In order to demonstrate the grave impact of competing cultural forces on migrant youth and families, Sofia presented a scenario that is all-too-common in Canada. As I mentioned earlier, because migrant youth often get to learn English faster than their parents do, their new family responsibilities eventually move them into a caregiving role, which in turn reverses parent-child power relations and contributes to intergenerational conflict. According to Sofia, another factor that contributes to such conflict is the cultural shift in parents' and children's rights, roles, and responsibilities:

> "… when you're back home, you know what the youth does, you know what the parent does.... You come back to Canada, then it's like 'Oh, well don't you know your parents can't do that? [...] Youth are allowed to make their own decisions...' So all of a sudden, they're hearing a lot of different messages from other youth, parents are hearing a lot of different messages…" (Sofia's interview with the author, July 5, 2012)

This can lead to youth confusion and fuel intergenerational conflict, as family members try to negotiate which parts of their culture they want to keep or discard in their new home (Sofia's interview with the author, July 5, 2012).

I brought up this issue during the Piety School sharing sessions by asking the following question: "How do you feel when your parents tell you that you should do something in one way, and Canadian culture tells you the opposite?" The Transition

students responded by sharing a variety of experiences and nuanced opinions; however, their overall attitude towards their parents' wishes was one of respect and obedience. For instance, Grace stated that she would feel confused because she would have to choose one way; then, she laughingly added that in actuality, she had to choose her family's way because they were more important to her, and she would not want to disrespect them by going against their wishes. May Su shared an example where her school had asked her to go on a two-week camping trip; she said that she had decided not to go because her mother and grandmother both told her that it would be wrong, and she trusted them more than she trusted the school. Thiri Aung agreed, saying that she trusted her own mother more than the school in such matters because "she's the best mom" (Piety School Sharing session 1, May 21, 2013). Meanwhile, some of the older female students discussed the price that one often had to pay when obeying one's parents. Aye Myat and Leila, for example, both remarked that they would obey their parents' wishes if there was ever a clash of messages between parents and friends (or school); however, they admitted that this sometimes cost them their friendships. Aye Myat recounted how a close friend of hers had begun to smoke and had asked her to take up the habit; when Aye Myat had refused, she had lost her friend (Piety School Sharing session 1, May 22, 2013).

Interestingly, there was less consensus when I brought up this topic during a sharing session with another group of students. As the following excerpt shows, the students expressed divergent views regarding cultural clashes between school and family cultures, and Zahra opened up about her struggle with her mother about musical performance:

- Rana: Ok, so, how do you feel when your parents tell you to do things in one way, and your school tells you to do it in *another* way? 'Cause it's Canadian culture and then *your* culture. […] Do you want an example? Like, let's say your parents tell you 'Oh, you should not... go out after school with your friends, and Canada, and your friends, and everyone tells you 'Oh, we should go out! It's cool!' and whatever. Or even about clothes, or the music you listen to... What happens? What do you feel?
- Mukasa: No, you have to first hear any things and you do what they want you-
- Rana: Who? Your parents?

- Mukasa: Yes.

- Rana: Yeah? Why do you do that?

- Mukasa: So you wanna learn it more, so… you want to *learn* it. So if they say 'Do something,' you do it like you know it - like that.

- Rana: Ok. Good. Yes?

- Zahra: […] you can feel bad that you're not going with - you're not hanging out with your friend - like your mom says 'Stay' and stuff, and then your friend are… want you to go… You can feel bad about that, but like, you have to respect your family, so, you have to listen to them… You can't do anything.

- Rana: Ok. You?

- Mary: The same.

- Rana: The same? Ok.

- [Tesfalem and some others do not understand the question, so I repeat it, then Tesfalem translates it to his Eritrean friends.]

- Zahra [interjecting]: I felt the same way actually about music… I felt really bad about music, because like, when I was in my country, I used to sing a lot and stuff, and then when I came … Like, when I was a baby, I wanted to be a singer when I grow up. But like my mom say like 'You can't be a singer because like, your religion and stuff'… yeah. And then in Canada they're saying like 'It's ok… God likes music.' And so, I'm like, confused about everything - yeah. My mom said God doesn't like music. And then, the other one -

- Rana: And it's something really precious to you, so it's very hard, right?

- Zahra: Yeah. And I can't stop singing or listening to music. It's like, it's really hard.

- Rana [addressing Mary]: Your parents think that about music?

- Mary [nodding]: That God doesn't like music.

- Rana [surprised]: Really?? … But, don't you sing church songs?

- Mary: Yeah, they know church songs, but like, some -

- Rana: Oh, so church songs are fine, but not other music.

- Zahra: Yeah, because it's for God, but like, just the music stuff for people, and for stuff… It's like, it feels so bad to leave your future away, to let it go and give up of everything that you had before you wanted to be, and now, you're just giving up. So it's like, it feels really bad… [laughing] But I don't know how I'm gonna stop.
- Rana: Ok… well, maybe we'll talk later about that, but thank you for sharing.
- [Fikru speaks in Tygrinian, expressing his interest in contributing to the conversation, so I ask someone to translate for him. He says a few adamant sentences in Tygrinya to Zahra, then Tesfalem steps in, seemingly objecting to Fikru's ideas, and they seem to have a verbal argument, with Tesfalem trying to sway Fikru and Fikru fighting back. I ask Zahra to translate because I suspect she will be more impartial than Tesfalem in her interpretation.]
- Zahra: He said first you have to think about what is good, and then you… you can choose something - like when your friends are saying something, and your family are saying something, like he's saying you have to [decide], like, you have to think which one is good.
- Rana: Ok, so *you* think, and *you* choose.
- Zahra: Yeah, yeah…
- Rana: Ok, that's an interesting answer! Uhh… anyone else? Yes.
- Yodit [looking down at the floor]: Bad.
- Rana: It's bad? Ok, it feels bad.
- Yodit: Yeah. Because you have to listen your father, or…
- Mukasa: Respect.
- Rana: So in the end, you have to respect your parents' wishes, right?
- Many students: Yes...
- Tesfalem [in a matter-of-fact tone]: You have to. If you don't… slap!
- [Zahra and Tesfalem laugh, other students ponder this statement or comment in Tygrinya.]
- Zahra [breaking out into laughter]: They do, actually!
- Mukasa [more seriously]: They *do* slap you…

- Yodit: If you're not listening, or… not listening your father and your ma…
  and they… [one hand slapping the other] slap you.
- [Yodit immediately addresses Zahra in Tygrinya, wanting her to translate
  what he's saying.]
- Zahra [translating]: When you don't listen to your family, they feel bad.
- Yodit: Yeah…
- Rana: *They* feel bad… ok. That's very interesting! So, I know it's very hard to
  be in Canada, and to feel like you have two cultures and you're in between -
- Mukasa [interjecting and smiling]: […] if you stay in Uganda, you miss
  Canada. If you go to Canada, you miss Uganda.
- Rana: That's true!
- [Ephrem laughs and nods.]
- Zahra [laughing]: I know!! (Piety School Sharing session 2, May 21, 2013)

B. Liberty School: Unaddressed culture-related issues

In the previous chapter, I discussed the various curricular and extra-curricular
programs and initiatives that Liberty School had set in place in order to provide a
welcoming and culturally inclusive environment for migrant students while facilitating
their social integration. However, as Knight et al. argue: "understanding the challenges
faced by immigrant and refugee youth in education requires an examination of both the
formal and informal structures of education" (Knight et al. 2012, 12-13). Therefore, in
this section, I shall attempt to provide a picture of the culture-related issues that stood out
during my participant-observation within the ELL students' external classroom
environment. I sought to decipher these observations through individual and collective
conversations with the students and their teachers. While my Piety School research
presented cultural difference as a barrier to peer interaction and friendship among migrant
and mainstream students, my Liberty School research alerted me to an equally important
issue - cultural difference as a barrier among migrant students of different linguistic-
cultural backgrounds, particularly with the presence of a single dominant cultural
majority *within* the migrant student population.

1. Cultural-linguistic segregation and marginalization

Marco Moustaki believed that Liberty School's students generally did not see colour, religion, or ethnic background when they interacted with their peers. Since the scope of my research project was limited to the ELL class, it was difficult for me to judge whether this was an accurate portrayal of the school or not, and whether intercultural friendships were possible within mainstream classes because students had been socialized into the homogeneous Anglo-Saxon Canadian culture of which Jane spoke. However, based on my observations of student social circles and interactions within the ELL class in 2014, I can say for certain that the migrant students definitely did see colour, religion, and ethnic background, and furthermore, it formed the basis of barriers to meaningful dialogue and intercultural friendships. For instance, I noticed that the Gujarati students were a very tight-knit group who always sat together and conversed in their native language during class, recess, and after school. Although this group was strictly divided along gender lines, their fathers all belonged to the "economic immigrant" class, and about half of them already knew each other from a small town in Gujarat. Meanwhile, the remaining ELL students who belonged to diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Mexican, Pakistani, Filipino, Afghani, Ehiopian/Somali, Ugandan/Congolese) seemed to maintain loose ties with each other, sometimes out of necessity, perhaps because they had no other choice. Most of their families had arrived in Canada on a refugee or temporary foreign worker visa; given the Canadian government's categorization practices, and in some cases profiling of potential migrant populations, this usually meant that they belonged to an economically disadvantaged social stratum. The field note excerpt below portrays the cultural-linguistic segregation and the apparent lack of social cohesion among ELL students at Liberty School.

As soon as the lunch break bell rings at noon, the ELL students scuttle out of their homeroom classroom, grabbing their lunches from their lockers and eagerly awaiting their turn to heat up their Tupperware in the hallway microwave. I hesitate for a moment, then decide to approach some of the Gujarati girls: "Where do you hang out during recess?" I ask. One of them replies: "Would you like to come with us?" "Sure!" I exclaim, then follow the girls into one of the side hallways.

Eight female ELL students are already seated on the floor, chatting and eating various foods, while some fiddle around with their iPhones. I notice that the girls are sitting in two groups, with about two meters separating them. One group constitutes a guarded Mexican girl, an outspoken Somali girl, and two Filipino sisters; they are eating inexpensive packaged foods (such as microwaveable burritos and minute noodles) and drinking from juice boxes, while occasionally conversing in English. Three Gujarati girls are seated in the other circle, conversing in their native language and sharing appetizing homemade food including rice, curries, and dessert. I say hello to everyone then sit with the Gujarati group, since they had initially invited me to join them.

As I survey the hallway, I spot a shy Gujarati student wearing eyeglasses; she is seated a few feet away from her compatriots. She is eating her lunch solemnly while staring at the floor. I address her, saying: "Come and join us!" But she shakes her head and stays put. I later learn from one of her female friends that she was crying during the lunch break because a classmate was bullying her.

I could see that the students were regarding me with curiosity: a teacher would not sit on the floor with them during lunch break. And although I may pass for an older teenager, I was not a student either… They probably figure it is wise to be cautiously friendly until they know more. I ask one of the girls in my group: "Do you always sit here to eat lunch during the break?" She replies: "We sit here during the first half of the break, then we go to the library to read or the gym to watch the others play badminton."

After about fifteen minutes, the bell rings to signal the end of the first half of recess. A few teachers materialize, urging students not to loiter - all hallways must be cleared during the second half of recess. I follow the Gujarati girls down the main hall. We take two left turns and arrive at the library. A few more students trickle in and head towards the book stacks to select books. Ms. Lewis is supervising the library during recess today. She says hello, and I approach her for a chat. She confirms that students have a few options during recess: they may either go to the library, or sit in the Foods Room; otherwise, they may play sports (dodge ball, basketball, badminton) in the school gym or on the school playground once the weather warms up. Ms. Lewis emphatically explains: "It's important to keep them on the school premises because if they go on the street or to the mall nearby, they'll get involved in gangs or drugs."

As we are speaking, an elderly man with greying hair approaches us, and Ms. Lewis introduces him as Mr. Baker, one of the school's Educational Assistants (or Teachers' Aids). He says he is in charge of working one-on-one with students who find it difficult to focus in the traditional classroom environment, due to learning impediments, mental health issues, and so on. These students may instead go to a specially lit room, where they can blow off steam through physical exercise and other activities. Ms. Lewis and Mr. Baker begin discussing the issues that the new ELL students are facing; apparently, they are in dire need of foundational training in English, but they are not receiving it because the school's funding for such ELL training has been cut this year.

2. Interest in intercultural learning

Throughout my pre-project research, I also discovered that many ELL students did not feel comfortable engaging in intercultural learning or were simply uninterested in other cultures. After spending about two months observing Liberty School classes and events and getting acquainted with students, teachers, and administrators, I decided to conduct four preliminary sharing sessions with the twenty-three[37] ELL students who had initially decided to participate in my ethnomusicology project (March 24 till April 7, 2014). I began by asking them some background questions about the differences between their lives before and after moving to Canada, as well as their musical tastes and practices. I then attempted to gauge their levels of interest in sharing their cultural knowledge with other students and in learning about other cultural traditions and musics. Approximately half of the participants (thirteen out of twenty-three) said they would be interested in sharing their culture and music with people of other cultures, but the facial expressions of many revealed that they were not overly excited about the prospect. The remaining ten students were either not interested in sharing or had reservations about the process; for example, a Somali refugee student called Ameena admitted that she hated public speaking or performing because she found it scary.

When I asked the participants whether they would be interested in learning more about *other* people's cultures and musics, again about half of them (thirteen out of twenty-three) said yes, while the others either said no or did not engage. During one

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[37] Four male Gujarati students later dropped out of the project, which brought the number down to nineteen.

session, no sooner had I posed the question, than Fuad (a Somali refugee student) eagerly began to ask who in the circle had a mobile phone; he apparently wanted to share something about Somalia right away because he would like people to know about his culture. Amjaad then addressed Adesh, asking if he could use his phone first (Liberty School pre-project sharing session 2, March 25, 2014).

During another session, a bubbly twelve-year-old girl who was born in Canada to Pakistani parents seemed very excited about cultures other than her own. She said she would love to learn more about Japan, especially since she already listened to a lot of Japanese songs. Kavita, a studious fourteen-year-old Gujarati girl, chimed in, saying she was really looking forward to join her class on an upcoming field trip to the Japanese Culture Centre in Edmonton. Subsequently, a soft-spoken thirteen-year-old Gujarati girl stated that it is a lot of fun to learn about different cultures' celebrations (Liberty School pre-project sharing session 1, March 24, 2014). My question also triggered the following exchange, which portrayed Ameena's fascination with Bollywood culture:

- Rana: And what about learning about other cultures? Would you like that?
- Isha and Amisha: Yeah!
- Malaya: Not really.
- Ameena (smiling then excitedly gesturing towards Diya, Amisha, and Isha, the Gujarati students): Oooh! I know this song from your culture – Dai dai dum dum daaaai!
- Dalisay: The Dhol Baaje one?
- Ameena: I know! It's awesome!
- Amisha [smiling]: So, we're gonna do the dance on that song [during the talent show].
- Diya: Yeah.
- Ameena [hardly able to contain her enthusiasm]: You should hear it! It's stuck in my brain! (Liberty School pre-project sharing session 3, March 26, 2014)

Despite some students' evident excitement about intercultural learning, the sharing session discussions alerted me to the obstacles that these students perceived to such a process. For instance, although a fourteen-year-old Pakistani girl (Aisha) admitted that she had loved the Chinese dance performance she had seen at the recent Chinese

New Year's celebration, she seemed pretty adamant about not wanting to learn about other cultures. She said that learning about other cultures "is hard" and "I just don't like it," even though she had apparently "never tried it." After hearing this response, one of Aisha's Gujarati friends (Falak) concurred by saying that it was fun to learn about other cultures, but "it's really hard" (Liberty School pre-project sharing session 1, March 24, 2014). Meanwhile, a guarded Filipino student (Malaya) said she was not interested in learning about other cultures because "it's too boring" (Liberty School pre-project sharing session 3, March 26, 2014).

3. Avoiding intercultural dialogue and tiptoeing around race

During my preliminary research at Liberty School, I further began to notice that the issues of racial difference and racism were being dealt with in an indirect and cursory way. Although the school was serious about taking disciplinary action against students engaging in racist behaviour, it did not provide any anti-racism or anti-bias training to its students as a preventive measure. In fact, I would often hear racial slurs or one student calling another racist while I was passing through the school's hallways. Eventually, I came to realize that although the ELL students were aware of the issue of racism, many (if not all) could not tell the difference between words or comments that were outright racist and ones that were not. To them, it seemed that the mere mention of race constituted an instance of racism. For example, during one of the pre-project sharing sessions, I was speaking with five male students: one Pakistani, one Pakistani/Emirati, one Gujarati, one Ugandan/Congolese, and one Ethiopian/Somali. At one point, I asked them what kind of music they liked. When the Gujarati student Adesh said he liked rap, I followed up with a question about his favourite singer. He pondered for a moment then replied: "I don't know… he's like black man..." The other students responded with shocked laughter. Then Fuad, the thirteen-year-old Ethiopian/Somali student who had just expressed his love for American hip hop and rap, shook his head and exclaimed: "That's racist, man!" Adesh unflinchingly replied: "Yeah, I listen to him all the time" (Liberty School pre-project sharing session 2, March 25, 2014).

Throughout my time at Liberty, I quickly learned that Fuad often made such comments. For instance, one day I was sitting next to his desk during class. Suddenly, he put his arm next to mine and asked me: "Why is my skin a different colour [from yours]?" I replied: "That's just the way we are." He replied: "You're racist!" with a mischievous grin on his face.

Since I knew Fuad quite well by then, I knew that he was joking. However, Fuad's frequent race-related comments seemed to demonstrate his hyperconsciousness of racial difference in his new multicultural homeland. His constant attempts at eliciting race-related comments from others may have represented his need to discuss an issue that played an important role in his racialized experience in Canada.

C. Resultant project foci

To summarize, my initial exploratory research alerted me to the two schools' limitations in terms of providing an inclusive environment for migrant students.

Firstly, most migrant students' cultures are not recognized in the provincially mandated Canadian curriculum; and when they *are*, the rigid curricular material and traditional top-down "information delivery" pedagogical styles are incapable of adapting to the subject-positions in each classroom. As much as Piety School and Liberty School teachers tried to connect with migrant students on a personal level, through different support programs and inquiry-based learning, the core approach continued to be an expert-driven banking model of education that used the Alberta-mandated dominant culture curriculum. This often ends up invalidating and alienating students and families that do not subscribe to the school and curriculum's underlying worldview, ideology, and values, while serving to furtively *colonize* migrant students' minds and actions.

Secondly, in an effort to recognize students' non-dominant cultures in an otherwise Anglo-Saxon-dominated schooling experience, many Canadian schools have taken to hosting "multicultural" days and school-wide "cultural" holiday celebrations, where music and dance often figure prominently. However, as Dei and Calliste argue, Canadian education is heavily influenced by *official* multicultural policy, which downplays difference and treats ethnic and cultural groups as monolithic, static entities; this reinforces cultural stereotypes and reproduces social inequities within schools (Dei and Calliste 2000, 21). Therefore, such multicultural initiatives and celebrations risk emphasizing the arguably superficial, tokenistic aspects of different cultures, thus promoting "song-and-dance" tourism multiculturalism (Abu-Laban 2002, 108-109; Reitz and Banerjee 2007). By portraying ethnic and cultural groups as monolithic, static entities, many of these events result in representations that are either superficially celebratory or patronizingly dismissive. Despite the best intentions of schools and teachers, such representations can be harmful;

for they may promote a disempowering deficit framework that is palpable for migrant students, and they may emphasize insurmountable intercultural differences in worldview and lifestyle, thus reinforcing students' and teachers' cultural stereotypes and fortifying their perceptions of impermeable cultural barriers. In turn, this can exacerbate social segregation and alienation and reproduce social inequities within schools.

Thirdly, schools with large migrant populations (such as Liberty School) often try to set up language- and culture-specific arts and recreation programs in the hopes of engaging and empowering students in their own cultures; Edmontonian examples include Somali culture clubs and Bollywood dance clubs. Such programming may in fact provide students with temporary respite from the dominant Anglo-Saxon Canadian environment. However, it fails to critically address the extremely culturally diverse nature of today's Canadian classrooms. Depending on the cultural minority dynamics within the school, such programming may cordon off migrant students' cultural practices and issues as inconsequential to the rest of the school and reinforce the idea that non-dominant (or "minority") cultures are not valued or legitimized by the school, teachers, and classmates of other cultures. It could also serve to reify intercultural divides by inadvertently contributing to the strengthening of in-group/out-group sentiments among members of different migrant student groups, thus alienating and marginalizing students who do not belong to the dominant migrant cultural group(s). Within Liberty's ELL class, this dominant migrant cultural group was Gujarati Indians. Drawing on ideas from critical multiculturalism and antiracism education, I would argue that such initiatives can be detrimental if unaccompanied by more sweeping, decolonizing curricular changes and sustained school-wide antiracism education that acknowledges, critically engages with, and works on transforming the social realities of power, privilege, and racism (Dei 2008; Reitz and Banerjee 2007; Bradley 2008, etc.).

Finally, despite some of the positive aspects of the Life Skills and SACH programs that were being delivered at Piety School and Liberty School respectively, there are many issues with their focus on "crime prevention" for "at-risk" youth. The concept of crime *prevention* itself is arguably on par with racial profiling practices, particularly with migrant junior high students who have never personally committed a crime. As Knight et al. state, many scholars critique the prevalent "youth-at-risk" concept and the accompanying discourse of crime prevention.

For instance, some of them argue that this concept has a tendency to reduce the understanding of risk to economic concerns, largely in terms of the ability of youth to successfully transition from school to the job market; according to them, this glosses over the equally important role of social factors. On the other hand, others find the concept quite problematic because it focuses blame on young people for their "deficiencies and aberrant behaviours" instead of acknowledging the serious societal and systemic inadequacies that create risk. Scholars in this camp criticize the "youth-at-risk" concept because they believe its partisan nature isolates and labels youth, which in turn increases their socio-economic marginalization. Meanwhile, it is evident from participatory action research projects such as Knight et al.'s that "immigrant and refugee youth [in Alberta] are not only failing to receive needed services such as adequate ESL training and health care but also are often placed in educational institutions that are woefully unprepared for diversity" (Knight et al. 2012, 42-43). As such, Knight et al. echo te Riele's argument that the first step towards addressing many of the issues faced by immigrant and refugee youth involves shifting the way we *understand* risk to youth. This includes the development of a "new vocabulary" whereby the concept of "youth-at-risk" is replaced with that of "marginalized youth." The authors argue that, in order to find enduring solutions, we must begin to shift the blame from immigrant and refugee youth to systemic issues while employing an interdisciplinary approach that acknowledges and studies the interconnections amongst a variety of psychological, political, social, and economic factors that produce marginalization (Knight et al. 2012, 43).

What is evident here is that Piety School and Liberty School's attempts at cultural inclusion and social integration of new migrant students could only go so far if the schools did not face and actively engage with the issues of cultural difference, racial discrimination, and the colonizing impacts of the "hidden curriculum." For on the one hand, the right to culturally relevant education has long been recognized as a basic right for children worldwide[38] (Kirova 2012, 23). Unfortunately, as Kirova argues, the linguistic and cultural capital of minority children and their families has been systematically invalidated (Kirova 2012,

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[38] In fact, Article 29 (c) in the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child states that "education should be directed at the development of respect for the child's parents, cultural identity, language, and values; for the national values of the country in which the child is living and for the country of origin; and for civilizations different from his or her own" (Kirova 2012, 23).

