Navigating and Resisting Barriers: Somali-Canadian Youth's Experiences in Edmonton's Public Schools

by

Mitra Kaitlyn Bates Mokhtari

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Sociology
University of Alberta

Abstract

Based on 13 in-depth interviews with young Somali-Canadians, this research sought to explore the experiences of students in Edmonton's public schools. Given the literature interrogating anti-Black racism and carceral logic within schools, including the specific ways that authority figures – teachers, guidance counselors, school resource officers – can impact student's experiences, this research explored if, and to what extent the experiences of these 13 young people were reflective of this literature. This research found that these students experienced a number of barriers and challenges during their time in public schools. These challenges included low expectations, experiences with streaming, inadequate resources, surveillance and discipline, and anti-Black and anti-Muslim racism. However, this research also explored the ways that these successful students navigated these challenges, developing methods and sites of resistance. These sites of resilient resistance and community cultural wealth were found within the their schools, peers, families, communities, and within themselves. This research contributes to the ongoing conversation regarding anti-Black racism in Canada and attends to specific experiences of 13 young Somali-Canadian living and learning in Edmonton.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Mitra Kaitlyn Bates Mokhtari. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "The Somali experience in Alberta: Hyper marginalization and "places of belonging"", No. 00041472, August 11,2013.

Dedications

To Idil, Bashir, Hodan, Ladan, Khadra, Yasmiin, Hani, Yuusuf, Jamilah, Bilan, Sadia, Habiba, and Cawo.

To all students – learning in spaces, and places that look differently from each other, within systems and without them.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this space to acknowledge that in attending the University of Alberta and conducting research in what is called Edmonton, I am living on Treaty 6 territory, traditional lands of First Nations and Metis peoples.

To my mom and baba, who without fail have allowed me to grow knowing that they stand behind in unwavering support. And to Morteza, whose respect I spent my childhood chasing after – your support means the world to me.

To Ahmed Abdulkadir – without you none of these words would have been written. Your willingness to welcome me allowed me to find a place in Edmonton. Thank you for showing me the love that exists in building community. Thank you for all that you do.

Dr. Sandra Bucerius, thank you. The privilege of working with you has challenged me in so many ways, but has been the most rewarding experience. You've pushed me to think, question, and get comfortable in contradiction. Your mentorship, advice, patience, and attentive feedback have been invaluable.

Dr. Harvey Krahn, thank you for your honest and thoughtful reflections at all stages of this project. It has been a privilege to exchange ideas about education with you and I have learned so much.

Dr. Alexandre Da Costa. Thank you for seeing the potential in this project when I first brought it to you. Our conversations about academia, and community have been freeing. I deeply admire the work you do.

To Emma Jackson, you are so dear to me. All the days you listened to ramble and made sense of the thoughts I was trying to articulate, all the times you let me cry and still made me laugh. Thank you for letting me be frustrated and conflicted.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction

the greatest teacher knows they are only ever a temporal guide. never the destination. never the answer.

     (@nayyirahwaheed, Twitter)

They say the government mislead the youth, youth, youth

     (Kendrick Lamar - Untitled 04: Untitled Unmastered)

My grade 9 science teacher was a fairly eccentric man, who grabbed students'
attention by lighting gummy bears on fire. Although he had these unconventional teaching
techniques that intrigued the 14 year olds in his class, he was able to captivate students in a
really genuine way, allowing students room to question the assumptions in their textbooks,
in the media, and in their lives more generally. I have never been a student who was that
enthralled with the sciences – but it was in this teacher's class that I first became conscious
of the critical ways to think about and look at the education system. One day he played the
class a video called "Changing Education Paradigms," that discussed ideas around the
standardization of schooling, and the ways this serves to organize and stratify society (The
RSA 2010). In many ways this teacher, and the classes he facilitated really contributed to
how I began to understand both the possibilities and the limitations that existed in formal
educational spaces. I often reflect on the ways that this teacher shaped my educational
pathway and the impact teachers in general can play in students' experiences.

Childhood and adolescence can create a sort of "legal strangeness" where youth are
navigating a school system that they had no hand in designing (Stockton 2009: 16). The
school system can often feel alienating for students, and this is true for students of all
backgrounds and social locations. However, public education, regarded as the "hallmark of
liberal pluralism" is, and has been, "failing to provide an equitable environment for the

1

delivery of education for all youth" (Dei, James, Karumanchery, James-Wilson & Zine, 2000:

270). For many, our time at school can be an opportunity to learn and grow. It provides us

a chance to explore new things, with teachers and staff that actively encourage our dreams.

It can be a space in which we feel comfort and build friendships. Although this should be

the case for all students who pass through the doors of Canadian schools, there are many

students who remain unprotected, unaffirmed, and unsupported by and within these

institutions.

A student's social location – inclusive of all intersecting structures – contributes to

the ways that they experience institutions such as schools. In this vein there has been a

move toward naming and exploring the unique experiences of Black Canadians. The 2018

Federal Budget includes – in a seemingly unprecedented way – a commitment to address

the unique challenges that Black Canadians face with a promise of $19 million over five

years to support communities, and conduct research (Morneau 2018). This commitment

underscores an acknowledgment by the federal government that, "it's time we recognize

that anti-Black racism, and unconscious bias does exist" (Trudeau: 2018). Although the

budget does not enumerate specifically concerns within education, it does denote a specific

focus on, "enhancing local community supports for [Black] youth at risk" (Morneau 2018).

The education systems in Canada are one set of institutions that the experiences of all

youth who pass through them must be looked at, as they contribute to how risk is

constructed. Schools bear a tremendous responsibility in impacting the experiences of

youth as sites of education, and development; they socialize, select, legitimize, and organize

those who participant in the institution (Davies & Guppy 2014). As a society, as

communities, and as families we place trust in the education system and the schools we

attend to support students. The implications that education has for life outcomes are immense (James & Turner 2017). Ensuring that all students are able to access quality, safe, and affirming spaces of education is imperative.

A recent report from York University reminds us that conversations regarding anti-Black racism in Canadian schools are not new, but that we are still lacking the empirical research necessary for change to be made (James & Turner 2017). These issues have deep, complex, and systemic roots within Canada that require immediate attention and tangible action (James & Turner 2017). Moreover, the regional differences across Canada, both within a province and between them require much more attention (James & Turner 2017). For example, this recent report speaks to the experiences of Black youth in Toronto's public school system, as well as three surrounding school boards: Durham, Peel, and York (James & Turner 2017). The specificity of this report although extremely informative and illuminating cannot stand in as a reflection for all other school districts across Canada. District-specific research must be conducted in order to understand the nuances of experiences within various public schooling systems, including Edmonton.

It is with these considerations that I sought to further explore the experiences that Somali-Canadian youth in Edmonton were having in the public school system. However, I was not starting a new conversation; these conversations were already ongoing. Community members, parents, and students have been actively engaging with the experiences they were having in the education system for years. The Ogaden Somali Community of Alberta Residents (OSCAR) and the executive director Ahmed Abdulkadir were active participants in such conversations. OSCAR is an organization dedicated to assisting those in the Edmonton Somali community with various concerns from

immigration, to education, to policing. One only has to spend a few minutes at the community organization's space to see the role they play in the community. Mr. Abdulkadir's phones – and, yes he has multiple – are constantly ringing. Whether he's attending to the concerns of parents who have language barriers, or providing a reference for a young person on the job market, he is doing so passionately. Collaborating with Mr. Abdulkadir on this project deeply shaped it at each step. This thesis is first and foremost a modest attempt to contribute to the ongoing conversations that communities are having to develop healthy and safe learning environments for students. It prioritizes the voices of the students with whom I spoke, and seeks to explore how their experiences fit broader patterns, contradict them, and simultaneously challenge a more complex understanding of lived experiences in the Edmonton public school system. Through the development of a deeper understanding of the experiences of students – and the structures that can inform them – I took to this project.

I begin this thesis in Chapter two with a brief but necessary account of settler colonization in Canada in an effort to contextualize the racial logics that operate and underpin within these colonial borders. I then provide both an historical – including this nation's history of slavery – and cotemporary look at some of the ways that anti-Black racism has functioned in Canada. In an effort to further situate the current context and the various structures that hold the potential to impact individual experiences, I briefly discuss Canadian immigration and anti-terrorism legislation. As this research focuses solely on the experiences of 13 young Somali-Canadians, it remained imperative to outline the history of Somali diaspora in Canada, highlight some of the key moments that have influenced

Canadian-Somali relations, and discuss some of the ways that legislation and media have worked in tandem to proliferate racist narratives that target Somali-Canadians.

Chapter three of this thesis provides the theoretical frameworks – including Critical Race Theory (CRT) and the carceral state – and reviews the relevant literature. The literature is Canadian focused in order to attend to the ways that race, racism, and processes of racialization have specifically functioned for young people in Canada's public schools. In chapter four I explain my research methods used, and reflect on my positionality within the project. I explore the barriers to equitable education that student's identified in chapter five and the various ways that these impacted their experiences in school. I then move to chapter six, which focuses on the examples of resistance and community cultural wealth that these students exemplified. To conclude this thesis I spend some time identifying the number of avenues that require further research, some of the limitations of this project, as well as some possible points of policy implication and change.

Chapter 2: Background & Context

Indigenous Peoples & Settler Colonization

This research does not deal directly with the experiences of Indigenous peoples

within the colonial borders of Canada. However, it is imperative that any anti-racist work

situates itself within a discussion of settler colonization – that it makes sure these contexts

do not remain "invisible and natural" (Tuck 2009: 415). Moreover, no conversation

regarding race relations in Canada would be accurately situated without acknowledging

the experiences of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples. It is only by working from a place

that deeply acknowledges this land as a settler colony founded upon white supremacy[1] that

---

[1] I utilize the term white supremacy here in an effort to understand the foundations of Canada and thus illuminate the ways white supremacy has permeated all institutions. The foundations of this understanding come from the work of Charles W. Mills (1998) who writes that white supremacy has "the semantic virtues of clearly signaling reference to a system, a particular kind of polity, so structured as to advantage whites" (100). Additionally, Crenshaw (1988) notes that with the evolution of laws and legislation that no longer legally entrench white supremacy, it remains, because "a society once expressly organized around white supremacist principles does not cease to be white supremacist simply by formally rejecting those principles… It remains in its maintenance of the actual distribution of goods and resources, status, and prestige in which whites establish norms which are ideologically self-reflective" (1336). Operating from an understanding that regards settler colonialism as a project of empire enabled by white supremacy (Bonds & Inwood (2016) I opt for this term over others such as white privilege. As Bonds and Inwood (2016) articulate, whereas the "concept of privilege emphasizes the social condition of whiteness…white supremacy accentuates the structures of white power" and "the institutions, practices, and processes that produce this condition in the first place" (716). The 'caricaturing' of white supremacy (Pulido 2015), such as through commonsense understandings of the term that are associated with the Ku Klux Klan or other white power groups, dismisses and obscures its importance by attaching it to individuals and groups outside of mainstream society (Bond & Inwood 2016; Pulido 2015). Thobani (2007) builds on Bannerji's (2000) critiques of Canadian multiculturalism, describing a new form of white supremacy, that constitutes white subjects as tolerant, and respectful of difference and diversity, "while non white people were instead constructed as perpetually and irremediably monocultural, in need of being taught the virtues of tolerance and cosmopolitanism under white supervision" (148). Although there may be a refocused attention on organized white power groups, I believe it remains imperative that we do not

I can begin to address the experiences of other racialized peoples. The racial logics of settler colonization and anti-Blackness are both foundational to the creation of Canada as a settler state. As others have noted (King 2013, 2014; Maynard 2017), anti-Blackness and slavery, and settler colonialism and genocide are not "isolated historical processes" and the oppression of Black and Indigenous peoples are "historically and currently connected" (Maynard 2017: 11). Providing even a modest summary of the ways that these historic processes have occurred and their current manifestations is an important starting point. Moreover, as this research explores the experiences of some Somali students in Edmonton – discussing both the barriers they face and the methods of resistance developed – many may raise the concern that Indigenous students in the city likely share common or similar experiences. I speculate that this is true and these students' experiences necessitate interrogation. Their experiences however, are not isolated from one another, nor are the ways that communities in this city have mobilized to address the concerns of youth. The development of relationships and communities between Indigenous peoples and Somali communities in Edmonton, specifically, has been an admirable method of both anti-racist and decolonial work (I will speak more about this in the following sections).

As a settler colonial state, Canada has a lot to grapple with and address as it recently celebrated its 150th year as a country. Often presenting an image of serenity and acceptance to the global community despite a history and contemporary circumstances that are anything but, it is unclear what is meant to be celebrated. In these 150 years, and more, the

---

allow white supremacy to become stagnant in its use and purpose. Articulating its institutional structuring is necessary to ultimately challenge it.

ongoing structural genocide[2] and displacement of Indigenous peoples continues. Although

manifesting in varying, but equally destructive ways, the staggeringly disproportionate

incarceration rates, the epidemic of suicides – especially in Northern communities – of

young people, and the lack of safe drinking water are but a few blatant examples of the

atrocities Canada and its government are responsible for. Indigenous peoples across

Canada have survived and endured horrific and purposeful attempts to remove them

permanently from the Canadian landscape.

---

[2] I employ the term structural genocide (Wolfe 2006) to address the current experiences of Indigenous peoples across Canada, as opposed to cultural genocide, or genocide. Wolfe (2006) argues that this term "avoids the questions of degree – and, therefore, of hierarchy among victims – that are entailed in qualified genocides, while retaining settler colonialism's structural induration" (403). However, amongst scholars there remain debates as to what the appropriate and accurate term for the current and past experiences of First Nation, Inuit, and Metis peoples within Canada's colonial borders should be. Wildcat (2015) cautions against classifying the "entirety of relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples as one of genocide," not to diminish the importance of such a classification, but to "understand how differences in power between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples have changed over time," allowing "us to understand where and how processes of group destruction against Indigenous peoples have operated in the Anglo-American context" (393). Additionally, Wildcat (2015) notes that "the ways in which Indigenous people experience tragic and premature death in Canada structures how we understand the concept of genocide" (393). Wolfe (2006) states, "settler colonialism is inherently eliminatory but not invariably genocidal" (387). In articulating why he does not employ the term cultural genocide, Wolfe (2006) states that it is a term that "confuses definition with degree" (398). Wolfe (2006) warns of the hazards that can ensue with this term, "in an elementary category error, "either/or" can be substituted for "both/and," from which genocide emerges as either biological (read "the real thing") or cultural – and thus, it follows not real" (398). Additionally, he states, "the apparently insurmountable problem with the qualified genocides is that, in their very defensiveness, they threaten to undo themselves. They are never quite the real thing, just as patronizingly hyphenated ethnics are not fully Australian or fully American" (402). Conversely, Macdonald (2015) acknowledges the utility of the term cultural genocide that was employed in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission into the Indian Residential Schools, as it "virtually eliminated the possibility of a large-scale denialist movement" (424). Although this is not exhaustive of the debates among scholars, these are some main texts that informed my thinking, especially as a non-Indigenous scholar.

Since 1867, the government of Canada has operated with a bureaucratic, but nonetheless violent, program of structural genocide on Indigenous peoples (Boyko 1995). Treaties, and the federal Indian Act comprise the basis for the relationship between the federal government and Indigenous peoples and nations, each with their own violent agendas (Boyko 1995). Canadian policy toward Indigenous peoples has been violently paternalistic, and assimilationist from conception, focused on a goal of cultural genocide (Boyko 1995). Education has been a central vehicle through which the Canadian government was able to enact brutal policies. With the last residential school closing just in 1996, and an official apology from the federal government issued 12 years later, Indigenous communities and families are still actively recovering from the heinous abuse suffered in these schools (Regan 2010; TRC 2015). The residential school system in Canada was designed to remove Indigenous children from their homes and families, stripping them of their cultures and languages in an effort to have them assimilate into the White settler population, and was where many children suffered physical, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse from school staff (Regan 2010). These facilities, called schools, "bore little resemblance to the caring, nurturing educational environment this word evokes" (Hamilton 2011: 93). As Regan (2010) rightfully notes, it is tremendously important that as non-Indigenous people we "recognize the strength and resilience of those who, despite the harms perpetrated against them, continue to resist colonialism, reclaiming and reconstituting their own governance systems, laws, histories, languages, and ceremonies" (8). In understanding the residential school system as only a chapter in Canada's history, we are deterred from recognizing colonization as ongoing.

The ongoing and intergenerational effects of colonization have left many Indigenous communities struggling with poverty, substance abuse, youth suicides, poor educational outcomes, poor health, and domestic violence (Regan 2010). Functioning in a similarly paternalistic and violent way, what's known as the Sixties Scoop, the child welfare system forcibly removed many Indigenous children from their homes and placed them into non-Indigenous homes (TRC 2015). Educational achievement is much lower for Indigenous peoples, which has led to unemployment and underemployment, as there is still a lack of adequate education (TRC 2015). Additionally, the justice system presents some of the starkest manifestations of ongoing colonialism and its effects on Indigenous communities, families, and peoples. Indigenous people disproportionately comprise 28% of those sentenced to custody, despite only being 4% of Canada's total population (TRC 2015). The rates are starker for women, girls, and boys at 43%, 49%, and 36%, respectively (TRC 2015). This brief outline of the systemic racism and ongoing colonization of Canada's most marginalized, does not encompass the depth of violence that has been suffered by Indigenous peoples, nor the forms of resistance that have been created. However, it is a necessary starting point for developing an understanding of racism in Canada and situating antiracist research.

Anti-Black Racism in Canada

Canada has its own history of anti-Black racism it often manages to obfuscate from the collective imagery of the nation. Contextualizing the history of how anti-Black racism has been constructed and utilized by the state to disenfranchise, marginalize, and criminalize Black Canadians is crucial to an understanding of current experiences. Institutions such as schools, the child welfare system, the criminal justice system, and

healthcare are all sites through which Black Canadians have experienced racialized state violence. Various Indigenous and Black scholars have worked to articulate the relationship between settler colonial violence and anti-Blackness, noting the importance of a holistic understanding (King 2013; Maynard 2017). As Maynard notes, (2017) "despite differing racial logics, the living legacy of slavery and the ongoing practice of settler colonialism at times results in similar forms of repression" (12). Poverty, incarceration, poor educational outcomes, health disparities (including addictions) are all issue that impact both Indigenous and Black people in Canada.

Canadian anti-Blackness and its policies are distinct – yet should not be regarded as more benign – from those of the United States. The focus on this distinction has been central to avoiding confronting how anti-Blackness operates and manifests in Canada (Amadahy & Lawrence 2009). This contrast was used as well during the time of abolition to create a national rhetoric of tolerance that failed to interrogate the racial violence still present in post-abolition Canada (Maynard 2017). Therefore, it is necessary to develop a specified understanding of the experiences of Black people and communities in Canada, without evading the pervasive anti-Blackness that exists within these colonial borders.

The settler colony of Canada, during its early years enslaved both Indigenous and Black people (James et al 2010). The transatlantic slave trade brought enslaved Africans to Canada as early as 1605 (Boyko 1995), however, given the colder climate and thus the limited economic value the number of enslaved Africans brought to Canada was much smaller than the United States (Amadahy & Lawrence 2009). "Smaller numbers were supposed to have made the practice more palatable, less harsh" (Hamilton 2011: 99) – though a practice as dehumanizing as chattel slavery should never be conceived as such.

The absence of slave plantation economies does not refute the state sanctioned violence

that enslaved Black and Indigenous peoples were exposed to (Maynard 2017). As is well

understood in addressing the history of slavery in the United States, it is important to

recognize that although slavery was formally outlawed in 1833, this did not translate into

true freedom for Black people in Canada. With the unground railroad bringing thousands of

enslaved Black people from the United States into Canada, the White settler state

developed discriminatory and racist laws to segregate and disadvantage Black people

arriving in Canada (Boyko 1995). Slavery evolved, as it did in other countries, so that the

state continued to exert racial violence[3] on Black Canadians. Moreover, "it is the practice of

slavery that set the stage for the subsequent centuries of dehumanization of Black life

across Canada" (Maynard 2017:19).

Anti-Blackness spans coast-to-coast, impacting Black people and communities who

have been in Canada for centuries and those who have recently, and continue to arrive. It is

important to recognize that despite a large focus on anti-Blackness in Ontario and Nova

---

[3] I use the word violence, purposefully, in an effort to expand understandings of what is experienced as violence, and is allowed to be characterized as such. Black Feminists such as Collins (1998) and Ritchie (2012) have been instrumental in shaping my understandings of violence, and how I employ the term throughout my writing. Collins (1998) writes, "elite groups define violence in ways that legitimate their own power, use those definitions of violence to enforce hierarchical power relations, and then point to ensuing social inequality as proof of the veracity of the definitions of violence themselves" 920). Collins (1998) urges us to shift from liberal definitions of violence focused on the individual, and to regard how violence is constructed within social hierarchies. Furthermore, Collins (1998) describes how stereotypes, inform speech, images, curricula, and everyday social practices, fostering a climate for systemic violence, noting a "symbiotic relationship between action and speech" (933). Ritchie's (2012) conceptualization of the contexts of abuse and violence includes acknowledging how the state, its institutions and its policies cause harm. Violence is experienced "along a continuum, reflecting a dialectical orientation" (Ritchie 2012: 132). Violence is both, and simultaneously the interpersonal acts of aggression and the "emotional manipulation that results from the creation of a hostile social environment" (Ritchie 2012: 133).

Scotia, the rest of Canada, Alberta included, should not feel immune to these issues. It is imperative to acknowledge the history of Black people and communities in Western Canada – including the discrimination that they faced. For example, when Black people and communities began moving westward, prairie towns and cities such as Calgary, and Winnipeg called for segregation and deportation in an effort to prevent Black people from settling in Western Canada. In 1911, Edmonton city council passed a resolution banning Black people from the city (Boyko 1995).

The history of Africville in Nova Scotia serves as but another mark of anti-Blackness and an attempt to wipe this from the collective imagery and memory. Africville, a Black community, had its land encroached by Halifax's development, specifically in the disease and waste management, and industrial sectors, until the community was bulldozed and its residents forcibly relocated in the 1960s and 70s (Nelson 2008). This purposeful move by the city of Halifax was coded with racial neutrality despite the "geography of racism" Africville is grounded upon (Nelson 2008: 231).

As with all other institutions, anti-Blackness flourishes in Canada's justice system, and policing institutions. Black Canadians experience disproportionate rates of incarceration, at both the provincial and more starkly at the federal level (Owusu-Bempah & Wortley 2015). Not only are Black people disproportionately represented in custody rates, but also interactions with police have been a source of racial violence communities have rallied against for decades. In some parts of Canada, Black people make up one third of those killed by police – despite only being approximately 3% of the population (Wortley 2006). In 1992 after the verdict in the Rodney King case was delivered, the Yonge Street Riots in Toronto demonstrated to many residents that police violence was a terrifying and

deadly reality for many racialized people living North of the border. The riot – or rebellion, perhaps more accurately termed – drew nation wide attention to the police shootings of Black residents in the Greater Toronto Area, such as Raymond Lawrence and Michael Wade Lawson (Black 2017). After the shooting of Mike Brown, in Ferguson, Missouri, the Black Lives Matter movement was born, and a chapter was created in Toronto, organized to show solidarity with folks in the United States, but also to address the violence that Black Canadians were experiencing. In 2016, Black Lives Matter-Toronto camped outside the Toronto Police Headquarters for two weeks, after Andrew Loku, a mentally ill Black man from South Sudan was shot and killed by Toronto police and it was determined that no criminal charges would be brought against the officer. In the 25 years that have passed since the Yonge Street Rebellion, Black communities in Canada continue to vocalize their sentiments of distrust, and negative experiences of policing.

One of the focuses of the Black Lives Matter movement has been addressing the racialized violence of carding or street check practices. Carding practices in various Ontario cities – Toronto, and Kingston (Wortley and Marshall 2015) – Halifax (Preveil 2017), Montreal (Maynard 2017), and most recently Lethbridge and Edmonton, Alberta disproportionately affect and target Black and Indigenous communities. Data recently obtained from Lethbridge Regional Police Service demonstrates that Black people are eight times more likely to be carded than White people (Progress Alberta 2017). Carding is a practice used by police forces in which members of the community are stopped, questioned, and their information is recorded (Progress Alberta 2017). Because this practice has disproportionately targeted Indigenous and Black people, police services have information on many members of the community, who have not committed crimes, nor

warranted the suspicion. Additionally, carding as a police practice serves little use for police forces, besides the further fragmentation of relationships between marginalized communities and police (Progress Alberta 2017). Carding does more than simply fragment these relationships. The practice "has significant impacts on the psychological well-being of Black communities" and "can cause post-traumatic stress disorder and other stress-related disorders, as well as alienation" (Maynard 2017: 91). In the Edmonton context, the Somali communities have been very vocal about their negative experiences with carding, and the impacts the practice is having on youth especially (Wakefield 2017).

Regarding the educational segregation of Black children as "a direct by-product of the system of chattel slavery, an institution whose goal was to strip African people of their dignity and humanity in order to use then as vehicles of cheap labour for a profit-making system" (Hamilton 2011: 98), allows us to see this evolution. Canada's history of legal school segregation is another example of the entrenched anti-Blackness in Canadian institutions that often goes unacknowledged. Education in Canada is under the purview of provincial governments, similarly to the United States where it is governed at the state level. Because of this there can be great variation between, and within provinces. For example, in two Canadian provinces – Ontario and Nova Scotia – students were required by law to attend schools separated and segregated by race (Hamilton 2011). Additionally, although there was no legal stipulation, racially segregated and separate schools also existed in New Brunswick, Alberta, and Saskatchewan (Hamilton 2011). The last racially segregated school in Canada – located in Nova Scotia – didn't close until 1983 (James et al 2010).

This modest review is not an all-encompassing understanding of the manifestations of anti-Black racism in Canada; it articulates just some of the ways that state institutions have impacted Black people, families, and communities. As Hamilton (2011) has noted, ignoring Canada's deep history of institutional racism and structuring racial logics will allow incidents of racial violence to be seen in isolation.

Multicultural Myths & Immigration Policy

In the previous sections I have provided a brief outline of the history and current experiences of Black and Indigenous people in Canada, including many of the manifestations of state violence that are experienced. However, immigration policies and practices are a central avenue through which many racialized people and communities are navigating the Canadian state. In 2010, as Canada looked toward its 150th year as a nation 27% of Canadians – providing the most common answer – said that multiculturalism is an aspect of Canadian society most worth celebration (Soroka & Robertson 2010). As a concept and as a policy, multiculturalism is regarded as central to the Canadian identity. Though this concept holds much symbolic weight, the lives of racialized people living in Canada – and those attempting to migrate here – do lead many to raise concerns about its functions.

The internment of Japanese Canadians, head taxes placed on Chinese immigrants, and anti-Semitism are just a few of the things that highlight the racialized hostility of Canada's history (Boyko 1995). In part, the racist immigration policies that have been in place are demonstrative of the pervasiveness of systemic and institutionalized racism in Canada. Quotas on differing racialized groups on entering Canada's colonial borders limited the number of racialized immigrants that would enter up until 1967 (Satzewich & Liodakis

16

2010). Having now moved to a points system with a focus on education and skills, Canada remains a White settler state that marginalizes bodies of colour. Today, racialized groups are still experiencing discrimination and racism, affecting their educational attainment, employment, and incomes. On average, people of colour in Canada have lower household incomes and higher rates of poverty, than White settler Canadians (Reitz & Banerjee 2009). And as Galabuzi (2006) notes, racialized immigrants do not see the same sort of economic return on their education.

Moreover, Canada's immigration policy needs to be examined to understand the pervasiveness of racism and how both internal and external policies manifest and interact together to negatively impact racialized communities. One example of how this manifests is in terms of the experiences of undocumented migrants in Canada. Currently, policy allows for the indefinite detention of undocumented migrants, as well as the very real possibility of deportation (No One Is Illegal-Toronto 2015). Some Canadian cities, such as Toronto are deemed sanctuary cities — meant to protect undocumented migrants — however, the deep relations that Toronto Police Services (TPS) has with Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) places residents in danger (No One Is Illegal-Toronto 2015). With the development of the School Resource Officer Program – a program that places armed police officers in schools – young people within Toronto schools face intensified surveillance and danger, especially for undocumented students, or those with undocumented families.

Bill C-51, the Anti-Terrorism Act serves as another example of policies that are negatively impacting racialized communities, increasing the pervasiveness of surveillance in the name of domestic security. RCMP's counter-violent extremism programs are predominantly targeting Muslim communities, especially Somali communities (Cader

2016). These programs allow counterterrorism efforts and surveillance to occur way beyond law enforcement, permeating other institutions such as schools and places of worship (Cader 2016). Although these programs and counterterrorism conversations centre on Muslim communities, there is the perception that the Somali community has been honed in on as a point of focus. Resources have been allocated in an attempt to address radicalization in the communities, however, there has still been a failure to address the socioeconomic challenges many Somali Canadians face (Mire 2017). Bill C-51, and the accompanying media reports perpetuate ideas that construct Somalis as terrorists, as violent, and in need of securitization (Mire 2017).

It remains imperative that we gain a deeper understanding of the ways that the Somali community has experienced Canadian institutions. In particular addressing youth's experiences at schools is necessary. Given Canada's deep and institutionalized history of racism, specifically anti-Black racism, there is a need to inquire further about schools impact on Somali-Canadian youth.

The Somali Diaspora

The Somali diaspora is one of the largest African communities in Canada (Mensah 2010). With an ongoing civil war, emigration from Somalia to Canada peaked in the 1990s (Mensah 2010). As well, as a fairly homogenous population, virtually all Somalis practice Islam (Mensah 2010). Due to the destabilization of their home country, many of those arriving in Canada, both as immigrants and refugees, had limited financial resources (Murdie & Texeira 2000; Danso 2001). Often already at a socioeconomic disadvantage, Somali newcomers have reported tremendous difficulties in both the labour and housing

market since arrival in Canada (Danso 2001). These difficulties have been compounded by the media's focus on criminality. Since arrival in Canada, the Somali community has been the focus of much media and law enforcement attention. The Somali population in Canada has often been negatively characterized by media reports that focus on suspected gang or drug involvement (Mire 2017).

With the largest population outside of Southern Ontario, Edmonton is home to approximately 20,000 Somali individuals (SCCSE 2014). Many of those arriving in Edmonton are migrating from other parts of Canada, most often Ontario. While pulled to Edmonton by the assumption of more and better labour market opportunities, the recent economic downturn has contributed to a precarious social location for Somalis in Edmonton. The Somali population is situated within matrices of oppression, including: race, ethnicity, religion, class, and immigration status. Other researchers have demonstrated the unique situation of the Somali community, as an experience of three-strikes of marginalization; they are Black, Muslim, and often foreign born (Joosse, Bucerius, & Thompson 2015).

Canada-Somali relations came strongest into focus in the 1990s when Canada was on a peacekeeping mission in Somalia. This peacekeeping mission brought two particular instances of horror to the Canadian public's attention, including the shooting of two Somalis in the back, one fatally, by Canadian soldiers and Shidane Abukar Arone, a 16-year old tortured to death by Canadian soldiers (Razack 2004). Razack (2004) describes the 'peacekeeping mission' as the following, "soldiers had acted more like conquerors than humanitarians, and their actions underscored the meaning of Black bodies both here and there, historically and in the present" (4). These horrific acts are important to keep in mind

in developing a holistic understanding of Canadian-Somali relations, and are part of the

history of abuses that Canada is responsible for against the Somali community.

Canadian media depictions of Somalis, particular youth, construct narratives of gang

activity, and terrorism (Mire 2017). Programs, reports, and episodes have been plentiful

and include:

> Among the CBC programs that cement these notions are the 1993 television series *A Place Called Dixon*; the *Fifth Estate* episodes "The Life and Death of Abdinasir Dirie" (2010) and "Crimes Against Humanity" (1992); the 2014 documentary on The Current, "No Man's Land: the story of Saeed Jama's deportation to Somalia"; and the 2016 television series *Shoot the Messenger*. In 2016, VICE Media also released their documentary *This is Dixon*. (Mire 2017:1).

Programs such as these reinforce the notion that Somali communities require policing and

surveillance, legitimizing policies and legislation that target Somali communities,

neighborhoods and families.

Bill C-86, introduced in 1992, amended the Immigration Act of 1976 with the claim

that it would improve security of immigration, giving more power to the government to

stop immigration of suspected criminals or terrorists (Mire 2017). However, this

legislation also increased the difficulty of immigration for those with inadequate or no

documentation (Dirks 1995). This severely affected Somali immigrants and refugees, who

often lacked identity documents due to the destruction of infrastructure in Somalia.

Subsequent legislation has attempted to alleviate the problems that Bill C-86 created for

Somali newcomers, among others, but the identification requirements of the 1990s have

negatively impacted Somalis in the long term (OCASI 2016). Access to resources and

services, as well as family reunification were two main sites of impact felt by the Somali

community (Mire 2017, OCASI 2016). Bill C-51, an Anti-Terrorism bill, has also negatively

affected Somali communities. Reinforcing narratives that Somalis are at risk of being radicalized, Public Safety Canada distributed over ten million dollars as part of the Kanishka Project (Mire 2017). Front-line community workers have raised concerns that counterterrorism initiatives are being prioritized, over social programs that Somali communities desperately need (Mire 2017). The existence of problematic legislation coincides with the media's willingness to perpetuate racist narratives of Somali communities as dangerous.

Despite issues within the education system as central concerns for many community members, attention is often shifted to crime and terror. The Somali-Canadian communities in Edmonton have faced additional public and state scrutiny, sitting on top of the stigmatizing narratives that accompany the Somali diaspora throughout Canada. In recent years the media attention on the Somali community has been massive. An unprecedented series of murders often involving young Somali men in Edmonton drew the attention of the public. Additionally, concerns surrounding Somali-Canadians were exacerbated, as it became known that individuals had gone overseas to join terrorist organizations. These homicides — often discussed in association with drugs and gang activity — and the al-Shabaab recruitment, stigmatize and serve to further ostracize the community, while placing a spotlight on them from the Edmonton Police Services (EPS). A report published in 2007, noted that Somali youth expressed concern over the ways that negative stereotypes that are sometimes linked to criminality were impacting their experiences in public and at school (SCERDO 2007).

Somali community members in Edmonton have worked to create community ties and relationships with Indigenous communities (Huncar 2017). Global Indigenous Youth

Coalition, an organization created to help address systemic racism in Edmonton (Huncar 2017), is one such way that relationships are being built between the communities. The Ogaden Somali Community of Alberta is similarly interested in developing relationships with Indigenous communities in Edmonton, sharing resources and tackling racism that adversely affects the communities (Bell 2016). The efforts made by grassroots community organization and members in Edmonton have been admirable and point toward possibilities of tackling Canada's most serious issues head on. In conducting research with Somali-Canadian community members, it has been my intention to contribute to these efforts.

Framing this research within an understanding of the carceral state and its implications for people of colour, and particularly Black people for this project, highlights the importance of asking whether carceral approaches are employed in Edmonton's schools. Moreover, given the counterterrorism programs discussed earlier and their impacts on Somali communities, it is important to outline the underlying theoretical frameworks on which these policies and programs and able to be flourish.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework & Previous Literature

Critical Race Theory

I will be utilizing Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a theoretical framework to understand the experiences of Somali youth in the public education system. Given the multitude of branches, and extensive history of CRT, I will be focusing on CRT developed to address the centrality of race in education (Delgado & Stefanic 2001; Ladson-Billings 1995; Lynn & Dixon 2013). CRT operates with a social constructionist understanding of race, seeking to examine the institutional practices and systemic arrangements that disadvantage people of colour in society, as well as challenge notions of colorblindness and neutrality (Trevino, Harris & Wallace 2008). CRT is a formidable lens to examine the experiences of Somali youth in public schools as the policies and institutions that may seek to operate as 'colourblind' can be challenged.

CRT centralizes race, including race as it intersects with other forms of subordination (Solorzano & Bernal 2001). CRT is a preferable theoretical framework because of the ability to conceptualize differing experiences due to the multidimensionality of our identities and experiences (Crenshaw 1989). Within this framework a more comprehensive understanding of Somali youths' experiences is made possible, with particular attention to race, religion, class, and gender. CRT challenges dominant perspectives, and seeks to reorient narratives so that marginalized perspectives are centered (Solorzano & Bernal 2001). Moreover, within CRT is a commitment to social justice that actively seeks to change and make better the issues discovered through research (Solorzano & Bernal 2001). Utilizing this theoretical framework opens space for

engaging youth and their ideas on how to work toward racial justice, and improve the experience of Somali youth in public schools.

The Carceral State

Some anti-racist researchers employ frameworks that account for the carceral state in their research regarding education, with most examples of this situated in the context of the United States. The carceral state, reliant on carceral logic, is a system of governance "enacted through a commitment across institutions to maintain order through surveillance, coercion, and punishment" (Annamma 2016: 1211). However, carceral logic is not evenly applied nor felt by all bodies within the state. Utilizing the work of DuBois (1899), Rabaka (2010) describes the experience of bodies being hypercriminalized, or racially criminalized as being simultaneously racialized and criminalized. Black, brown, and Indigenous bodies are punished within the carceral state, as a commitment to white supremacy reinforces the carceral state (Annamma 2016). This commitment to white supremacy necessitates an exclusion, punishment and even extermination of racialized bodies (Annamma 2016). The punishment and surveillance of these bodies exceeds the walls of prisons, or the criminal justice system and finds itself located in institutions such as public schools. Within the carceral state, institutional boundaries "are purposefully porous," allowing institutions to work together and inform each other (Annamma 2016: 1211). Teachers, guidance counselors, and other school officials are all operators within and of the carceral state. Regardless of the desire of many of these individuals to 'help,' they operate as state agents of social control within the carceral state (Annamma 2016). Within the carceral state public schools and their staff function as an institutional tool, providing some (read: white)

children with opportunities to set or improve their social standing, as it simultaneously

negates these chances for others.

Literature Review

Racialized Barriers, Carceral Logic & Public Education

> Mainstream schools have been successful in engaging some students (e.g., students from the dominant society), while disengaging others (e.g., poor, working-class and racial minority students, and student bodies marked as "different" by gender, sexuality, faith, dis/ability…) (Dei et al. 2000: 8).

Canada's school system – with its roots in a racially segregated and residential

system – has been a place where Black, Indigenous, and students of colour have had

experiences that are cause for concern (Hare & Pidgeon 2011; James & Turner 2017). As

education is under the provincial jurisdiction, differences exist between provinces, as well

as within them. Provinces have different communities, histories, and political climates that

all contribute to shaping their public school systems. However, research across the country

has explored the various challenges, difficulties, and negative experiences that Black,

Indigenous, and students of colour are having. Although it remains imperative that we

continue to interrogate the experiences of all racialized students – this research solely

focuses on the experiences of Somali-Canadian students.