24). This issue is particularly salient in immigrant-receiving countries such as Canada, where the emergence of this so-called "deficit framework" within schools progressively disengages minority students from the learning process and eventually leads them to drop out of school (Kirova 2012, 21). As the coordinator of the EPSB SACH initiative and a second-generation immigrant herself, Lina Dirksen expressed concern over the Anglo-Saxon Canadian ethnocentricity of most classrooms in Edmonton.[39] She believed that Canadian schools needed to do a better job of honouring migrant students' cultural beliefs and practices instead of only focusing on integrating them into the hegemonic Anglo-Saxon Canadian way of life (Lina's interview with the author, March 26, 2013). On the other hand, Knight et al. state that what is needed in Albertan schools is antiracism programs that recognize "the active agency and resilience of the immigrants and refugees themselves" (Knight et al. 2012, 47). Such programs would move away from the youth-at-risk focus on young people's so-called deficiencies, instead highlighting a more critical, empowering, and constructive type of engagement between students and their schools.

Building upon the views of students, teachers, administrators, and settlement practitioners, this section shall present the project foci that were chosen for the second and third cycles of praxis.

1. Piety School

As I demonstrated in the previous section, Piety School's refugee students appeared to be facing three major culture-related issues as they attempted to navigate their multiple interconnected social worlds in Edmonton: challenges to cultural learning and continuity, bullying and the pressure to conform at school, and reversed child-parent dynamics. Taken together, these three factors intensified the pull between the students' home culture and mainstream Canadian culture, increasing the potential for identity

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[39] Lina stated that they were usually filled with Valentine's hearts, Thanksgiving-themed decorations, and the like, but there was rarely any evidence that half the class might be from ethnocultural groups that celebrate other kinds of holidays. According to her, we need to be asking: "'What is *your* harvest celebration?' so that we can honour what it is that you celebrate in your community of origin. And then you can make a link, you know?" Lina recounted the story of a young woman who used to volunteer with migrant students in the Schools as Hubs program. Having moved to Canada as a child, the woman told her: "… for ten years I didn't have any idea what turkeys were about […]. And it was like we were supposed to get it! There I was, from South America, and somehow I was supposed to embrace the turkey at Thanksgiving. And I didn't even know what they were talking about..." (Lina's interview with the author, March 26, 2013)

struggle and intergenerational conflict. And in addition to the culturally alienating nature of the school curriculum, Piety School did not usually provide students with any opportunities for intercultural learning and discussion (Ella's conversation with the author, June 29, 2012), but rather glossed over issues of competing cultures, bullying of newcomers, and the intense pressure to conform. Furthermore, despite the relatively critical nature of Ella's pedagogical approach, Life Skills represented a crime prevention program; it focused mainly on raising students' awareness about the dangers of substance abuse, while equipping them with safe, effective tools to pursue healthy relationships and deal with bullying, racism, and negative emotions without resorting to violence or criminal activity. As such, the program did not provide space for critical reflection or discussion about individual and cultural identity or the complexities of navigating two cultures while developing and maintaining healthy family and peer relationships. At the same time, despite Ella's constant efforts to empower her students on an individual level, Life Skills itself was not set up to value or validate their cultural knowledges. In this way, then, the program arguably reproduced the "hidden curriculum" of Canadian mainstream culture that disempowers students that do not subscribe to the dominant Anglo-Saxon cultural paradigm. I would also argue that generally speaking, challenges to cultural continuity were much more severe among the refugee students at Piety School (as opposed to the immigrant students at Liberty School) because of their higher levels of poverty, their complex family and migration histories, and their less established ethno-cultural communities in Edmonton.

Throughout my research and consultations with multiple stakeholders, it became evident that there was a need to address cultural identity in a critical, sensitive, and empowering manner that engaged with - and perhaps attempted to reconcile - the contradictions of family and school life. Speaking from her own experience as an immigrant, Ella explained why she believed that knowing one's own "cultural" background is key to engaging productively with cultural diversity in Canada: "[As a migrant,] you have to know who you are. […] The more you know and appreciate what you are and what you're about, the more self-respect you have, and the easier it is for you to address people from other cultures. […] You must know your [cultural] history to be able to go out there and represent yourself" (Ella's interview with the author, June 29,

2012). Furthermore, the key role of intergenerational bonds has been recognized in studies of migrant youth. As Knight et al. note: "In Carranza's (2007) study of Salvadorian female youth' [sic] settlement and integration experiences in Canada, she found that strong intra-family / generational bonds and cultural self-awareness gave them a sense-of-belonging and a defense against patterns of racism in Canada" (Knight et al. 2012, 47). This is why my ethnomusicology project at Piety School took on a dual family- and peer-based cultural empowerment focus.

2. Liberty School

Between January and mid-April 2014, I attended as many ELL classes, after-school programs, and events as possible, partly to acquaint myself with Liberty School's culture, procedures, and ELL curriculum, and partly to begin formulating relationships with students and staff members. When I initially entered the school environment, I was under the impression that I would be delivering an ethnomusicology curriculum similar to the cultural empowerment one I had implemented at Piety School. After all, the immigrant-serving organization that had referred me to Liberty School had told me that my curriculum would be very beneficial to the migrant students at that school, and this was confirmed during my consultations with the school's Vice Principal Marco and the ELL teacher Jane. Jane in particular thought that such a project would be valuable for her students because they particularly lacked self-confidence outside the ELL classroom: "[They] often try to hide and […] be that wallpaper child that sort of gets looked past instead of engaging with others, and they don't feel comfortable sometimes with the other kids in their class, and they don't know how to [position themselves]" (Jane's interview with the author, May 28, 2013). The teacher also thought that her students would benefit from learning effective intercultural dialogue skills.

Throughout my ethnographic research with the ELL students, however, it quickly became evident that these migrant youth were grappling with the social ramifications of living in a hyper-diverse nation. Teaching migrant students how to navigate mainstream Canadian culture - which Jane referred to as "Canadian cultural competency" - is obviously extremely important. For it provides migrants with key tactical information that will help them exercise social intelligence on the most basic of levels. Furthermore, as I have demonstrated, coupling Canadian cultural competency training with occasional

celebrations of cultural diversity may have increased some ELL students' fascination with visible elements of other cultures (such as food, music, clothing, dance…). However, I argue that such initiatives are insufficient, and perhaps even harmful. For on the one hand, they unwittingly communicate a strict hierarchy (and a resultant deficit framework), where Anglo-Saxon Canadian culture dominates over all other cultures, thus requiring "one-way integration." This reinforces Sofia's argument that migrant students generally receive the following subtle message: "How *Canadian* can you become?" (Sofia's interview with the author, July 9, 2012) On the other hand, it is particularly ineffective when teachers portray Canadian multiculturalism to their migrant students as "getting along" with others who are different because they "have to" (Jane's interview with the author, May 28, 2013). Not only does this approach fail to provide students with any practical guidelines on how to actually do that, but it also teaches them to "tolerate" others from a distance, without promoting the value of intercultural understanding and reciprocal respect and appreciation.

For most of the ELL students, the topics of culture and race were sensitive and confusing, so it seemed less daunting for them to stick with their own cultural-linguistic groups or avoid uncomfortable situations where they may mistakenly commit a cultural faux pas or utter a racial slur. Although such avoidance was understandable, it seemed to have led to cultural-linguistic segregation among many of the ELL students. And because the Gujarati Indians represented a majority in this class, the students from other cultures seemed to be effectively marginalized, which in turn left them with no choice but to gravitate towards each other (and me!). While the Gujaratis sought refuge in ethno-cultural enclaves, students of other cultures often suppressed key elements of their identities in order to fit into multicultural minority social circles. As I mentioned earlier, school staff members stated that migrant students usually settled into the school routine quickly *because* they found schoolmates from their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Undoubtedly, this process is absolutely necessary for any migrant student, particularly due to the sometimes crippling language barrier. However, I would argue that by leaving migrant students in their social comfort zones at all times, while teaching them to superficially integrate (read as "assimilate") into mainstream Canadian society, Liberty School was unwittingly contributing to the persistence of an inequitable majority/minority cultural dynamic that

encouraged the development of communal sentiments among the former and marginalized the latter.

What struck me most about this setting was the way in which migrant students who were personally subjected to discrimination and exclusion in mainstream classes were - although inadvertently - effectively marginalizing the cultural minorities within their own "safe haven" of an ELL class. The point here is that *everyone* is capable of contributing to cultural/racial inequity and racism. But this is more likely to take place in the absence of anti-racism, or more broadly, anti-bias, training. Such training should be a key priority for Canadian schools because, as Knight et al. argue, schools may "act as arenas of acculturation where immigrant and refugee youth adapt to societal norms and build lifelong inter-community social bonds. […] schools also represent one of the few spaces in Canadian society where our pluralistic values, our commitment to a multicultural society, can be passed on to our young people" (Knight et al. 2012, 12).

In the case of Liberty School, not only were these issues left discursively unaddressed, but the issue of cultural hierarchy within the ELL class itself was eclipsed by the teachers' concern for ELL students' marginalization within mainstream classes. Here I am reminded of something Ella Clarke said during one of our conversations: it is not only "white" people, but people of any ethnicity or background that may partake in racist language or behaviour (Ella's conversation with the author, May 9, 2013). This view also emerged as she reflected upon the outcomes of the "Raise Our Voice" project within which her Transition students participated a year earlier. She had claimed that in addition to empowering the migrant students to raise their voices against stereotyping and racism towards newcomers, it made them realize that they could also be part of the problem if they themselves have prejudices about people from other cultures (Ella's interview with the author, June 29, 2012). This is why I eventually elected to change the focus of my Liberty School ethnomusicology project from family- and peer-based cultural empowerment to peer-based intercultural dialogue and learning, with a strong focus on anti-bias training.

Chapter 6: The Second Cycle of Praxis: "Music from my Culture"

"Together" (a poem by Leila)
Together we can change the world
We play together
We share our secrets together
We learn together
We go together
We hold our hands together
We help together

This chapter ethnographically documents the "Music from my Culture" project by elucidating the pedagogical choices that Ella and I made and comparing different students' engagement with and reactions to various aspects (or components) of the project. Keeping in mind that the outcomes of such projects are difficult to quantify, the goal here is not to demonstrate whether the project "worked" or not. Rather, the chapter aims to glean insights about the various *ways* in which ethnomusicological and performative methods may impact different students within a particular classroom environment. Therefore, it will discuss the project's major components by providing a rationale for using each element, illustrating said element through ethnographic examples, and portraying its divergent effects on different students based on various cycles of evaluation.

In fact, Ella and I ensured that evaluation through student feedback was built into various stages of the project. For instance, we had student language groups collectively evaluate each major project phase by responding to three open-ended questions: a) What did you like about this activity? b) What did you not like about this activity? c) What did you learn from this activity? We also devoted a substantial part of the post-project sharing sessions to discussing students' opinions about various components of the project. This approach allowed the students and teachers to gain insight into its effectiveness as well as begin to formulate hypotheses about the ways in which specific elements operated, individually or in tandem, in order to generate certain outcomes.

Notably, this emphasis on constant reflection and evaluation further communicated the importance of student feedback to the success of the process, particularly as students realized the important role they were playing in shaping the project.

Ella and I had learned a great deal from implementing the wedding project in 2012; therefore, many of our subsequent decisions were based on our analysis of student feedback about that first project. For example, the family element that had begun as a logistical compromise during the first cycle actually morphed into a central component of the empowerment process during the second cycle. Concurrently, the 2013 project included a major shift from final presentation posters to performances. Furthermore, we decided to change the focal theme of the 2013 project from "traditional" wedding traditions to music. The "Music from my Culture" project sought to increase students' critical understanding of bi-cultural identity in the context of migration through research on musical tastes and practices within their own families. This represented an effort to first move beyond the arguably reified categories that might be associated with "traditional" wedding practices, and second help the students to ponder the various roles that music may play in their own lives as migrants.

This direct focus on music within the migration experience also sought to build upon three foundational workshops that Ella had provided to the Transition class earlier that schoolyear. During the first workshop, a local police officer with Rwandan/Kenyan background had visited the class and spoken with the students about the key issues that they, as migrants, should allegedly know with regards to dealing with the police in Edmonton. During the second workshop, the students had participated in a brainstorming activity, where they wrote down all the words that came to mind when they thought about leaving their homes, migrating to Canada, and living in Edmonton. Ella had also screened excerpts from a documentary film called "Twelve," which explored diverse individuals' migrant experiences in Canada, before leading discussion on the topic with her students. Finally, Ella had invited her own daughter to lead a poetry-writing workshop around the theme of migration, while utilizing the compiled list of migration-related words that were brainstormed earlier. A poet herself, Ella's daughter had taught the students about the value of writing poetry when one is dealing with difficult emotions, particularly as an alternative to destructive behavior. Ella proudly proclaimed that she was able to cover all

this important material without ever asking the students to "tell her their [personal] story." The importance of protecting refugee students' privacy and not pressuring them into expressing, or even remembering, traumatic past experiences (unless they wanted to) was an issue that most adult stakeholders cited during my consultations with them. In fact, I often found myself grappling with this issue and trying to create a delicate balance between respecting students' privacy and holding relevant in-class discussions about migration and cultural identity.

A. Reciprocal intercultural learning

One of the first collective activities we conducted with the Transition students represented an exercise in reciprocity. During the first cycle of praxis, we had introduced the students to the ethnomusicological interview process by essentially role-playing it with the participation of student and teacher volunteers. Ella and Katia had taken turns at being the interviewee and speaking about weddings in their native and diasporic cultures. This had allowed the whole class to witness a process of learning about various "traditional" elements of Jamaican and Ukrainian weddings, respectively. It had also helped them prepare to conduct their own ethnomusicological interviews with their parents.

I was planning on again utilizing this apparently effective method of modeling the interview process in 2013, specifically by inviting a young, amateur musician from the Edmonton community to recount the role of music during her immigration experience to Canada. However, it seems that Ella had gained some additional insights into the power of this strategy. Apparently, she had enjoyed sharing her native culture's wedding traditions with her students so much that she had decided to incorporate this intercultural knowledge sharing practice into her teaching the following year. This was significant because the students did not usually have any opportunities to explore their classmates' or teachers' cultural backgrounds within the classroom (Ella's interview with the author, June 29, 2012). In particular, Ella had begun to periodically share songs and children's games from her culture and encourage the students to do the same with her.

Having personally experienced the power of this intercultural learning practice, and recognizing that, as a researcher, I needed to begin to establish trust with the students within the temporal and access-related constraints set forth by the School Board, Ella

urged me to assume the role of interviewee myself. She and I then set aside two class sessions (April 17 and 18, 2013) where I openly shared my own migration story and the role of music in my life, while simultaneously modeling the ethnomusicological interview process. This intentionally dialogic process also served as an important foundational exercise in that it helped the students to negotiate and practice a common English vocabulary for speaking about music, migration, identity, cultural continuity, and social ties. In what follows, I shall provide extensive excerpts from this exercise in order to ethnographically demonstrate how the process unfolded:

- Rana: ... first I'm gonna start with a song called *Nassam alayna el hawa*. Do you know it? [addressing Yasmine, an Assyrian Iraqi student who had spent many years in Syria]

- Yasmine: Aha.

- Rana: Ok, so the person who sings it is called Fairouz, and she's *very* famous where I come from - probably in the whole Arab world. [...] I don't have any music with me, so I'm just gonna sing. [laughing nervously]

- Ella: Ok, go ahead.

I sang about half of Fairouz's *Nassam alayna el hawa* (roughly translated as *The wind gently blew upon us*), tapping my foot on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and fourth beat. I could see that most of the students had broad smiles on their faces while I was singing. Eventually, the students began clapping along with the beat, and then burst into applause when I signaled the end of my performance.

- Rana [recognizing that there were a few Arabic-speaking students in the class]: So... who understood the words? [smiling, then addressing Yasmine who had raised her hand] You have something to say?

- Yasmine: I have a question.

- Rana: Yes, you have a question - great!

- Yasmine Why did you pick the song?

- Rana: I picked this song because it's about immigration... And it didn't mean a lot to me when I was back in Lebanon, but when I came here, I learned it when I was with the group that plays music at the university - okay, so Arabic music? That's what they play. And it talks about... Fairouz is talking to the wind in the

valley, and she's telling it: 'I miss my country, my homeland... Why don't you take me back to my homeland?' And then, she says: 'I'm scared that I will grow up in this new land where my country will not know me anymore... Take me back.'

- A student: Oh...
- Rana: So, I chose it because I think now, I actually understand what it means. When you're back home, maybe you don't... you don't really give it much thought - it's not one of the problems you're facing. So, any other questions?
- [There was absolute silence within the class… Then Tesfalem spoke.]
- Tesfalem: You were good.
- Rana [flattered]: Well, thank you! Umm... anything else you would like to ask about my music, my culture? […]
- Yasmine: When did you come to Canada?
- Rana: I came to Canada six years ago. I came alone... So I was twenty-one, and I had lived in Lebanon all my life, with my family, and I didn't know anything else. And then, when I finished my Bachelor degree [...], after a month, there was a war in Lebanon. And I was hoping that, you know, I would have a future in Lebanon, but I just didn't have any hope, because... my parents went through fifteen years civil war, and I saw part of it too when I was young. And things just weren't changing, and I wanted a better life for myself. And my parents supported me, they wanted that for me as well - they felt like they had given Lebanon a chance, but they didn't want the same thing to happen to me... you know?

The following day, we picked up where we had left off:
- Tesfalem: Did your parents lose hope when you [moved] here?
- Ella: What do you mean by that - lose hope?
- Rana: Yeah, can you explain?
- Tesfalem: Well, yesterday you said that you lose hope because, like, there's war... Did your parents too?
- Rana: Did they lose hope... Yeah, I guess... Ok, so, there was a civil war between 1975 and 1990, okay? […] [Then the war in Lebanon] was over, but at

the same time, things are always happening - there's always people getting killed, and bombs... Like, there was a war in 2006 and all of that. So, it's just... the country...

- Tesfalem: Wasn't safe.
- Rana: It wasn't safe - exactly. So my parents […] were already like forty years old by then, and most of their life had been in war... you know? So that's why when another war came in 2006, they decided... you know, 'Just go!' They told me and my sister to go and make a life for ourselves and go to university in Canada... And my sister went to America - she went to university there. And they were scared for us, very scared, you know? And also, we were girls on our own - it's different sometimes, you know?
- Grace: Yeah, yeah.
- Rana: But at the same time, they were just like, fed up - they were done! […] And we still love our country very much - that's not what I'm saying. But it's hard there, you know?? And it's scary... So of course it's better here for us.

Later on, we returned to talking about music:

- Zahra: What does music mean to you?
- Rana: Hmm... that's a good question - a difficult one. So I've had a long relationship with music, since I was very young. I used to study piano since I was eight, for like ten years. And my teacher taught me European piano music. And that was great, and I really loved it [...]. But then when I was about your age, I started to think, you know, I want to listen to popular music! That's what everyone was listening to, and I liked that kind of music, so I listened to American pop and stuff like that. And then I started writing my own songs, played some guitar, and I wrote about my problems as a teenager. […] If you were to ask me when I used to listen to music from my culture, I [think] the only time that I actually listened […] was when I went to the village in the mountains in Lebanon where my Dad is from. So [...] my Mom is from the capital city, and my Dad is from the village in the mountains. And it makes me feel like they're from different cultures - although they're both from Lebanon - but it was always weird because like my Mom would listen to the Beatles - you

know, like American popular music and all of that - and my Dad, he would listen to some of the old traditions - the musical traditions from the village that have been around for hundreds of years. And my Mom wouldn't understand that. […] I grew up thinking that, because as I told you, my school also was American, and they didn't make us appreciate our culture a lot... So my Dad grew up going to the village. These were the happiest days of his life - playing with his friends in the village, and hunting and all of that. So every time he would take us, on the weekend or in the summer, to the village, when we're driving in the car, we'd put on music. And that's the only time I remember hearing music that's actually from Lebanon. So, Fairouz, someone like Sabah maybe... I have videos I can show you later [...]. And I didn't really appreciate it, but just because you listen to it a lot, it becomes part of you, and then when you hear it, you remember the good times of being with your family and all of that. [...] And then, when I came to Canada and I finally started to appreciate my own culture as I told you yesterday, I started to talk to my Dad about this music. And he was so happy because before we didn't really talk a lot - we didn't have a lot in common. And he was very happy that he saw I valued his culture. And I want to tell you that, you know, that really helps you become closer to your family, when you start sharing these traditions. Any questions?

- Grace: Why did you pick the music from your Dad's side? [...] Like, why did you like it, or...
- Rana: Well, as I said yesterday, I *didn't* like it when I was young. I started liking it when I came to Canada!
- Grace: Really??
- Rana: Mhem! I was twenty-one, imagine!
- A student: Oh my God.
- Rana: Yes! And really, when you come to Canada, you immigrate, that's when you start missing your culture and... you know, you feel like you don't really belong here, you're still new, you're starting - you're trying to fit in... And sometimes when you go back home, you also feel like, you know, 'I'm not *really* Lebanese anymore - I don't live here... If a bomb goes off, I don't worry that I'm

gonna die. You know, like it's different... It's weird because you feel like you're not there anymore, you're not from there, you're not *really* from here. And it's an in-between, you know? And it's hard! You know, and I think that's why also - that's where music helps you, because when you're having hard times, and when you're angry or sad or whatever, you can listen to music and it can remind you of your family, feel like you're back with them. It can remind you of your being a child, the good times you had... […]

- Thiri Aung: Can you sing something for us?
- Rana: I'm gonna show you something better, a video of real musicians.

I played an excerpt of Um Kulthum's *Inta Omri* (Arabic for *You Are My Life*) performance, fast forwarded to the "chorus" (arguably the best part), and explained how important she was in Egypt and the Arab world. Then I told them that this kind of music is referred to as *tarab*. Some students started repeating the word. I also told the students that when I was talking to my Dad a few days earlier, he had told me how some of his relatives in the village would sing traditional genres like *zajal, mijana, 'ataaba.*

- A student: Can you sing one for us?
- Rana: I don't know them, but I have some video - they're hard!
- Yasmine: Yeah, it's really hard…
- [A student asked a question that was inaudible to me.]
- Rana: Question?
- Yasmine: She's asking what's *'ataaba* mean. […] There's one I know… A song I know.
- Rana: Can you sing it?
- Yasmine: No… I don't know how to sing it - but I forgot. I'm gonna find out.
- Rana: Ok, when you interview your parents, if they know it, they can teach it to you, or they can sing it for you, and… that would be very precious.
- Yasmine: Ok…
- Rana: And that's one of the things we want to learn from our parents.

I proceeded to play a video of a *zajal*[40] sung by Wadih el Safi who was also playing *oud*. This seemed to remind Yasmine of a *zajal* by Wadih el Safi and Najwa Karam. So, we

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[40] *Zajal* is a rural Lebanese call-and-response genre of song.

decided to play this example on the classroom projector once we had located a video clip of the song on YouTube. I then explained to the students when it would be culturally "proper" to clap along within such a song, and they instinctively began to clap along with the people in the video with the start of the second response cycle.

- Rana: Ok, so can someone tell me what was going on here?
- A student: They were singing.
- Rana: Ok, but like why was one person singing and the other saying…
- A student: It's like a comment.
- Rana: A comment? Ok. That's a good one. So sometimes they call it call-and-response […]. A virtuoso and a group of people responding… Something called 'eweeha.
- Yasmine [laughing]: Yeah!
- Thiri Aung [repeating the Arabic word in order to learn the difficult pronunciation]: 'Eweeha. 'Eweeha…
- Rana: Does anyone know what that is?
- Yasmine: That's when someone get married they do it.
- Rana: […] when I was young, in the village, a neighbour of ours got married [and I witnessed the 'eweeha].

I tried to describe this vocal practice to the students, then Ella stated that Nigerians and Ghanaians have the same kind of practice. She asked the students if they knew about griots, because she thought they engaged in a similar practice - she said they are like oral history books. Yasmine then brought up a Syrian wedding song tradition that I was not aware of; that got me talking about *zaffeh*. Yasmine also made the connection between the *zaffeh* drum and the *dabke* drum, and I started talking about the *mizmar* and the "*sayf* and *tiress*" (Arabic for "sword and shield") used during traditional wedding dances in that region.