The experiences of Black students have been explored in various provinces such as,

Ontario (Dei et. al. 1997; Dei 2006; James 2005; James and Turner 2017; Spence 1999; Yon

2000), Alberta (Codjoe 2001; Kelly 1995), Quebec (Beauger, Dorisaint, & Turenne 1994;

Livingstone, Celemencki, & Calixte 2014; Richardson 1994), Nova Scotia (BLAC 1994) –

demonstrating the various challenges students encounter, and forms of resistance they

utilize. Much of the research that has been conducted that attends to the experiences of

25

Black students is concentrated in Ontario, and often in the Greater Toronto Area. The work of scholars and community members to push for the collection of race-based statistics (RBS) in the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) for instance has been integral to the ability of understanding the existence, and extent of systemic racism.

Concerns around streaming practices in Canadian public schools have been long standing, as streaming practices sustain and increase inequity. When students are streamed into classes, or vocational programs, their options for post-secondary are drastically reduced and altered. As post-secondary options are limited, so are a student's life chances and employment options – low-wage work, poverty, and incarceration all become prospective realities. Research interrogating the use of streaming, and which students are affected by the practice often are concerned with inequities based on socioeconomic status, and race and ethnicity. Research that attends to the practice and experiences of streaming for racialized students has demonstrated some mixed results. However, it is important to be attentive to the ways that race is accounted for in studies – such as definitions of visible minority status. Research that utilizes data from four provinces – Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia – found that visible minority status did not have a strong influence on streaming that limited post-secondary options but that socioeconomic status was strongly linked (Krahn & Taylor 2009). However, as these researchers explain, interpretation of the results must be done with caution, as they did not discern between various racial groups, such as Black and Indigenous students (Krahn & Taylor 2009). A qualitative study conducted in Ontario with immigrant and refugee students regarding their experiences, identified that racialized immigrants and refugees were more likely to discuss issues they were having with course

placement (Selimos & Daniel 2017). These research projects underscore the importance of how many factors can contribute to a student's experiences in school – immigration or refugee status, race, class, visible minority status – and the intersections of these experiences requires further study.

Data from the TDSB demonstrates that racialized (non-Black) students are enrolled in the three levels (Essential, Applied, and Academic) at similar rates to white students, however, Black students are less likely to be enrolled in Academic streams, and more likely to be enrolled in Essentials and Applied streams (James and Turner 2017 p. 29). These data demonstrate the importance of disaggregating by various racial groups, as the experiences of Black students often seem to be different than non-Black students of colour.[4] As race and class remain inextricably linked, "the systemic barriers resulting from poverty impact youth of all racial backgrounds, Black youth face unique and acute disadvantages because of long-standing associations linking Blackness to a lack of intelligence, and inferiority more generally" (Maynard 2017: 214). Researchers have pointed to racial stereotypes (such as assumptions about academic aptitude or athletic abilities) held by educators as playing an important role in the streaming of Black students (Codjoe 2001; Dei et al. 1997).

Although streaming has been one avenue through which issues of systemic racism have been explored, researchers point to many other areas of concern for Black students.

---

[4] 'Non-Black students of colour' does not refer to First Nations, Metis, and Inuit students. Indigenous students confront incredible barriers within Canada's public education system that demand immediate attention and action. The legacies of slavery and colonization in Canada cannot and should not be articulated as separate processes and as others (Maynard 2017) have worked to demonstrate education as a tool of white supremacy impacts both Black and Indigenous youth. This research does not articulate the current experiences of Indigenous youth, however, their experiences must not be lumped into those of all racialized students – their histories and current contexts remain distinct.

27

The data from the TDSB also demonstrates that Black student are about twice as likely to drop-out of high school compared to non-Black students of colour and white students (James and Turner 2017). These data reveal that the Black students are significantly less likely to complete high school. Although somewhat dated Dei et al (1997) provides important insights into the ways that student disengagement and drop (push) out are racialized. Factors such as an alienating school curriculum, "low teacher expectations, differential treatment of Black students, conflict with school authorities because they do not respect Black students, and academic labeling an streaming that significantly narrow students' options and chances for the future" are all noted as contributing to this disengagement and eventual dropping out (Dei et l 1997: viii). Research from Montreal, Quebec presented similar findings noting that Black students do not feel adequately supported within the school – including teacher expectations – nor reflected in the curriculum, influencing drop out rates (Livingstone et al 2014).

A hostile school climate that prioritizes order over a holistic learning environment can contribute to students feeling unsafe, alienated, and unaffirmed. Disciplinary practices – including detention, suspensions, and expulsions – as well as other surveillance measure such as armed police officers, and cameras, contribute the ways that students experience schooling. Data from both Ontario and Nova Scotia have demonstrated that Black (as well as Indigenous) students are disproportionately suspended from both the TDSB and Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) (James & Turner 2017; Ryan 2016). Although provinces and school boards have moved away from zero-tolerance policies that are often regarded as being responsible for the disparate impact on Black and Indigenous students, their effects have seemingly remained intact. The disciplinary policies – both formal and informal – that

28

leave Black students feeling targeted and treated punitively are a manifestation of the ways that carceral logic operates within public schools. These disciplinary practices have been regarded as a contributing factor to the ways schools are "banishing" Black youth from their perimeters (Maynard 2017: 218). Currently, the EPSB does not collect race-based data on disciplinary measures; however, the staggering number of suspensions – approximately 1 in 10 students – is cause for concern (French 2017).

As school boards continue to work with police forces, the boundaries between the criminal justice system and the public education system become more and more porous. School Resource Officer (SRO) programs contribute to this erosion of boundaries. In November 2017, the TDSB voted to end the SRO program after a report determined that 1055 students reported feeling uncomfortable attending school with the presence of an SRO, 1715 felt intimidated by the SRO, and 2207 reported feeling watched or targeted by the SRO (TDSB 2017). Police presence in schools often means that matters that used to be dealt with by school administration can and are becoming criminal matters. For example the African Canadian Legal Clinic (2012) reports that even when police are not in the school, some principals have contacted police for minor infractions – in some instances these lead to court conditions that criminalize student and prevent them from being within a certain geographical distance from their school. Barring students from school for disciplinary measures serves to limit opportunities of education and learning, and contribute to student disengagement (ACLC 2012). These formal and informal practices send the message that Black students are unwelcome and unwanted in Canadian schools.

Alberta has recently implemented educational policy that seeks to move away from zero-tolerance type policies. However, as Alberta moves away from policies of this sort,

police presence in schools has increased (Thomson 2016). The SRO program in Edmonton

has been in operation for 36 years, but there has been a move to expanding. Edmonton

Police Services (EPS) and Edmonton Public Education System work closely in regards to

the School Resource Officer program, which has been implemented in every public

secondary school, and some public junior highs, across Edmonton, placing an EPS officer in

the school. This program's primary function is to "assist the school administration in

ensuring a safe and caring place of learning for students and staff, balancing enforcement

with prevention and intervention." (Edmonton Police Service 2015:1). However, police

presence does not necessarily translate to safety, especially for marginalized youth. Studies

regarding the specific impacts of police in Canadian schools do not exist as they do in the

United States where data demonstrates police in schools has increased arrests of Black

students (James & Turner 2017). However, reports have articulated that students, parents

and educators have expressed concern regarding the role and impact of police in schools,

especially for Black students (James & Turner 2017).

Edmonton

Scholarly research focusing on the experiences of Black students in the Edmonton

context exists, but is limited and dated (see Codjoe 1999; 2001; Kelly 1995). Despite its

limits in quantity, this research is tremendously insightful. Codjoe (1999; 2001) conducted

his research with a specific focus on academically successful Black youth in Edmonton,

countering narratives that focus on the poor achievement of Black students. This research

offers valuable insights into the ways that students find motivation and utilize a strong

sense of racial identity to succeed (Codjoe 1999). Codjoe's (1999; 2001) research also

identifies a number of concerns that Black students had and challenges they faced,

including: racism, negative stereotyping, curriculum exclusion, low teacher expectations, and social isolation.

A report published in 2004 that focuses on equity in Edmonton schools, provided important context (NAARR 2004). Conducting both focus groups with parents and a survey with students, this report raised many concerns regarding the safety of racialized students in Edmonton schools. This report articulated a number of concerns that racialized students, and their families expressed, including racism from other students, few racialized teachers, curriculum exclusion (especially from African and Indigenous parents), assessment and labeling – such as designations of Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder – and streaming (NAARR 2004). Although this report presents interesting insights, it has limitations in a comprehensive understanding of racialized students' experiences in Edmonton schools. Black and Indigenous students make up a very small portion of the sample, just 6 and 2 participants respectively, and given what research in other contexts has illuminated regarding the particular marginalization of these students compared to other racialized students, a greater focus on their experiences is undeniably necessary.

There are some severe gaps in this literature. For example, Codjoe (2001) conducted his research with, "four students who had been born or who had origins in continental Africa, four born in the Caribbean region, and four born in Canada" (347). Although this is not a weakness of his work, there is no subsequent mention of if and how these regional origin, and ethnic differences affect students' narratives. Moreover, in pointing to future directions (Codjoe 2001), asks "would they have succeeded if some of them came to Canada as refugees, like the Ethiopians and Somalis?" (370). This articulates the need for research to attend to the various intersections that structure Black students experiences, such as

refugee and immigration history, religion, and ethnicity.

Kelly's (1995) research demonstrates many interesting and relevant articulations of the experiences of Black youth in Edmonton schools. For example, the students interviewed attended one of two schools in the city – one with a reputation for academic strength, the other, located in a low-income area with a strong history of vocational training. My research attempts to further tease out similar contexts and experiences, by acknowledging the structural inequities and differing school cultures that can exist across the city. Moreover, most of Kelly's (1995) participants are Black students from the Caribbean. They articulate at times the fragmentations on ethnic lines that can divide Black students within the school, with one participant noting, "the Africans don't like the Jamaicans and the Jamaicans don't like the Africans…. Any part of Africa, they all stay together, Somalia, Ghana" (Kelly, 1995: 88). It is in this vein that my research seeks to expand on existing literature. By attending to the particularities of Somali-Canadian students in Edmonton, in a way that contextualizes anti-terror legislations, anti-Blackness, and carceral logic I sought to fill some of these gaps.

More recently there has been literature that exclusively attains to the experiences of Somali-Canadians in Edmonton (Bucerius, Thompson & Hancock 2016; SCERDO 2007). Although neither of these projects deals directly and solely with the experiences of Somali-Canadian youth in the Edmonton public school system, they do articulate it as an area of concern. Education, and specifically the Edmonton Public Education System is one of the main concerns identified by Somali families here in Edmonton (SCERDO 2007). Moreover, schools are one of the largest sources of discrimination reported by the community, with teachers and other school officials often being the source of reported discrimination

(Bucerius, Thompson, & Hancock 2016). Negatively held perceptions and ideas about Somali youth are an identified issue that community members have outlined as negatively impacting their experiences and outcomes at school (SCERDO 2007). There is strong concern within the community that negative experiences within school are impacting youths' life aspirations and educational outcomes, as well as pushing them to deviant or criminal activities (SCERDO 2007).

This brief exploration provided much of the impetus for my research. The concerns articulated by community members required further understanding. It is with a deep sense of commitment to resisting discourse that sweeps the experiences of racialized youth under the proverbial rug of Canadian politeness, that I undertook this project.

Chapter 4: Research Methods

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Current Education Level	Interview Structure	1st Generation Immigrant
Idil	19	Female	At University	With Bashir	No
Bashir		Male	At University	With Idil	Yes
Hodan	21	Female	At University	With Ladan	No
Ladan	21	Female	At University	With Hodan	No
Khadra	19	Female	At University	Individual	No
Yasmiin	20	Female	At University	With Hani	No
Hani	21	Female	At University	With Yasmiin	No
Yuusuf	16	Male	In High School	Individual	No
Jamilah	20	Female	At University	Individual	No
Bilan	21	Female	At University	With Sadia	
Sadia		Female	At University	With Bilan	
Habiba	18	Female	Completed High School	With Cawo	
Cawo	16	Female	In High School	With Habiba	

Table 4.1: Participant information

Although my project is not a Participatory Action Research project, I felt it was important to conduct a project that is as community-based as possible. In an effort to do this I began volunteering in summer of 2017 with a community organization, Ogaden Somali Community of Alberta Resources (OSCAR) and working closely with their executive director, Ahmed Abdulkadir. My supervisor, Dr. Sandra Bucerius had worked closely with Mr. Abdulkadir in other research projects, and she introduced us. This project grew out of the work that Dr. Bucerius had previously done with Somali community members – a project with ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board and this coverage extended to my project.

Together, Mr. Abdulkadir and I developed a questionnaire that would address some of the questions and concerns that were being articulated from Somali community members in regards to the school system in Edmonton. In the early stages of developing this project, I had a strong interest in gaining a further understanding of the experiences young people were having with School Resource Officers, as this was a conversation I had

been quite tapped into in Toronto, where I am from and did my undergraduate degree.

However, other themes and experiences quickly became the primary focus during

conversations with community members and those working at OSCAR. The project

developed as a more general look at the various actors within the school system that young

people interact with (including teachers, guidance counselors, principals, etc.). I created a

guiding framework that articulated Canada as a settler colonial state and a country with a

history of anti-Black racism, Canada's immigration policy and anti-terror legislation and

the impacts on racialized communities, as well as an articulation of carceral logic and its

operationalization within schools. Thus leading me to the research question:

1. If, and to what extent do the experiences of Somali-Canadian youth within
   Edmonton's public school system reflect the literature of carceral logic and anti-
   Black racism?
   a. How might authority figures within schools contribute to these
      experiences?

It was through my volunteer work that I recruited initial participants. I utilized

purposive sampling to recruit young people to this research project.

Participants must be aged between 16 and 25, attended public school (at any level –

elementary, junior high, high school) in Edmonton, and self-identify as Somali. I then

utilized snowball sampling (Maxwell 2013) to meet additional young people in the city who

would be interested in talking about their experiences, with me. All of the individuals that I

reached out to about participation in the research were willing to do so, except for the case

of one young man who was incredibly busy at the time. Additionally, most were extremely

eager to put me in contact with friends of theirs. Individuals that I met who were unable to

participate because they had not done public schooling in Edmonton – and were here for post-secondary – were some of my most valued connections within the community.

I conducted a total of 8 semi-structured interviews, with a total of 13 participants. Three of these interviews were conducted individually with a participant, and the remaining 5 were conducted in pairs. Although this was not anticipated, I believe that it was an important consideration in ensuring that the individuals I was speaking to felt comfortable. The pairs I spoke with were siblings, family, or very close friends – they opted to speak to me together, and I did not feel it was appropriate to demand that they complete the interview individually. I acknowledge that with more than one participant in an interview setting, dominant personalities can 'hijack' the interview, however, I felt that the young people I spoke with were respectful of each other in allowing each other space and time. There was one interview where it became immediately apparent that one sister was much more outspoken than the other, in this instance I ensured that at each opportunity I would check in with the quieter sister, making my best effort to hear from them both. The dynamics of interviewing more than one participant at a time were unique in each instance, depending on the participants' relation to each other and their personalities. However, it was evident that they had spent a great deal of time talking to each other about their school experiences and their reflections were evident, often reminding each other of the incidents that had happened to each other.

Interviews were either conducted at OSCAR – with the exception of one being conducted at a nearby Tim Horton's – the University of Alberta's campus, or McEwan's campus. OSCAR is located in the north side of Edmonton, a few minutes outside of the city's centre. These locations were chosen by participants, in the effort to make the interview as

accessible as possible, limiting the travel time of participants, and being in familiar settings. All participants were provided with $20.00 as a compensation for their time, and willingness to participate in the interview, sharing details about their lived experiences. Participants were told prior to the interview that they would receive this honorarium, and that they would still, even if they didn't feel comfortable finishing the interview, or answering certain questions. However, all participants completed the interview, answering all of the questions posed to them. Interviews ranged in length, the shortest interview was approximately 20 minutes, and the longest approximately 2 hours, with an average length of 40 minutes. All interviews were audio recorded, with the consent of the participant. Shortly after each interview was completed I transcribed the audio recordings, in full. Prior to the interview, I went through the consent form with each participant, asked if they had any questions, and reminded them that they could stop the interview at any time, or opt to skip questions.

It was through spending time at OSCAR's community centre and assisting with other projects that I was able to build trust with community members and participants. Community members, and Ahmed expressed concern to me regarding past experiences with researchers. Navigating this reality was a central concern of mine, as I wanted to ensure I was not repeating past mistakes and doing a disservice to community members. From the outset, I did my best to be respectful and responsive to the concerns of community members, and the desired directions for the research project.

The insider versus outsider debates within qualitative research have been explored and weighed by scholars for decades. My positionality as a researcher and the identities I navigate within, including my gender, ethnicity, and class, were important points of

reflection and consideration. As a researcher from outside the community, there are ethical considerations that are imperative to the project. Intercultural research has a lengthy and controversial history and those who have conducted research in the Somali community have reflected on the insider versus outside status of the researcher (Joosse et al. 2015). Given that I am not ethnically Somali, nor racially Black, I occupy an outsider status and my positionality must constantly be reflected upon and negotiated, in terms of the power dynamics at play. In addition to these aspects of my positionality, I am not an Edmonton local – growing up in Toronto, I was originally very unfamiliar with the inner workings of the city, including the school system.

When I began the interviews, it was a common experience for participants to ask me questions about myself, including where I was from, why it was that I was the one working on this project, why was I interested in working with the Somali communities, etc. I felt that these questions were fair, and I think it pushed me to think deeply about my positionality and intentions with this project. As I began to meet potential participants through snowball sampling, that took me further from those I met through OSCAR and Mr. Abdulkadir, it became more and more important to have someone vouch for me, and my research intentions. Having positive interactions with community members, and their willingness to tell others that I could be trusted really assisted me in securing interviews. However, this research would not have been possible without the help of Mr. Abdulkadir. His impact on this project is invaluable, as he welcomed me into community spaces and events, always willing to do what he could to see the project be completed.

An unexpected aspect of my identity seemed to play a large role in how I developed rapport with participants, my age. For the most part, I was very close in age to participants

(about 3 years older than most) and in a similar life position, as I had recently finished my undergraduate degree, and many participants were in the midst of theirs. During interviews, it seemed as though participants felt at ease talking about certain things that someone in our age bracket might be familiar with, such as social media, pop culture, and being familiar with current school climates. In virtually every interview it came up that I was not from Edmonton, often because I would ask someone to clarify something about the school or area of the city they were talking about that I was unfamiliar with. This, although seemingly trivial, I believe also played into the dynamics and rapport I built with some participants. A few of the people I spoke with were also born, and/or raised in Toronto – giving us a common point to talk about, making the interview feel less formal and more like a conversation. I think that this was especially helpful because of the age of my participants, and ensuring they felt at ease during the interview was really important.

In some interviews, participants asked me what my racial and ethnic background was – often prompted by hearing and seeing my name. In some cases it seemed be a comforting point when I told participants that my father was a Muslim Iranian immigrant. However, in one instance a participant might have felt like she was offending me as she talked about the race relations between Somali people and Middle Eastern people at her school. Balancing whether or not having discussions about my identity at the outset, or after the interview, or even at all, would be more beneficial in terms of building rapport was something that I negotiated with each interview.

The majority of my participants were female – with only two participants being male – meaning in most interviews I shared a gender identity with my participants. In the interviews I did with younger participants (those still in high school) I believe that my

gender – intersecting with my class and ethnicity – allowed me to be recognized as a somewhat of a respected mentor. Some asked me questions about post-secondary, and the University of Alberta specifically. They expressed a curiosity about my path to university, and my experiences at both the undergrad and graduate level. I was recognized as possessing insider knowledge to these institutions, and as someone who could potentially assist them in further navigating them.

Despite being similarly located in some instances as my participants, I was an outsider in many ways. I was conducting a research project that focused solely on the experiences of Somali-Canadian youth – which prompted questions and concerns from some participants. However, I would usually end interviews off by asking participants about the changes they hoped to see in the school system and this often prompted discussions about why they chose to participate in the project. Many expressed a hope that things would change, that conversations would continue and that those who had the power to make a difference would listen to things that were being said.

Once interviews were transcribed, I began the coding process and all interviews were coded manually. Utilizing methods such as cutting pasting, and colour coding certain themes within the word documents, I was able to begin to make sense of some of the arising themes. Both reading the data, and looking to previous research to develop an understanding of how others have come to comprehend similar experiences informed the development of themes. The themes I compiled included: negative perceptions (from both staff and students), the justification of negative perceptions (internalized racism), colourblind discourse, discipline (unfair/harsh), gender differences, neighbourhood context, community networks of support, parental support, peer networks, school

segregation, streaming, low expectations, surveillance, inadequate resources, English as a Second Language, stereotypes, im/migration, teacher reputations (positive vs. negative), fear and distrust, future aspirations, and alternative schooling. These themes were then organized into two overarching groups: barriers, and methods of resistance. I do not fully explore the ways some of these themes – including: internalized racism, neighbourhood context, im/migration – played into the experiences of these students.

Chapter 5: The Barriers to Equitable Education

Alberta Education – like many other provincial education ministries – include in their guiding framework a commitment and respect for diversity, inclusion, tolerance, and multiculturalism (Alberta Education 2016). This discourse of multicultural education – further rooted in Canada's Multiculturalism Act – characterizes Canada as culturally neutral (James 2011). Various scholars (Bannerji 1997; Thobani 2007; Walcott 2003) have critically examined multicultural discourse and policy in Canada, challenging the myths that reproduce neutrality. Instead, scholars demonstrate how multiculturalism has worked to sustain white domination in the settler state of Canada (Thobani 2007). As Thobani (2007) notes, "multiculturalism has been critical also in the reconstitution of whiteness in its distinct (and historically new) version as a culturally 'tolerant' cosmopolitan whiteness" (148). Multicultural educational policy similarly embraces a sense of cultural tolerance. This espoused commitment to cultural tolerance and seeming neutrality fail to interrogate the structural inequities in Canadian society, and Canadian school systems. As scholars such as James (2011), have explored in regards to other provinces such as Ontario:

> Multicultural discourse masks the injurious effects of race on those without race privilege (minorities), hence the lack of support for education programs that make race explicit in addressing their educational outcomes... education in Canada is mired in colour-blind and monocultural discourse in terms of vision, content and style that the promise of democracy, inclusivity and equity continue to elude minority students (192).

Within such a society – and education system – "student successes or failures are reflective of individual effort, aptitude, motivation and merit" (James 2005: 41). Reflective of a neoliberal multicultural ethos, students who find themselves marked with identifiers of difference (race, ethnicity, religion, nation of origin), and thus outside of the Canadian

42

imagination are responsibilized for their own successes (James 2005). In responsibilizing

the student, the school climate, curriculum, and school system – historically constructed on

"Eurocentric, middle class monoculturalism" – remains uninterrupted (James 2005: 42).

If we look at Canadian schools as spaces of racial neutrality – divorced from the

inequities structured into them – students are regarded as the sole reason for their

successes and/or failures. In this view, we do not see the ways that a student's relationship

to the school, curriculum, and to educators can be mediated by markers of racial difference.

Nor do we see the ways that the school system serves to preserve and perpetuate a "system

of structured inequality based on race" (Henry and Tator 2006: 200). Multicultural

education fails to challenge these structures, and thus fails to eradicate racism (Bedard

2000).

A Critical Race Theory (CRT) lens allows me to understand the experiences of the

youth I spoke with as challenging these ideas of colourblindness, meritocracy, and racial

neutrality that are purported within Alberta Education. In this section I will explore some

of the challenges that youth identified when speaking about their experiences in the

Edmonton Public School Board. Articulating these identified challenges serves to explore

the variety of experiences that Somali-Canadian youth are having in the EPSB. However, as

I consider their narratives I hold central the structural and institutional underpinnings in

which they are learning. The challenges that these young people identified, and their

perceptions of their experiences, should not be taken as a blanket understanding of all

Somali-Canadian students in Edmonton. What these experiences serve to do is demonstrate

potential areas of concern. Moreover, by identifying areas of concern and exploring

challenges I do not wish to paint these young people's experiences as solely negative. The

43

extent to which negative experiences were perceived, and the weight students placed on these experiences varied greatly. Exploring the challenges that students encountered does not erase or minimize the positive experiences they discussed, or the successes they celebrated. It is my hope that within understanding these students' experiences, there is room to include all aspects and nuances of lived realities.

The impacts of the expectations that the teacher, administration, and educator hold of students affect the school performance of the student (Henry and Tator 2006). Many students I spoke with expressed frustration, and confusion over the low expectations that some of their teachers, counselors, and/or school staff held of them. To my knowledge, the young people I spoke with were successful students. Those who had completed high school were all enrolled in post-secondary programs, and those who were still in high school all had plans to go on the post-secondary. Although, I do not know the grades that any of these students held during their schooling, there does not seem to be a reason to doubt the accuracy of the grades they spoke about. I acknowledge that people – maybe young people, especially – exaggerate certain aspects of their experiences, wanting to be seen favourably by whom they are communicating with. However, in interviews, many of the young people seemed honest about the things they felt they were good at, the classes they were excelling in, as well as those that they struggled with.

This section focuses on the challenges and issues that students voiced about their educational experiences. The subsequent section focuses on the ways that students navigated and resisted these challenges. Thus, as this chapter does identify the challenges some students have with some teachers, counselors, and school staff; this should not be seen as a comment on all of these actors. Educators and staff within the school play a

tremendous role in the experiences of students – both negative and positive. As I state in the subsequent chapter, the various ways that many teachers and school staff seek to support and encourage students stood out in the ways that some student spoke about their school experiences. Given the power that educators hold, and the potential to have such a strong positive influence on students, it remains imperative that we also investigate the ways that students express that they do not feel fully supported by all within the school. I believe that providing the space to interrogate the complex experiences students have within schools allows us to identify areas of concern. It is in identifying these areas that we can begin to work to remedy these issues.

Low Expectations

Teachers, guidance counselors, and other school staff exist within a society that constructs stereotypical understandings of racial groups. These opinions and biases hold the potential to translate into the ways that some students are treated and taught within the school and classroom. These stereotypes affect the ways that racialized students are taught and what is expected of them. For example, model minority myths of Asian Canadians, and stereotypical understandings of Asian students as high achievers – especially in the math's and sciences – allows "educators, administrators and government officials to ignore the differential needs and the very real, and often systemic barriers faced by Asians in Canada (Maclear 1994:54). Black students are often stereotyped as not academically successful, athletically gifted, and criminally involved. The strength of these stereotypical understandings contributes to the perception that Black students are unable to excel academically, and the low expectations that educators around them hold (James

and Turner 2017). Expectations from school staff are not solely racially constructed, as class has demonstrated to play an integral role in the experiences of students in past research. However, in my research I did not specifically ask students about their class location, or socioeconomic status. Therefor I am unable to fully interrogate the ways that students perceived class to impact their school experiences. The intersections of race and class should not go understated and require much further exploration and empirical understanding that is unfortunately outside the scope of this project.

For many of the students I spoke with, accounts of teachers and guidance counselors holding low expectations of them were common and stood at the forefront of how they articulated their challenges within school. As one student, Bashir[5], expressed, "the one thing that really bothered me, was like low expectations I guess they have specifically for groups." Although this student found other supports both within and outside the school, and is currently pursuing a degree in education, these sentiments bothered him. Many of these students had high expectations for themselves – they discussed wanting to enroll in difficult and advanced courses, and their academic plans for the future. However, in some instances the teachers and guidance counselors they encountered did not share these expectations of them and there was an expressed lack of confidence in students' abilities to succeed academically. As one student shared:

> Every time I go to a counselor, cuz I remember I went to a counselor in my school, and they try to doubt you… they don't tell you "oh, you got this! You can do this" they be like, "are you sure you can do this? This is too hard for you! There's this subject, there's this course you can go into if you want," they kind like make you doubt yourself, you know? – Habiba

Similarly, another said:

---

[5] All names used are pseudonyms to ensure anonymity of the students I spoke with.

Counselors like specific at high school, whenever I would go in for course change or it was like the class that I wanted usually, they'd have like lower expectations for me, like I don't think, my English wasn't that good at the time, it was like grade 10-ish, it was okay, I think that was their assumption, that they were working off of. Like usually, I'd be like "I want to take this class" they'd be like "okay no maybe you should take this class," or towards grade 12, I wanted to take for example chem-30 or something like that, they'd be like, instead of, they'd be like "oh why don't you just go to Centre High and upgrade" they'd tell me that, you know? – Bashir

These sentiments are cause for concern. Students expressed a want and need to feel supported and encouraged from educators, and counselors and yet there seem to be some who actively doubt students. The low expectations students felt from some within their schools were disheartening. However, the fact that the students I spoke with remained academically successful – despite, or in spite of low expectations – should not overshadow their expressed frustrations. The perceptions that educators and school staff hold of students remain an important factor in how students are experiencing school and the educational pipeline. Low expectations held by educators and school staff have the potential to influence the type and amount of support they are willing to offer students. Many students I spoke with did not feel adequately supported during their time at public school, nor in terms of moving on to post-secondary education. Some explained that they found information regarding programs and admissions on their own, as those within the school were unable or unwilling to help them. Expectations can be impactful. One student, currently enrolled at the University of Alberta, with the hopes of becoming a nurse, said the following:

Idil: A lot of people were surprised that I was going on and doing things
I: Like your teachers? Or like students?
Idil: The counselors, and other students too.

Given that she had been an AP (Advanced Placement) student – who had plans for

university – and a student athlete, her success and moving on to post-secondary should not

have been surprising to most.

These low expectations, that some perceived to be racialized, were found within the

classroom and around the school – not just from those in educator roles. For example, Idil

talked about the perception the school secretary held, noting:

> Like the perception at my school, at my high school, oh was like all of us were like
> Black and like we didn't know English, everyone else did, but she [the secretary] just
> thought that if you're Somali, she would try and get us to understand what she was
> saying and she would repeat it like 4 or 5 times, when we understood it the first
> time, it was weird.

Important for a nuanced understanding of Black students' experiences in Canadian schools,

is the exploration of the intersections of race, ethnicity, and [perceived] immigration status.

In this regard, [perceived] English language proficiency serves as a marker of difference –

contributing to processes of othering and racialization. Many of the students I spoke with

were born in Canada. However, despite a strong proficiency in English – as it often was

their first language – student's bilingual (English and Somali) abilities were not always

recognized as an asset. Regarding language as an instrument of power (Bourdieu 1977), we

can articulate the way "a speaker's social location always shapes responses to language"

(Creese 2010: 296). The secretary in this instance was perceived to have made a judgment

about the student's ability to understand English – an assumption based in racial logic that

positions non-white people as non-English speakers.

English comprehension – or more often, the perception of this level of

comprehension – was a theme that was found in many students' experiences. In some

instances this was through the experiences of being coded an English as a second language

student. English as a Second Language (ESL) classification was something that some

students I interviewed had experiences with, to varying degrees. There was often

expressed confusion over the ways that school administration decided on these

classifications. One student noted:

> Our school, that was weird, I don't know like they kind of judge you like by the way
> you look and then when I spoke to them it was "oh you don't need it" and I was like
> okay and I got confused and went back to class. – Idil

This student was reflecting on the day her ESL classification was removed from her file, and

that this was done based on an informal assessment of her conversational English.

However, she was unsure how this classification had been decided in the first place, and the

arbitrary way that it was then removed.

Several students raised valid concerns over the ways that the Edmonton school

board was utilizing ESL designation as what they referred to as a "cash out". Edmonton

schools get $1,178.10 per student coded as ESL, and students are funded for a maximum of

5 years (Alberta Education Funding Manual). However, it is the discretion of each school's

principal to decide how this funding is spent, and there are no stipulated requirements

from the school board or province that this funding is to be used for ESL instructional

purposes (Rossiter and Derwing 2012). One student expressed her valid frustrations

around ESL classifications of students who may not require the additional resources,

saying:

> Cuz I feel like to cripple an entire like upcoming class, so that they have, so you're
> giving, not only are you like messing with their self-confidence but you're, like this is
> something I feel like a lot of people don't give enough attention to, these are kids,
> they, no matter, like nobody is cognizant of race all the time, they trust their
> teachers so if their teacher says, you cant keep up with the rest of the kids you are
> ESL, even thought you're born in Canada and this is the language you speak in, this
> is the language you think and write in, somebody tells you you're not even good

even to keep up with your white counterparts, and its all just for a bottom line, like I feel like I don't know how people convince themselves of that. – Bilan

This student was asked by a teacher and school administration to be classified as ESL, and she felt that this was problematic as she was at the time in Advance Placement (AP) English. The interrelatedness of the challenges that students identified is extremely important, and requires much more interrogation. For example, in a subsequent section I explore the ways that students identified a lack of resources available to them in their schools as an area of concern. The connections between ESL coding and resources, are one instance in which students identified concerns for themselves. However, as this one student explains, when students feel both like a cash grab, and have a lack of self-confidence from teacher expectations, it remains imperative that we look further at the current experiences around ESL coding in Alberta. As public education continues to fight for adequate resources and provincial funding, students' needs should be centered, identifying the gaps, and schools should work tirelessly to fill them.

It is important to note that classification as ESL is not inherently problematic. However, there are implications for this classification on students, and impacts that raise concerns. One such concern is due to the funding cap the province of Alberta has in place. The nature of funding for Alberta education is similar to many other provinces, as Alberta caps public funding to schooling at the age of 19, after this age a student must finance their own studies (Wilkinson 2002). However, newcomers, and ESL students are disproportionality affected by this funding model (Wilkinson 2002). The students who had articulated their concerns over being a 'cash out,' also brought up a concern that because of being coded as ESL, students were having their education prolonged and weren't finishing

high school within the allotted time where it was publicly funded. This push out factor has been identified by other researchers as a site for concern, and requires further exploration in the Edmonton context (Derwing et al 1999).

Low expectations from educators and others within the school have consequences to the self-confidence and engagement of students (Livingstone 2010), and their ability to receive the necessary support they seek. As one of the identified challenges these youth face, the low expectations they perceive from their educators are alarming and require much further exploration. The low expectations that students felt from some of their teachers and school staff is closely related to experiences of streaming, or attempted streaming for some of these students. I now turn to exploring these experiences, and the perceptions, feelings, and articulations around them.

Streaming

Streaming, (tracking as it is commonly referred in the United States) is the "placement of students into different programs based on their aptitude, ability, or special interests and needs (Wotherspoon 2014:131). For example, it differentiates students into academic or vocational programs. In Alberta it is important to consider both streaming as it occurs between schools (that offer various programs, i.e. school choice) and within the school that serves to differentiate between the ability groupings for subject areas. Alberta Education differentiates between what is called -1 and -2 (and -4 for the Knowledge and Employability stream), where -1 is designed for students who intend to move on to post-secondary, -2 is intended to "prepare students for technical schools, college, and life in general or the work force" (Ryley School Orientation Handbook). Class – although

inextricably linked to race – is also a factor in streaming inequities for students, as poverty

greatly impacts young people in the education system. However, the "long-standing

associations linking Blackness to a lack of intelligence and inferiority more generally"

(Maynard 2017: 214), impact the experiences Black youth face in schools.

Important in the narratives of some of these students is how their experiences

capture the ways the streaming is attempted, but also resisted by some students. This

remains an important consideration because these experiences may not be captured and

reflected in quantitative data that examines the level of classes students are, or were

enrolled in. The suggestions made to students as to which level of class is appropriate for

them complicates understandings of streaming. These suggestions seem to coincide with

the low expectations that students feel from some of their educators and school staff – and

despite their resistance to them, contribute to the ways students feel supported within

their schools.

Students had a variety of accounts that related to issues around streaming. The

subsequent chapter explores some of the ways that students resisted attempts at

streaming, and how different resources were utilized. One student, who said that she was

able to resist her school's attempt to place her in -2 courses – courses that would not make

her eligible for university – because her parents provided her the support to do so. Her

experiences with attempted streaming are interesting:

> Yea but I didn't really find their [the counselors] advice helpful cuz like, they tried to
> put me, cuz I was in Africa for three years right, so they tried to put me in like I don't
> know if they have this in Toronto, but its like English 30-1, and then 30-2, so 30-1 is
> like advanced, not really advanced but like the English you need to get in everything
> and English 30-2 you do that, and then you do 30-1. So it's like a little bit lower than
> -2. So they'd always try to put in those classes even though I had the marks for
> English 30-1, they'd say "oh just take this first and then take that after since you

were in Africa for 3 years", which didn't make sense because if you have the marks you should go in the class you want, right? So they tried doing that, and say "take a year off, just upgrade" it just kind of felt like they didn't want me to go straight to university after high school, which I ended up doing. But that was what I felt the counselors weren't really like helpful, but I don't know if they were doing it on purpose, or if they were actually saying like, like Africans (or I) don't speak English in a way, cuz I was like only there for 3 years and I learned English there and too its not like I stopped learning English. – Khadra

This student is currently enrolled at university, hoping to become a teacher in the future. Her expressed confusion over the advice that she was receiving from counselors raise concerns about the messages students are receiving about their ability levels. This student was quick to note that, "if I didn't know, and had no advice, the way they were talking like I'd think they were right". The trust that students and their families place in the school system and those who operate within it is important to articulate. However, as some students told me this trust often wasn't there in the first place. They, and their families, had preconceptions – that were confirmed once they entered schools – that there would not be adequate support for them. As one student, Hani, noted, "it is like parents do know, especially in the Somali community they know that that's not a school for their kids, like they're not going to help us reach our goals, like even if we present a goal to them they're not gonna." This student was specifically talking about the reputation of a school in the north side of Edmonton that has a large Somali student population, noting that her parents no longer saw the school as able to adequately support their children, having her younger siblings attend another school.

'Upgrading' often refers to the process of doing additional schooling, not necessarily to earn a diploma but to boost one's grade point average, depending on their future plans.