- Yasmine [jumping in]: *Ma hiyyah haydel 'araada.* [This was the first time she had ever spoken to me in Arabic, and it was in front of the whole class! Perhaps it was a slip of the tongue because she got so excited about making a connection with someone from a similar culture at school.]

- Rana: My Dad told me that villagers didn't used to hire professional *zaffeh* dancers - your family and friends would do it for you. All these traditions made these communities closer.

I ended the this session as such:

- Rana: What we did yesterday and today, this is what we call an interview. […] Usually you interview someone who has a lot of *knowledge*, you know, they *know* a lot of things. […] When you ask your parents, they will know a lot of things about their culture. And you will interview them, ask them these questions, and learn from them. And then you will come back and tell us what you learned and share with the whole class so we can learn from you, because you are also experts… You know what an expert is?
- Grace: Yes.
- Rana [laughing]: Other than Grace.
- Ms. Zelinski: We do! It's one of our [vocabulary] words this week.
- Another student: Oh, yeah!
- Tesfalem: Expert is like - you know- he good at anything.
- Ms. Zelinski: Someone who's very good at something, or…? Leila, tell Rana the other part of the definition.
- Leila: Knows a lot of things.
- Rana: Exactly. So, in this case, your parents will be experts because they know a lot of things, right?

Ella had advised me to share my music and migration experiences with the students at an early stage of the "Music from my Culture" project. She believed that such an exercise would represent a vital stepping stone for two reasons: first, it would give the students a chance to practice engaging in verbal intercultural learning while listening to and inquiring about other people's personal experiences; and second, it would allow me to begin to establish a connection with them, as a fellow migrant and human being. However, engaging in this exercise further revealed the potential of teacher-student reciprocity during intercultural learning, particularly in terms of equalizing power relations, increasing the level of trust within the classroom environment as a whole, and contributing to the development of a culture of respect for cultural difference during

intercultural learning. During a post-project interview, Ella spoke about the effectiveness of this pedagogical tool:

"I think [a reciprocal relationship between the teacher and the students] is crucial - I think it's absolutely essential, because I think: number one, you're patterning what you want them to do, which is always the best way to go about things with kids; number two, [...] when you go up there to share, they can see that you're nervous, they can see that you're shy, so then they go 'Ok, [...] so if I feel nervous and shy, it's okay 'cause she does too, and she's a teacher. [...] So you kinda help them through that too. But also, *you* take the risk first, that you're asking them to take. *You* go up there, and you share with them that thing that is so valuable to you, and you lay yourself bare, because they *could*'ve laughed in your face - like you *really* take the risk. And if you can take the risk and model that for them, then *they* will take the risk - it's the same like when I taught them my games, I took the risk. They reacted a certain way, and I said 'You know what? The way you reacted, it hurt me.' I *told* them! I said 'I was very hurt. I felt terrible.' And then they realized that I *had* taken a risk, that that's what that's really about, so they [...] have a better understanding and a deeper understanding of what that is all about, you know? Which again, why in the end it's so *empowering*. [...] And look how well they opened up - I mean, some of them just met you [...] But I think they really opened up to you *so* quickly [throughout the project], you know?" (Ella's interview with the author, June 6, 2013)

B. Family interviews

After we had established a common vocabulary and explored some of the connections between music and migration in class, Ella and I helped the students prepare to interview their parents, or alternatively, their older family members. The aim here was for students to engage in a productive conversation with their family members about the role of musical and cultural practices in their homelands and in Canada.

Ella and I spent several class sessions preparing the students for these family interviews. For instance, we helped them prepare interview questions that built on the questions that they had spontaneously asked me about my own experiences with music, migration, and identity. These questions mainly fell within the following thematic

categories: music from the interviewee's culture(s), the interviewee's favourite music, the role of music in their lives, and the relationship between music, cultural values, and cultural continuity during their process of migration. Following are examples of these interview questions:

1. What kind of music do people play in your culture?

2. (a) What is your favourite song?

   (b) Can you teach me to sing it?

   (c) What does it mean to you?

3. (a) Do you listen to music from your culture in Canada?

   (b) When and where? *((doing housework, dancing at special events, church, other…))*

4. (a) Which cultural values would you like me to learn?

   (b) Why?

5. (a) Which cultural traditions do you miss the most when you're in Canada?

   (b) Tell me more about that.

6. (a) Do you think it is important for families to sing or listen to music together?

   (b) Why?

We also set aside class time for students to help each other learn how to use a basic tape recorder so that they can record the family interview on their own. This was followed by a few role-playing exercises, where student volunteers were paired with teachers or other adults in order to practice using the tape recorder while asking some of the questions they had prepared. Each student subsequently borrowed a tape recorder and set out to interview an older family member at their home. Once the interviews were done, a number of teachers and teachers' aids worked individually with the students in order to transcribe, paraphrase, and in some cases translate into English the contents of each interview.

The family interview component led to the generation of some valuable insights, particularly regarding the impact of sharing musico-cultural knowledge between migrant students and their parents, in spite of (or perhaps *because*) the interview was required as "homework for school."

Many of the students stated that they had enjoyed learning about their musical and cultural practices from their parents. For instance, Aye Myat said that she had liked interviewing her mother, because she had gotten to learn about Karen musical instruments that she did not know before. She later added that it had felt good to hear about her culture from her mother, and she would like to engage in more sharing in the future, particularly since her mother does not usually talk about music with her (Piety School Sharing session 1, May 14 and 22, 2013). Thiri Aung stated that she had liked learning more about her culture and the instruments that were played on special occasions; she had also appreciated her mother singing "one of the old songs" for her (Thiri Aung's post-interview activity response form). Notably, one of the themes that recurred during the sharing session discussions with this group of female students was that of receiving their parents' attention during these home interviews. Thiri Aung was the first to mention that she had liked the fact that her mother "gave good answers and a lot of information," and that she had appreciated the attention she got from her parents because they were usually too busy to talk to her in that way.

Leila and Yasmine agreed that they received more parental attention during their interviews, and May Su noted that her mother was usually very busy cooking and cleaning (Thiri Aung's post-interview activity response form; Piety School Sharing session 1, May 14, 2013). It seems that the students' parents had taken the interview more seriously because it was framed as a school requirement. In relation, some of the older students noted that they had gotten frustrated because they had had to compete with their younger siblings for their mothers' attention. Aye Myat, for instance, stated that she had had to interview her mother while the latter was busy cooking and taking care of her young niece or nephew. Meanwhile, Leila said that her baby brother had begun to cry during the interview, and she had had to be patient so her mother could take care of him (Piety School Sharing session 1, May 14, 2013).

Ella commented on the impact of this process during a post-project interview: "… I think since they've done the project, I have the impression that they are - *some* of them anyway - are actually asking more questions, or doing more things at home, or trying to understand things a bit more [about their cultures]. I think

[the project] opened a door of intimacy to their parents that, for some of them, it will stay open... (Ella's interview with the author, June 6, 2013)

According to Ella, then, the students' engagement in family interviews was able to open up a new line of communication with some of the parents, thus contributing to cultural continuity through family learning. One particularly poignant depiction of this process was revealed when I asked a second group of students what they had learned from the project. Yodit, a shy Eritrean student, struggled to communicate in English, so his Tigrinya-speaking classmates helped to translate:

- Yodit [smiling]: I learned how to dance.

- Rana [smiling, but clearly surprised]: You learned how to dance?!

- Yodit: Yeah.

- Mukasa [taking this as a queue to show off his shimmying moves]: Yeah!

- Rana: How did you learn that?? Did someone teach you?

- [Yodit nods.]

- Rana: Who?

- Yodit: My Dad.

- Rana: Your Dad taught you how to dance?

- Yodit: Yeah.

- Rana: For this project?

- Yodit: He can't dance.

- Rana [now somewhat confused, addresses Tesfalem for help with interpretation]: So he taught him for this project specifically?

- [Tesfalem translates, and Yodit replies to him in Tigrinya]

- Tesfalem: He's saying like, if he show me when I dance, umm...

- Zahra [jumping in to help with the interpretation]: He saw him when he was dancing, so he told him that he have to do like this, and like this...

- Rana: So he was practicing at home...?

- Zahra: If he saw him, like when he did the dancing, so he can help.

- Rana: Oh! That's great! Did your Dad like that you were learning how to dance?

- Yodit [smiling]: Yeah... Because in the TV he's looking how to dance... then he's looking there, TV how to dance the boys girls and then he told me.
- Rana: Wow! So he actually went and learned it so he can teach you?
- Yodit [nodding and smiling]: Yeah.
- Rana: Wow, that's great! (Piety School Sharing session 2, May 21, 2013)

Later, I was speaking with the Eritrean school cultural liaison Jemal about setting up parent focus groups, and I happened to mention that Yodit had apparently learned how to dance from his father. Berhanu was clearly surprised to hear that, then he became skeptical, saying that Yodit must have been lying because his father cannot dance, either due to a disability or a serious illness. However, upon reflection, I believe that the father most likely guided and instructed Yodit without necessarily taking a standing position. That is what makes the bonding experience during this father-son interchange so poignant: the fact that a simple school-initiated ethnomusicology exercise could be capable of transcending physical limitations in order to facilitate the process of maintaining cultural continuity within refugee children's lives through parent-led musico-cultural learning.

Another unexpected, yet positive, outcome of this exercise related to students' perceptions of their parents and their relationships with them. During a sharing session, I asked the students how they felt about their parents and their family after participating in the project - in other words, whether anything had changed. Thiri Aung began the conversation by saying that usually, when her mother would ask her to do something (such as household chores), she would keep putting it off until it is too late, which would make her mother angry. However, after conducting the ethnomusicology interview with her, Thiri Aung had begun to do things as soon as she is told. Following is a translated and paraphrased transcription of the student's interview with her mother:

1. What kind of musical instruments do people play in your culture?
   They play piano, guitar, drums.
2. In your culture, where do people play or listen to music?
   Music is used in religious services and choir practice. Adults sing more traditional songs.
3. Who is your favourite singer or musician?

I don't have one.

4. Does music help you get through hard times?

    Music helps me get through hard times. I did not know English, so I listened to songs from my culture, and that made me feel better.

5. Is it hard for you to live in Canada where the culture is different?

    It is hard to live in Canada. Life is different in our country. Education is different, and food is different. It's hard because I don't speak English. It's so hard to go out.

6. Do you think it is important for me to keep speaking the language of my culture in Canada?

    You must speak your culture's language. English at school but not at home.

7. Which cultural values would you like me to learn?

    You must wear Karen clothes.

Ella and I had elected to include student-parent interviews within the project, in the hopes of allowing the students to see their parents as a valuable source of (cultural) knowledge. Nonetheless, given the family interview's brevity and limited scope, I was quite surprised to hear that it could have had such a profound effect on Thiri Aung's relationship with her mother. Thinking that perhaps I might have misunderstood, I asked Thiri Aung why she thought her behaviour had changed after the project. This is the conversation that ensued:

-   Thiri Aung: Because I feel like I... I don't know... I feel like she's the boss.
-   Rana: But how did you get that out of the project?
-   Thiri Aung: She told me about my culture and more then, and I feel like... I did something wrong before, and I feel like sorry [laughing at her confession]…
-   Rana: Hmm... that's very interesting. […] So how do you feel about her now?
-   Thiri Aung: Just feel like I respect her more.
-   Rana [asking the other students - Chaw Su, Leila, and May Su]: What about you? Do you feel anything like that? Similar?
-   Leila: Yep. [...] [Smiling sheepishly] Sometime when I get angry, like I do loud voice [laughing].
-   [Everyone laughs.]

- Leila [smiling]: So now, I... like, I'm ok.
- [More collective laughter]
- Leila: I shout at my brother, [whispering] sometimes my mom... [...] [More seriously] So now, I like... like, do what she say and like, respect her more. So umm, even my brothers, so like, we all family, so we came from one culture, like... [smiles] (Piety School Sharing session 1, May 21, 2013)

Herself a single immigrant mother of three, Ella seemed particularly elated by this discovery. As we drove away from Piety School in her car the following day, she could hardly contain her excitement:

"When [the students] come to Canada, they see their Mums struggling with trying to adjust to Canada, trying to speak English - they're kinda on the bottom - they're trying to get this done, they're working too hard... They're doing all this stuff, and then suddenly they have a conversation with their Mum where their Mum is *completely* in power. She's *completely* in control because it's her*self* that she's talking about. And it's things that are very important to *her*. [...] When they get to talk, then they see this powerful, self-assured woman that maybe they've never seen before - or they've just had glimpses of before! And not only do they see her, she's interacting with them on *such* an intimate level, you know? And she's giving them the full attention out of this experience, and... so all of that together, *yeah*! They suddenly realize 'Wow... This *is* my mother!' Like 'This is who my Mom *really* is,' and 'Wow, I have to respect this woman! This woman is fantastic!... And I have to listen to her, and I have to trust her, and I must obey her, and this is who she is...'" (Ella's conversation with the author, May 22, 2013)

C. Student presentations

1. An ethnographic account

After the students had transcribed their interviews, Ella and I set about helping them prepare for their final class presentations and performances. As newcomers to Canada, most of the students were still struggling to communicate in English, and they generally did not have any experience in public speaking. Based on our experiences during the first cycle of praxis, Ella and I knew that presenting in English in front of the

whole class would be challenging in itself, so we asked them to choose only three pieces of information that they would like to present from the parent interview. Additionally, this time around, the emphasis was on sharing their culture through at least one creative or performative medium of their choice, such as poetry, rap, song, or dance. The students spent several class sessions brainstorming, preparing, and in some cases, collectively rehearsing during recess and after school for their final presentations.

On the first day of the final presentations (May 2, 2013), Ella began the class session by setting some key guidelines for audience behaviour in order to maintain a safe space for sharing:

1. When people go up to present, remember that they are nervous. So you have to behave in a way to help them. In other words, listen well, look at them, stay calm and allow them to get past any mistakes they may make.

2. Each person is coming up to present their culture to you. So it's even more important than usual to give them all the respect that you have. If anyone isn't being respectful, they will be asked to leave the room because that cannot be tolerated at all. So no laughing at presenters, because it makes them feel very bad.

3. While listening to each presentation, think about questions you want to ask. After each person presents, feel free to ask these questions. But make sure your questions are meaningful and respectful. Ask questions about their culture so you can learn more about it.

Ella then stated that she would be standing at the front of the class with each presenter, just in case he or she got scared or needed any assistance.

a. Yodit's presentation (May 9, 2013)

Yodit stood at the front of the classroom and faced his peers. He was wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt over a pair of faded green pants. He addressed his audience and said with a wide, sheepish smile: "So I'm from Eritrea…" Ella was standing next to him, holding a blue paper folder containing his presentation notes. Having opened it to the correct page, she pointed to the first piece of information he wanted to share with the class and whispered a few words. Yodit sighed, then proceeded to read the hand-written text slowly, as Ella held the open folder with one hand and tracked the text with the finger of her other hand: "I interviewed my father about music from his culture. He told

me that people play the flute and the drums in Eritrea. My father said… I should keep…"
Here, Yodit struggled to pronounce the word, so Ella whispered it to him, and he
resumed: "… speaking my language so I can speak to people when go… when I go back
to my country." Ella nodded and closed the folder, signaling that the reading section was
over. She whispered something to Yodit, who then turned his attention to the audience,
then turned his gaze to the floor, smiling shyly and stating: "Today I'm going to sing."
Ella asked him: "What?" Swinging his hands back and forth, he responded: "*Mezmur*!"
Ella nodded and walked away, giving Yodit the stage.

The students shifted in their seats, making clattering sounds, and the teachers
present shushed away. Now left to his own devices, Yodit laughed nervously, turned his
back to the class, and placed his hands over his face for a few seconds. Then he turned
back around, and said "Ok" with a smile on his face, announcing that he now had things
under control. He opened his mouth, presumably in an effort to sing, then turned away
again, assessing… He was clearly very nervous. Yodit then burst into laughter as he
cradled his head in his hands. Ella addressed him with encouraging words: "It'ok." A few
seconds later, Yodit's face emerged with a smile. He said "Alright," and immediately
broke into song. Following is the discussion that took place once he had finished his
performance.

- Ella: Another one? You have another, second one?
- Yodit: No.
- Ella: No? Ok. So, questions, everybody?... Miss Zelinski.
- Katia: I have a comment - Yodit, you have a *beautiful* voice.
- [Ella and many of the students agreed, bursting into unabashed cheers and
  applause.]
- Katia: I want to listen to *you* on YouTube.
- [This was met with joyful laughter from the audience. Yodit was
  embarrassed by all the attention.]
- Ella: Aye Myat?
- Aye Myat: What does the song mean?
- Ella [repeating the question]: What does the song say?
- Yodit: *Mezmur*, for church.

- Ella: So, say what…?

- Yodit: For God.

- Ella: So… any more? What's it say about God?

- Yodit: Thank you… God.

- Rana [referring to a word I had recognized in the song]: What does *berhanu* mean?

- [The Eritrean students chattered.]

- Yodit: Berhanu means light.

- [Tesfalem tried to explain the deeper religious meaning of the word, but he could not be heard over the other students' chatter.]

- Ella [jumping in]: Ok, hold on! Maybe Tesfalem can tell the whole class?

- Katia [addressing Tesfalem]: Ok, nice and loud, Tesfalem.

- Tesfalem: Yeah, the berhanu means… umm… God rise from the dead, so God is our light of the world, right? So… berhanu, he lights our world.

- Many students: Ohhhh!

- Yasmine: Why did you pick this song?

- Yodit: 'Cause this is my country's song.

- Katia: Yodit, do you sing this song every week in church? Every Sunday?

- Yodit: Yeah, different *mezmur*.

- Katia: Different *mezmur*… Does everybody know what *mezmur* means?

- [Some did, while others did not.]

- Ella: What is *mezmur*?

- Yodit: It's for God… In church - not outside, only in church.

- Katia: So singing for God?

- Yodit: Yes.

- Katia: So church songs, right? ... But, you sing them at your house?

- Yodit [shaking his head]: No.

- Katia: No? You save them for church.

- Yodit: Yes.

- Rana: Umm… Do you go to church here in Canada?

- Yodit: Yeah.

- Rana: And you sing the same things that you used to sing back home?

- Yodit: Yeah.

- Rana: Is this church for people from your country only?

- Yodit: Yeah, only Eritrea.

- Rana: Ok. […]

- Ella: In church, do you dance to the song when you sing?

- Yodit: No, like this only [shifting his weight from one foot to another while swinging his hands from right to left, then clapping to demonstrate the bodily movements that accompany *mezmur* performance].

- Ella: Oh…

b. *Leila's presentation (May 7, 2013)*

- Leila: Hello. My name is Leila. I interview my mom. I ask her 'What kind of music do people play in my - in your culture?' She said in our culture we sing *dalluka*[41] -

- Ella: What's that?

- Leila: It's one of an… instrument. So we play [it]… And *tarab* - just like rap - and *zeffa*, for the like, the bride and groom, when they come, they do it… Umm… then I ask her 'What your favourite type of music?' She told me she like *"Ya Tayr ya mashi li ehlna."*[42] It means […] a bird is going to our families and friends… The singer is Sayyed Khalifa. She likes this song because it is about missing my country. My mother told me that music helps me when I am bored or sad. She also told me that it is hard to… live in Canada because we are too busy to see our friends… So I'm gonna show you the song that my mother likes. [Pointing to the projected photo of a beautifully decorated goblet drum on the screen at the front of the room]: This is… this is *dalluka* - this one.

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[41] According to Muhammad, *dalluka* (also *daloka*) is a term used in Sudan to designate "a popular small rounded drum covered by hide, usually played by women." In relation, "*tom-tom* is a type of popular music and songs performed mainly by young women at weddings and other public celebrations. The singer uses the *dalluka* drum and is accompanied by a chorus, who clap and sing" (Muhammad 2007, 1424). These women's songs are often referred to as "dalluka songs" (El-Nour 2014, 93), which is why Leila used the terms interchangeably to refer to both the instrument and the songs. Also see Malik 2003.

[42] This song was composed by Saleh el Dayy.

- Ella: The instrument?

- Leila: Yeah. It made from mud from here [pointing to the body of the drum] and this one from animal skin [pointing to the drum head].

- Ella: Mud?

- Leila: Yeah.

- Ella: Like clay.

- Leila: Yeah.

- [Leila then played a minute of a YouTube video that captured a televised performance of her mother's favourite song. She played an excerpt performed by the late Nader Khidr.[43]]

- [Pausing the video stream, Leila pointed to the lead male singer in the video] This singer died like… this year. [Turning back to face the audience and smiling nervously] That's the song… [Going through a batch of papers in her hands] I'm gonna… do a poem… yeah. [Leila then delivered a powerful recitation of a long poem written in a Sudanese Arabic dialect. This was followed by applause.]

- Rana: Can you please tell us what that means in English?

- Leila: So, it was a girl, she loved school, and her talent is to be… to go to university. So, everyone loves her. Uhh, but after that, she went to the university - she's going to the university, but his father doesn't have money. So her grandmother bought… buy her cow, and goat to give… to the… to pay her… for university. So, then she went [away] to the university, and she… [shaking her head and smiling, trying to find the right words] no, she just confused that the girls and boys, like together, and how they wear like, skirt… like short. So she took off her scarf [passing her hand over her own headscarf] and dressed the short dress. And after that, uhh… her parents are waiting for her to give her money, and then she […] she drank a poison, so she… she went to the doctor. And

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[43] A video of this performance may be accessed on YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCg4B6rcl3Q (accessed on June 15, 2016).

after that, she went back to her country, and they didn't allowed her like anymore, so she… she… [made a falling motion with her arm]

- A student: Fall.
- Leila: No, she went on the roof… and…
- Grace: Hanged herself?
- Leila: Yeah. No, she came… she came down again. So she died.
- Rana: She threw herself off the roof - she killed herself.
- Leila: Yeah.
- Ella [finally understanding]: Ohh…
- Grace: I didn't like this… What did she do to like… why did she do…?
- Leila: She went to the university, so she followed the boys, and she got a baby, so then…
- Grace [finally understanding]: Ohhhhh!!! So *that's* why… Ah, never mind… Ahh…
- Tesfalem [concerned]: Is that true… is that true?
- Ella: A true story…?
- Leila: Yeah, I think it's true.
- [This was followed by pensive silence in the classroom.]
- Rana [signaling to Leila]: Ok, she has another poem that she wrote.

Leila then proceeded to read her untitled poem shown below; it portrays her love for her family and native culture, her desire for reunification with her family and friends in her homeland, and her career aspirations of being a medical doctor.

[Untitled]

Life is what I need
food, clothes and family.
People telling me I am crazy
but that is not who I am.

You see I am from culture
with love.

Living in the shadow

of my dream.

Wait for a girl who's dreaming

to be a doctor

that the real me

Life is walking on the road

My wish is to visit my

friends and family-ee

gather back again

to be a family-ee

that who I am.

- Leila: Questions?

- Grace: Why did you... do that poem?

- Leila: I just expressed my feeling on it, so... yeah. I did it last night.

- Grace: It's nice.

- Ella: Any more questions?

- Yasmine: Why did you read the other Arabic poem? What... what was the
  reason?

- Leila: I wanted just to like... to show everyone that if you like go to some
  other places, don't be like... selfish or something -

- Ella: Don't change.

- Leila: Yeah. Change everything and to go to different culture... So that it's
  not yours.

- Yasmine: Don't change yourself…

- Rana: How did you find out about the poem? Did... did someone tell you
  about it?

- Leila: Yeah, my... my auntie's daughter, she teach me that song... And I
  did this song in my school in my home country... [...]