Being told to 'upgrade' was something that many students discussed as being the advice

they received from educators. One student recounted:

> So when I got here in grade 11, and I started getting into my classes and stuff like the first thing the counselor at my school told me was "okay take the easy classes because Centre High is always an option" like its like they automatically push that on you from day one. They're always like "just graduate, Centre High is always an option" instead of you know like take the higher classes. Like they never, I don't know how to explain it, they never pushed us to like be better. It was always whatever we have is whatever, where you are is where you are. Like if you're not trying, you're not trying. It was never like we're in high school, we're kids, like we don't really know what to expect… I don't know it was kind of like they looked down on like Somali people, especially at [her high school] because we're such a big population… its like we always have a negative light on us, like we go to the counselors and it was always like Centre High, Centre High, but like if someone else went who wasn't Somali or Black or anything, they'd give them options, they'd tell them this is how you apply to university, this is how you do this. – Yasmiin

As students remember being told to focus on getting the sufficient number of credits to

graduate, this seemed to be done at the expense of ensuring they were earning credits that

would allow them to move onto the post-secondary goals and plans they had. This seems to

raise concerns as to what purpose high schools are serving for some students in Edmonton.

Undoubtedly, some students may be unsure about their future plans, opting to take a gap

year. However, students who feel pushed out of their schools are identifying the ways that

public education is increasingly prioritizing the overall statistics of graduation rates, over

the quality education of students.

Some of these accounts specifically addressed the way that counselors would

present Centre High as an option for students to upgrade – as upgrading in the city of

Edmonton sometimes occurs at Centre High. Centre High is a school located in the city's

centre, and is an alternative schooling environment that focuses on preparing students for

post-secondary or the working world. A few of the students I spoke with attended Centre

High – for various reasons – sometimes to upgrade marks, sometimes because the

experiences at their regular high school were too uncomfortable, and sometimes because

there didn't seem to be an alternative. Students who attended Centre High had really

positive things to say about the staff there, and their abilities and willingness to assist

students in moving forward in their educational pathways. However, some students

expressed frustration with having "wasted a year" at the school – noting that they had

sufficient marks to apply to the post-secondary programs they wanted to, but lacked the

information and guidance from counselors at their high schools. It is evident that Centre

High is an invaluable resource for students, with dedicated teachers and staff. However,

there is concern as to how, why, and which students are being funneled into the school

from their respective high schools. Again, Alberta's funding cap is an important contextual

piece to exploring the role of Centre High in the experiences of Edmonton students.

One student I spoke with had an experience with streaming (or attempted

streaming) that differed from the others I had interviewed because of the degree to which

the incident reached. She recounted:

> Yea I remember, it was my, it was math's 30, and like basically I was in the wrong, so
> basically they put me in 30-2 instead of 30-1 and then basically said like "oh we'll
> change it to 30-1" and I was like okay cool. And then I remember one day I didn't
> come cuz I was like there's no point in coming like cuz I'm not supposed to be in this
> class, and then um he [math teacher], so and then I told them that, and then he saw
> me in the hallway, he was like "why didn't you come", he made a whole scene in
> front of all the teachers, he grabbed my arm and he's like lets go to the office. I was
> like oh my god. It was like wow! – Jamilah

This student's experiences are a very serious cause for concern. Although she later

explained that school administration remedied her class placement – enrolling her in the

appropriate -1 course, it remains unacceptable for this to have been the case in the first

place. There remains no practical reason for a teacher to physically grab a student and she did not discuss any repercussions this teacher faced for his actions. This incident, although a singular event in the context of the series of interviews I conducted, should not be seen in isolation from the experiences of racialized girls, and especially Black girls in schools. Robin Maynard (2017) opens her chapter on the (Mis)Education of Black Youth, by detailing an incident from the Greater Toronto Area, where a six-year old Black female student was placed in handcuffs in her classroom. Maynard notes that, "Black youth, who experience schools as carceral places characterized by neglect, heightened surveillance and arbitrary and often extreme punishment for any perceived disobedience (2017: 209). We must continue to examine the ways that schools can act as unsafe spaces for students and the various structures that contribute to these experiences.

Inadequate Resources

Accessing the support and resources that many of these students discussed, was a challenge. As they all had, or have, plans to go on to post-secondary education navigating the application procedures, accessing information on schools and programs, and gaining knowledge about scholarships were all things students noted as being challenging. In the subsequent chapter I discuss the various ways that students were able to access information and resources through different channels – their friends, their families, and their communities. The development of these avenues illuminates the various ways that individuals and communities can work to build the resources they need, when they do not find them available or adequate to them. Undoubtedly, public education requires tremendous resources including adequate funding. Those who work in public education

are often "devalued and poorly compensated" (Maynard 2017:109), and though this should

not be the case, it is students who ultimately suffer. Students are demanding more. Finding

sufficient information about post-secondary options was a challenge that many students I

spoke with experienced.

> She didn't know what she was talking about like she started talking like this is the information I know, and this is all I know so like I kind of had to do most of it on my own. But like she'd get me to the point of like website for UofA, yea she'd get me to the point of the website for UofA and then from then on I would just like continue. – Idil

> They really just wanted everyone to graduate and just walk the stage, whereas post-secondary was never discussed at our school – by teachers, by counselors, everybody was just like get your 100 credits, you can walk the stage. Like it was always pushed to do that, like I remember I was always in the counselor's office, I just had questions in general about like post-secondary and they literally wouldn't really be able to answer it. – Hani

> The thing is I went there [Centre High] mostly because I was pretty confused. I didn't know what to do. But like literally if I wanted to get into what I wanted to get into, I had the marks, I just didn't like have anybody to talk to about like how post-secondary works, or like how to apply or like what's going on, and its like whenever I asked questions, they were just like, "we can message a school" but I thought like at least of you're counseling grade 12 students you would at least know how to apply, you point me to a website or something. But it was more about post-secondary, is coming, but right now get your credits and walk the stage. So it was yea I literally feel like I wasted a year at Centre High, so not gonna lie, because I had the marks. – Hani

> Like we had counselors but they just didn't have the information to like help us.

> Okay I think would be like the support system thing you were saying. Not really like at home, but just not knowing lots of people that went to university, because in my family when I went I was the first to go into university so it was like, and they don't teach you things like applying for loans, or how to apply for university even with the classes you need, you need to go do that by yourself, so to not have anyone is really hard. – Ladan

A number of the students I spoke with expressed these frustrations. They wanted

information, they wanted guidance, but they often did not receive it from those in the

school whose job it is to provide it. The inadequate resources that students were identifying are likely not only a concern for Somali-Canadian students in Edmonton. These issues likely speak to a wider trend across Canada, but specifically in Edmonton, where funding of public education is insufficient. Resource issues affect the public schooling system as whole, this research however seeks to understand the ways that these issues can affect students from the Somali community in Edmonton.

Resources that students sought out at school also had to do particularly with the challenges they encountered with some teachers, or counselors. As I explored above, there were some students who felt that some of their teachers and counselors held low expectations of them. However, for many of the students these negative experiences weren't a reflection of all school staff. Many students pointed to different actors within the school who they felt they could either go to for support, could provide them with resources, or looked to remedy the issues they were encountering. However, in some students' perceptions, there failed to be enough of these people, or enough of their time in order to make change. For example, two students I spoke with discussed frustrations that they had with various teachers and counselors in the school but noted that the principal and vice-principal were both positive actors in the school. The issue however, was that these two people were incredibly busy within the school; leaving students unable to access the support they were actively seeking.

> The vice principal's actually really good, the vice principal and the principal actually listen to you. The problem is they're always busy with other stuff and other students. So when you're trying to go talk to them, they're like okay go to the counselors, they more free than the principal and vice principal, you know, and like once you get sent to a counselor. Like some kids don't want to be sent to the counselors because counselors don't want to help you, and the principal's busy you

know. That's when they're like okay never mind I'll just do it my own way… That's why it's so hard; the only time you talk to him is when you skip class. – Habiba

Want to talk to the vice principal? Just skip class! You can have a nice conversation with him! – Cawo

As Cawo's comment implies, students who feel that the only way that they'll be able to speak with someone within the school who they felt was supportive and attentive, is to get into trouble. Too often resources are concentrated at the end of the road. If students are identifying concerns that they have within their schools, there needs to be an avenue for these concerns to be addressed. Although it may be outside of the school's principal's job description to attend to the individual concerns of students, there must be more adequate support systems in place that all students are able to access. It should not be the case that the only positive resources students are recognizing within the school, are unavailable.

The vast majority of teachers and school staff that students had encountered were white. For some of the students I spoke with, this was something they hoped would change. And in some instances, as I discuss in the subsequent chapter, this was the impetus for their pursuits of a teaching and education degree. For some students, not having educators who looked like them, or similar, was something they felt contributed negatively to their schooling experiences. In some schools, there was one or a few racialized staff, and for some students these individuals were valuable resources and persons of support. For example, one student who discussed the tensions between Arab and Somali students at her high school found that the one Arab teacher in the school was the most willing to help in these instances. Additionally, another student discussed the way a Pakistani staff member acted as a bridge between administration and students when it came to race relations. However, simply hiring more racialized staff will not solve the issues that students have

59

articulated, and as some pointed out, there were non-white teachers who had anti-Black views.

Surveillance & Discipline

Issues around surveillance and disciplinary practices are two very important aspects that have commonly been discussed when scholars have explored the experiences of racialized students in schools. This theme however was less prominent among students I interviewed than some of the previous themes that I have explored above. Nevertheless, it was still part of some students' accounts of their experiences and the challenges that they navigated during their schooling. Unfortunately, the EPSB does not collect data disaggregated by race on the use of disciplinary measures such as suspension or expulsion. There is no accurate way of knowing whether some groups of students are disciplined more than others – and if these are proportionate to their behaviour. However, some of the students that I interviewed expressed concerns over the ways that disciplinary measures were taken, why they were taken, and who was targeted.

When students shared experiences that related to surveillance or discipline, these incidents related to various peoples within the school – teachers, principals, and SROs. Considering this, it raises questions about the role that various actors are playing within the school. Moreover, students expressed a variety of concerns over surveillance and discipline. These experiences were sometimes perceived to be targeting all students of colour, Black students, or sometimes specifically Somali targeted. However, there were also some students who perceived that disciplinary practices didn't necessarily target a specific

group, but that they were just used overall too often, and for unnecessary actions. For example, one student, Hani, said:

> Always, like if you're walking too slow to class, detention at lunch, because you're not rushing to class. When the bell rings you have 5 seconds to go. Like it was just really petty things like that, that just added up.

Schools that focus on discipline, order, and enforcing rigid behaviour such as dress codes and punctuality, seemingly prioritize social control over education. When these are the focuses of school administration it leaves the possibility for these practices to affect some students more, or differently than others. The same action by one student may be perceived differently from another depending on their race and gender. Important to consider here are the intersections of race and gender that can affect the ways that a student's behaviour is understood. Often the topic of surveillance and discipline in schools brings to mind the picture of a Black young man, however, "less visible forms of violence experienced by Black girls at school at school often go unaddressed and unseen by traditional measures (Maynard 2017:223). Wun (2015), notes in the American context that Black girls although reporting fewer suspensions and expulsions compared to Black boys, their smallest movements were constrained in the classroom. Laughing, chewing gum, speaking vibrantly, are all examples of such behaviour.

> I felt like that teachers, usually they, too like, if a white person laughed, I don't like saying that, but if a white person laughed like they wouldn't take it way, like they would take it light, but if someone of colour, or different cultural background laughed, they'd be like "why are you laughing" which was something I seen actually a lot, in throughout my high school experience. – Khadra

As the majority of the students I spoke with were young women, these intersections, and the experiences they shared are important in this respect. Interesting though, was that many students felt that Somali boys faced more disciplinary issues, and were targeted more

often Somali girls. However, the young women I talked to reported experiences of feeling

watched and targeted. They themselves may also feel that in comparison to things they

witnessed happening to their male friends, what they experienced wasn't as severe. These

experiences may be less visible, and less likely to be captured in traditional measures of

surveillance and violence, but this does not make them less harmful (Maynard 2017).

The vast majority of students that I spoke with did not report negative experiences

with and perceptions of their SROs. For the most part, their most expressive concerns did

not have to do with SROS – but illuminated the ways that other actors within the school,

such as teachers and principals took on more punitive roles. However, one student shared

the following perception of the SRO at her high school:

> The constable was really helpful but I found that he was like more like keen like
> more like, more like he watched the coloured people more and it was something
> that was known in the school like there's a back alley in [high school] were like
> everyone who smoked smokes, but he wouldn't let like the black people smoke, but
> like the Arabs would like smoke and the white people too. But like coloured people
> he'd always like give them a ticket or take them to the office or, I know it was a
> known thing too to the point where the Arab people were like, "yea we can do it, and
> you can't."- Khadra

The high school that this student went to had both a large Somali and East African

population, as well as a large Lebanese and Arab population. However, in this student's

perception these racial and ethnic groups were not all treated the same by the SRO. Several

other students discussed similar perceptions about the differences between Arab and

Somali students during their time at high school:

> Like I feel like, like they [Arab students] were a lot too, like we [Somalis] were
> similar in numbers, but they just didn't get into as much trouble, no one was
> watching them as we were being watched. – Yasmiin

The majority of students I interviewed attended one of two high schools in the north side of Edmonton, both having large populations of racialized students. Many of the students described these schools as racially and ethnically segregated – Somalis hung out with Somalis, Arabs hung out with Arabs.

Concerns that some students raised around feeling watched by school staff were articulated as being specific to Somali-Canadian students, more clearly than some of the other experiences that were raised. This seemed to only be the case from students who attended schools that had a large Somali population in them. A few of the students I spoke with attended schools that had very few students of colour, and in this case they were often the only Black student, and the only Somali student. These students did not express concern about feeling watched or as if the school kept tabs on them in the same way that students from schools where they were one of many Somali students. The differences in the way school composition played into students' experiences is an interesting point of consideration. These perceptions of feeling targeted, as Somalis, seemed to coincide with being in a school with a large Somali population – possibly leaving the administration to feel as if specific measures are needed to prevent disruptions in the school. This hypervisibility, in some perceptions', seemed to function as an "extra target on your back," as Hani put it, exacerbated by being in a group. The most poignant example of the ways that school staff were perceived to take on a more punitive and social control oriented roles, was discussed by two students who had attended the same high school where there was a large Somali population. These two students expressed concerns about feeling targeted by a vice principal, because they were Somali:

Hani: There was one principal she was our assistant principal she always kind of got to know all the Somali kids first, like she would try and be on first name last name basis, like but it wasn't like a friendly thing, it was more of like if I see you around I know its you who did something-

Yasmiin: I can tell you apart. Cuz like the other ones they couldn't really tell us apart cuz like black hijab, black hijab, they couldn't really tell us apart-

H: she put in effort

Y: to know us, like one by one

H: and its just like its not like, it didn't feel like she was trying to get friendly with us, it was like the second she saw us shed be like be "blah blah you're not doing this right" she'd know you from off the bat. Whereas we noticed with other people in the school she wouldn't get, I feel like she was just targeting but without, like in case something were to ever happen, she would know.

These students' perceptions of the lengths that this school staff member went to are troubling. Schools acting as carceral spaces leave some students feeling that the place where they are meant to learn is not safe for them.

Anti-Black & Anti-Muslim Racism

Blatant acts and utterances of anti-Black and anti-Muslim racism were a theme in some students' articulations. Although not all students experienced, or discussed these types of incidents – they did seem to contribute to the school climate and environment where students were trying to learn. The way these experiences occurred for students at predominantly white schools, and for those who attended schools with many racialized students is another point of consideration. For one, as I explore in the subsequent chapter, the ways students resisted and navigated negative experiences such as a teacher or student using a racial epithet or micro-aggressions seemed to be related to the school's racial composition. Having peers of the same racial background was a common way that students

discussed their navigation of such incidents. For some students, being at predominately

white schools opened them up to particular kinds of racism – perhaps because white

students felt emboldened by the majority they held within the school. For example one

student said:

> Basically the racism with like my classmates was kind of, it was just immature
> racism, like they would say the n-word in songs, and say it in front of me, and it was
> almost like I was an honorary white person, cuz I was going to an entirely white
> school. – Bilan

This student attended an almost entirely white high school in Edmonton. She had a number

of examples of the ways that she perceived this to impact her experiences at school.

Teachers play such an important role in how they foster a safe classroom environment. One

such experience came when her class began reading To Kill a Mockingbird

> Before like starting the book, but she made sure to say we're going to say the N-
> word okay guys, this is part of the book, we're gonna say the n-word, just say it don't
> say n-word, just say nigger, and I was sitting there and I was like why is this so
> important and we did that and then it like got to a place where when we're talking
> about the book, and the black character people would refer to him as like nigger, like
> literally in conversation and discussion and I couldn't, and I felt like this was 10th
> grade I was 15, I felt like I couldn't go to my teacher and say you know like there's
> people, and then she was it too, and she didn't stop it so it was like I was gonna go to
> her and go her, and be like it makes me really uncomfortable, how everyone's just
> throwing around this word, like it doesn't mean anything. – Bilan

Experiences of anti-Black racism and/or anti-Muslim racism in schools have the potential

to impact the level of safety of comfort a student feels. An environment that allows racial

micro-aggressions to go unanswered leaves some students vulnerable to being pushed out.

Although only one student expressed to me that she was pushed out of school, her

experiences demonstrate what is at stake when schools are not actively working to support

all of their students – not despite racial differences, but fully accounting for and affirming

racialized students.

For me it was something that I couldn't really handle, but it wasn't like outright racism, it was just like kind of, and it does also like since I was like the only black kid in the whole classroom, you would obviously feel like you're not really a part of the group that much, plus with the like subtle racism it wasn't like outright racism, it was the subtle racism, I felt uncomfortable going to class, I really, I skipped a lot. – Sadia

It is not just white students who can and do make anti-Black remarks. In schools that had both large Black and Arab populations some students talked about the segregation and tension between the groups. However, one student noted that there was a particular tension among Somali student and Lebanese students:

They would say "Abed" which means slave in Arabic, they'd call Somali, it's usually Somali people, and like Lebanese people, its not like other African people like Nigerian people or anything, its just Somali people and Lebanese people, they always clash for some reason, which I don't feel is necessary but they feel like they're one up on us cuz apparently we were once slaves to them. – Khadra

Although we must continue to interrogate the ways that all students are experiencing schooling and the difficulties they encounter, we must also remain aware that the issues within communities often find their ways into classrooms. Anti-Blackness in Arab communities – as all communities – must be actively confronted.

Some of the responses that I received when I was discussing feelings and conceptions of safety that students felt within their schools, are important to understanding the ways that experiencing racism and racial profiling can impact a student's wellbeing and academic success. As racial spaces, schools can serve as hostile, unwelcoming, and unsafe for non-white students. The following are two examples of the ways students' discussed their perceptions of safety and the ways that school climate contributes:

> Like I guess the one time I felt like my safety was kind of shakable was because of the racism. So that was like, but it was not like 'okay I'm going to be abused or anything' it was more like this low level anxiety, all the time. – Bilan

> Yes and no – Yes form like outside threats... but from within the school, I'd say 50/50, because there were some assistant principals that we got along with and there were some that downright seemed like they didn't like us form the jump. – Hani

These students' accounts demonstrate the ways that the surveillance some students felt and described from school staff can impact their feelings of safety. For Hani, one of her vice principal's made a concerted effort to remain familiar with all Somali students – an experience that is reminiscent of how students in other school boards have described their experiences with school staff, including SROs. Carceral logic, as it operates within the education system, allows for an understanding of how school officials, whose role is not necessarily one of punishment, take on these roles. All students deserve to feel safe[6] within their schools, and we must work to ensure that this is the case moving forward. Students must feel safe in their classrooms as well, meaning that their ideas are welcomed, and it is a space that doesn't' allow the dehumanization of others.