- Rana: So she taught it to you, and then you presented it in class.
- Leila: Yeah.
- Ella: Any more questions?
- Katia: Leila, how is it different to present it to *us*, compared to when you presented it in Sudan?
- Leila: Uhh... in Sudan, it's like really kind of... like you can... like... they're all like the *same*.
- Katia: They all understood, [laughing] yeah.
- Leila: Yeah... And in here, like people don't really understand my language, and... [solemnly] we all different, so...

c. *The Karen presentation (May 14, 2013)*

Having decided to merge their presentations into one, four female Karen students (Aye Myat, May Su, Chaw Su, and Thiri Aung) stepped up to the front of the classroom, each dressed in jeans and a T-shirt or a sweatshirt. Ella stood next to them to assist. The students took turns reading their parent interview notes; they spoke very softly, stuttering at times as they struggled to pronounce some of the more challenging words. They all had their heads buried in their papers, and when they did look up at the audience, they would giggle nervously, leading Ella to step in and encourage them to continue. Once they had finished reading their notes, the four students presented a poster they had created to visually portray different elements of their culture. As shown in the images below, their poster featured traditional Karen clothing and a variety of musical instruments (drums, lutes, fiddles, zithers, harps, and buffalo horns) used in Karen weddings, festivals, and other celebrations.

Once the students had finished the more academic part of the presentation, they moved on to the part to which the class was really looking forward - a Karen dance that they had been rehearsing. In fact, Aye Myat had taken it upon herself to teach them the choreography, and they had been trying their best to rehearse it together for about a week, during recess and at home, despite the challenges they were facing in negotiating logistics, scheduling, and adult supervision on school grounds. Following is the discussion that took place after their dance performance:
- Ella: Ok, a question, Grace?

- Grace: When did you learn to dance like this? Who taught you?

- Aye Myat [smiling]: My teacher.

- Ella: In Canada, or…?

- [Aye Myat shook her head.]

- Ella: In Thailand.

- Aye Myat: Yes…

- Ella: Questions? … What does the song mean? The song you were dancing to.

- Aye Myat: Uhh…it's like today is our new year, and come and join us and… dance together…

- Ella [addressing the rest of the students]: Did you hear? It's a new year's celebration song. Yep. So it's telling people come and dance with us, it's the new year. Yes, Yasmine?

- Yasmine: Why did you pick this song?

- Aye Myat: Umm… because it's like easier to show the dance, so yeah.

- Rana: I have a question. Umm… does each movement mean something?

- Aye Myat: Yesss…

- Rana: Like what? Give us an example.

- [Aye Myat turned away and buried her face in her hands, laughing nervously. Then, she began to explain the meanings of a few specific dance movements while performing them to the class.]

- Aye Myat: When we do this one, it's like 'first day of our new year.' And… this is like 'come back together…' [Turning to the other Karen students standing by her side, she asked them for help, and her sister May Su volunteered a word she was looking for] Yeah, pull your cultures together…

- Ella: Hold your culture, keep your culture?

- Aye Myat: Yeah, it's like clothing…

- Ella: Wear the clothes…

- Aye Myat: Yeah.

[Aye Myat spotted Mukasa trying to emulate the move she had just demonstrated; she and May Su pointed at him and burst out into laughter.]

- Ella: Ok, any more questions? Grace?

- Grace: Uhh… did you mom ever teach you that song?

- Aye Myat: No, I just got it from the YouTube and I learned it by myself.

- Ella: Ok, Leila?

- Leila: Do you know how to sing that song that your mother didn't sing to you [during the interview]?

- Aye Myat [burst into laughter]: Yes!…

- Ella: Can you sing it for us?

- Rana: You can sing altogether - we won't hear you!

- Ella: *Please* sing it for us.

[Aye Myat grabbed her interview notes where her mother had written down the lyrics for her and and her sister. She stood next to her co-presenters, and they anxiously discussed a spur-of-the-moment game plan for this unexpected performance request.]

- Ella: So this is a mothers' day song, yeah?

- Aye Myat [correcting her]: No, it's not a mothers' day song. This is a Karen -

- Rana [jumping in]: National anthem.

- Ella [addressing Aye Myat]: Oh, it's the national anthem! Should we stand up?

- Aye Myat [laughing]: No!

- Ella: Ok.

[After a few nervous giggles, Aye Myat began to sing. At different points throughout the anthem, her three co-presenters joined in with very soft voices and sheepish smiles, at times making eye contact, laughing, or elbowing each other, clearly quite embarrassed. All of a sudden, Aye Myat stopped singing and burst into laughter, burying her face behind her sheet.]

- Ella [addressing Aye Myat]: Ok, sing first.

- Aye Myat [laughing]: She just wrote me only one part - I don't know the other part.
- Ella: Ok, well sing it so we can hear it.
- Rana: Well, repeat it then but a bit higher… It was really great!
- Ella: All of you sing *together*… it's good! … Ok, do it again… Go ahead: One, two, three, go!

[This time, the four students stood closer together so they could read the lyrics on Aye Myat's sheet; they followed along as Aye Myat tracked the text with her finger, and their voices were louder and more synchronized than before. When they finished singing, the whole class responded with a round of loud applause, leading the presenters to beam with pride.]

- Ella: One more question. Last question… Tesfalem?
- Grace [addressing Aye Myat]: What kind… is that only dance you know?
- Mukasa: She do a lot!
- Grace [laughing]: Ok ok… Can you teach us??
- Ella: No… we don't have time.

2. Key outcomes

a. *General outcomes*

The presentations seemed to have had a significant impact on many of the participating students. One simple reason was related to the novelty of the experience; as some of the students stated, they did not usually have the opportunity to share their cultural knowledge at school, although they would be interested in doing that (Piety School Sharing session 1, May 14, 2013). Aye Myat, for example, said that she had felt happy to share a dance practice from Karen culture with her friends and teachers and would like to do more of it in the future (Piety School Sharing session 1, May 22, 2013). However, it was the way that their peers and teachers *reacted* to their presentations that had the most considerable impact on the students. As Grace noted: "It felt like someone cared. [...] when you tell them about your culture, it felt like they cared. […] it's good... that people care" (Piety School Sharing session 1, May 21, 2013). Ella reiterated this point during a private conversation with me:

" […] the fact that other people in the room *wanted* to hear. Like, a lot of the presentations, they said 'Can you sing *another* song? Can you tell us *another* story?' They *wanted* to hear, you know? And that is such a fabulous thing when people actually *want* to know who you really are, over and above who they see already, you know?" (Ella's conversation with the author, May 22, 2013)

Based on her knowledge of the students and her observations of their behaviours during and after the project, Ella further tried to elucidate why the class presentations seemed to have a significant impact on many of them:

"Not just interviewing the parents, but also sharing it and having that gift of sharing accepted - received so graciously by everybody else! So, all of a sudden, like instead of just 'Oh, you are,' you know, 'I'm Karen,' it was like, 'I'm Karen. Like, this is my dance, this is who I *am*.' […] And so, they realized that this thing that I have *is* important. And this thing that I have *is* valuable, and it is valued. So then, all of a sudden my self-esteem is going through the ceiling! Because now, I belong here. Like, now I have a sense of... I'm valued. So, the *whole* of me is valued. Not just the piece that works at school. The piece that is at home, the piece that speaks my language and does my dancing... *all* that is now valued. So then, all of me is ok here now. You know? And I think that was the most important thing that came out of this. […] And they talked about it in the [sharing] sessions. Like *all* of them [...] became *hugely* empowered from doing this. […] I do have a sense that everybody is a lot more confident - feels a lot more confident as a result of the project" (Ella's interview with the author, June 6, 2013).

b. *Culture-specific outcomes*

For the Eritrean students, singing their native language church songs and performing their native culture's dance practices in Canada allowed them to access a collective cultural identity, connect with a faraway homeland, and maintain a sense of belonging as they negotiated life in a radically unfamiliar cultural environment. In contrast, for students like Leila, simply continuing to wear the hijab in a western country - and particularly as the only Muslim student in a Christian school - represented an expression of individuality and resistance to conformity. During a sharing session, Leila talked about the importance of being true to one's culture and oneself when migrating to

a different country. When I asked her why she chose to recite the Arabic poem she had learned in Sudan, why it was important to her, she said: "It values who you are and what you're gonna be in the future... Like when she like said she like to go to university, so it's her career. And then she lose it, so... and, she lose it..." (Piety School Sharing session 1, May 22, 2013) I then asked her: "How does it feel to wear hijab in Canada, and to be Muslim in a [Christian] school?" Leila replied: "To wear it, it's just like... to stay like with your culture religion, and [not] just to be like the same as your new country. And like, don't change [what] your parents taught you to wear it from you when you were little. So..." At this point, Aye Myat stepped in: "It's kind of like, showing people who you are when you wear those stuff." Leila agreed. I further asked her if it takes courage to do that, and she responded: "M-hem. And, to wear it in a [Christian] school... there's no one is wear it except Miss Salman" (Piety School Sharing session 1, May 22, 2013).

In the case of the Karen students, however, the notion of cultural continuity in the diaspora took on a much more complex meaning; this was largely due to their people's unique political and migratory history, which had led their diasporic community to make a conscious effort to create and maintain a pan-Karen identity through specific practices of cultural performance. This became evident throughout the project. One day, for example, while I was helping them brainstorm ideas for their final presentation, Aye Myat and May Su decided to play a YouTube video of a dance that they said was representative of their culture: the bamboo dance. Aye Myat told me that she had grown up watching her sister, brother, and cousin performing it at their Thai refugee camp. She added that it had felt good when she was finally able to learn and perform the dance during the Edmonton community's New Year celebration[44] (Aye Myat's interview with the author, May 4, 2013). I later learned just how significant this dance is for the Karen community. Having most likely evolved from an old Sgaw Karen funeral game, the bamboo dance is usually performed by at least a dozen young people and involves "skillful jumping in between pairs of *klee*[45] that are being moved together and apart,"

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[44] I asked them if they and their Karen classmates would like to perform the bamboo dance for the class, but they told me that it was too difficult (Aye Myat and May Su's conversation with the author, April 26, 2013).

[45] According to MacLachlan: "*Klee* is the Sgaw Karen word for a long wooden dowel used for pounding rice, a tool once found in all Karen homes (Htoo n.d., 43)." This prop is used to organize all of the dancers' movements; nowadays, either a bamboo shoot or a PVC pipe is used as an alternative (MacLachlan 2014,

following an osZahrato rhythm (MacLachlan 2014, 68, 72). What is interesting about this performance practice is that it is one of two signature dances that KNU leaders in the refugee camps appropriated and secularized in their mission to create a unified identity for the Karen diaspora - a pan-Karen identity. As MacLachlan puts it: "the bamboo dance, therefore, became a 'new tradition' that was open to Karen people of all faiths," Christians and Buddhists alike (MacLachlan 2014, 67-8). Since the 1990's, the bamboo dance has become a performative centrepiece at two significant events within the Karen calendar: the New Year celebration and the wrist tying ceremony. According to her field research within a large Karen community in Indiana, USA, MacLachlan argues that these dance performances are not solely about a diasporic need to celebrate one's native culture. Besides the bi-annual performances, the months of daily rehearsal comprise rare occasions when Karen youth in the diaspora can consciously learn and embody what the community recognizes as "Karen identity;" by engaging with clothing, language, music, and gesture, these youth learn habits that have long been associated with village life and community celebrations in their homeland (MacLachlan 2014, 71).

As MacLachlan states, Karen New Year ceremonies usually commence with speeches that explicate the importance of "Karen tradition" and provide a brief history of the civil war in Burma and the heroism that Karen insurgents exhibited in "defending the integrity of the Karen homeland." As Aye Myat explained during her class presentation, even choreographed dances performed to new Karen pop songs employ gestures that signal towards elements of "quintessential" village life in the homeland. It is therefore unsurprising that for Aye Myat and her sister, the act of performing or watching a bamboo dance was all about remembrance (Aye Myat's interview with the author, May 4, 2013).

However, what is interesting is the fact that they also associated the bamboo dance with the physical act of escaping from the enemy during wartime (Aye Myat and May Su's conversation with the author, April 26, 2013). It seems that their family was forced to flee Burma in the early 1990's, when a Buddhist Pwo division of the KNU "defected and allied itself with the Burmese army," which led to deadly fights with the now Christian-dominated KNU (MacLachlan 2014, 67). Aye Myat and May Su were

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72).

therefore born in a Thai refugee camp. During a post-project interview, I asked Aye Myat to elaborate, as her description of the cultural significance of the bamboo dance seemed inconsistent with the literature I had encountered.

- Rana: What does the bamboo dance mean?
- Aye Myat: [...] We run away for the war.
- Rana: So... ok. Can you tell me something else about it? Like more?
- Aye Myat: It's like... we all, we get hit by the other people, that come and kill us, so we had to run away. But then, we started to do the dance. [...]
- Rana: Well obviously, it's not how really you run away from them, right?
- Aye Myat: No.
- Rana: It's just like a way to express?
- Aye Myat: Yeah, express... And remembering. [...]
- Rana: Can you explain how you're actually running from the war within the dance?
- Aye Myat: It's just like running around the place. (Aye Myat's interview with the author, May 4, 2013)

It is true that Aye Myat and May Su never personally experienced the civil war in Burma. However, having grown up exclusively within Karen refugee camps in Thailand, they were constantly exposed to the discourse propagated by the KNU leaders, one that stresses the importance of remembering their ancestral homeland, sustaining their cultural traditions, and memorializing their people's heroic resistance to their enemies. Perhaps more significantly, the two sisters grew up listening to and internalizing their parents' personal narratives of persecution, fear, and forced displacement from the homeland, even more so because their father had fought with the KNU army. As I shall demonstrate below, for many Karen students, the notion of Karen culture seemed to be inextricably linked with a history of persecution and loss.

During the home interviews, a number of Karen students had asked their parents which cultural values or traditions they would like to pass on to their children. Thiri Aung's mother had told her that she must wear Karen clothes and keep speaking her native language at home. As Thiri Aung explained:

"Like sometime, when I go to church, I only wear pants. [...] And she was like, I have to wear a skirt [points to her ankles] to here, and Karen clothes... And she was like 'You look better with the Karen clothes'" (Piety School Sharing session, May 21, 2013).

Aye Myat and May Su's mother had also emphasized the importance of holding on to Karen language, adding that learning English is equally vital so that they could one day help their ethno-cultural community by becoming translators in Canada and back home. Recognizing that children and young people often hold contrasting views from their parents', I sought to gain insight into the students' *personal* opinions regarding cultural continuity in the diaspora. Specifically, I asked them whether there were any cultural traditions or values they would personally like to keep or give up now that they were in Canada. However, this seemingly straightforward question paved the way towards an unexpectedly poignant discussion that demonstrated how closely linked contemporary Karen identity is with the experience of persecution and forced displacement.

May Su was an extremely timid student who usually relegated much of the talking to her older, more confident, sister Aye Myat. However, Aye Myat could not attend the May 21st sharing session due to a conflicting academic engagement, so May Su responded earnestly, saying that she thought it was important to remember what her ancestors had left her, but she did not want to remember "all the stuff with the Burmese people." Clarifying, she stated:

- May Su: Like when my Mom, she was pregnant, she had to run with that like… we all had to run out of our village.
- Thiri Aung [quickly interjecting]: It's not all Burmese people. Some people, like they're... only soldier people - only soldier, but not *all* people.
- [May Su agreed, saying that she had meant to say the "soldier people."]
- May Su [adding in a sincerely grateful tone]: I'm glad that my Dad didn't like - my Dad was the Karen group soldier - and that he didn't get hurt or anything.
- Thiri Aung [pointing to her lower left thigh]: My Dad too, he got [a bullet] here, but his leg doesn't broke - anything there! [...] It's still in there. But

her leg, there's nothing wrong with it. [...] He used to fight before, but not anymore. He's like, [clergy at a Karen church in Edmonton].

Now unusually animated, Thiri Aung continued:

- Thiri Aung: I was like, I want to do what my Dad do like before, if I growing up, I can like travel every country, and do like my Dad do. [...] I wanna do like my Mom and parents tell me that I wanna do. I wanna become like them.

- Rana: In what way?

- Thiri Aung [beaming]: I don't know… Like, if my parents ask me to be something, I try my best to do it. My Mom told me [...] I can be a nurse... I tried hard at that. [...] And my Dad told me like... [he] only told me like, I have to be nice - that's all he told me. (Piety School Sharing session, May 21, 2013).

Because persecution, civil war, and forced displacement have defined the Karen community's experience for half a century so far, Karen students seemed to feel that their cultural identity was deeply intertwined with this experience, to the extent that some of them almost equated being Karen with traumatic memories of war, displacement, and loss.

So far, I have discussed the importance of performing "(neo-)traditional" music and dance as a vehicle for collective remembrance and identity formation, as well as a way to ensure that the "traditional" habits of Karen-ness are passed on to younger generations in the diaspora. However, it is equally important to note that, given Karen people's history of persecution and their ethnic minority status in Burma and elsewhere, holding on to various elements of their culture represents a feat in itself. This is clearly demonstrated in the president of the Fort Wayne Karen Association's conversation with MacLachlan in 2010. The president expressed a seemingly widespread fear among the Karen people that their cultural identity and nationhood would be lost if they no longer performed their dances. In other words, "Karen people, lacking any distinct cultural markers, will forget their unique origins and 'mix with others'— leading finally to their disappearance" (MacLachlan 2014, 62). As such, for Karen youth in Canada, merely practicing their cultural traditions or speaking their native language in *private* represents

an act of cultural survival, in defiance of the oppression and persecution their people have been facing for generations. In such a case, what could the act of presenting one's native culture signify, particularly when performed for a culturally diverse audience of classmates and teachers?

- Rana: Would you like it if at the school, or other places in Canada, they told you we would like you to share [things from your culture]?
- Thiri Aung, Aye Myat, May Su, Chaw Su, Leila, Yasmine, and Grace: Yes.
- Rana: Why? [...]
- Aye Myat: Because... if you tell them about your cultural stuff, so that they can respect you more.
- Grace: Understand.
- Leila: Like, to know about your culture.
- Rana: So *you* learn about your own culture.
- Leila: Yeah. And *other* people, like, they could know like about it.
- May Su: Like other... fight, and stuff. […] Like, in our culture, I think Burmese people and our people, they have a bad [relationship].
- Rana: So they fight...
- Aye Myat: They wanna kill us... [...]
- Rana: So the people in your country in Burma, if they asked you more about Karen culture, what would happen?
- [May Su pondered the question and appeared to have no answer.]
- Aye Myat [jumping in to clarify]: They would never talk to us.
- Rana: Sorry?
- Aye Myat [in a matter-of-fact manner]: They never talk to us.
- Rana: They don't talk to you… Why…?
- Aye Myat: A different language.
- May Su [jumps in]: Enemy…
- Rana: They're your enemies?
- May Su [nods and smiles]: Yes.
- Rana: […] What do you think about [that]?

- Aye Myat [solemnly]: I don't like it… We don't like them because… we had to run the other people place [Thai refugee camp]… so yeah. But now we're in Canada - we had to run away here. […]

- Rana: So you had to do that because… the Burmese people didn't like you and they were your enemies, right?

- Aye Myat: Like if you like live in Thailand and go back to Burmese, if they catch you, they will kill you.

- Rana: Ok… So […] when I tell you to show me your culture, that is something that would have gotten you killed back in Burma, right?

- [Aye Myat nods.]

- Rana: Ok… so how does that make you feel, that I tell you 'Show me your culture' here?

- Aye Myat: It make me feel happy to tell everybody about what happened to my life and what happened to my people.

- Rana: Ok… so maybe you feel more appreciated and respected?

- Aye Myat [nodding]: Yeah. […]

- Rana: How do you feel about your culture - your *own* culture - after doing this project? Did anything change?

- Aye Myat [smiling]: After I did that [dance], I feel like I'm not in Canada [...] I feel like I'm back home.

- Rana: Wow! That's a great thing!

- Ella: You still feel that way today? After you did a dance, you felt like you're back home - you still feel the same way today?

- Aye Myat [smiling]: Yeah.

- Ella: Why do you think that is?

- Aye Myat: Because like... showing people your cultures [putting her hand to her heart], they get to know it. And after all, they'll understand you, and you feel like they're the same people as you have in your country. (Piety School Sharing session 1, May 21, 2013)

Based on their moving testimonies above, being asked to share music and dance from their culture seemed to have been especially significant for the Karen students, in

comparison with refugee students of other cultural backgrounds. As an ethnic, cultural, and linguistic minority in Burma, the Karen people have long been persecuted and killed for distinguishing themselves from other ethno-cultural groups and attempting to establish a Karen nation. Therefore, the way that the Karen students' culture was received by members of diverse backgrounds in Canada presented a striking contrast to what had constituted the norm for them. They finally felt like they and their culture were respected and appreciated. Like cultural difference did not constitute a basis for hatred, conflict, and fear. Like they were "home" even among people of different cultures. The impact of such a seemingly simple ethnomusicological exercise has profound implications for social integration and intercultural relations within immigrant-receiving countries and classrooms.

D. Student sharing sessions

Ella and I had initially planned to conduct student sharing sessions before and after the Piety School project. As such, the pre-project sessions would explore the students' transition into life in Canada, their school experience, and the role of music in their lives. This would provide a helpful baseline in order to contextualize students' experiences and engagement with different elements of the project. Meanwhile, the post-project sharing sessions were conceived as a conventional means of evaluating the impact of the ethnomusicology project on different student participants. The focus would be on evaluating various phases of the project, what the students had enjoyed or not enjoyed, and what they had learned. It would also investigate whether the project had had any impact on students' attitudes towards their cultures and their peer and family relationships. Due to time constraints, however, we had to pose both sets of questions during one series of post-project sharing sessions.

Ella felt that these sharing sessions were not merely evaluative of what came before, but that they greatly contributed to the transformational power of the project. In fact, during a post-project interview, she told me that she wished we had had more time to devote to these sessions, because the students had a lot to say. In her opinion, this was because the project was not merely about valuing one's culture; it was also about investigating living between two different cultures, which is a discussion that most migrants do not get to engage in, especially at this age:

"They may have it years later, and say 'Oh yeah, I remember when I was - I was so confused... I was this...' You know, I've taught kids in regular school who say 'Yeah, when I'm at school, I'm Canadian. When I'm home, I'm Korean.' […]

They have to find the parameters between the two cultures where they can exist."

Ella further expounded the importance of having a forum to discuss these issues, particularly because the school is usually not a place where students get to talk in depth about things that are important to them personally. According to her, students do not usually get that kind of time and respect:

"[The sharing session] is a safe place to have these discussions with people who know how to guide them through that process, and just be able to reflect. […] I think it's really neat that [the students] had a forum where they could actually talk about it, and have it recognized as a legitimate concern, or a legitimate process" (Ella's interview with the author, June 6, 2013).

The students that participated in Sharing Session 1 were particularly vocal about the impact of these discussions. Leila, for instance, stated that when she came to Canada, she felt like she wanted to know other people and to "open her heart to others." She further asserted that presenting about her culture in class provided a good learning opportunity for both her and her classmates. However, based on her response to the last audience question, Leila did not seem to think that such an exercise could necessarily transcend linguistic and cultural barriers and result in intercultural understanding. This is where the sharing session seemed to have helped. For when I asked the students what they had learned from the project, Leila said that she had learned about how other students feel when they miss their cultures; she felt like other students' experiences of migrating were similar to hers. However, she went on to say that some students have different situations, pointing to May Su. Grace, the most academically advanced Transition student, chimed in and explained that while some students were finding it easy to learn English, others were still struggling. But Leila was referring to something else: she stated that some students, like the Karen girls, had to run away from enemies that could kill them (Piety School Sharing Session 1, May 14, 2013).