Within the classroom, teachers play an important role in ensuring that their classrooms are safe spaces for all students – however, as some students reflected this isn't always the case:

> Yea I think we were debating about wearing the niqab and the teacher was playing devils advocate but she wasn't on the side, she was on the other side, and the student, there was one boy in the class that kept saying, "that thing on her head" I was the only hijabi I was the only black girl, only anything and he's like "that thing on her head" and he said "that stupid thing on her head should be banned" or

---

[6] Utilizing the term safety in this research was purposeful. Mr. Abdulkadir – the community collaborator – requested the inclusion of the word safety itself within the questionnaire guide. It is through my conception of the word safety, his conception, and the students I spoke with that I employ this term.

something like that and I looked at him, and I was just so shocked and I was like what! And I had no one to you know like look back on, no one to elaborate with, it was just me by myself. It was just like yea you know you're right, speak your mind, tell me how, she was kind of like encouraging him to speak his mind, and I was just so taken aback like I don't even think I even said anything in that class cuz she's like um don't be offended its just devils advocate, just you know I'm just trying to see both points of view, and its like you're a teacher you know, you know you shouldn't be supporting those type of like thoughts, if anything you should tell like, or ask me to explain it or something to him what it is, or I don't know. - Yasmiin

That's that thing is they'll always be like we're trying to see both points but they don't let you, they don't allow your point to like, well they give you the chance to talk but its just like its not enough for you to come back with contradict what the other person is saying. - Hani

These experiences demonstrate an important piece of classroom dynamics that are also seen elsewhere such as debates around free speech on campuses. Allowing students to use violent words and ideas, with the defense of free speech or playing devil's advocate has the potential to harm students and contributes to a hostile school climate, constructing the school as an unsafe space. However, it is important to highlight the ways that teachers were able to do this and still leave a positive impression on students. Ladan noted:

Other than that I would say all other teachers I've had were very like welcoming and understanding of like and I don't know, and I feel like they really understood religion and race, and depending on certain schools, like when I was in the all girls school, it was like 20 students, and three of us were like Black right, and some of us, two of us were Muslim so its like sometimes you'd feel kind of odd, but they'd always would make sure we were included so if were doing any event.

Ladan spoke about a negative experience with a teacher who made anti-Muslim comments but that the positive experiences with teachers greatly overshadowed this one teacher. Teachers who fostered a safe school and classroom environment were an important piece of the narratives of some students – especially to contrast those who failed to do this.

The challenges that students articulated, as I spoke to them spanned a variety of topics and aspects of school and the education system. However, although many of them

discussed these challenges, things were not just happening to them. But as agentic

students, they were making choices and working to find options, resources, and the

support they needed. I illuminate the challenges these students faced in an effort to work

toward an education system that works for all students.

Chapter 6: Resistance & Community Cultural Wealth

The young people I spoke with encountered various barriers during their public education. These barriers are racialized – structured in and by the individualistic multicultural ethos that pervades Canadian public schooling. I use critical race theory (CRT), as a framework to see the ways that schools are constructed as sites that reflect and can reproduce the inequalities in society. Power relations and differences thus become evident using this approach as it acknowledges the practices that marginalize some students. Within each participant's articulation of their experiences, there were various issues that they reflected on. Inadequate resources were available to them at their schools, teachers and school staff harbored low expectations regarding their achievement levels, classroom environments were sometimes unwelcoming and racially hostile, there was a lack of trust among students about school staff, punishments were felt to be trivial and unevenly applied. However, it would be disingenuous to describe students' experiences as solely negative – as many explained things that they enjoyed about school. As well, by and large, the students I spoke with were extremely successful in their academic pursuits. Although it was not my intention at the outset to do a research project focusing on academically successful Somali-Canadian students, such as Codjoe's (2001) research on successful Black students in Edmonton, many youth I spoke with excelled academically. However, it became evident that to understand the experiences of students, it meant exploring any of the barriers that they faced, how they were able to negotiate and resist barriers, and how this translates to not only their success, but how it can be understood as a success for their current and future families, and communities.

For some of the students who shared their stories with me, school was largely a

positive memory. For others, their memories were a bit more mixed – making space for

both the positive and the negative. And for some, the negative experiences they

encountered stood at the forefront of how they reflected on their school experiences.

However, in these reflections different actors or aspects of school brought about different,

and sometimes contradictory responses. I believe that as a researcher, it was and is my

responsibility to ensure that I allow for the nuanced, complex, and sometimes

contradictory explanations of their lived experiences to be given the human quality they

deserve. But also, that I make space to acknowledge the actors both within the public

school system and in the community at large who demonstrate a commitment to providing

the resources and support children need throughout their schooling experiences. Even

more though, with this research I eagerly hope to allow the efforts of students who may be

flourishing in a system structured to stifle them to shine through. It is here that I see it as

entirely necessary to spend a great deal of time exploring the ways that students are not

passive players in their educational journeys. In presenting the various ways that students

enjoy school, develop strategies that ensure they survive and succeed, and transmit these

strategies throughout their peer groups, families, and communities – in a way that deeply

acknowledges the structures at play – I do not wish to portray a neoliberal representation

of individual success. My research is a reflection of these students lived experiences[7], a

demand for anti-racist education development, and another piece to the complex

---

[7] The centrality of experiential knowledge or lived experiences is core to a CRT framework (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal 2001). This framework recognizes that "the experiential knowledge of Students of Colour are legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination in the field of education" (Solorzano and Delgado Bernal 2001: 314).

narratives of racialized student experiences in Canada. I have conducted this research with

a deep commitment to ensuring that all students have the right to equitable schooling.

The concept of *resilient resistance*, as developed by Yosso (2000) demonstrates a

formidable tool to discuss students' experiences. This concept builds both upon the

literature of resiliency, as developed by educational psychologists, and resistance

literature. Traditionally, resistance has been utilized to redefine the:

> Causes and meaning of oppositional behaviour by arguing that it has little to do with
> the logic of deviance, individual pathology, learned helplessness (and, of course,
> genetic explanations), and a great deal to do, though not exhaustively, with the logic
> of moral and political indignation (Giroux 1983: 107).

Acting out and, dropping out are some examples of oppositional behaviour that scholars

have pointed to as acts of resistance (Dei et al. 1997). As much focus was placed on what

was regarded as 'the underachievement' of some students, such as Black students, critical

scholars sought to change the narrative. Gosine and James (2010) identify some resistance

strategies employed by marginalized student in North America as:

> 'Opting out' of the system which could take a form of, among other behaviours,
> dropping out of school, limiting school attendance (or being truant), being
> unconcerned with punctuality, challenging teachers, being disruptive in school and
> classes, and/or choosing to participate in school primarily through athletic
> endeavors (42).

Much scholarly attention has been paid to the ways that students' actions and behaviour

that directly challenge the structure of schools and classrooms can be understood as acts of

resistance. However, as Gosine and James (2010) identify, academic success can also be a

vehicle that students see suitable to challenge and resist the racist aspects of schooling,

when coupled with a commitment to their ethno-racial communities. Resistance strategies

are varied and fluid – they change across time, place, and from person to person (Portfolio & Carr 2010).

Resiliency scholars, however, examine the social and psychological characteristics of academically successful students. Students who remain successful despite facing, "stressful events and conditions that place them at risk of doing poor at school and, ultimately dropping out" (Alva 1991: 19). Resiliency is described as "a contextually 'optimal' response to stress" (Spina 1997: 2). However, as Yosso (2000) states, in her research with Chicana/o students, being resilient is a form of resistance; success and survival through the educational pipeline is resistance – "resilient resistance is surviving and/or succeeding as a strategic response [to visual microaggressions]" (180). Important in this conception is recognizing it as, "a process by which students strategically challenge inequality, even though they often cannot or do not fully articulate the structural nature of inequality" (Yosso 2000: 182). The students I spoke with at times named the structural inequities that they experienced at school – their lack of support, the lack of resources, for example. They expressed the need for changes to be made to their schools and others – wanting Black and other racialized teachers, wanting to incorporate Black history into curriculum, wanting to become teachers themselves to connect with and inspire future generations. The navigation and success of these students through the educational pipeline points us to the structural changes that are necessary to make schooling an equitable and safe experience for all students. It highlights those actors and actions that are currently doing the work, ensuring that students develop critical thinking and engagement. Resilient resistance must account for the ways that the student, their friends, their families, and their communities respond to the structures of schooling. Thus, I locate sources and sites of resilient

resistance in the school, in the community and in themselves. Not all of the sources act in

the same way or equally for each individual, but they all seem to contribute to the ways

that students achieve and, also how they themselves understand their successes.

Community Cultural Wealth

Critical Race theorists and scholars have challenged the common interpretation of

Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital that positions students of colour as lacking the

knowledge and skills to succeed in education settings (Yosso 2005). These interpretations

– termed deficit or deprivation theories – place the fault in the lap of racialized students,

their families, and their communities. "Educators most often assume that schools work and

that student, parents and community need to change to conform to this already effective

and equitable system" (Yosso 2005: 75). Utilizing a CRT lens grounded in 'Outsider' (Hill

Collins 1986) and transgressive (hooks 1994) knowledges, this traditional interpretation of

Bourdieuean cultural capital can be challenged, as the margins become places "empowered

by transformative resistance" (Yosso 2005: 70). Yosso (2005) developed a concept termed

community cultural wealth, which refers to "an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and

contacts possessed by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms

of oppression" (78). Within community cultural wealth Yosso (2005) identifies six forms of

capital: aspirational capital, linguistic capital, familial capital, social capital, navigational

capital, and resistant capital – these forms are "not mutually exclusive or static, but rather

are dynamic processes that build on one another" (77).

Although developed by a CRT scholar focusing on Chicana/o/x studies in the

American context, scholars Gosine and James (2010) have utilized the concept to articulate

the experiences of Black students in the Canadian context – grounded in multiculturalism

and individualistic ethos. Many of the ways that the students I spoke with discussed their journeys through the educational pipeline, can be grounded in community cultural wealth. Their aspirations, the way that they shared information, the resources their communities developed were all instances where capital could be identified.

In the School

Peers

The role and impact that peers served within the school were varied. For many though, peers played an integral role in how students talked about navigating incidents in, and structures of the school. As many students discussed teachers' low expectations, racial micro aggressions, or how they fostered a classroom environment that made them feel uncomfortable, knowing which teachers, and which classes to avoid was one strategy that students utilized to survive and succeed in school. For some students, peers were a source of information regarding which teachers to avoid, if possible. If a teacher had a reputation for being "problematic," as one student, Yasmiin put it, then it was often known amongst the students; "English teachers we know that there were certain ones that were problematic; math teachers, there were certain ones that were problematic". As Yasmiin further, explained to me, she felt "picked on" by some teachers, as they would refuse to call on her during class – but she knew that not all teachers were like this, and learning which ones were which proved to be important for helping limit the number of negative experiences. If a student is going to navigate and succeed within the educational pipeline, learning which teachers demonstrate a commitment to their entire student body's learning proves to be important. Students acknowledged and were well aware of the varying

degrees of support that teachers offered, especially to racialized students. And in some

cases, there was the option to switch out of a class in favour of a teacher who students felt

provided more adequate support.

> "That's why we always end up at the counselors office and like everybody would get
> in line to switch out – because the teachers had reputations among the students, and
> we'd know" Hani

It is important to note that there were teachers who were regarded positively, but it was

the accepted knowledge that this is not the case for all teachers, allowing students to

develop one strategy to succeed navigate and in their schools, exhibiting resilient

resistance. Although it is highly probable that all students engage in this sort of information

sharing, it takes on a specific shape for racialized students. Sharing information amongst

each other so that peers knew which teacher was preferable was done in a way that related

to how teachers treated and interacted with racialized students. However, Hani explained

to me, when requesting a course change students wouldn't share the same information

with counselors that they did with each other – there was a lack of trust with school staff.

She noted, "you can't say that as a valid reason to a counselor, like we thought they couldn't

relate to us" – when a student had negative experiences with a teacher these were often

only shared with other students. Passing along information to peers was one way that

students were able to resist barriers in their schools, limiting the number of experiences

with racist teachers, and seeking out the adequate and affirming support that they needed.

One student also explained how this information sharing was necessary in regards

to other actors within the school, such as guidance counselors. As some students told me

about negative experiences with guidance counselors, including their low expectations,

attempts at streaming, and/or the inability and unwillingness to provide information on

post-secondary, sharing this information was invaluable in helping students succeed. As Hodan explained, "there was this one counselor, he definitely wanted everybody to like succeed." However, as was the case for Hodan and this counselor, having someone who believed in them, and saw their potential was directly contrasted to the other counselors who would "shut you out". As important as it was to avoid those in the school who had reputations for their racial hostility, or inadequate support – when someone was identified as an encouraging and supportive actor within the school this information was also important to share with peers. Navigating who would and who would not support you – who was on your side – and sharing this information among your peers was one of the ways that students responded to and resisted the structural inequalities in their schools. This information sharing can be understood as a part of community cultural wealth (Yosso 2005). Navigational capital in particular, refers to "skills of maneuvering through social institutions not created with Communities of Color in mind" (Yosso 2005: 80). Navigating a school system that was designed for middle class white settlers can be done in part through the resources at networks that community cultural wealth recognizes in racialized communities.

In some instances peers were a vital source of information that students utilized in order to survive and succeed, however, in other instances it was the friendship with, and presence of, other racialized students that contributed to how students demonstrated resilient resistance. Peers, sharing similar racial and ethnic backgrounds especially, were an invaluable resource and common theme in how students spoke about resisting barriers they encountered – although this seemed to vary depending on the racial composition of the school. Schools that had a large proportion of Somali students were predominately

located in the North side of Edmonton, and were mostly attended by non-white students, of various racial and ethnic backgrounds. Students who attended these schools spoke about a variety of barriers that they encountered in attending schools that had inadequate resources (lack of funding, inexperienced staff), however, within these schools it was this sense of community that made these schools an environment students felt more comfortable in. In a similar way to how neighbourhoods may function despite their issues, schools are similarly structured.

For example, when I posed a question about feelings of safety in the school, Bashir noted that "being around, surrounded by other Somalis made me feel more comfortable". As well, Idil told me that it was important to her to have a large Somali student population at her school because "they're the people I'd go to for help". As these students' reflections reveal, it is imperative that understandings of what makes a place such as a school feel safe are expanded to account for the ways that racialized students develop and utilize alternate and differing ways to ensure their safety and success. In schools structured by anti-Black racism, Islamophobia, and xenophobia, that place racialized and otherwise marginalized students in positions that negate their mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing, the support and safety they find from their peers is imperative to how they navigate and succeed in these spaces. For one student, Jamilah, who had told me about multiple negative experiences with teachers – one of which included a teacher physically grabbing her – did not want to change schools, having all of her friends at this one school made it preferable over a school where she would not have this support.

However, even within a school that has a significant proportion of Somali students, your classes could be somewhere that you find yourself without a friend or ally. Social

78

studies class, for example, was one space that some students had negative interactions with both teachers and peers, that centered on conversations about race, religion, and current events in a way that made some of the young people I spoke with feel uncomfortable. Your only saving grace was to "just hope that you have a friend in that class," as Yasmiin told me.

One of the young women I spoke with did almost all of her schooling at predominantly white schools, with very few racialized students. For her, the one time she had another Black student in her school stood in stark contrast to how she remembered her other schooling experiences. As Bilan explains, "she was the only other Black person in my class, and it was like the first time, but it was a good time, cuz at least I had another person to rant to". The importance of this friendship became all the more salient after a teacher showed a video that was meant to address internalized racism and colourisim within racialized communities. However, this teacher failed to provide the necessary context and explanation as to why this may be the case given the pervasiveness of white supremacy and racial logic. Instead, Bilan noted that students were left with the impression that all Black people desired to be white; she felt that the situation was trivialized and perceived that the class spent the duration of the video clip staring at the only two Black students in the class. Although in the moment having this friend didn't stop or prevent experiences that made Bilan feel uncomfortable in her class as one of the only Black students, it was a resource that she appreciated.

For two students I spoke with who attended predominantly white schools, Bilan and Sadia, they discussed experiences of feeling like an 'honorary white person' or that they didn't feel part of the group. However, not all students felt that being the only Somali-Canadian student isolated them. One student, Yuusuf, articulated to me that at his school

being the only Black student, he felt that "I was somebody who looked different and I'm pretty sure even though they might have had Black friends before it might have been oh he's a Black person, maybe it would be nice if I were to be his friend." Yusuf described that his peers went out of their way to befriend him, something he was appreciative of. The racial composition of a school does not seem to play a uniform role across schools, or time. Students discussed a number of ways that this impacted their schooling – positive, negative, and neutral – and is just one consideration in understanding their experiences.

One young woman, Cawo, spoke about the way that she encouraged her friend to question the counselor's advice. As many students talked about the ways that counselors and teachers would encourage them and their friends to take easy classes, or didn't provide them with the confidence and sense of inspiration to take on challenges, having your peers there to encourage you was an important way that students continued to succeed. There was a resounding sentiment that many of the counselors or teachers students interacted with did not seem to actively support their goals, or believe in their ability to succeed. For students to continue to succeed, they had to negotiate who was a resource of support and utilize these resources. Although sometimes this meant utilizing the resources that were traditionally in place in school, often this was done through reaching out to community, familial, and friend support.

In the Community

Parents

Parents were instrumental in narratives of resistance. This was especially the case in terms of how students explained how they stayed out of lower streamed courses, or

were able to push for a course change when they were streamed into lower level courses. Parental involvement and support was an integral way that students were able to resist the barriers they encountered in school. Khadra encountered this in her English class. Conscious of the fact that she had the marks to be in the higher level class (what is called, a dash one course), she found herself up against guidance counselors that were insistent she take the lower level English course, describing how "they just talk you into it, you know? Like, by saying 'this is better for you, this is good for you, just take this'". But it was her parents that didn't allow this to happen. Specifically, she noted that her dad – who was a teacher himself – was adamant that she resist this push to enroll in a class below her ability. She went on to say "but if I didn't know, and had no advice, the way they were talking like I'd think they were right." Khadra articulates the precarious position students find themselves in. We place trust within guidance counselors and other actors within the school to do what is best for the student. However, for students who remain marginalized by the structures of society and school, it becomes clear that all actors within the school are not protecting their best interest. Guidance counselors, as one actor within the school, may be understood as an exercise of social closure. Social closure, a Weberian concept, means "the process by which social collectives seek to maximize rewards by restricting access to rewards and opportunities to a limited circle of eligibles" (Parkin 1974:3). Weber (1968) states that any group attribute – race, religion, language, or nationality – can be utilized if it can be used for the monopolization of opportunities. For Khadra, the guidance counselor may have been acting to prevent non-white, non-Christian, students from taking the higher courses. Parents are thus playing an incredibly important role in advocating for their

children, to ensure that the barriers they come up against do not stifle their children's abilities.

Hani explained to me how she wanted to transfer to a new high school – a school that had a reputation for streaming, especially Somali-Canadian students. But after her mom overheard a counselor advising two other Somali students to enroll in courses that weren't "as hard", to make it more likely they would graduate, she was furious and insisted the only way she would allow Hani to still attend the school was if she checked her schedule, saying, "you are getting dash one's, you are doing physics, you are doing chem, nobody can tell you to just take science 30 and graduate – like no!" Parents such as Hani's remained strong advocates for their children's futures, knowing that if left on their own their children may not receive the support that they need. Certain schools, such as the one Hani attended have reputations among Somali community members,

> Parents do know, especially in the Somali community. They know that that's not a school for their kids, like they're not going to help us reach our goals – like even if we present a goal to them, they're not gonna. (Hani)

Students sometimes wanted to attend these schools despite knowing these issues; often their friends were all going to attend the school, making it worth it for them. However, parents' involvement then became all the more important. Barriers were expected, lack of support was anticipated – but parents remained a source of resilient resistance for their children.

Friends, Family & Community

Students sometimes discussed seeking out resources and support within their families and the community to help them through their classes. Sometimes the resources

were available in the school, but availability doesn't necessarily translate to accessibility.

As Bashir told me, "I was supposed to go to the teacher, the teacher made herself available, but instead I would go to a friend's older sibling… and I guess it made it much more relaxing I guess." In a similar way to how Bashir discussed the importance to having Somali peers in his school to make him feel safe and comfortable, learning from someone he identified with was important in who he sought out for help. Idil shared this sentiment, telling me, "like always in high school he [her cousin] was always my tutor, like I would go to him rather than ask my teacher." A learning environment that makes students feel safe, comfortable, and affirmed allows them to develop and learn as young people. Reaching out to their families, friends, and communities often provided the support students were seeking to succeed in their schools. Utilizing the resources that they felt best suited them, students navigated and succeeded in a school that is often structurally unresponsive to their needs.

Students' navigation and success through the educational pipeline was a reflection of their efforts, and those who came before them – such as their parents – but it is also demonstrated in future generations. Students often discussed the ways that they got to university as 'on their own'. But many were also adamant that this would not be the case for the younger people in their lives:

> In my family when I went, I was the first to go into university so it was like, and they don't teach you things like applying for loans, or how to apply for university even with the classes you need, you need to go do that by yourself, so to not have anyone is really hard and I know now since I've been in school and I have lots of little cousins and my siblings, I can help them and stuff… like a lot of people like my friends and my family that come to me and ask like how do I sign up for scholarships or loans even just singing up for school, and like I'd help them with that, and like I wish kind of had that for myself cuz it would have made things much easier. - Ladan

As Ladan discussed, there were resources missing from her school, compelling her to figure it out on her own. The process to apply to university is complicated. And, there are additional applications and forms one must navigate if they are from low income families and require financial assistance. High schools should be providing these resources to their students, with staff who are able and willing to assist students with the process. But as many students told me, these resources were unavailable to them at their schools. At times this was felt to be something that wasn't available to any student in the entire school, however, at other time, student felt that being Somali, staff within their schools were additionally unwilling to provide with them the resources to go on to post-secondary. The lack of resources and systemic racism that attempts to stifle and dissuade racialized students from success – success on their own terms – creates a situation where students, their families, and communities must work to support students through this educational pipeline. As Ladan is currently enrolled in a post-secondary program, her success through this pipeline allows her to translate the information she gained, to assist those around her in how to navigate these complex applications and procedures, becoming an all too needed resource. In addition to the informal resources students create by advancing through the educational pipeline and garnering information helping them to do so, young people have also formal organized to assist their communities. As one student explained,

> I know the Somali group here, that was at the U of A and they help with the whole application system, so like they actually do help Somali students with um applicating like what grades you need, what classes you need, and everything, which helps a lot now. - Hodan

Individually and collectively students were making changes in their families and communities. Successful high school completion, and advancement to post-secondary

education translated to success for these young people, and those around them. It is not to say that enrollment in post-secondary education is the only route to, or example of success. However, it is the option that so many of these students had desired, but felt strongly that their high schools did not, or could not prepare them for. Completing high school and transitioning on to post-secondary education, was a tremendous achievement – to do this, students reached out to their peers, families, and communities. However, they also articulated themselves as central to their own resiliency. Their dreams, successes, and how they intend to move forward all demonstrate resilient resistance.

On their own

The students I spoke with were tremendously successful. They were all currently attending post-secondary, or had plans to upon graduation. They took advance placement courses, and spoke about the high grades they earned. They had big dreams and high hopes for what they would accomplish. These dreams, and the fact that for so many of them they were actively on the path to accomplishing them, demonstrate resilient resistance. One student was jubilant in telling me all about her future plans:

M: so what is it that you want to do in university?

Cawo: you're going to think I'm crazy

M: no I won't

Cawo: everyone's like, "how long do you want to be at school?!" Cuz like, alright! So because I want to get into the medical field, I want to be a pediatrician, you have to have a bachelors, so I want to get into teaching – English teacher to be specific – Mister step back, Cawo to the rescue for the future generation of students! And after like that I want to take 6 months off to become a photographer, because I enjoy photography and I think I'm pretty good at it!

The conversation I had with this student was full of excitement and passion for her future – she had big dreams and detailed plans for how she was going to accomplish them. This student was still very much in the process of her journey through the educational pipeline, and still in high school. Although, this student, like many others knew what she wanted to do, she felt that the resources available to her at school were inadequate, telling me in detail the number of phone calls she has made to try and get the information she requires for her university applications. Sometimes students were able to ask friends or family, such as Bashir told me, "I talked to people who were already here, like older friends of siblings," many did it on their own. Too often students told me that the staff at their school did not provide them with adequate information to allow them to apply to post-secondary institutions. Their successful journeys through the educational pipeline were full of accounts of how they took their futures into their own hands. With one of the most common experiences being inadequate support and/or resources from school staff, and the low expectations that they held of them, students were forced into finding the answers on their own in order to be successful. As one student told me,

> She didn't know what she was talking about like she started talking like "this is the information I know, and this is all I know" so like I kind of had to do most of it on my own. But like she'd get me to the point of the website for the UofA ad then from then on, I would just like continue. - Idil

They were resistant and succeeded in a system that often worked to negate any success.

They go to great lengths to ensure that they get the answers they need:

> Oh my gosh! Like literally you have no, I feel like all the teachers or like the people over the phone know me because of my annoying ass voice. I keep ringing them up, I'm like "so I was looking to getting into this program, and I wanted to like know what I have to do and whatever." – Cawo

It remains important to recognize students' academic success as a form of resilient resistance, and articulate that ways that they do not passively accept the resources offered – they create new ones, look to their communities, and demand better for themselves.

Navigating and succeeding the educational pipeline allowed students to become much needed resources for their families and communities. However, for some students being this resource directly influenced the career and educations paths they were pursuing. For quite a few of the students I spoke with, they had aspirations of becoming teachers. Sometimes this was inspired by what they felt was a lack of representation or resources among teachers currently, other times having that one incredible teacher who motivated them was an inspiration to be that for other students – and sometimes it was a combination of the two. Becoming a teacher was seen as way that students could enact change:

> I feel like as a teacher later on I'll just know how to connect with students better… That's when I decided I wanted to be a teacher, because I was like, I feel like I could you know, I could help more, guide them at least to post-secondary or even bring that up in class, cuz even that was never brought up at all, it was just a state of panic and confusion… Like you know make kids feel safe, make them feel support that they need to graduate, and make them feel like they're capable of doing things. Because we didn't have that hope – so that's why I want to give back to society in that lane. – Hani

Students, such as Hani, recognize the impact teachers have on students' experiences and aspirations. As someone who made it through the educational pipeline, and is currently enrolled in post-secondary education, she desires strongly to be a support and resource for students to come. Other students, such as Bashir expressed similar sentiments as to why he wanted to be a teacher, saying, "preferably high school, so I'm like able to kind of like those, the ones that are in the same position as me, push them towards post-secondary." Aspirations of becoming a teacher acknowledge the need for support and resources within

the school. Although this is just one of the many ways that students are resisting the existing structures that they perceive to be attempt to limiting their potential, it demonstrates an important one. This pathway centers on the future, and the creation of resources that seek to build a healthier school environment. It offers an optimism for coming generations, acknowledging the work necessary to develop equity in education.

Recognizing the successes of these students – and the ways that they navigate and confront barriers of all sorts – as resilient resistance is an important narrative in their experiences within the educational pipeline. As students continue to attend schools where resources are inadequate, and staff hold negative perceptions and low expectations for them, exploring some of the ways that young people continue to resist these structures, succeeding within their schools is tremendously important. These paths of resistance demonstrate actions that students take for themselves, to make their school experience one where they can succeed. As well, they demonstrate the ways that paths of resistance can be future oriented. Young people utilize resources and support within their schools, within their communities and families, and within themselves to achieve academic success. They reach, both out and in to succeed in schools that are often offering minimal support, or actively negating their potential. Articulating the resilient resistance that my participants are demonstrating, point to further inquiry into what is necessary to support students who are not receiving equitable access to resources.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusions

Discussion

This research presents a number of important considerations. In some ways this research was able to explore some unique aspects of the experiences of students in Edmonton's schools. However, in many ways this research identified common themes that previous research both in Edmonton and across Canada have explored. Research from decades ago in Edmonton by both Codjoe (1999; 2001) and Kelly (1995), identified that Black students in Edmonton were encountering a number of barriers within their schools. Although many years have passed since these research projects were conducted, it seems as though there are still a number of students who share similar experiences. Low expectations from school staff and experiences of racism were barriers that students encountered in Codjoe's (1999; 2001) research, and are things that students are still identifying as barriers they encounter in their schools. As this research has identified some enduring experiences, it demonstrates that supports and resources for racialized students have not gone far enough – more support is required for students.

This research specifically focuses on garnering an understanding of the experiences Somali-Canadian students are having within the in EPSB. I center the voices of the students I spoke with to ensure that their lived experiences are at the forefront. Students identified a number of barriers that they were experiencing during their years in the EPSB, including: low expectations, streaming, inadequate resources, surveillance and discipline, and anti-Black/anti-Muslim racism. These barriers contributed to how students discussed feeling supported in their schools, and how the school environment factored into their experiences of academic success.

The majority of students who participated in this project are young Somali-Canadian women offering an important focus on their specific experiences, and challenges that they encounter. As I have stated previously, much of the research on barriers in education for Black youth, predominantly interrogates challenges that young men are encountering. Modestly, this research provides some insights into the ways that surveillance and discipline for example are also issues that young Somali-Canadian women face. As well, this research attempts to further tease out the ways that a school's student body racial composition, and neighbourhood location can impact student's experience, both in terms of barriers and sites of resistance. Although there are common trends across the different schools – whether they are predominantly attended by white students, or have large racialized student populations – racial composition of the student body plays an important role in the sites of resistance that many students identified. The presence of Somali-Canadian peers was something that could contribute to feeling surveilled by school staff, and simultaneously factor into feeling safer in one's school. These insights complicate understandings of what makes a school feel comfortable and safe for the students who attend it. Identifying various barriers that Somali-Canadian students are experiencing in the EPSB is an important step in addressing these issues, so that problems do not persist.

Though it is important to highlight that many of the barriers students identified have been similarly discussed in previous research – and in other Canadian cities – it is imperative to also draw attention to methods and sites of resistance that this research identifies. Each student, their friends, their families, and their communities were all powerful sites of resistance. Although students identified that they weren't always receiving adequate support from their teachers, or the resources available to them were

lacking, they were academically successful students. Their big dreams and successes are exemplary of resilient resistance. Through this research I was able to explore how communities mobilize to support young people. Information about post-secondary options and un/supportive teachers is shared amongst peers and through communities to assist students in navigating the education system. Peers and families who are knowledgeable about the education system become invaluable support to resist the barriers that students encounter while at school. Identifying the ways that supports and resources are constructed outside of the traditional education system for, and with Somali-Canadian students in Edmonton, is an important contribution of this research that may also be relevant for other communities, and other cities.

Further Research

Eve Tuck (2009) in an open letter reminds us that "theories of change are implicit in all social science research, and maybe all research" (413). Tuck (2009) provides this reminder because of the reliance on damage-centered research that she recognizes as too common – especially for research that involves marginalized or disenfranchised communities. For many, we want to conduct research that makes positive changes in our communities and societies. However, sometimes this desire leads to conducting research that replicates harm. This approach focuses on demonstrating that things are broken, documenting the pain or loss with the hope that this will lead to political or material change (Tuck 2009). Tuck offers an antidote to this approach: desire-based research, which is "concerned with understanding complexity, contradiction, and the self-determination of lived lives" (416). I, too, want to see more research into the lived experiences of young people in schools that allows for these complexities to be explored. There are a number of

issues and barriers that necessitate deeper interrogation, but doing so should not flatten the experiences of those individuals and communities by solely attending to the 'damage'.

Much more empirical research in the Canadian context generally and the Edmonton context is required. It is possible that similarities may be seen with different groups of students in this city, or in different school districts. This research articulates some points of consideration that are specific to the Edmonton context that require further exploration. For example, Centre High was a common theme that ran through many students' narratives. However, this school is unique to Edmonton, and developing a further understanding of the ways that it functions for students is necessary.

A deeper look at the staggering number of suspensions and expulsions across Alberta schools is necessary (French 2017). A recent media investigation into the high number of suspensions and expulsions, raised questions about the racial dimensions of these findings, especially given the findings of research completed in other districts, such as Toronto (French 2017). Alberta Education currently does not disaggregate the data it collects on suspensions by race or ethnicity, leaving a gap in the available data.

Experiences with SROs did not encompass a large aspect of the narratives – neither the barriers nor sites of resistance – of the student's I spoke with. However, given the recent move in Toronto to remove SROs from schools and suspend the program, additional research is imperative to understanding the Edmonton context. These programs although distinct, do share underlying purposes and therefor I feel that many of the concerns that community members in Toronto identified, could be similarly felt in Edmonton. Exploring the experiences of students of all backgrounds (not just Somali students) and their experiences with SROs in Edmonton schools is a pressing matter.

Policy Implications

This research has a number of practical and policy implications. These implications were articulated during interviews with students, many of whom had concrete ideas about what they wanted to see change in their schools and across the board. Two students identified that teachers need to be educated on race, racism, history, and how racialized students are experiencing the school system. Some of the things that students articulated include: wanting teachers and staff who reflected their identities, with multiple students stating the need for racially diverse teachers in schools. Some also proposed changes to the curriculum so that they would be able to learn Black history and take language courses such as Arabic. Students also want more support and resources. They discussed the importance of implementing the resources in their schools so that students can access information about post-secondary options, scholarships, and the resources that are out there for low-income students. These suggestions include ensuring that all teachers and school staff receive training, potentially on professional development days, and have resources available to them so that they are able to have conversations in their classrooms about race, that allow students to feel safe. Some students discussed that they wanted an anonymous way to file complaints or put forth suggestions about their schools. Implementing a program or resource that would allow students to be active participants in providing feedback on their education.

In addition to the suggestions that students had, I also believe that there are things that this research identifies as possible areas of change. Across provinces, we must continue to push for a prioritization of funding for public education, and other social needs that benefit communities. Ensuring that communities are able to access equitable and well-

resourced education in Alberta, includes stopping the subsidization of private schools, and should necessitate an overview of the SRO program in Edmonton. Redistributing resources away from punitive and stratifying institutions in society is one step toward a more just and equitable one. At present, Alberta subsidizes private schools across the province with over 27 million dollars each year (Progress Alberta 2018). Although these funds are not the sole reason public education is in need of more resources, it is one discernable avenue that could be quickly remedied, with funding reoriented to the public school system. As I previously discussed, funding around ESL in the province is something that requires renewed attention. Given the lack of mandates for how this funding is utilized on the school level, policies must be implemented to ensure that the students who need these supports are receiving them, and in the ways that most benefit them.

EPSB must begin to collect and publicly publish data that is disaggregated by race, and other factors. This is important for issues relating to suspensions and expulsion. But this also important to further explore streaming practices, special needs assessments, drop out rates, etc. that have been investigated in other districts. Such data is necessary for informed policy to be drafted.

Additionally, the EPSB must work hard to communicate and collaborate with the communities who attend these schools. Ensuring that there are accessible town hall meetings where parents or community leaders are able to bring issues forward is one possible option that could be taken. Recognizing the students, their families and their communities as stakeholders in their education provides the space to actively contribute to the shape that this takes.

Limitations

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of my research project. In presenting my findings, it is imperative to note that they should not be seen as all encompassing. My research does not seek to generalize to the experiences of all Somali-Canadian students who attend Edmonton's public schools. As one of my participants appropriately reminded me, "I'm not going to speak for anyone else… I'm speaking from my experience and my point of view". The themes and issues that I have illustrated throughout my work are an understanding of the experiences of the young people I spoke with.

However, it is imperative that we recognize common themes across Canada, while simultaneously seeking to explore the nuances of, not only each city, but also each school board. Research on the experiences of racialized students – and Black students more specifically – has been conducted in multiple provinces, and various cities. Each of these endeavors, like my project, should not be looked at in isolation. Instead, we must continue to look closely at the experiences students are having across Canada.

I interviewed a total of 13 participants, representing a small fraction of students enrolled in public schools in Edmonton. This small sample size was also achieved by snowball sampling – meaning I was drawing from a connected network of students. The research may have looked different if I had gained my participants through other networks. Moreover, some of my participants were related to each other, potentially further limiting the networks that I was tapping into. Many of the students who participated in the project went to one of two high schools in the north side of Edmonton. Thus, many of the experiences that they discussed were concentrated to the experiences at these schools. There are over 30 public high schools in Edmonton that I was not able to gather an

understanding of – necessitating further and broader research that includes more schools in the city, and more students from the schools that my participants attended. Additionally, my research deals only with those students who attended public schools. Research into the experiences of youth within the Catholic school board is crucial. This is especially salient given the large number of students who are being suspended (French 2017). Additionally, as the backlash to Bill 24 – a bill designed to strengthen the rules for gay-straight alliances in schools, aiming to offer more protection for students – demonstrated that LGBTQ students are likely facing difficulties (Bennett 2017). These instances raise red flags regarding the safety of marginalized students, sitting at various intersections, within the city and across the province.

I did not have gender parity in my sample. Although this was not a goal I was striving for, it is an interesting point of reflection given similar research. The vast majority of my participants were female (11 female, 2 male) and this provides an important point of consideration. Much research that centres on the experiences of Black youth in Canadian schools has focused on the experiences of male students – leaving much to be learned about young women's experiences.

My research presents the voices and experiences of the young Somali students. In doing so, interviews with school administration, teachers, and school resource officers were not completed. This means we are only hearing one "side" of the story. This research is one piece of the conversation – motivated by a desire to see young people at the centre of conversations that affect their lives. Thus, I cannot analyze, nor reflect on the actions and the intent behind the actions of those I did not speak to. My project does not engage directly with the perspectives of community workers, parents, or actors within the school

such as teachers. They seem to play a tremendous role in the lives and experiences of the youth I spoke with yet their voices are not captured in this research. This research is illuminating, but should force us to dig deeper into the experiences of racialized students across Canada.

Conclusion - Moving Forward
"You clearly know I'm Black, and think about it a lot ... so let's be productive thinking about race" - Bilan

As Bilan states, we are cognizant of race – as individuals, as institutions, as society. But we have failed and continue to fail at productively engaging in conversations that do more than pay lip service to respecting differences. Participants shared with me a number of ways that they perceived their Somali identities to have affected their schooling experiences. In these accounts there was not one neat narrative, but student's experiences varied greatly. Different people within their schools – teacher, guidance counselors, principals, SROs – different levels of schooling, different classrooms, and peer groups played contributing roles. No single account was perfect. As would be the case for almost anyone, there were always things that students would have done differently, or that they wanted to see change in how schools operated.