The sharing sessions had shown Leila that her classmates were struggling with similar migration issues. These sessions had simultaneously provided her with insight

into the uniqueness and complexity of each individual's experience of migration, a concept that is often overlooked. As Knight et al. explain:

> "Immigrant and refugee groups face unique challenges based on a combination of social, economic, cultural and psychological characteristics often shaped by individual experiences. It is also important that we differentiate between immigrants and refugees – both in terms of how the categories differ but also in terms of how individuals often possess unique advantages and disadvantages in the integration process" (Knight et al. 2012, 8).

For many students, being able to share and learn about their classmates' (and even friends') experiences and issues within this safe space had a positive impact on their peer relationships. Grace and Leila, for instance, stated that they had enjoyed these discussions, particularly because they were able to hear people's different ideas. Aye Myat then brought up the notion of trust, and others agreed that participating in the sharing sessions has increased their levels of trust in their classmates and made them feel safe enough to open up (Sharing Session 1, May 21, 2013). When I brought up the question of self-esteem and self-confidence later on, Leila in particular stated that these sharing sessions had made her feel more confident in expressing herself around her classmates:

> "I used to be not confident [around] other student[s]. And now that I know like everything about what happened to them and stuff, I start to be like the same - like, I be confident and talk to them... I talk to them, and, yeah, start to share stuff" (Sharing Session 1, May 22, 2013).

Furthermore, Ella was happy to inform me that May Su had been speaking up in class much more than usual since participating in the sharing sessions. Ella believed that one reason behind the success of the project was its focus on relationship building:

> "As a result of investigating their culture and sharing their cultures with each other - and with whoever else was in the room - they were able to strengthen relationships... […] or form new relationships with people in the class. […] I don't know if Miss [Zelinski] said it to you, but I really noticed a difference! […] I can't put my finger on it, but something has happened since everybody did their presentations. Something has happened in that classroom. And even in the

[sharing sessions], they said 'Ah, we realized that they're people who go through the same thing as we go through. And because I realize that you and I are same, all of a sudden it's okay for us to be even better friends than we were before.' I *really* notice it! [...] I just find the whole dynamic is different" (Ella's interview with the author, June 6, 2013).

Chapter 7: The Third Cycle of Praxis: "Cultural Ambassadors"

Friday February 21, 2014

At five after two, I head down the hallway to Ms. Crawford's room for the ELL students' Health class. Ms. Lewis usually teaches this class collaboratively with Ms. Crawford. Today, however, the class is hosting a special guest: the school's success coach and counselor Rachel. She is currently working for a pilot program that aims to promote mental health as well as prevent substance abuse among junior high students and their families.

> *After the students settle into their seats, Rachel begins by introducing herself:*
> *"I am the school's success coach. I work with students that are struggling with their peers, at home, etc. I also run a fitness club, a boys' group, a girls' group, the Aboriginal mini-conference, the lunch program… I help the school to be a better place."*

Although the ELL students may have seen her around school, it is evident from their blank stares that very few, if any, have ever confided in her. Rachel then says that it is fun to listen to stories, and we can also learn important messages from them. She takes out a picture book from behind her and holds it up: it is called "The Wrong Stone" and is written by Russell Deal. Rachel shows the students the colourful illustrations while slowly reading the short book. Following is an excerpt:

> *"'I want you to build me a wall with only perfect stones,' the big architect said. All the stones tried to put their best faces forward. They hid their ugly bits. But there was one stone that didn't seem to fit. He was the 'Wrong Stone' and all the others laughed at him. Was he destined for the crusher?!"[46]*

After finishing the book, Rachel recaps the main events to ensure that the students have understood them:

> *"At the beginning, everyone got along… But when the architect came, everyone started turning on each other, and cliques formed. In the end however, all the*

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[46] Source: http://www.innovativeresources.org/Pages/Our_Publications/Book_Range.aspx?id=40514224-e06e-4d77-a8ef-0a85a27b0a48

stones found out that there's a place for them and there's no wrong shape to be –
no one is perfect."

According to the publisher, "The Wrong Stone" shows that everyone is valued;
therefore, it is an ideal book for jumpstarting conversations with youth about "difference,
self-esteem, and finding one's niche in life."[47] This is what Rachel is trying to do;
however, when she attempts to elicit stories about bullying from the students, no one
speaks up. The students evidently do not feel comfortable sharing such personal stories
within this relatively unsafe space. Ms. Lewis comes to her aid, recounting a story from
her own experiences. Rachel then asks the students what they have been learning about
healthy relationships during Health class, and whether they know what self-esteem is.

- *Rachel: Self-esteem is the way we feel about ourselves and how we think*
  others think about us. Some things that may increase your self-esteem are
  if a teacher tells you that you're smart, a love note, getting a good grade,
  being good at music… And some things that may decrease your self-
  esteem are when your child says something rude to you.
- *[These examples seem to help the ELL students understand the concept*
  better.]
- *Rachel: Now, let's do an activity together. We are all going to make a*
  stone to put on this stonewall [pointing to a large black cardboard
  covering the white board.] You can make your stone any shape you want,
  then you will write things that you think are positive about yourself on it.
  All the stones need to fit together on the wall.

As the students begin to work on their individual stones, Ms. Munro asks me to
help the two Afghani students I had helped during Science class earlier. So I move to
their table in the back of the room for the rest of the session. They seem very grateful for
my assistance; since they only recently arrived in Canada, they are still struggling to
understand the most basic of English instructions. Towards the end of class, Rachel asks
the students to come up to the front of the room and stick their paper "stones" on the
black "wall" using double-sided tape. I find the whole exercise rather empowering. For

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[47] ibid.

on the one hand, it helps individuals to begin to counter the negative effects of bullying
on mental health by personally acknowledging their positive traits. And on the other
hand, the mere process of posting one's positive traits on the wall and physically finding
a place for one's representative "stone" among peer "stones," is a powerful metaphor.

This chapter ethnographically documents the "Cultural Ambassadors" project by explicating the choices that I made in light of various stakeholders' perspectives, while comparing different students' engagement with and reactions to various project components. It is important to note that this project was much more challenging to implement than "Music from my Culture," largely because it forced students to move out of their comfort zones, on a cognitive, as well as social, level. This chapter also assesses the effectiveness of each core project component.

The organization I had collaborated with at Piety School had hired program coordinators in order to implement the Life Skills program at two more Edmonton school sites, including Liberty School. It was through them that I was introduced to Liberty's Vice Principal Marco Moustaki who was extremely enthusiastic about me running an ethnomusicology project with one of his classes. The organization had initially envisioned that the project would take place within Liberty's Life Skills program, as had been the case at Piety. However, after I had attended a few of these sessions and spoken with the coordinator Sok Visal, I realized that the kind of project I had in mind would not fit the parameters of this program. For, unlike the case at Piety School, the coordinator at Liberty School was delivering Life Skills twice (instead of three times) a week during recess (instead of class) time. Because the sessions did not take place during class and students spent half the time having lunch, the program had a loose, unstructured format with no specific curricular goals. The students who attended these sessions did not necessarily know each other or have any classes in common. I knew that I needed to work with a group of students who belonged to the same homeroom class and had a minimal existent relationship, and I recognized that this kind of project required more commitment and participant continuity than a recess-club would be able to offer. Fortunately, the organization was very understanding about these needs and encouraged me to work with Liberty School directly in order to secure a more suitable context in which to implement my project. After consulting with Marco and Jane, we settled on

delivering the sessions three times a week within the three ELL class blocks devoted to Learning Strategies.

As I mentioned earlier, Jane had expressed concern about her ELL students fading into the background within their mainstream classes; but after conducting preliminary ethnographic research with the ELL class between January and April 2014, it became evident that many (if not most) of the students did not even feel safe participating in class discussions and expressing themselves around their ELL peers. This is evident in the field note excerpt above. These low levels of trust and social cohesion within the ELL class were unsurprising given the relatively large size of the class.

Looking back, I further realize that since Piety's Transition class was a literacy class, most of its students spent a large proportion of school and out-of-school time in newcomer-exclusive settings together, including all the activities and field trips offered by the Life Skills program. Of course, as I demonstrated in Chapter 4, both Katia and Ella were always mindful of creating a classroom environment that was respectful and appreciative of cultural differences. However, the "Music from my Culture" (2013) project was not the first critical intercultural learning experience within which the Transition class had engaged. Since implementing the "Weddings from my Culture" project in 2012, Ella had been intentionally employing culturally responsive pedagogical strategies with this class and periodically incorporating reflective intercultural sharing and learning exercises into her teaching practice. And of course, Ella had spent two years diligently implementing in- and out-of-class learning activities that promoted emotional and social intelligence, as well as healthy peer relationships, within Piety's Transition class. Altogether, I believe that this combination of factors had helped Transition students to develop the value and the "habit" of engaging in effective intercultural dialogue and learning, to the extent that this principle was taken for granted by the time they participated in the 2013 project. However, this was certainly not the case with Liberty's ELL class.

Notably, although I attempted to include various methods of student-based evaluation throughout the "Cultural Ambassadors" project, it often proved difficult to elicit candid responses or lead constructive sharing session discussions. This seemed to be due to the low levels of trust among the students, and perhaps between some of the

students and myself. More importantly, though, many of the students never quite bought into the written or verbal activities, as they expected the project to be a "music club" of sorts. For the school requested that the project be made optional. The project also did not involve any graded assignments or exams and was led solely by an inexperienced teacher/researcher who knew very little about classroom management. At the same time, Jane's absence from the project sessions due to protracted illness meant that I could not benefit from her expertise, advice, or feedback about different components. In fact, Jane and Marco's post-project feedback were both based solely on their attendance and observation of the students' final public performances.

Therefore, unlike Chapter 6, this chapter draws heavily on my personal field notes and my analysis of students' behaviour and verbal or non-verbal interactions caught on video. Specifically, it will shed light on some of the critical incidents and conversations that I found representative of the challenges and transformations that occurred over the course of this project. Many of these critical instances involved collective student discussion and interaction. I found it equally valuable to study two students' development throughout the project, particularly because their transformations appear to have been quite pronounced. I shall not claim that the project succeeded in creating friends out of foes, particularly in cases of personality clashes and longstanding intergroup feuds. However, student feedback and video comparisons between student interactions at different points during the project show a number of developments that can be built upon for future research. As Nagda and Gurin argue: "Critical consciousness cannot be imposed on the students, nor is it immediate; it is both developmental and cyclical in nature" (Nagda and Gurin 2007, 36). In many ways, this chapter stands in contrast to the previous one, demonstrating the radically different challenges and outcomes that ethnomusicological projects might bring about within migrant programs in a single city.

A. Verbal participatory research about cultural and racial stereotypes

Given the degree of cultural polarization and avoidance within the ELL class, it seemed imperative to begin such an intercultural learning project with participatory research activities that raised students' awareness about the pervasiveness of cultural stereotypes and the ways in which they may impact their psyches, relationships, and social circles. These activities aimed to aid the students in: a) *recognizing* and

acknowledging the subtle ways in which stereotypes about cultural and racial difference operate within their own lives; and b) *practicing* ways to effectively engage with the thorny subjects of cultural stereotypes and racism in a non-threatening, depersonalized, and non-confrontational way. That way, they would theoretically be more comfortable and prepared to later delve into critical intercultural teaching and learning activities with their classmates.

During the post-project sharing sessions, some students opened up about the frustration they had felt during those participatory research and learning sessions. For instance, Ameena stated that it had not been fun to sit in class, listen to me speaking, and answer questions (Post-project sharing session 2, June 24, 2014). Diya and Malaya said that they had not enjoyed these three sessions because they were "kind of boring." Rayya confessed that she had seriously been considering dropping out of the project at that point, and Dalisay and Diya agreed, saying that they had thought the project would be just like any other class, where they would have to study and write exams (Post-project sharing session 4, June 25, 2014).

This feedback demonstrates that more effort has to be made in the future in order to ensure student engagement during such non-performative critical thinking activities. One solution would have been to interweave such traditional verbal and critical thinking activities with performative activities within each session. Another would have been to use more movement- and game-centric activities in order to broach the topics of cultural stereotyping and racism. Nevertheless, some of the student conversations that took place during the first class session made it obvious that facilitating critical discussions about race, culture, and stereotyping within Canadian classrooms is absolutely essential.

1. "You look so Indian!"

Since these class sessions included a great deal of individual activities and group discussion among twenty-three students, I was often unaware of the small group discussions and interactions that were taking place. While going through the video recordings of these sessions, however, I came upon incredibly telling snippets of student discussion and interaction to which I had not been privy at the time. For instance, during the first class session, Fuad had gotten into a heated debate with Rayya who was sitting in

the seat in front of him, presumably after having seen her participate in an advertising school activity for Indian students:

- Fuad: Rayya! [Rayya turned around to face Fuad, wearing her customarily friendly smile.] You look so Indian!

- Rayya: [her smile disappeared, and she responded sharply] *What*?

- [Fuad turned to confer with Amjaad who was sitting in the seat behind him.]

- Amjaad [forcefully informed Rayya]: You look Indian!

- Rayya: [taking a facetiously astounded tone] No… Really??! You *swear*?!!

- Amjaad and Fuad: Yes!

- Rayya [now seemingly amused]: You swear that I'm *Indian*?

- [Fuad and Amjaad vigorously stuck to their position.]

- Rayya: I'm not *Indian*… No, no, *Pakistani*!!

- Amjaad: You can do an *ad* for Indians, so *you* are Indian!

- Fuad: I *know*, right??!

- Rayya: Pakistan is *part* of India, so that's why I was *in* the ad!

The heated banter had continued, with Rayya seemingly pointlessly trying to explain… The last thing caught on video was a frustrated groan from her (Full class session, April 8, 2014). Based on this short interchange, it is evident that Fuad and Amjaad were making assumptions about Rayya's nationality because of her physical features and/or clothing (in this case, potentially the fact that she did not wear hijab like many Pakistani Muslim girls), and her involvement in a presumably Indian student activity. Furthermore, based on this verbal interchange, it seems that Fuad and Amjaad did not recognize that the kinds of comments they were making could be hurtful.

2. Safe space activity

The second example occurred while the students and I were working on establishing some respectful rules for engagement that would help us create a "safe space" during the project. While brainstorming together, Amisha suggested that we respect each other, Ameena yelled out "No yelling!" and Kavita stated that we should not be rude. I took this as an opportunity to explore the rationale behind such behavioural recommendations:

- Rana: Why is it important not to be rude when we're talking about culture?

- Adesh: Can you be racist?
- Rana: Uh… yeah! Well, if you're being rude when you talk about culture, […] sometimes you *could* be racist.
- Ameena: Wait, racist?!
- Rana: […] you'll hurt each other's feelings.
- Ameena: I thought 'racist' meant… I thought you like… 'You're black, and I'm white, and we're different' - *that's* being racist. (Group 2 class session, April 14, 2014)

Based on my pre-project observations, Ameena's inquiry may be considered representative of many students' understanding of racism within that school, where the assumption is that racism is about discriminating against people solely on the basis of skin colour, but not other ethnic or cultural determinants. In my opinion, these two examples provide sufficient evidence of the need for anti-racism programming within Edmontonian schools and elsewhere.

3. Cultural iceberg activity

Based on a common educational tool that compares "culture" to an iceberg, this constituted a collective brainstorming activity with the aim of differentiating between *surface* cultural markers (ones that are visible or audible, and therefore can easily be detected through the senses) and *deep* cultural markers (ones that cannot easily be discerned through the senses). This activity sought to draw students' attention to the multiplicity of tangible and intangible elements that may contribute to a shared "culture." More importantly though, it aimed to shed light on deep cultural markers (such as value systems and religious beliefs) that are often neglected while emphasizing the more easily detectable cultural markers (such as food, clothing, and musical sound).

After the students had written a number of words that represented different elements of "culture" on sticky notes, we collectively attempted to categorize them by placing the sticky notes either on the visible or the underwater part of the iceberg I had drawn on the whiteboard. The students found it relatively easy to categorize some of these words as either surface or deep cultural markers. They unanimously decided that "traditional/cultural clothing, cultural food, language, music, cultural festivals, Hindu temple, dance, and flag" are surface markers, while "God" is a deep cultural marker.

However, unsurprisingly, they ran into some words that were more ambiguous. One student had written "colour of skin" on a sticky note, which led the class into collective nervous laughter. It became evident that the students could not decide whether skin colour was a surface or deep cultural marker, if any. At that point, I did not want to get into a complex discussion about skin colour, its connection with the concept of "race," and whether it may be considered a "cultural marker" at all. So I decided to place it within the first category for the sake of simplicity. There was also much debate about the word "family;" while some students argued that families and family members are easily visible, others claimed that the *feeling* of family is not. I decided to place the "family" sticky note on the border between the visible and invisible part of the iceberg: "See, 'family' and 'religion' and 'God,' and… you know, all these things, we think we see them or we feel them through temples and mosques and all that, but really, it's something deeper, right?" Subsequently, I attempted to survey the students about what they had learned from this activity:

- Rana [pointing to the iceberg drawing with the sticky notes on it]: What do you see now about how we have surface cultural markers and then the deep cultural markers, if you wanna call them that? What's the difference [between these two categories]? […] So when you think about umm… let's say Lebanese culture - my culture - there are things that you might see, like traditional clothing, or the food I eat, right? … Or the festivals I go to, right? … [pointing at the underwater part of the iceberg] But can you tell what my *values* are, when you look at me?

- Daakshi: No.

- Rana: … What I believe in?

- Some students: No.

- Adesh: Yeah.

- Rana [surprised]: Can you *tell*??...

- Amisha: We have to get to know you…

- Rana [amused at Adesh's response]: Ok, *what* can you tell?

- Adesh: You're Christian.

- Amjaad: *I* can… [pointing to Rayya] She's Indian. [This was obviously a continuation of Fuad and Amjaad's previous discussion with Rayya. The two boys burst out into laughter, and Rayya was not amused.]
- Amisha [turned to face the boys, then exclaimed while shaking her head in disbelief]: Guys, be quiet!
- Diya: Guys, stop!!
- Rana: Ok, so, [Amisha] said something important here: you have to get to know me to know the deeper cultural markings. *This* is what we're going to be talking about… Because yeah, you might find out that someone is Muslim or Sikh or Christian or whatever from something they wear -
- Dalisay: Jewish!
- Rana: Or Jewish -
- Ameena: Catholic!
- Rana: - or that they're from a certain country… through their music! But music [pointing to the "music" sticky note on the board] for instance can tell us a *lot* about what is important to people in that culture - about their values! So this is why we will be focusing on music in this project because I think it's a very interesting way of learning more about other cultures and their values, and what's important to them, and their history, and a *lot* of different things!

Here, Amjaad interjected, saying that we should place the "music" sticky note on the border between the visible and invisible part of the cultural iceberg. I told him that is a great point and moved the sticky note as per his instructions (Full class session, April 8, 2014).

4. True or False game

Racism is an extremely contentious subject, and it is sometimes very difficult to confirm whether a certain passive-aggressive comment or action is racist or not. Much does depend on intention, but it is obvious that Liberty's migrant students are not used to living in such a culturally diverse country, where the topics of "culture" and "race" are sensitive and confusing, and they would rather avoid the topic and stick with their own cultural groups in order to avoid committing any cultural faux pas or racial slur. My job is to teach them that always erring on the side of caution keeps them from experiencing,

sharing, and learning from the wealth of knowledges and perspectives that is represented in Canada's cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity.

<div align="right">*-- A field note*</div>

The True or False game constituted a safe group activity that anonymously tested students' knowledge about their classmates' different cultures, with the aim of recognizing the way that stereotypes may negatively impact our understanding of other cultures. I had used the information that each student had provided in order to inform my cultural categorizations for the True or False (T or F) game. I had planned to give each student a set of differently coloured cards, each carrying the name of a country or national culture to which one of their classmates belongs. Then, on the back of each card, I would ask them to individually and anonymously write words that came to their minds when they thought about each of these countries and national cultures.

a.   "Stereotypes" and "ambassadors"

Before we commenced with the True or False activity, I introduced the concept of "stereotyping:"

- Rana: Does anyone know what "cultural stereotype" means?
- Fuad: Drugs!
- Rana: Ok… any other idea? [After some time, it became evident that no one knew the term.] What's a "stereotype"? ... Ok, I'm gonna write it down here… Stereo… type.
- Rayya: Oh! I know what a stereotype is.
- Rana: What?
- Rayya: It's people who like, if you're blond, people will think you're automatically dumb because you're blond. But you're not - that's a stereotype.
- Rana: Ok! That is actually a good example.
- Amjaad: Oh!! I think I got one… It's like, people think that men… uh, most principals are men.
- Rana: Most principals are men - ok! That's a good stereotype because - I mean, it's not a "good" stereotype - it's a good *example* of a stereotype.
- Fuad: It's horrible!

- Rana: So a stereotype is when you generalize - you say that *all* people that are from this country are like this. Or *all* people who do this job are like that. Ok? And that's usually not true. […] What's a "cultural ambassador"?

- Fuad: What?

- A student: Huh?

- Rana: Ambassador. [I wrote the word on the board.] You know what "ambassador" is?

- Rayya: Yes! A leader!

- Deepak: To help someone?

- Rana: Ok, so ambassadors are usually people that -

- Rayya: Are leaders?

- Student: Helpers?

- Rana: Are leaders - definitely are leaders. So, ambassadors are people also that work in foreign affairs, right? […] That word actually came from the government. So every government has an ambassador for each country. So, you have someone who's Canadian that lives in Lebanon for example and represents Canada in Lebanon. And then you have an ambassador who's Lebanese that also lives in Canada and represents Lebanon in Canada. So [...] when you say a "*cultural* ambassador,*"* that means they actually help people of *other* countries to understand their country. Does that make sense? So I can come here and say 'I'm a Lebanese ambassador in Canada,' ok? 'I will help you to understand what my culture is like and what we think is important, and what our religion is like, or religions,' right? Does that make sense?

- Some students: Yeah.

- Rana: Ok, so why do you think it might be important to have a cultural ambassador?

- Shakir: So we can tell... we can tell others about our country.

- Rana: And why is that important, to know about other countries?

- Deepak: So we can learn more about their culture, or if you wanna join their culture, you can.

- Rana: Ok. So you learn more... If you *didn't* know a lot about someone else's culture, what might happen?
- Fuad: War! Bazouka fight...
- [Some students laughed.]
- Rana: [in an effort to legitimize Fuad's unique perspective of war and refuge] This is *true*. This is very true... Sometimes even within the same country, if different religious groups don't know a lot about each other and don't appreciate each other, they might fight - even within the same country. So that's why a cultural ambassador is *very* important.
- Rayya: You can bring more people into your country. [...] You can advertise, but it's like actually *true* about your country, and they'll be like 'Hmm... It's actually a really good country! Let's go to Lebanon.'
- Rana: Ok, so this is important. Rayya is talking about *representing* your culture. [...] It's important to represent your country, because if you don't, someone else will do it for you. And they'll say 'Oh, you know, in that country, they do that,' and it might not be true! So you need to take power over that and ownership over your *own* cultures in Canada, in your school, so that others won't have stereotypes about you. [...] Stereotypes come out of not knowing. [...] And that could lead to conflict and misunderstandings.
- Amjaad [raises his hand and asks me]: Do you know any cultural ambassadors?
- Rana: I don't! But you know what? We might end up being cultural ambassadors in this group!
- Rayya: Yay!
- Rana: And this is what this project is called - the Cultural Ambassadors project! [Fuad slumped down in his chair and groaned. I took that as my queue to end the serious discussion and begin the actual activity.] (Group 1 class session, April 9, 2014)

b. *"30% Canadian and 70% Lebanese"*

Here, it is important to note that my attempts at creating a fun, simple game of "True or False" somewhat backfired. For, in an effort to prove a point about the pervasiveness of cultural stereotypes, I had arguably reduced the students' complex

cultural identifications into one-word national culture descriptions like India, Mexico, and the Philippines. In retrospect, that was particularly unwise to do in a classroom where individuals' experiences were very diverse, ranging all the way from being born in Canada to migrating there due to war or economic reasons, sometimes after having lived in one or more countries in between.