In many ways I want to highlight the academic success of the students who participated in this project. Doing so does not obfuscate the barriers that each of them discussed. But it recognizes one of the various ways that young people navigate and respond to barriers that they may encounter. Their successes also do not translate to the success of all Somali-Canadian students in Edmonton. This project presents the experiences of 13 young people who have and are navigating the public school system. Through their

narratives they discussed that friends or peers were not able to succeed as they had. Additionally, some also noted that other students – namely West Africans, and Indigenous students – were facing similar barriers that they encountered.

Some of the students discussed that they chose to participate in this research project because they felt that changes needed to be made to their schools, and the education system. This was always my goal in conducting this project. In centering the voices of these 13 young people, it is my hope that we can continue to work toward making schools safe, and healthy learning environments for all students. In articulating the barriers that students faced, and some of the ways that they were able to navigate and resist these barriers I believe that much can be done. As we continue to have conversations about the ways that we can improve schools we must always listen, and give space to the young people who currently find themselves in them. It is my hope that much more empirical research will be conducted in Edmonton and across Canada, oriented toward social and racial justice, and decolonization. This project is just one piece of a large and ongoing conversation, exploring the experiences that 13 young people – Idil, Bashir, Hodan, Ladan, Khadra, Yasmiin, Hani, Yuusuf, Jamilah, Bilan, Sadia, Habiba, and Cawo – chose to share with me.

References

ACLC (2012). *Canada's Forgotten Children: Written Submissions to the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the Third and Fourth Reports of Canada.* Toronto: African Canadian Legal Clinic.

Alberta Education. (2016). "The Guiding Framework for the Design and Development of Kindergarten to Grade 12 Provincial Curriculum." Edmonton.

---------------------. (2017). "Funding Manual for School Authorities 2017/2018 School Year." Edmonton.

Alva, S. (1991). "Academic Invulnerability Among Mexican American Students: The Importance of Protective Resources and Appraisals." *Hispanic Journal of Behavioural Sciences*, 13(1), 18-34.

Amadahy, Z., and Lawrence, B. (2009). "Indigenous Peoples and Black People in Canada: Settlers or Allies?" In A. Kempf (eds.) *Breaching the Colonial Contract: Anti-Colonialism in the US and Canada.* New York, NY: Springer.

Annamma, S. (2016) "Disrupting the carceral state through education journey mapping". *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*. 29:9, 1210-1230.

Bannerji, H. (2000) *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, nationalism, and Gender.* Toronto, Canada: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Beauger, D., Dorisaint, A., Turenne, H. (1994). Education Initiatives for Haitian Students in Quebec. In V. D'Oyley (eds.), *Innovations in Black Education in Canada.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Bedard, G. (2000). "Deconstructing Whiteness: Pedagogical Implications for Anti-Racism Education. In Dei, G. and A. Calliste (eds.). *Power, Knowledge and Anti-Racism Education.* Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.

Bell, Roberta. (2016). "Indigenous, Somali Communities in Edmonton partner to Make Downtown Safer." CBC. http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/indigenous-somali-communities-in-edmonton-partner-to-make-downtown-safer-1.3672831

Bennett, D. (2017). "Changes Needed to Support LGBTQ Youth in Alberta: Report." *Globe and Mail.* https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/alberta/changes-needed-to-support-lgbtq-youth-in-alberta-report/article37032142/

BLAC (Black Learners Advisory Committee). (1994). Report on Education: Redressing Inequality – Empowering Black Learners. Halifax, Nova Scotia: Black Learners Advisory Committee.

Black, S. (May 2 2017). "Yonge Street "riot" Remembered." Now Toronto.

https://nowtoronto.com/news/yonge-street-riot-documentary/

Boyko, J. (1995). *Last Steps to Freedom: the Evolution of Canadian Racism.* Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada: Watson & Dwyer.

Bonds, A. and Inwood, J. (2015). "Beyond White Privilege: Geographies of White Supremacy and Settler Colonialism." *Progress in Human Geography*, 40(6), 715-733.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). "The Economics of Linguistic Exchanges." *Social Science Information,* 16(6), 645-668.

Bucerius, S., Thompson, S., and K. Hancock (2016): Final Report on the Somali Experience in Alberta: radicalization, discrimination, and integration. Report prepared for Public Safety Canada and the Edmonton Police Service.

Cader, F. (2016). "Speaker's Corner: Time to Challenge Counterterrorism Programs." Law Times. http://www.lawtimesnews.com/author/na/speakers-corner-time-to-challenge-counterterrorism-programs-13030/

Codjoe, H.M. (1999). "The Schooling Experiences of African Students in Canadian Schools." *International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction,* 1, 67-94.

------------------. (2001). "Fighting a 'Public Enemy' of Black Academic Achievement – The Persistence of Racism and the Schooling Experiences of Black Students in Canada." *Race, Ethnicity and Education,* 4(4), 343-375.

Creese, G. (2010). "Erasing English Language Competency: African Migrants in Vancouver, Canada." *Journal of International Migration & Integration*. 11, 295-311.

Crenshaw, K. (1988). "Race, Reform, and Retrenchment: Transformation and Legitimation in Anti-discrimination Law." *Harvard Law Review,* 101(7), 1331-1387.
Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics. University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989, 139-168.

Danso, R. (2001). "From 'There' to 'Here': An investigation of the Initial Settlement Experiences of Ethiopian and Somali Refugees in Toronto". *GeoJournal*, 55, 3-15.

Davies, S., Guppy, N. (2014). *The Schooled Society.* Ontario, Canada: Oxford University Press.

Dei, G. (2006). "Black-focused Schools: A Call for Re-Visioning". *Education Canada,* 46(3), 27-31.

Dei, G. James, I., Karumanchery, L., James-Wilson, S., Zine, J. (2000). *Removing Margins: The Challenges and Possibilities of Inclusive Schooling.* Toronto, Canada: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Dei, G., Mazzuca, J., McIsaac, E., Zine, J. (1997). *Reconstructing 'Dropout': A Critical Ethnography of the Dynamics of Black Students' Disengagement from School.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2001). *Critical race theory: An introduction.* New York: New York University Press.

Derwing, T., Decorby, E., Ichikawa, J., and Jamieson, K. (1999). "Some Factors the Affect the Success of ESL High School Students." *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 55(4), 531-547.

Dirks, G.E. (1995). *Controversy and Complexity: Canadian Immigration Policy During the 1980s.* Montreal, Quebec: MQUP.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1899). *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania.

Edmonton Police Service. (2015). "This is Who We Are- School Resource Officer Unit." http://www.edmontonpolice.ca/News/SuccessStories/TIWWA_SRO.aspx

French, J. (2017). "Time out: Edmonton: Students are Suspended Thousands o Times Each Year." Edmonton Journal. http://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/time-out-edmonton-students-are-suspended-thousands-of-times-each-year

Galabuzi, G. (20016). *Canada's Economic Apartheid: The Social Exclusion of Racialized Groups in the New Century.* Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press.

Giroux, H. (1983). *Theories of Resistance in Education.* South Hadley, MA: Bergin and Garvey.

Gosine, K. and James, C.E. (2010). "Racialized Students Resisting: Hindrance or Asset to Academic Success?" in *Youth Culture, Education and Resistance: Subverting the Commercial Ordering of Life.* Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishing.

Hamilton, S. (2011). "Stories from the Little Black School House." In Ashok Mathur, Jonathan Dewar, Mike DeGagne (eds.) *Cultivating Canada: A Reconciliation through the Lens of Cultural Diversity.* Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation.

Hare, J., and Pidgeon, M. (2011). "The Way of the Warrior: Indigenous Youth Navigating the Challenges of Schooling." *Canadian Journal of Education,* 34(2), 93-111.

Henry, F., and Tator, C. (2006). *The Colour of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society.* Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Co.

Hill Collins, P. (1986). "Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought." *Social Problems*, 33, 14-32.

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom.* New York, NY: Routledge.

------------ (1998). "The Tie that Binds: Race, Gender and US Violence." *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* 21(5), 917-938.

Huncar, A. (2017). "Edmonton's Indigenous and Somali-Canadian Youth Join Forces to Combat Racism." CBC. http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/edmonton-indigenous-somali-youth-1.3957053

James, C.E. (2005). "The Ties that Bind: Thinking Through the Praxis of Multicultural and Anti-Racism Education in Canadian Contexts." In *Engaging Equity: New Perspectives on Anti-Racist Education.* Calgary, Alberta: Detselig Enterprises.

------------- (2011). "Multicultural Education in a Color-Blind Society." In *Intercultural and Multicultural Education: Enhancing Global Interconnectedness*. New York: Routledge.

James, C.E., Este, D., Bernard, W.T., Benjamin, A., Lloyd, B., and Turner, T. (2010). *Race and Well-Being: The Lives, Hopes, and Activism of African-Canadians.* Black Point, Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing.

James, C.E., and Tuner, T. (2017). *Towards Race Equity in Education: The Schooling of Black Students in the Greater Toronto Area.* Toronto, Ontario, Canada: York University.

Joosse, P., Bucerius, S., and Thompson, S. (2015) "Narratives and Counternarratives: Somali-Canadians on Recruitment to al-Shabaab." *British Journal of Criminology* 55(4): 811-832.

Kelly, J. (1995). *Under the Gaze: The Experiences of African Canadian Students in Two Edmonton High Schools.* Thesis. University of Alberta.

King, T.L. (2013). "In the Clearing: Black Female Bodies, Space and Settler Colonial Landscapes." Dissertation. University of Maryland

-----------. (2014). "Labor's Aphasia: Toward Antiblackness as Constitutive to Settler Colonialism." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society.*

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). "Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy". *American Educational Research Journal*, 32, 465-491.

Livingstone, A.M., Celemencki, J., and Calixte, M. (2014). "Youth Participatory Action Research and School Improvement: The Missing Voices of Black Youth in Montreal." *Canadian Journal of Education,* 37(1), 283-307.

Livingstone, A.M., Celemencki, J. Calixte, M., Kofi-Duah, G., Julmeus-Leger, J., Thompson, T., and
Dolphy, T. (2010). "Black Youth's perspectives on Education Challenges and Policy."
Montreal, Quebec: Consortium for Ethnicity and Strategic Social Planning, McGill
University.

Lynn, M., & Dixson, A. D. (2013). *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education*.
New York, NY: Routledge.

Macdonald, D.B., (2015). "Canada's History Wars: Indigenous Genocide and Public Memory in the
United States, Australia and Canada." *Journal of Genocide Research*, 17(4), 411-431.

Maxwell, J. A. (2013) *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. 3rd ed.
Thousand Oaks: SAGE

Maynard, R. (2017). *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present.* Black
Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing.

Mclear, K. (1994). "The Myth of the Model Minority: Re-thinking the Education of Asian
Canadians." *Our Schools, Our Selves,* 54-76.

Mill, C.W. (1998). *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race.* Ithaca, New York: Cornell
University Press.

Mensah, J. (2010) *Black Canadians: History, Experience, Social Conditions*. Winnipeg, Manitoba:
Fernwood Publishing.

Mire, H.Y., (2017). "The Anti-Somali Feedback Loop". Briarpatch Magazine.
https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/the-anti-somali-feedback-loop

Morneau, W.F. (2018). "Equality and Growth: A Strong Middle Class." Department of Finance
Canada. https://www.budget.gc.ca/2018/docs/plan/budget-2018-en.pdf

Murdie, R. A. and C. Teixira (2003). Towards a Comfortable Neighbourhood and
Appropriate Housing: Immigrant Experiences in Toronto. In P. Anisef and M. Lanphier
(eds.) *The World in a City*. Toronto: University Toronto Press

NAARR (Northern Alberta Alliance on Race Relations). (2004). *Equity in Edmonton Schools.*
Edmonton Alberta.

Nelson, J. J. (2008). *Razing Africville: A Geography of Racism*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

No One is Illegal- Toronto. (2015). "Often Asking, Always Telling: The Toronto Police Service and
the Sanctuary City Policy."
http://rabble.ca/sites/rabble/files/often_asking_always_telling_-_kedits_dec_1.pdf

OCASI (Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants). (2016). *Somali Refugee Resettlement in Canada*: paper Presented at the 18th National Metropolis Conference in Toronto of Getting Results: Migration, Opportunities, and Good Governance.

Owusu-Bempah, A., and S. Wortley. (2013): *Race, Crime, and Criminal Justice in   Canada. Oxford Handbooks Online.* Oxford University Press.

Parkin, F. (1974). *The Social Analysis of Class Structure.* London: Tavistock Publications.

Portfolio, B. and Carr, P. (2010) *Youth Culture, Education and Resistance: Subverting the Commercial Ordering of Life.* Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Previl, S. (2017). "Black in Halifax? You're Three Times More Likely to Undergo Police Check." *Global News. https://globalnews.ca/news/3169332/black-in-halifax-youre-three-times-more-likely-to-undergo-police-check/*

Progress Alberta (2017). "Freedom of Information Request Shows Massive Disparity in Carding Incidents for Black, Indigenous, People in Lethbridge." http://www.progressalberta.ca/lethbridge_foip

----------------- (2018). "How did Alberta get the Most Expensive Private School Subsidies in all of Canada?" http://www.progressalberta.ca/how-did-we-get-here

Pulido, L. (2015). "Geographies of Race and Ethnicity I: White Supremacy vs. White Privilege in Environmental Racism Research." *Progress in Human Geography*, 39(6), 809-817.

Rabaka, R. (2010). *Against epistemic apartheid: W.E.B. Du Bois and the disciplinary decadence of sociology*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books/Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Razack, S. (2004). *Dark threats and white knights: the Somalia Affair, peacekeeping and the new imperialism*. Toronto, Ont.: University of Toronto Press.

Regan, P. (2010). *Unsettling the settler within: Indian residential schools, truth telling, and reconciliation in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Reitz, J.G, and Banerjee, R. (2009). "Racial Inequality, Social Cohesion and Policy Issues in Canada." In *Multiculturalism and Social Cohesion: Potentials and Challenges of Diversity.* Dordecht: Springer.

Richardson, G. (1999). "Education Innovations: The Montreal Experience." In V. D'Oyley (ed). *Innovations in Black Education in Canada.* Toronto: Umbrella Press.

Ritchie, B. (2012). *Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America's Prison Nation.* New York: New York University Press.

Rossiter, M. and Derwing, T. (2012). "Still far to go: Systematic Programming for Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth." In *Refugee and Immigrant Students: Achieving Equity in Education.* Charlotte: Information Age Publishing.

Ryan, H. (2016). "'Its sad:' Date Shows Halifax's Black Students Suspended at Higher Rate." *Ottawa Metro. http://www.metronews.ca/news/halifax/2016/05/26/data-shows-halifax-black-students-suspended-at-higher-rate.html*

Ryley School Handbook. (2017). Ryley School Handbook. https://www.brsd.ab.ca/school/ryley/About%20Our%20School/HandBook/Documents/Ryley%20School%20Handbook%202017-2018.pdf

Satzewich, V., and Liodakis, N. (2010). *'Race' & Ethnicity in Canada: a Critical Introduction.* 2nd ed. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.

SCCSE (The Somali Canadian Cultural Society of Edmonton). (2014). The Somali Canadian Cultural Society of Edmonton. Retrieved from: http://somaliedmonton.com/who-we-are/our-story/

SCERDO (Somali Canadian Education & Rural Development Organization). (2007). Somali Canadian Education & Rural Development Organization. Retrieved from: http://www.scerdo.org/files/needs-assessment-research-for- somali-community-in-edmonton.pdf

Selimos, E., and Daniel, Y. (2017). "The Role of Schools in Shaping the Settlement Experiences of Newcomer Immigrant and Refugee Youth." *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies.* 8(2), 90-109.

Solórzano, D. G., & Bernal, D. (2001). Examining transformational resistance through a critical race and LatCrit framework: Chicana and Chicano students in an urban context. *Urban Education*, 36, 308-342.

Soroka, S. and Robertson, S. (2010). "A Literature Review of Public Opinion Research on Canadian Attitudes Towards Multiculturalism and Immigration, 2006-2009." Ottawa: Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Spina, S. U. (1998). A review of Robert J. Haggerty, Lonnie R. Sherrod, Norman Garmezy, and Michael Rutter (eds.), "Stress, Risk, and Resilience in Children and Adolescents: Processes, Mechanisms, and Interventions." *Mind, Culture, and Activity* 5: 235–239

Spence, C.M. (1999). *The Skin I'm in: Racism, Sports and Education.* Halifax, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing.

Stockton, K. B. (2009). *The Queer Child, or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Taylor, A., and Krahn, H. (2009). "Streaming in/for the New Economy." In C. Levine-Rasky (ed), *Canadian Perspectives of the Sociology of Education.* Toronto: Oxford University Press.

TDSB. (2017). "School Resource Officer Program Review." Toronto: Toronto District School Board, Planning and Priorities Committee.

The RSA. (2010). "RSA ANIMATE: Changing Education Paradigms." Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcDGpL4U&t=599s

TRC (2015). "Honoring the Truth, Reconcililng for the Future." *Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Trevino, A. J., Harris, M. A., Wallace, D. (2008). "Introduction to special issue. What is so critical about critical race theory?" *Contemporary Justice Review*, 11(1), 7-10.

Thobani, S. (2007). *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada.* Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.

Thomson, S. (2016). "Edmonton Police Reveal Junior High Schools that will have School Resource Officers this Year." Edmonton Journal. http://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/edmonton-police-reveal-junior-high-schools-that-will-have-school-resource-officers-this-year

Trudeau, J. (2018). "Trudea says its Time to Acknowledge Anti-Black Racism in Canada." Retrieved from: https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/video-trudeau-says-its-time-to-acknowledge-anti-black-racism-in-canada/

Tuck, E. (2009). "Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities." *Harvard Education Review*, 79(3), 409-427.

Wakefield, J. (2017). "What it's like to be Carded by Edmonton City Police." Edmonton Sun. http://edmontonsun.com/2017/07/02/what-its-like-to-be-carded-by-edmonton-city-police/wcm/360be705-811d-4eab-b011-f41358bba256

Walcott, R. (2003). *Black Like Who? Writing Black Canada.* Toronto: Insomniac Press.

Weber, M. (1968). *Economy and Society.* New York, NY: Bedminster Press.

Wildcat, M. (2015). "Fearing Social and Cultural Death: Genocide and Elimination in Settler Colonial Canada – an Indigenous Perspective." *Journal of Genocide Research*, 17(4), 391-409.

Wilkinson, L. (2002). "Factors Influencing the Academic Success of Refugee Youth in Canada." *Journal of Youth Studies*, 5(2), 173-193.

Wolfe, P. (2006). "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research,* 8(4), 387-409.

Wotherspoon, T. (2014). *The Sociology of Education in Canada: Critical Perspectives.* 4th Edition. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.

Wortley, S. (2006). *Police Use of Force in Ontario: An Examination of Data from the Special Investigations Unit, Final Report.* Toronto: African Canadian Legal Clinic.

Wortley, S. and Marshall, L. (20015). *Race and Police Stops in Kingston, Ontario: Results of a Pilot Project.* Kingston, ON: Kingston Police Services Board.

Wun, C. (2015). "Against Captivity: Black Girls and School Discipline Policies in the Afterlife of Slavery." *Educational Policy*, 30(1), 171-196.

Yon, D.A. (2000). *Elusive Culture: Schooling, Race, and Identity in Global Times.* Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.

Yosso, T.J. (2000). "A Critical Race and LatCrit Approach to Media Literacy: Chicana/o Resistance to Visual Microaggressions." Thesis. University of California, Los Angeles.

------------ (2005). "Whose Culture has Capital? A Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth." *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), 69-91.