In fact, two students protested my categorizations. Earlier on, Rayya had stated that her nationality is Canadian, her culture is Pakistani, and her religion is Muslim; however, during the True or False activity, she corrected my card categorizations by saying that she is actually Canadian, whereas her *parents* are from Pakistan. Meanwhile, Amjaad had stated that his nationalities are Pakistan, UAE, and Canada (probably referring to the fact that he has lived in each of these countries), his culture is Pakistani, and his religion is Muslim. During the True or False activity, he similarly declared that he is from Dubai, not Pakistan. At that point, I had unfortunately already prepared the activity materials, and there was no turning back. So, I gave the students two additional cards each and asked them to add "Canada" and "UAE" to their card set. This made Rayya happy. As I now watch the video recording from that day, I realize that Amjaad, on the other hand, was not impressed: in a frustrated tone, he had apparently pointed at Rayya from the back of the classroom and exclaimed: "Indian… You're not Canadian - you're *brown*!" Thankfully, Rayya had not heard him, and neither had I, due to the usual in-class clamor. However, that precise point came up again and was addressed later in the session.

In the future, it would be prudent to explain the activity to the students and ask *them* to provide me with the cultural descriptor(s) they would like to use for that specific purpose. After all, individuals often choose to emphasize different facets of their identities within different contexts and situations. If I had given the students the opportunity to do that, I might have ended up with more personalized and representative categorizations such as Gujarati as opposed to Indian, and Muslim instead of Pakistani. I did, however, make a point of addressing the complexity of cultural belonging and the inadequacy of customary cultural labels: "Sometimes we try to put cultures in categories, and make them seem so clear-cut, but it's not that simple usually... right? Like, what am *I* gonna say? I'm 30% Canadian and 70% Lebanese?! Just because I've been here for seven

years? … It's *hard*, right? But it's something we need to think about, because it's important" (Group 1 class session, April 9, 2014).

c. *"It's not [racist], but people would think!"*

After the students had finished writing on each of their cards, I gathered the cards and dropped them in a bowl. What ensued was meant to be a simple game. First, a student or I would randomly pick a card from the bowl, read out the name of the national culture (e.g. Mexico) followed by the student entry (e.g. burrito). Second, the students present who belong to that culture would have to raise either their green (True) card or their red (False) card in response. Meanwhile, a student volunteer would keep score, which would reveal which of the countries or cultures were well known by the group, and which were not. After the first two rounds, the students were visibly fidgeting in anticipation.

Notably, I did not plan to bring up the issue of racial discrimination; instead, I believed I had centered the game on cultural knowledge versus stereotypes. However, the subtleties of racial discourse organically arose as a key issue during the activity; this presented the perfect opportunity for us to begin to discuss critical ways of addressing racial and cultural difference within a hyper-diverse environment, instead of engaging in avoidance strategies.

- Rana [picked out a card labeled Pakistan from the bowl; it read "they wear hijab"]: Do they wear hijab in Pakistan?
- [Many students shouted 'Yes!' and several hands shot up holding True cards. Fuad shouted 'No!']
- Rana: Ok, wait. Who's here…? [pointed to Shakir, a student who had grown up in Pakistan] Ok, are they *all* wearing hijab in Pakistan?
- [Shakir shook his head adamantly, and Fuad again shouted 'No!']
- Rana: No? Ok, so you put False… You know why? The whole point is, some of them *do* wear hijab, but not *all* of them. So maybe this is a *stereotype*.
- Fuad: What's a hijab…?
- Rana: Hijab is a headscarf.
- Amjaad [addressing Fuad]: You *know* what's hijab!

- Rana [choosing another card from the bowl]: Now, Canada… Oooh… Ok. 'White.'

- [Almost half of the students held up their True or False cards, and some of them shouted out different responses that were hard to decipher due to all the clamor.]

- Rayya [shouted]: She said it's about *Canada* - it's only *me*! [then burst out laughing]

- Rana [addressing the students]: Ok, wait, wait! Ok, listen, you're not supposed to… because we need the Canadian here to say… [pointing to Rayya]

- Deepak [looking over to where I was pointing]: *Who* is Canadian?

- Rana [addressing Rayya]: Is that true…?

- Rayya [held up her True card and confidently responded]: Yes.

- Rana: Is everyone in Canada 'white'?

- Rayya [her face fell in shock after hearing my question, and she quickly raised her False card]: No!

- [Fuad looked at Rayya and burst out into raucous laughter.]

- Rayya [laughing]: I thought you meant 'white' as in snow!

- Rana: No… no, I'm pretty sure they meant the other one…

- Fuad [pointing at me]: That is *racist*!... I disagree! [then broke out into more laughter]

- Rana [trying to explain]: I didn't… I just read it… [then, realizing there was a greater issue to be addressed here] Wait, wait, wait. Is that racist, to say 'white'?

- Fuad: Yes.

- Rayya: Yes.

- Amjaad: No!

- Rana: Who says it *is* racist? [Rayya, Fuad, and Deepak raised their hands]

- Rayya [rethinking her answer]: Well actually, it's not… Well, it's a *stereotype*.

- Rana: It's a stereotype that all white… uh, all Canadians are white. So you say 'False' for Canada. […] Ok, listen. Is it wrong to say that someone's white?

- [As usual, many students shouted out their answers; there was no consensus.]

- Rayya: No! It's not *wrong*!... It's a way to describe someone.

- Rana: Ok, but maybe it's not a *great* way to describe them, right? … Why is that?

- Fuad: Can we say 'vanilla'? [Some students giggled.]

- Rana: Please don't… Ok, raise your hand if you have an answer - why is it not a great way to say 'white' to describe someone?

- Rayya: People will consider it rude, kind of…

- Rana: Why… why is it rude?

- Rayya: Because they'll consider it racist.

- Rana: Why? You think it's racist?

- Rayya: It's not, but people would think!

- Rana: Ok, listen. I know that a lot of people *do* use it, and sometimes… it might be one of the ways you might want to describe someone. *But* the problem with saying what your colour is - your skin colour - is that it reduces someone to just their skin colour! As if they don't have a personality, as if they don't have a value to society beyond that they're white or not white or whatever. So, it's not a great idea to use that, right? […] So let's do one more round before we're done.

- [I walked over to Dalisay and asked her to pick one of the cards marked Philippines. The first one she picked read "damn house;" apparently it was a joke entry by Fuad. The second card was left blank. She drew a third one.]

- Dalisay: 'They eat rice' - again?! [The students laughed. Dalisay was getting frustrated with the responses; she picked a fourth card.] 'I don't know.' [More raucous student laughter]

- Rana: Why don't you go through the rest?

- Dalisay: 'White.' 'Don't know.' 'Warm weather, mountains, animals, foods.'

- Rana: Well, you find mountains and animals and foods in every country, so that's not very helpful. 'Warm weather,' is it always warm in the Philippines?

- Dalisay: Yeah.

- Rana: So after doing this exercise - after we saw […] what was written about the Philippines - what did you notice? What did you learn?

- Rayya: They tried their best to write down everything... like, stuff about the Philippines... they kinda just copy each other.

- Rana: Ok... Does anyone have another answer? [The school bell suddenly rang, and the students lost their concentration.] […] The point is, maybe the Philippines is not very well known here. Maybe we don't know a lot about it, right?
- Diya: Yeah. (Group 1 class session, April 9, 2014)

It seems that the True or False game had laid bare a harsh reality for the students. The anonymity of the student responses had definitely facilitated the learning process while saving their writers from individual embarrassment. However, during a post-project sharing session, Diya revealed that she had not enjoyed being asked to share ideas and how she felt about other cultures when she did not even *know* much about other cultures; here she pointed directly at Dalisay, whose culture was evidently not well-known in class. This led other students to confess that they had felt uncomfortable at some points during the game. For example, Rayya said it was not nice when some of the student responses had insulted some of the cultures. Adelina laughingly chimed in, remembering how some of the students had written "nachos" about her Mexican culture. She said: "Fuad would tell me: 'Hey, nachos!'" Taking a more serious tone, Diya later explained that "some words weren't appropriate…" She said she was referring specifically to when someone had written "white" for Canadian culture. I was glad the students were able to share their feelings with me; I tried to explain to them how the activity had meant to raise awareness about how little most of us know about each others' cultures, and how important it is to learn how to address culture- and race-related issues sensitively and appropriately (Post-project sharing session 4, June 25, 2014).

After engaging in the same activity with the second half of project participants, I asked the students what they had learned from it. Amisha and Daakshi responded by saying that they had learned about other cultures, Ameena said that she had learned not to be distracted by her phone, and Rauf said that he had learned about stereotypes. As an immigrant myself, I told them that I had additionally learned that we all would benefit greatly from learning more about other cultures, particularly since we now live in a very culturally diverse country. Subsequently, I asked them whether they could think of anything else we can could do as individuals in a multicultural country. Khalil, a refugee student from Somalia who later had to drop out of the project due to academic reasons, made a very erudite suggestion: that we should learn more about our *own* cultures. When

I asked the students why they think that might be important, Amjaad said that it would better equip us to tell others about our own cultures - in other words, to better represent our cultures; Khalil added that we could then destroy stereotypes about our cultures. I ended the discussion by saying: "This is why it's important to be good cultural ambassadors. Do you see why we actually *need* it??" (Group 2 class session, April 14, 2014)

B. Verbal intercultural dialogue and learning

"I wanted to tell you that I think you're all experts in your own cultures. [...] In this room, and in this school, and probably in this country, you know a lot about your [cultures]. And you're in a position to be able to teach others about it and to be cultural ambassadors. So this project will teach you how to learn the skills so you can teach others and learn from them about cultures through music. And that's the fun part. So you don't have to go learn about… you know, boring history or whatever... You learn about music, and that helps you understand the culture and the history better." (Rana El Kadi, Group 1, April 15, 2014)

1. Music and culture videos

After finishing the introductory activities above, I prepared some media viewing and discussion activities for the students in a manner that resembled an introductory ethnomusicology class. I asked them to collectively watch and react to ethnographic music videos from geocultural areas to which none of them belonged. This project section was designed in the interest of providing a safe training ground for intercultural dialogue and learning about unfamiliar musical practices. It aimed to increase students' interest in engaging with and learning about unfamiliar cultures, while encouraging them to recognize connections across various cultures through an analysis of musical practices from ritual lifecycle ceremonies, street and stage performances, as well as national competitions. Furthermore, this project section sought to provide the students with a non-judgmental, supportive environment where they may begin to develop mindful intercultural dialogue skills, without worrying about offending any of their classmates or their cultures.

To this end, I tried to select arguably engaging video content that represented cultures and languages with which none of the students were too familiar. I then very carefully settled on a screening order that I hoped would gradually ease the students into "the unfamiliar." My first few examples represented excerpts from a documentary entitled "Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul." The aim was to grab the students' attention, increase their respect for various cultures, and in this case demonstrate the diversity of cultural influences on the sounds of Istanbul. I commenced by playing an amusing video clip of breakdancing (or "breaking"), a street dance practice that originated among Puerto Rican and African American youth but is now popular around the world. Although the students could not understand the Turkish rap in the background, they were immediately able to connect with the dance itself.

I then played captivating performances of Mevlevi Sufi dance (associated with the whirling dervishes) accompanying the Turkish fusion musician Mercan Dede (with a host of native Turkish instruments including the *ney* and *baglama*). Subsequently, we watched a poignant Kurdish song ("Ahmedou") by the UK-based performer Aynur. Furthermore, I was fortunate to receive assistance from Deirdre, a Master's student conducting research on Aboriginal youth musical cultures in Canada. Serving as an occasional project assistant, she played YouTube videos of a Cree First Nations dance competition in Alberta, including a women's shawl dance and a men's hoop dance. I ended the session by playing some excerpts from an ethnographic documentary produced called "Wedding;" this short film captured the key ritual phases of the Tajik wedding ceremony as they appeared in the Moskovsky district of the country.

2. Collective brainstorming

During these sessions, I asked the students to brainstorm ways in which they might personally use music and dance in order to address some of the issues we had discovered during the previous participatory research activities, namely cultural stereotypes and cultural segregation.

a. Large group

We held the first brainstorming session in the Drama Room, which constituted a large carpeted area with a basic sound system. The session commenced with a

recapitulation, where the students and I briefly discussed some of the key findings that had emerged from the verbal participatory research and learning activities of the past two weeks. I then asked the students if they could get into small groups of four or five so they may begin to brainstorm ways in which the aforementioned issues (or problems) may be addressed through a project about music and dance from various cultures. However, it quickly became evident that many students did not understand what I meant. Fortunately, since I had already been supervising a number of Indian students' rehearsals for the annual school talent show, I knew that they would be prepared to perform *gerba*, a popular Gujarati folk dance. Having informed these six girls of this possibility before the session, I invited them to present their dance performance to the seventeen other project participants; I believed it would be helpful to provide the students with a concrete example of how one might begin to address cultural stereotypes within this context. Dalisay and Ameena got very excited upon hearing that their friends will be performing; they began to clap and cheer loudly in anticipation, with Ameena yelling: "Woohoo! Amisha!!!"

As soon as we turned on the gerba song recording, the student audience members began to move around the mostly unfurnished room; some were playing with dramatic hats, and others were fighting with pillows - all theatre props they had fished out of an unlocked cupboard. The six dancers were finding it difficult to figure out where to stand; they shouted over the clamour and urged some of their classmates to sit elsewhere so the dancers have enough space to perform. Although the dance was off to a chaotic start, the performers quickly got into the groove, smiling and laughing as they tried to coordinate their collective movements. Occasionally, their friends would cheer them on, Ameena attempting to coach them along from the large armchair prop to which she had laid claim. Meanwhile, the Indian boys sat together on top of the cupboards, intently observing the dance; sometimes they would whisper a few words amongst themselves and laugh. Ameena then started singing loudly along with the music "Dhol baaje… Dhol baaje!" in reference to the *other* song the Indian girls were rehearsing for the talent show. This distracted the dancers, as they immediately broke out into laughter, while Diya yell at Ameena: "Ok, stop it!" At this point, some of the Indian boys began to lose interest, playing with the different hat props and speaking to each other. However, most of the

other students were evidently engaged in the performance. Dalisay yelled: "Nice work!!" which prompted more cheering. Suddenly, the song ended, and the audience proceeded to applaud and cheer with excitement.

I proceeded to ask the audience members if they enjoyed the dance. Ameena, Fuad, and Dalisay screamed out why they had liked it. I then asked the audience members from non-Indian backgrounds if this dance helped them to understand Indian culture well. Rayya said yes, Dalisay said not really, and Ameena said no, because they were not wearing their "Indian clothes," in reference to the traditional clothing she usually sees in Bollywood movies. Rayya elaborated, saying that the dance helped her understand Indian culture because it was "Indian," not hip-hop. Ameena responded by saying that they could have mixed traditional Indian (Gujarati) and hip-hop dance elements. Another student stated that it would be useful to have "props."

I subsequently drew the students' attention to the fact that we might have learned *more* about Indian, and specifically Gujarati, culture if the dancers had told us something about the song they had played, the meaning of the dance movements, the significance of this dance to them, or the fact that the performers had actually choreographed this dance themselves by drawing on traditional *gerba* dance movements. Daakshi was clearly not impressed with all the attention the Indian girls - his rivals - were receiving. He retorted: "We do that all the time!" At any rate, the aim behind this exercise was to demonstrate that, although events like the Liberty School talent show or the Chinese New Year celebration could spark students' interest in other cultures and their musical practices, they usually have limited educational potential and may in fact serve to increase cultural stereotypes when unaccompanied by a more sustained contextual component.

The students spent the remainder of the session brainstorming ways they would share their musical cultures with their peers. Some students said they would interview each other about their musical cultures. Deepak proposed to describe the way his god looks, Ameena suggested she and her friends would rap in their native languages, while Amisha, Diya, and Kavita decided that they would teach others about their various Hindu festivals and sing songs from their culture (Liberty School project session, April 30, 2014).

The initial brainstorming session was followed by three sessions where my project assistant and I worked more closely with each student group, so as to pin down more specific and feasible ideas for intercultural teaching and learning. It is important to note that the students encountered many challenges from this point on, including intergroup conflict and resistance to cultural and group desegregation. In the following sections, I shall provide examples of these challenges in the form of two students' experiences. Coincidentally, both students were thirteen-year-old Muslim refugees of Somali/Ethiopian background; however, while Fuad had arrived in Canada a year earlier, Ameena had arrived almost five years earlier.

b. Small group

Despite many students' resistance to desegregation, we tried to set up groups of four to six that included members from at least two different cultural backgrounds.[48] It is important to note, however, that some students' pre-existent personality conflicts were actually aggravated through the attempts at intercultural dialogue. One student in particular - Ameena - encountered several difficulties during this project phase.

Ameena was an intelligent, kind-hearted, and highly sociable girl with a strong personality; during her time at Liberty School, however, she had also acquired a reputation for being loud, impulsive, and often disruptive. In fact, during the post-project sharing sessions, several of her classmates voluntarily expressed annoyance and frustration with her behaviour in class. Rayya stated that Ameena made her mad. Later, when I asked the students whether there was anything they would have changed in the project process, Rayya said she would probably tell Ameena to be quiet. The other students laughed, then Adelina told her: "Don't worry, Rayya. I smack Ameena!" Rayya laughingly said: "Good!" This prompted Diya to say that it was especially difficult to work with Ameena because she kept goofing around and disrupting her efforts to teach a Bollywood dance (Post-project sharing session 4, June 25, 2014). In another sharing session, Shakir stated that things got chaotic during the project sessions "because of Ameena" (Post-project sharing session 1, June 23, 2014).

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[48] Because of the over-representation of Indian students within the large ELL class, the project sub-groups always included a majority of Indian students.

At the same time, Ameena did not seem to get along with some of the Indian girls (including Kavita) and therefore did not want to work with them during the project. She attributed that to the fact that Kavita was "bossy" and acted like she was her mother (Conversation with Ameena, May 8, 2014). Frictions with some of the Indian girls resurfaced at various points during the project. In fact, it seems that Ameena's outspoken nature and poor impulse control, coupled with pre-existent personality conflicts with some of her Indian classmates, contributed to the particularly explosive attempt at intercultural dialogue, which I described in the introducory vignette of my dissertation. Ameena brought up this issue during one of the post-project sharing sessions. Pointing at her friend Amisha, she stated that she did not like how the Indian girls were always "yelling, thinking they're the boss of stuff." Ameena explained that she has had other Indian friends before, but they did not yell like the Indian girls in ELL class do. Listening intently, Amisha calmly admitted that she and her best friend Diya always talk as if they are yelling at each other. Interestingly, this led into a discussion about how modes of social interaction might differ among different cultures or social circles, and how such nuances may easily lead to conflict and misunderstandings.

3. Verbal intercultural peer teaching and learning (interviews)

Once the student participants had decided upon a number of performative cultural practices they would like to teach each other, we moved on to the intercultural peer teaching and learning - or interview - phase. Each student partnered up with a group member from a different culture, then worked on preparing a set of information-seeking questions related to one or more of the cultural practices they will be learning from the latter. The aim behind these intercultural peer interviews was threefold: 1) to ensure that the students acquired a deeper contextual understanding of the performance practices they would be learning, 2) to provide each student with the opportunity to share knowledge about their own culture, and 3) to provide each student with an opportunity to practice mindful and respectful intercultural dialogue with a classmate.

Ameena's initial attempt at intercultural dialogue (described above) was evidently an extreme example of what could happen when students try to engage in intercultural dialogue without receiving sustained training in this area. Interestingly, the intercultural conversation upset not only the Indian girls, but also Ameena herself! She had previously

been extremely excited to learn the *garba* or a Bollywood dance from them; however, the day after that grievous exchange, Ameena told me that she did not want to work with the Indian girls anymore because they keep shouting at her. Instead, she said she would just work with Malaya and Dalisay who were planning to teach a Filipino pop song (Conversation with Ameena, May 14, 2014). At that point, it had become blatantly obvious that personality conflicts were hindering Ameena's project participation. Having observed Amisha's patience and understanding when interacting with her classmates, I thought she might represent a good fit for intercultural dialogue with Ameena. After all, it seemed important that she confront her difficulties in this area head on.

Indeed, this turned out to be quite a strategic partnership. On May 20th, Deirdre and I helped half of the participants to prepare for their intercultural peer interviews. We began the session by providing the students with concrete advice regarding interviewing people about their cultures; through role-playing, Deirdre and I acted out some interview questions that we might ask each other about our American and Lebanese culture, respectively. We had intentionally prepared some arguably offensive questions in order to give the students a chance to suggest more respectful and appropriate ways of phrasing those questions. We proceeded to discuss the importance of being open-minded, reacting appropriately to new information about other cultures, and generally thinking before speaking or reacting [social intelligence skills]. I also asked the students to practice asking mindful questions by collectively interviewing me about any aspect of my own culture; this led into a discussion about using follow-up questions.

Afterwards, Deirdre and I each sat at one of the large tables and assisted the students in formulating questions for their upcoming peer interviews. Throughout this session, Ameena and Amisha seemed so excited about engaging in intercultural dialogue that they even began to ask each other questions about each other's musical cultures even before the official scheduled interview. Ameena was clearly making a concerted effort to consider the impact of her questions before writing them down. In fact, she informed me that she had changed some "bad questions" in her mind to "good ones" before voicing them out loud (Group 1 project session, May 20, 2014).

During the subsequent sessions, each student had the opportunity to engage in a supervised intercultural peer interview that drew on the questions they had previously

generated. Amisha and Ameena's interview session, for instance, was held on May 27th, 2014; lasting around 20 minutes, it was based on five questions by Amisha and three by Ameena. I sat with them and tried to keep the conversation going by asking the interviewee follow-up questions. Gradually, the two students became more comfortable with this method and began using the written questions merely as a springboard for further conversation. Below I shall provide each of the interview questions they had prepared, along with a brief summary of the interviewee's response and the conversation that ensued.

1. Amisha's first question: "How many gods do you have?"

Ameena told her that Muslims only believe in one God. Amisha responded by stating that she had already heard the term 'Allah' being uttered by a Pakistani Muslim woman in a Bollywood drama.

2. Amisha's second question: "What kinds of food do you [eat] in your [religious] festivals?"

Ameena responded by talking about Ramadan, the Muslim holy month of fasting, and this prompted Amisha to compare it to the Navaratri festival in which she and her family takes part to worship the Hindu deity Durga. This subsequently led the students into a discussion about various forms of worship, where Amisha tried to explain the concept of having a (Hindu) temple at home. This was unfamiliar for Ameena, but she was able to gain an understanding of the concept by linking it to the practice of using a Muslim prayer rug and ensuring that one is facing the direction of Mecca while praying. Ameena then returned to the original question and described all the different types of food her mother cooks during the month of Ramadan and Eid al fitr, the festival of breaking the fast.

3. Ameena's first question: "What's the meaning behind your Hindu (religious) songs?"

Amisha told Ameena about the devotional songs (bhajans) and rituals that Hindu women usually perform while worshiping their deities at temples. This reminded Ameena of the various rituals she had witnessed within Bollywood movies. I then discovered that Ameena had once visited India with her family, and she often asks Amisha questions about Indian culture.

4. Amisha's third question: "Why do you wear hijab, and what's [the] meaning behind it?"

Ameena stated that the hijab is the most important thing to abide by in Islam, but she admitted that she does not actually know *why* it is important for females to cover their hair when in the presence of male non-relatives.

5. Ameena's second question: "Do boys have different dance than girls?"

Amisha said "not really," explaining how Gujarati boys and girls dance the gerba together, for instance. This prompted Ameena to compare her own culture, wherein boys and girls have separate dances. This quickly led into an enthused comparison of Muslim and Hindu wedding traditions, wherein Ameena even began to complete Amisha's sentences, obviously having learned much about Hindu weddings from avidly watching Bollywood movies.

6. Amisha's fourth question: "Why do you go to [the] mosque?"

Ameena responded by explaining in terms comparable with the role of the temple in Hinduism.

7. Amisha's fifth question: "What is Islam?"

This was certainly a tough question to answer; Ameena responded by saying that it requires one to wear hijab. I press her to tell us about what the religion teaches, then Amisha followed up by asking: "If you go to mosque, do you read any book?" Ameena mentioned the Qur'an, and Amisha compared it to the Hindu holy book, explaining that it is the parents that usually teach Indian children its contents.

8. Ameena's third question: "When one boy and a girl get married, why does the boy put the red sindoor on her head?"

Amisha did not know the answer to this question; but fortunately, her friend Diya had already arrived for her own interview, so she explained it to us instead. This led into a discussion about the bindi and the symbolism of various types of jewellery within their cultures and religions.

This peer interview proved to be very successful - indeed, it was a far cry from Ameena's earlier explosive attempts at intercultural dialogue, and it was quite informative for Amisha as well. Evidently, the project had given them both a chance to hone her intercultural dialogue skills and learn more about each other. While Amisha

later stated that she now feels differently now about teaching others things from her culture, Ameena pointed at Amisha and said she now feels less scared to talk about these things with other people (Post-project sharing session 2, June 24, 2014).

C. Performative intercultural peer teaching and learning (rehearsals)

Within this phase of the project, students engaged in intercultural peer teaching and learning and music or dance rehearsals. For instance, a large group of male and female students of Indian and Pakistani descent rehearsed an Urdu-language love song called "Hona Tha Pyar" (Love was Bound to Happen); it was composed for "Bol," (Speak) a Pakistani social drama film that was released in 2011 and met with widespread acclaim. A group of Gujarati female students rehearsed the Indian national anthem. A female student of Mexican background chose to individually rehearse "Como la Flor" (Like the Flower), a Spanish song by her mother's favourite singer Selena; she was a famous Mexican-American artist who was active in the 1980s and 1990s. Meanwhile, the two Filipino sisters taught Rayya to sing a Tagalog pop song called "Baliw" (Crazy) and accompanied her on acoustic guitar. Amisha and Diya taught many of their female classmates of Somali, Filipino, and Canadian/Pakistani backgrounds the gerba dance choreography for the song "Nagada Sang Dhol" ("The Drums Beat with the Kettle-drums); this song and dance number was featured in the immensely popular Bollywood film "Goliyon ki Raasleela Ram-Leela" (A Play of Bullets Ram-Leela) that was released in 2013. For the purposes of this chapter, I shall focus on one student's experience in particular in an effort to demonstrate the potential outcomes of performative teaching and learning.

D. Key project outcomes

In addition to the outcomes of individual phases, the project's various components operated in tandem to produce a number of key outcomes. These became particularly evident towards the end of the project - during student rehearsals, casual conversations, and post-project interviews and sharing sessions.

1. Students' interest and proficiency in intercultural dialogue and learning

This is not to say that engaging in intercultural dialogue and learning was effortless; several students spoke candidly about the challenges they faced throughout the rehearsal process.

Amisha, for instance, opened up about the difficulties of teaching the gerba-based Bollywood dance to students of other cultures. She stated that "teaching was hard," referring to the dance steps in particular, even though she has taught it before to her Indian friends. Ameena was also present during this sharing session, so we took this opportunity to discuss why it might be more challenging for her to learn these dance moves than people of Indian background, even though she had apparently been exposed to contemporary Indian dance culture through watching Bollywood movies over the past five years. We concluded that this might be due to the embodied dance knowledge that people amass while participating in frequent community events such as weddings, festivals, and parties (Post-project sharing session 2, June 24, 2014).

During another sharing session, students discussed their competing emotions while engaging in performative intercultural teaching and learning with their classmates. Specifically, they talked about the Filipino Tagalog song that Dalisay and Malaya taught to Rayya, and the gerba-based Bollywood dance that Diya and Amisha taught to Dalisay, Malaya, and Rayya.

- Dalisay: I like the part like when they're teaching us to dance [the Bollywood dance].
- Malaya: Yeah, me too!
- Rayya: Yeah!! Me too! It was so *hard* though…
- Diya: And singing the Bollywood... [then, points to Malaya and says sincerely] And like, you play like such *very* good guitar [for the Tagalog song].
- Malaya [smiling]: Oh, thank you!
- Others: Yeah!! [Laughter]
- *Rayya: It was so much fun! I think it's more fun to like dance and sing in someone else's culture -*
- Malaya [addressing Rayya]: Yeah, it was fun to teach you [the Tagalog song]-
- Dalisay: Yeah, she actually can read it -

- *Diya: Yeah, like if you like teach or like learn like someone else's culture, it's fine.*
- Rana: So have you done that a lot before? Have you had the opportunity?
- Everyone: No...
- Diya: No, not that much, no...
- Malaya [smiling]: I'm too shy… (Post-project sharing session 4, June 25, 2014; italics by the author).

In connection, I remember that during one of the early rehearsal sessions, Malaya could not keep up with the others; she got so intimidated by the difficulty of the Bollywood dance moves that she seriously considered dropping out of the group. However, I tried to encourage her to at least try: I reminded her that we are only here to learn from each other and emphasized that she does not even have to participate in the final performance if she does not want to. Eventually, she felt better and cheerfully threw herself back into the chaotic excitement of the student-led dance rehearsal (Conversation with Malaya, June 5, 2014).

Based on the evidence from the students' final sharing sessions and their general enthusiasm towards the end of the project, it was evident that they greatly enjoyed and valued the process of performative intercultural teaching and learning, despite its apparent challenges. For many students, this signified a significant change in attitude towards intercultural learning when compared with the trepidation they displayed towards it during the pre-project sharing sessions and the outset of the project. Echoing Rayya's and Diya's italicized comments in the excerpt above, many students said that they enjoyed teaching and learning music and dance from other cultures, and despite its difficulty, Amisha stated that she now feels differently about teaching others things from her culture (Post-project sharing session 4, June 25, 2014).

On the other hand, some students' feedback demonstrated that their participation in intercultural teaching and learning played a role in destroying certain barriers that usually impede the development of intercultural school relationships. For instance, Shakir stated that the project helped him to overcome his fears of conversing with people from cultures other than his own:

- Shakir: Like... first I was... I don't like to talk with people... I was like... who can speak *my* language only I used to talk to them... […] Like, I only talk with *them*...

Not now - like when I was new. Like last year, like I came for three [...] weeks, and I was like... I can't -

- Rana: So you're saying that this project helped you to...?
- Shakir: Like... it made me like... confidence [to talk to people] *not* from my culture. (Post-project sharing session 1, June 23, 2014)

Students' experiences during this project seemed to also increase their interest in participating in similar future activities. Many inquired about whether I will be implementing the "Cultural Ambassadors" project in the following year, because they would like to participate (Conversations with Muzuri, Adelina, and Rayya, June 23, 2014; Post-project sharing session 2, June 24, 2014). Moreover, while inquiring about whether they ever have the opportunity to engage in performative intercultural learning, several male students expressed an interest in making it a permanent school elective. Having grown up outside his native country, Amjaad further stated that he would want to use such an elective as an opportunity to learn more about his *own* cultural background:

- Rana: Do you usually get to do that in your other classes?
- Amjaad and Daakshi: No.
- Fuad: We should have a class... about that.
- Rana: About what?
- Amjaad: Breakdance.
- Fuad: What you're doing. [...] We should have a Option in that... Additional class in it.
- Amjaad: Yeah, your country... You should have a like Option in which you can learn about your... country. I forget.
- Daakshi: Different cultures.
- Amjaad: Different cultures.
- Shakir: Different religions?
- Amjaad: Yeah, your project. Yeah. [...] Like in... a *full*-year Option.
- [...]
- Daakshi: Yeah, that would be good.

Furthermore, it was evident that the students' experience during this project taught them to view classmates of other cultures as valuable sources of knowledge.

Dalisay, for instance, said she wished that *all* of her ELL classmates had chosen to participate in the project, presumably so she could learn even more songs and dances from them (Post-project Sharing session 4, June 25, 2014). Furthermore, it was especially interesting to learn of some of the South Asian students' regrets, given the intergroup conflicts I mentioned in Chapter 3. Following is an excerpt from the conversation we had when I asked some of the male students whether there was anything they did not like about the project.

- Deepak: The group we did... we separated the boys and the girls.

- Shakir: Yeah, that was the best!

- Deepak: No! That was the worst, because...

- Daakshi [surprised]: What?

- Deepak: ... we didn't get to learn about the *girls* so much. And we just wander around, and we didn't dance better. [...]

- Rana: But you realize that… [...] At the beginning of the project, every time I would try to put girls and boys together, people would have like a revolt or something. They would not want that. So gradually, as time went by, I realized that some girls were interested in doing what the boys were doing, and vice versa. So [...] Falak started drumming, Aisha started drumming... And then 'Hona Tha Pyar'.... [...] The girls joined your groups, and... So, was that a good thing or a bad thing?

- Amjaad: Nobody cares.

- Deepak: That was good.

- Daakshi: That was a good thing.

- Rana: Why was that a good thing?

- Shakir: We got the singer for the girl part.

- Deepak: And not that we know how they sing. They... they were pretty good in singing.

- Shakir: Yeah.

- Rana: Ok, so you didn't know that they could sing before? You've never seen what they can do...

- Deepak: Yeah... yeah... […]

- Rana: So... how would you have done that differently?

- Deepak: You can just mix them together and... do a one performance - not *ten* performance... [...]
- Rana: So you wanted to do everything together… […] You wanted to be more involved in what *they* were doing, and you wanted them to be involved in what *you're* doing.
- Daakshi: Yeah... Like we can dance.
- Shakir: Yesss. (Liberty School Post-project sharing session, June 23, 2014)

During another sharing session, all five of the female students expressed a tremendous interest in learning about Japanese culture. It seems that their school fieldtrip to the Japanese cultural centre in Edmonton had greatly piqued their interest. They told me that they had the opportunity to learn a lot about Japanese language, clothing, and even children's games. At one point, Rayya expressed her genuine regret about not having a Japanese classmate, because they could have taught her Japanese songs or dances during the project. Dalisay and Adelina chimed in: "I know!" And Diya and Malaya agreed. Adelina then suggested that I bring a Japanese person along when I return to run the project the year after! At this point, I had become quite intrigued; I asked them why many of them seem to like Japanese culture, and suddenly all of the girls started explaining very excitedly: Adelina, Dalisay, and Rayya said they like anime, and Rayya added that she likes Japanese language and food. Diya stated that she likes Japanese language, karate, games and clothes, but said the language is very difficult to learn. Diya and Malaya then began to tell me about a fun Japanese children's game they had learned where you pick something up with a stick (Post-project sharing session 4, June 25, 2014).

This prompted me to ask them whether they would have liked to share games from their cultures during the project. Upon hearing my question, the students all got extremely excited again, and they all tried to speak at the same time, then they began to laugh. It seems that the day before, Dalisay and Malaya (the Filipino sisters) had taught three of their female Indian classmates (Diya, Amisha, and Isha) how to skip rope - a children's game that the sisters had learned back in the Philippines. Diya tried to explain to Adelina, Rayya, and me how the game is played; soon thereafter, Diya and Malaya began to laugh together, for demonstrating the game was not an easy feat to accomplish while seated (Post-project sharing session 4, June 25, 2014). Admittedly, I was happy to learn that the project had encouraged some students to start teaching each other different

types of embodied practices from their cultures. What is notable here is that the project succeeded in opening a new, potentially prolific channel of communication that is rooted in a shared interest in embodied intercultural teaching and learning. It is also important to mention that the Filipino sisters taught the Indian girls the rope-skipping game after Diya and Amisha had toiled/laboured over teaching the Bollywood dance to several students *including* Dalisay and Malaya.

2. Students' peer relationships

Besides increasing their interest in similar future endeavours, it seems that participating in intercultural teaching and learning had an impact on students' existing peer relationships. Many students stated as much during the sharing sessions, and Jane Lewis confirmed it during an interview, stating the project encouraged students to work with their classmates to learn about other cultures, and that it helped them "come together" (Post-project interview with Jane and Marco, June 27, 2014). Throughout the sharing sessions, the students pinpointed a number of different project aspects that impacted their attitudes towards their classmates and even close friends, thereby opening new channels of communication among them and in some cases even bringing them closer together.

During one of the post-project sharing sessions, some students mentioned a key outcome relating to the discovery of commonalities across cultures and the destruction of stereotypes about students from other cultures. While discussing their opinion of the pre-project sharing session, for example, Deepak said he liked that he got to learn more things about his classmates, adding that this made them realize that they had been stereotyping each other. He and Daakshi then told me why they had liked participating in the True or False activity:

- Daakshi: We can know how different cultures, and we can like, be friendlier with them.
- Rana: So why would you be more friendly with them?
- Daakshi: After we know that they... sometimes, we think that *we* are only doing that thing, but they're not doing. And after that, we came to know that *they* are also doing that thing.
- Rana: Like what?

- Deepak: Like cultural things.
- Daakshi: I don't knew that Muzuri and Fuad are also here can do breakdance.

    (Post-project sharing session 1, June 23, 2014)

This suggests that engaging in verbal intercultural dialogue allowed students to learn about new aspects of their classmates' lives, thus beginning to destroy cultural stereotypes and revealing cross-cultural commonalities that could pave the way towards intercultural friendships. Interestingly, Deepak mentioned that the project had further allowed him to learn some things he did not even know about his close friends; for example, although he was under the impression that Daakshi did not like pop music, this turned out not to be the case at all (Post-project sharing session 1, June 23, 2014).

For some of the female students, the project seemed to visibly "bring them closer," as Jane Lewis put it (Conversation with Jane Lewis, June 13, 2014). The closer bond they had formed was evident in these students' interactions when I played the video recording of the final performance during one of the post-project sharing sessions. The Filipino sisters were especially eager to watch the recording; they had been unable to participate in the actual performance because its timing conflicted with their weekly Wednesday night church attendance. I first played the video of Rayya's Filippino song performance. Malaya, Dalisay, Diya, and Rayya were so visibly excited they could hardly contain themselves! Malaya struggled to hear her pre-recorded vocal and guitar track that was supporting Rayya's voice. Then, she noted that Rayya looked cute in her outfit. Next, I played the video of the Bollywood dance. They were all very excited to see it, and Malaya said that she was so proud to see Diya's expert moves. The girls laughed when they saw Ameena mixing up the dance steps. Soon thereafter, they began to dance along with the choreography in the video, as Rayya sang along (Post-project sharing session 4, June 25, 2014).

When I asked these students how they felt about their classmates after participating in the project, Rayya said she feels proud of her classmates because "they were brave enough to do this." Malaya said she agreed with her, and Dalisay said it was nice to see that her classmates were comfortable enough to show their culture. Perhaps most significantly, this multicultural group of students clearly stated that their collective

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experience of intercultural teaching and learning actually strengthened their relationships and brought them closer together:

- Rana: Has your friendship circle changed in any way after this project?
- Malaya: Umm, yeah!
- [...]
- Rayya: We know *more* about each other now.
- Diya; Yeah, so *yeah*… My [circle] *did* change [nodding towards Malaya who nodded and smiled back], 'cause like *now*, my friend is like Malaya, Dalisay [pointing at each of them]… But like they *were* my friend [before], but like now they're like… [looking at Malaya and smiling]
- Malaya [making eye contact with Diya and both smiling]: *Close* friends.
- Diya: *Closer*. [Malaya was also smiling, then she reached across the table and high-fived Diya, who laughed.]
- […]
- Rana [addressing Rayya]: You were saying something about friends.
- Rayya: Uhh, yeah, yeah, they're really nice, and they're… it's closer, 'cause I know more *about* them now. I know more about their culture, and then we start to discuss like… we just like start to meet *up* and stuff like that… And it's *cool* because now I know more about them! And now they're like… and they *complement* me and stuff like that… That's nice… Stuff like that (Post-project sharing session 4, June 25, 2014).

3. Students' self-confidence and cultural pride

Finally, the project seemed to have a palpable impact on students' self-confidence and sense of self-worth, in terms of their personal abilities as well as the non-dominant ("minority') facets of their cultural identities within the context of a Canadian school. During a post-project interview, Jane Lewis and Marco Moustaki both stated that Malaya used to be very shy, but the project helped her "come out of her shell." They also agreed that Adelina had "come a long way" since the beginning of the project, with Jane noting that many of the female students (including Adelina, Dalisay, Malaya, and the Bollywood dancers) demonstrated incredible talent during their final performances. Marco summed it up by saying that the project gave the students the confidence to try, and the final

performances provided them with good exposure within the school (Post-project interview with Jane Lewis and Marco Moustaki, June 27, 2014). To be sure, an audience turnout of 150 people was in itself incredibly legitimizing. Particularly significant, however, were the students' own descriptions of various aspects that boosted their confidence and validated their minority cultures throughout various stages of the project.

During the post-project sharing sessions, a number of the students identified a seemingly self-evident truth: that simply publicly exhibiting and representing their minority (musical) cultures resulted in a surge of cultural pride. For instance, when I asked the students what they thought of the final performances, Daakshi said that he thought the *gerba* was the best performance "because it represent our culture..." (Post-project sharing session 1, June 23, 2014) At another point, I asked the students how they felt about their native cultures after participating in the project; Rayya, Diya, Dalisay, and Malaya all responded by saying that they are now more proud of their cultures. Rayya elaborated further: "I like my culture because people are proud to show that they're from it;" then she explained that her cultural pride increased because she saw her classmates performing a song from it in Urdu (Post-project sharing session 4, June 25, 2014).

Other students spoke of the impact of the audience members' engagement with the Indian girls' rendition of their national anthem. Adelina was the first to turn our attention to this issue, as she sought to provide her opinion of the public performances. She said that she liked how the Indian, as well as non-Indian, audience members rose from their seats during the national anthem. Adelina explained that it was like they were "united across cultures" - they were "together in a group." Later, I tried to elicit other students' impressions of the audience's engagement with the national anthem. This led into a discussion about the different standing postures and hand gestures that people from their various countries make when listening to their own national anthem. I asked them how they felt when all the audience members rose from their seats during that particular rendition:

- Rayya: That was nice.
- Diya: Good. That everyone like respect like… other cultures and their anthem.

- Rayya [laughing]: It was kind of awkward though, because they didn't really know the lyrics.

- Rana: That's true.

- Diya: Yeah, but it's ok if they like just stand up…

- […]

- Rayya: What made me so interested was that there were people from *India* who were actually *saying* it! They were like… they were going along with it, when usually it's supposed to be *[the students']* performance.

- Diya: Yeah, so like *that's* what I'm saying. (Post-project sharing session 4, June 25, 2014)

Finally, and despite the earlier resistance to segregation and various intergroup tensions, the students generally received resoundingly positive feedback about their performances from their classmates. Sharing sessions indicated that the overwhelming praise they received further contributed to increasing their cultural pride. For example, when I asked the students how they feel about their native cultures after participating in the project, Diya responded as such: "I'm proud of my culture 'cause they [pointing at the other students in the sharing session] like our culture's dance" (Post-project sharing session 4, June 25, 2014). In fact, the sharing sessions provided a space for students to express their appreciation of their classmates' cultures and performances face-to-face. For example, Ameena, Falak, and Kajri said they liked the Bollywood dance, Ameena said that Falak's drumming group was "awesome," and Falak said she liked Rayya's and Adelina's songs (Post-project sharing session 3, June 24, 2014). Interestingly, Malaya and Dalisay were very quiet during this part of the discussion. I suspected they felt like they could not contribute to the conversation because they were unable to participate or watch their classmates' performances during the final event; so I attempted to highlight their pre-performance efforts:

- Rana: People were very happy with [Rayya's performance], and you know, of course, part of that was her doing, but a big part of it was because you *taught* her so well, right?

- Rayya [addressing Malaya and Dalisay]: Thank you *so* much! … I know some Filipino now - right? Filipino? ... Tagalog. [The girls laughed.]

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- Diya: […] Their voice was like very beautiful, and then she was playing the guitar very well.
- Malaya: Thank you!!
- Rana: Yeah, you were both amazing.
- Malaya [addressing Diya]: I really like the [Bollywood] dance - I really like it! It was… different. (Post-project sharing session 4, June 25, 2014)

But perhaps the most powerful indicator of appreciation and respect for other (musical) cultures was many students' willingness to devote time and energy to learning and publicly performing a song or dance from that culture. Rayya captured this sentiment perfectly as she attempted to explain why her pride in her Pakistani culture increased after participating in the project: "Because they performed a *song* from it. In Urdu. And they got people from India to do it" (Post-project sharing session 4, June 25, 2014).

Chapter 8: Critical Ethnomusicology Pedagogy

Samuel Araujo contends that ethnomusicologists need to begin unearthing the top-down (and symbolically violent) neo-colonial processes of knowledge production (Araujo et al. 2010, 219). Based on my praxis in Edmonton, I argue that recognizing the musical and cultural "wealth of knowledges" of migrant individuals and families represents a key strategy in challenging the Anglo-cultural bias in Canadian schooling. In this chapter, I utilize insights acquired from three cycles of ethnomusicological praxis in order to propose and theorize a new pedagogical approach called Critical Ethnomusicology Pedagogy (CEP). I argue that this approach takes critical pedagogy a step further in order to address the migrant and multicultural realities of the contemporary Canadian classroom.

A. Praxis in two school contexts

As I have demonstrated in this dissertation, my ethnomusicological praxis assumed different forms at Piety School and Liberty School; this was due to a number of factors, namely: school philosophy and culture, school resources and staff support, participating class size, school cultural politics, inter-student social dynamics, and individual student characteristics. For example, while the Piety School project, "Music from my Culture," took on a family-oriented cultural empowerment focus, the Liberty School project, "Cultural Ambassadors," assumed a more peer-oriented intercultural dialogue focus.

At Piety School, the focus was on legitimizing the refugee students' and parents' non-dominant cultural knowledges and experiences of refuge and settlement. This was achieved when the migrant youth and their parents effectively became "teachers," while their teachers and the PhD researcher became "students." In Paulo Freire's terms, this "reconciled the teacher-student contradiction," if only temporarily in this case. The ethnomusicology project further enhanced the migrant students' critical understanding of their classmates' different cultural identities and practices, while highlighting similarities in migration experience and connections between worldviews, values, and customs among cultures that are usually reified within mainstream Canadian schooling. Due to the small, cohesive nature of the Transitions class and the safe environment created by the

Life Skills program, the students were quite accustomed to expressing their personal opinions and having candid discussions in class[49]. Therefore, they were generally willing and able to voice their critical opinions openly within the ethnomusicological project and sharing sessions.

At Liberty School, the focus was on legitimizing the ELL students' non-dominant knowledges and experiences, while empowering those marginalized within the ELL class itself - namely, those of non-South Asian (or "minority migrant") background. The first goal was achieved when the ELL students effectively became "teachers," while their teachers and the PhD researcher became "students." The second goal was achieved when the minority migrant youth became "teachers," and the majority (South Asian) migrant youth became their "students." The ethnomusicology project further enhanced the ELL students' critical understanding of their classmates' different cultural identities and practices, while highlighting similarities in migration experience and connections between worldviews, values, and customs among typically reified cultures. However, this could not be achieved without incorporating a Freirean-inspired "problem-posing" approach, wherein students began to gain an awareness of the gender- and culture-exclusive social practices within their own class. This was followed by attempts at verbal reflection and dialogue about ways to change this state of affairs. Despite the students' relative fluency in English, most of them were unwilling or unable to voice their critical opinions openly during the early sharing sessions and project activities; this was unsurprising considering the large, segregated nature of the ELL class and the pre-existent personality conflicts among some students. In this context, it became absolutely imperative to utilize creative, performative means of knowledge sharing and production, if only to begin to transcend intergroup rivalries and perceived intercultural barriers.

B. A malleable approach

Although the ethnomusicological project had a different focus within each school, it is possible to distill the three cycles praxis into a single, malleable approach that draws on key theoretical principles from critical pedagogy and practical tools from ethnomusicological research. In what follows, I shall elucidate some of the main

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[49] As one student stated: "Once you are in [Life Skills] you learn to share your ideas and opinions" (Life Skills 2012 evaluation report, p. 18).

components of this novel approach, which I refer to as Critical Ethnomusicology Pedagogy (CEP).

First and foremost, the Project Instigator (PI) (researcher, teacher, etc.) conducts ethnographic research within various school contexts, including the participating classroom, recess, school-wide events, and specialized migrant program contexts. The aim is to familiarize oneself with the school culture, diverse programming, and migrant students' school routines, while noting their social circles and dynamics. This is usually accompanied by consultations with different stakeholders, including the participating students, teachers, administrative staff, and parents if possible. Such preliminary research would help the PI to collaboratively pinpoint the key culture-related issues that migrant students are facing in that school context; these will inform the focus of the CEP project. Once the necessary student and parent consent is obtained, the project may begin.

An important component of the CEP approach is participatory research activities wherein students reflect on and participate in classroom dialogue about their musico-cultural identities and practices in light of their experiences of migration, while discussing the former's impact on their family and peer relationships. These are followed by musico-cultural interviews; depending on the focus of the project, each student conducts an interview with their parent or a classmate of a different cultural background. In classes with a majority of refugee students of diverse cultures, the emphasis could be on student cultural empowerment through a family-based approach. In classes with a majority of immigrant students of diverse cultures, the focus could be on intercultural dialogue through a peer-based approach. Subsequently, students following the family-based approach would prepare their research findings, along with a creative reflection or solo or collective performance. On the other hand, students following the peer-focused approach would engage in supervised participatory music-making (or "musicking") activities, where students of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds teach each other music and dance selections with which they identify, culturally or otherwise.

This is followed by a public presentation of the students' research findings and creative music or dance performances to an audience of their peers, parents, and teachers. The final component of the CEP method is evaluative; interviews and sharing sessions are held with participating students, their teachers, and if possible, their parents. This

allows different stakeholders to share their views regarding the outcomes of the project and provides students with a space to reflect on the project's pros and cons, and the lessons they learned. Furthermore, it provides the PI with an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of different project components in order to improve the CEP approach with each cycle of praxis. Notably, this component also enhances the PI's understanding of the migrant students' lived experiences, concerns, and priorities, thereby allowing her to better serve their needs in her role as a consultant, school teacher, or provider of specialized school services for the migrant student population.

C. CEP's value

By incorporating ethnomusicology research tools, CEP actively involves students in critical thinking and inquiry about their classmates' migration experiences and multiple, fluid musico-cultural identities (as opposed to "cultures" as ossified curricular topics), as well as their own. Loosely based on Freire's problem-posing approach, CEP encourages students to begin to question cultural inequities within their Canadian school or classroom environment, while brainstorming ways to address these issues through ethnomusicological means. The music research and presentation aspects of this approach are capable of challenging cultural stereotypes, facilitating intercultural dialogue, and reinforcing the migrant parent's position as a valuable source of musico-cultural knowledge for their child and school. Furthermore, unlike most existent cultural empowerment projects that cater to a single linguistic-cultural group to the exclusion of others, CEP can adapt to all subject-positions within a classroom, thereby acknowledging and engaging with the unique identity politics of each context.

CEP further provides the space for students to actively begin to address these issues through participatory music making (or "musicking") with their parents or peers. Unlike critical pedagogy's usual focus on verbal dialogue as an avenue towards critical thinking and conscientization (even within the theatrical arts), this approach's focus on music and dance performance is capable of transcending some barriers that may render traditional critical pedagogy ineffective within junior high classrooms, and particularly with a culturally diverse group of migrant students. These barriers include language, low levels of trust and social cohesion, verbal tiptoeing around cultural and racial difference, cultural-linguistic segregation, and intergroup or personality conflicts. This is largely

because participatory music making is a malleable, performative, nonverbal, affective, and engaging social practice, particularly for young people. As such, the creative musical process is capable of nonverbally negotiating and subverting entrenched relations of power among youth and between youth and adults, engaging in *performative* knowledge sharing and production, legitimizing multiple non-dominant knowledges, challenging students' cultural stereotypes, and facilitating social bonding within multicultural classrooms and families.

What is unique about CEP is that it extends Freire's notion of dialogic knowledge production and action into the realm of music and dance performance. For, unlike verbal critical pedagogy, this approach tries to incorporate as many opportunities for students to engage in music and dance performance. In this way, CEP plays to the strengths of nonverbal, performative exchanges of knowledge, and working towards a common performative goal, particularly in terms of expressing, negotiating, and contesting novel power relations between the socio-culturally dominant and marginalized.

Based on several cycles of praxis, I argue that CEP is capable of transforming migrant students and their parents into self-conscious *subjects* who actively engage in the production and consumption of musical knowledge and discourses about themselves, instead of being mere *objects* of Canadian schooling's neocolonial discourses about social marginalization. In fact, it establishes migrant students as "cultural *ambassadors*," with all the value and social responsibility that this title entails, particularly within a hyper-diverse context like Canada. As such, this approach may constitute a step towards combating symbolic violence within multicultural schools in a variety of geographical contexts.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Throughout my dissertation, I ethnographically documented, comparatively analyzed, and theorized three consecutive cycles of ethnomusicological praxis. In this chapter, I shall summarize my key findings, while discussing the contributions and limitations of my research in various areas of scholarship and practice.

A. Scholarly contributions

1. Conducting research with migrant youth

In my dissertation, I ethnographically explored the intricacies of conducting research with migrant youth in a Canadian school setting. I detailed my ethnomusicological praxis and discussed my experimentations with various music-centered research methodologies in order to extrapolate a youth-centered, collaborative approach that is engaging for migrant youth of diverse backgrounds. I showed how these research methodologies allowed me to: (a) develop relationships of trust with the young migrant students, (b) ethically gather rich ethnographic data about their social interactions and intercultural learning processes, and (c) glean unique insights into their lived experiences of migration and schooling through class discussions, in-depth interviews, and sharing sessions. Furthermore, I compared the methodological challenges and negotiations within each cycle of praxis, while citing the influence of a variety of factors: school philosophy and culture, school resources and staff support, participating class size, school cultural politics, inter-student social dynamics, and individual student characteristics (immigrant status, family situation and history, socio-economic background, gender, cultural background, English language ability, musical interest and ability, personality).

As such, my research contributes to the burgeoning discourse on the theoretical and methodological challenges of conducting applied ethnomusicology projects. Given the hyper-diverse reality of immigrant-receiving countries these days, it is important that ethnomusicologists start paying serious attention to the challenges that immigrant and refugee youth are facing within these countries. As a key nexus for migrant youth settlement and social integration, the public school represents an important research context that is frequently overlooked in our disciplinary field. Ethnomusicologists

possess rigorous cross-cultural training in music and are thus uniquely qualified to deal with the complexities of cultural diversity through a socio-artistic medium that is central to human processes of self-identification, social connection, and community-building (MacDonald et al. 2012).

2. Developing CEP

My dissertation utilized the insights acquired from three cycles of praxis in order to propose a new pedagogical approach called Critical Ethnomusicology Pedagogy (CEP). Within this performative-discursive approach, students investigate their peers' migrant identities as well as their own, while exploring new relationships of teaching and learning with their parents, teachers, and peers. Using ethnographic examples from two school settings, I demonstrated how migrant youth might utilize participatory music making and ethnomusicological research tools to: a) counter the "subtractive," colonizing effects of Canadian mainstream schooling, b) promote a more critical understanding and practice of multiculturalism within their schools, and c) begin to formulate new social interactions and friendships with students of other linguistic, cultural, and religious backgrounds.

Besides supplementing the current literature on ethnomusicological pedagogy, I argue that CEP takes critical pedagogy a step further in order to address the contemporary migrant and multicultural realities of the Canadian classroom. For unlike critical pedagogy's usual focus on *verbal* dialogue as an avenue towards critical thinking and conscientization, this approach's focus on music and dance performance is capable of transcending barriers that may render traditional critical pedagogy ineffective within multicultural migrant classrooms. This is largely because participatory music making is a malleable, performative, nonverbal, affective, and engaging social practice, particularly for young people. As such, it is capable of nonverbally negotiating and subverting entrenched relations of power among youth and between youth and adults, while facilitating social bonding within multicultural classrooms and families.

3. Migrant youth's intersectional identities, social agency, and power relations

By ethnographically investigating young students' experiences of migration and schooling through the lens of music, my dissertation revealed their challenges as well as

their social agency as they negotiated different facets of their fluid, intersectional identities, expressed and pursued their interests, and navigated a variety of relationships within the context of two different school contexts. My research thus contributes to the children's studies literature on migrant youth's experiences of schooling, as well as migrant youth's musical cultures.

My focus on migrant students' strengths and social agency contributes to the growing literature that argues for the misleading and ultimately harmful impacts of the "youth-at-risk" and "crime prevention" discourse. My depiction of migrant youth aims to expose the harm in assuming a framework that indiscriminately labels migrant and/or refugee youth as "at-risk" (te Riele 2006) and focuses blame on young people instead of acknowledging the societal and systemic inadequacies that create risk and produce social marginalization (Knight et al. 2012, 42-43). It urges researchers, policy makers, and service providers to listen to migrant youth's voices and lived experiences, to hear about how various public institutions are inadvertently contributing to their marginalization, as is the case with "subtractive" schooling (Valenzuela 1999).

At the same time, my research aims to deconstruct the reductive binary of migrant student as victim and Canadian-born student as oppressor within research and practice, in a way that recognizes a variety of individual, interpersonal, and contextual factors that contribute to migrant students' levels of social marginalization or integration. As my account of the Liberty School project shows, this binary fails to consider the complex interplay of power relations - and sometimes-exclusionary social practices - among migrant students themselves. Some of the factors that one needs to consider are: the dominant migrant population attending each school (such as the South Asian student population at Liberty School), the status of each migrant student's family in Canada (refugee, immigrant, temporary foreign worker), the extent of discrimination that their ethno-cultural or racial community faces, their socio-economic status, their social capital and how well-connected they are to their ethno-cultural community in the host country, how well-established their ethno-cultural community is (ethno-cultural or religious institutions, access to native language education), etc.

B. Practical contributions and limitations

1. Implications for educational and child service policies, programs, and practices

My dissertation research further contributes to the policy and practice aspects in various publicly funded sectors in immigrant-receiving countries such as Canada.

Through an in-depth study within two school contexts, my dissertation demonstrated a variety of commonalities and differences in students' individual experiences of migration and schooling. Based on this research, I argue for the importance of espousing a child-centered approach when designing and implementing social programs for migrant youth. For, while one may discern some general patterns regarding children's experiences of migration and their subsequent culture-related challenges and needs, each migrant student cohort in each school will likely communicate specific concerns and priorities, based on a variety of personal factors, group dynamics, school culture, and broader societal attitudes towards migration and migrant children during different historical junctures and within different geographical areas. Moreover, my research revealed the frequent disjunctures between migrant children's experiences of schooling and official school discourses regarding the effectiveness of various policies, programs, and service provisions. As such, I advocate holding periodical child-led consultations within each school with a migrant population, and using these young perspectives in order to inform program provisions for this population. For, as Knorr and Nunes argue, social action programs can only be developed in ways that suit children - rather than merely suiting "the interests of children as perceived by adults" - if children are consulted within the process (Knorr and Nunes 2005, 12-13). Such a scenario entails a shift from adult-centered to child-centered approaches to research on children, where children speak for themselves, and adults listen to the *voice* of the child.

In fact, child social service providers and newcomer settlement practitioners may wish to draw on my praxial approach to better understand migrant children and youth's socio-cultural experiences and needs. As this dissertation has showed, my research methodology allowed me to: (a) develop relationships of trust with the young migrant students, (b) ethically gather rich ethnographic data about their social interactions and

intercultural learning processes, and (c) glean unique insights into their lived experiences of migration and schooling through class discussions, in-depth interviews, and sharing sessions. According to Knorr and Nunes: "There can be no doubt that cultural identity and social practices learned and generated in childhood have an important impact on the course of social and cultural integration in youth and adulthood. Therefore, the investigation of these processes is not only of scientific interest but can also give important impetus to the development of strategies and modes of integration that appeal to children and serve their needs" (Knorr and Nunes 2005, 16).

On the other hand, educational practitioners (such as teachers) as well as policy makers can use critical ethnomusicology pedagogy (CEP). Throughout my ethnomusicological praxis in Edmonton, I tried to collaboratively develop a critical pedagogical approach that could validate non-dominant cultures and knowledges while facilitating positive social interactions and friendships among students of diverse linguistic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Combining ethnomusicological research with participatory music making, this approach constituted a set of pedagogical strategies that were flexible and dialogical enough to adapt to various contingencies, including school philosophy and culture, research access restrictions, level of staff support, as well as student cultural backgrounds, language ability, etc. Therefore, various educational practitioners can use CEP to more effectively connect with, teach, and deliver programs to migrant children and youth of various cultures by better understanding their experiences and needs. According to critical education theorists Kincheloe, McLaren, and Steinberg: "A central aspect of critical teacher research involves studying students, so they can be better understood and taught. Freire argued that all teachers need to engage in a constant dialogue with students, a dialogue that questions existing knowledge and problematizes the traditional power relations that have served to marginalize specific groups and individuals. In these research dialogues with students, critical teachers listen carefully to what students have to say about their communities and the problems that confront them. Teachers help students frame these problems in a larger social, cultural, and political context in order to solve them" (Kincheloe et al. 2011). In the case of multicultural, migrant classrooms, however, CEP provides a starting point that is more engaging, less obtrusive, and more responsive to migrant students' literacy and language

barriers than conventional, verbal approaches to critical pedagogy are. Due to CEP's malleable nature, interested parties in Canada and elsewhere can use this approach within their own programs, while tailoring it to the specific needs of their students or youth groups. Furthermore, CEP provides one response to Knight et al.'s call for antiracism programs that recognize "the active agency and resilience of the immigrants and refugees themselves" (Knight et al. 2012, 47). This is because CEP shifts the focus from the "youth-at-risk" discourse that highlights young people's so-called deficiencies, instead providing strategies that lead to a more critical, empowering, and constructive type of engagement among students, parents, and teachers.

2. A continually reinvented and self-sustaining pedagogy

Due to CEP's malleable and dialogic nature, it builds the habit of intercultural question posing, intercultural sharing, and performative learning among students and teachers, such that it is continually reinvented and self-sustained. It encourages educational practitioners to organically tailor its key strategies to fit any classroom context or curricular unit, while building on student interests and concerns, and even spontaneously utilizing any situation as a "teachable moment." The result seems to promise a nuanced approach, better adapted to socio-cultural realities, and more emancipatory than any fixed curriculum could hope to be. This became evident at various points throughout my three cycles of ethnomusicology praxis; for educational practitioners who observed CEP in action began to independently extend its various strategies into their teaching practices, while moulding them to fit different contexts and situations.

For example, Ella and Katia were both thrilled see the positive impact that the "Weddings from my Culture" project had on the Transition students' social cohesion as a group. Ella told me that although they sometimes bickered throughout, the students helped and cheered each other along - especially during the nerve-wracking final presentations - because they had experienced the challenging process together. She believed that this shared experience had contributed to building comradery and class spirit, where the students became more cooperative rather than competitive with each other. Ella further informed me that Katia had decided to integrate the values of team work and cooperation into her classroom lessons and activities in the following school

year, while deliberately addressing them during the two initial Life Skills field trips (Ella's interview with the author, June 29, 2012). The two teachers had also witnessed the impact that intercultural learning had on their students' relationships with classmates of other cultures and religions. While interviewing Katia after the second cycle of praxis (the "Music from my Culture" project), for instance, she told me that she had decided to make the Transition class's Religion curriculum more culturally inclusive the following year. Specifically, she planned to put together a unit on Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity and another on Islam, "just so that the kids can help to understand each other more" (Katia's interview with the author, May 28, 2013).

Witnessing CEP in action further influenced Ella's practices within the Life Skills program. Following the first cycle of praxis, I asked her whether the Transition program ever provides students with any opportunities to explore their classmates' cultural backgrounds. Ella said "no;" then she added that my ethnomusicological project with her students had propelled her to do the following during her Life Skills sessions: "I went it one day and I was feeling very happy, and I didn't want to teach, and I really wanted to sing!" She laughed, then continued: "And I said to them: 'Look you guys, [...] we can do the lesson, or we can share culturally.' [...] I sang Jamaican folk songs, which was a bit of an eye-opener because I don't think they expected Jamaican folk songs to sound like that. They thought it would sound like reggae or dancehall - they had no concept of Jamaica other than those things. And then [...] I said 'Just sing a song in your own language,' and some people were too shy, so we had to close our eyes while they sang. [...] And it was really, really nice! And then a second day, we had all this little block of time, and I said: 'Ok, let's do some more sharing! [...] I'm gonna start by singing, and then you come up with something else, but that was our second time around, so people were a little less nervous... When I go [to teach] next year, I think it's something I might do more and more" (Ella's interview with the author, June 29, 2012).

Ella provided me with yet another example following the second cycle of praxis at Piety School. She told me that she had recently been talking to some of the female Transition students about hygiene and medicine, and they ended up discussing natural remedies from their various cultures. Ella succeeded this by noting that, although it is helpful to have a volunteer policeman visit the Life Skills classroom to raise the students'

awareness about body image, drug use, and the like (as has been the case in the past), she does not want to do that over the following three to four weeks. She told me that she is considering personally facilitating some sessions on medicine in different cultures instead (Ella's conversation with the author, May 10, 2013).

Besides encouraging Piety School educational practitioners to utilize culturally responsive curricula and practices within their teaching, CEP's affirmative results during the first cycle of praxis led the community organization delivering Life Skills to make some significant changes to its curriculum, which had previously drawn on the Lion's Quest curriculum. Specifically, the organization added "cultural identity," "being an immigrant," and "diversity in Canada" to the program's curricular foci. It subsequently included several activities based on CEP in its Life Skills curriculum, which it made available online and in print to any educational practitioner working with migrant, and specifically refugee, youth in Canada and elsewhere.[50]

As the examples above demonstrate, CEP-inspired practices represent an easy and effective way for educational practitioners and their students to take matters into their own hands in terms of challenging asymmetrical relations of power within schools. This is especially important, given the slow-moving pace of broader educational policy reforms. Educational practitioners are much more likely to embrace such strategies after personally witnessing their impact on their students and their relationships with them.

3. Broader applications of CEP

My research suggests that migrant students of *all* backgrounds would benefit greatly from a peer-oriented intercultural dialogue program; in this case, students would use musical research and performance to challenge cultural stereotypes, enhance cross-cultural understanding, instigate meaningful dialogue, and break down the perceived barriers to intercultural friendships. However, regardless of the school context, I would recommend that migrant students of *refugee* background participate in a family-based cultural empowerment project. For the families of the economic immigrant students I worked with tended to possess more established community ties in Edmonton, as well as relatively higher education and English language proficiency levels; this allowed them to

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[50] I shall not be sharing this curriculum's web page in order to protect the privacy of the children involved in my research.

maintain their already strong musical and cultural traditions within the host country. In contrast, young refugee students at both schools tended to possess low confidence levels due to limited prior schooling and English language skills, relatively little knowledge about their home cultures' languages and traditions, and limited community relations within their host country. Based on my research, refugee youth and their families are likely to find the cultural empowerment project valuable in that it encourages intergenerational learning and musico-cultural continuity, enhances students' self-confidence cultural pride, and strengthens their peer and family relationships.

Notably, educational practitioners at Piety School and Liberty School believed that CEP-inspired projects should be implemented with *all* junior high students in Canada. As a "white" woman herself, Jane argued that every Canadian family has its own "culture" at home - even so-called white families. During our pre-project consultations at Liberty School, Marco was initially hoping that I could work with Aboriginal students as well (Conversation with Jane Lewis and Marco Moustaki, January 9, 2014). Furthermore, as a "visible minority" Canadian of Jamaican origin, Ella detailed the importance of such projects for all students, as well as *teachers,* in Canada. Following are excerpts from our conversations in May and June 2013:

> "… that sort of speaks to the value of the project, and how valuable that project is, and potentially for *every* single child in Canada. Because the thing about it is that... it doesn't matter which culture they come from, you know, it doesn't matter if they look like they come from the dominant culture, which many people do, but when you talk to them they tell you they're Irish or they're Jewish or they're this, or... right? When imagine doing an exercise like this with just a class of students! It doesn't matter if they're new immigrants, older immigrants, whatever!... or Aboriginal people... *just* a group of people who go home and say 'Tell me, Mum or Dad, tell me about my culture. Tell me who I am, basically.' You know? 'Tell me where from. [...] And people actually *want* to know who I am. [...] I mean, seriously, [...] I know when I move on from this position, and if I get to teach, [...] I'm *gonna* take this to my teaching. Because it's *profound*. […] it can be [...] night and day - a simple thing like that where... Aaahhh!!! I'm just blown away - I'm just totally blown away!" (Ella's conversation with the author, May 22, 2013)

"… I just think it's such a cool thing to have kids go home and question about *themselves*. Because, in the general curriculum, like I said, you don't get asked about yourself. You may get asked about what you *think* about something in English Language Arts; otherwise, you never really get asked about yourself. So, it's a lonely thing, coming from a different culture, especially if you're not 'Canadian.' Then it's a lonely thing! [...] Even as a teacher, I found... Lonely thing, going into the classroom and teaching material that does not reflect me or my culture in any way, shape, or form. Like... everything is foreign - *everything* is foreign! [...] it makes you feel isolated and lonely! And I think that's one of the reasons this project was so powerful, because for the first time, who they were - who they *are* culturally, ethnically, whatever - but that other aspect of *them* was brought in as a main focus for the class. So that's why I think *all* classes can do this, because it's... up close and personal, and it's good, it's good to do stuff like that with children, *especially* this age" (Ella's interview with the author, June 6, 2013).

4. The need for a public (and sustainable) CEP

Despite the largely affirmative outcomes of implementing CEP within two schools in Edmonton, critical pedagogues could rightly question how this approach might lead to any *broader* social change in Canadian society when it is confined to the realm of one junior high school at a time.

Although CEP can empower students of non-dominant and migrant cultures and raise their critical consciousness, it does not claim to bring about broader social change in and of itself. That can only be achieved through a more protracted process, where teachers, researchers, practitioners, and other advocates, act as adult allies, thus using their relative position of power to assist young people in their fight for social change. In the future, I plan to mobilize my research by collaborating with youth groups and organizations to advocate for the integration of children and youth's diverse voices, lived experiences, cultures, and concerns into various aspects of Canadian schooling, including the provincially mandated curriculum. As Darder et al. argue, "… critical educators attempt to reach beyond the boundaries of the classroom, into communities, workplaces,

and public arenas where people congregate, reflect, and negotiate daily survival. Furthermore, it is within this context, of what Giroux's terms a *public pedagogy*, that critical educators can develop their capacity to read power effectively and thus enact political and pedagogical projects, in the interest of social justice and critical democratic life. […] no political struggle in a school or society can be waged by one lone voice in the wilderness, nor are democratic principles of education ever guaranteed. It is precisely for this reason that on-going emancipatory efforts within schools must be linked to collective emancipatory efforts within and across communities" (Darder et al. 2009, 18-19). Such a "public pedagogy" should be enacted if CEP's principles are to have any chance of making a wider difference and impacting society.

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