

Dis/enabling children of Sub-Saharan African immigrants: Challenging structural and
institutional barriers to social mobility at the grassroots level

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Abstract

The literature on non-European immigrant offspring has established that some children of non-European immigrants are achieving social mobility by way of attaining a post-secondary education, and others are faring worse than their working-class immigrant parents. One such group that has had difficulty incorporating into mainstream institutions and society are racialized black immigrant offspring. Notwithstanding the importance and usefulness of highlighting differences between non-European immigrant offspring, a lack of focus on within group differences in the literature perpetuates stereotypes about racialized non-white groups. To assist in addressing this imbalance in the literature, this study aims to further enrich limited extant research that examines how racialized black immigrant offspring 'successfully adapt' to living in a racially stratified and unequal society. More precisely, this research strives to capture the diverse experiences of racialized black children of immigrants—a group labelled 'at-risk' to underachieve and prone to experience downward socioeconomic mobility.

Twenty-three children of Sub-Saharan African immigrants and ten African immigrant parents and key informants were interviewed for this qualitative narrative study. Participants' narratives revealed that racialized black immigrant offspring, who were able to successfully navigate the compulsory school system, shared some similarities. A commonality that the participants shared was that they adopted or were receptive to or in tune with their parents' culture, advice, guidance, high educational expectations, and optimistic worldviews as adolescents. However, participants differed with respect to their identity formations and educational journeys. Participants who were independent learners, studious and/or identified as intelligent (e.g. enrolled in an enrichment program) were able to progress through the education system with little support. Other participants, on the other hand, relied—to varying degrees—on their family's assistance and community-based supports to overcome structural, institutional and spatial barriers. Without these supports, some of these participants would have had greater difficulty achieving their goals. Furthermore, the narratives suggest that racialized black youth from low socioeconomic backgrounds who rely heavily on family and community support to complete high school are vulnerable to experience difficulties (including dropping out) at the post-secondary level, especially when their support system diminishes. With respect to identity formation, participants formed a diverse ray of identities.

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Dedication

To hoyoo (my mother)

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1. Introduction

Western societies in transition: Immigration, diversity and inequality

Issues pertaining to immigration, inequality and diversity have moved center-stage in global and national affairs. One of the most pressing, and arguably contentious, questions of the 21st century has become how can diversity be managed in pluralistic and inherently unequal societies? Globalization, growing inequality between nations and a rise in conflicts in under-developed and developing countries have led to unprecedented large-scale migration from ‘the third world’ to developed affluent nations (Alba & Waters, 2011; OECD, 2015). This ‘new’ “phenomenon of transnational migration to the lands of colonial powers—centres of Capital” are largely the consequence of disparities created by a history of European conquest and colonization and unequal access to and exploitation of the world’s natural resources (Wallis, Sunseri, & Galabuzi, 2010, p. 1). People living in poverty stricken, environmentally degraded and conflict-prone regions in the ‘global south’ are on the move. Treacherous seas, harsh terrains, restrictive immigration policies and physical barriers do not seem to be stopping these migrants; thus causing a 'global migration crisis' (UNHCR, 2015). In 2015, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported more than one million asylum seekers and migrants—84% of which were from African and Asian countries in social, political and economic turmoil—arrived on European shores and nearly 4000 went missing or died on a journey across seas (e.g. Mediterranean) partitioning the developing and the developed world (Clayton & Holland, 2015). Many asylum seekers and poor economic migrants attempting to reach developed nations are undeterred by the risks, including death, associated with their journeys; they are desperate to leave their precarious environments and determined to reach

prosperous nations that are perceived to be safe and full of opportunities (Brain & Laczko, 2014; Guild, Costello, Garlick & Moreno-Lax, 2015; Spindler, 2015).

Most immigrant-receiving countries, especially European nations, have been reluctant to accept non-European migrants into their societies for a number of reasons other than the sheer number of migrants arriving each year. Some authors note that European nations' anxiety about opening their borders to non-European migrants could be attributed to the fact that they recently switched from being immigrant-sending nations to immigrant-receiving countries (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino, & Taylor, 1993; Alba & Foner, 2014). However, many European countries have explicitly expressed a desire to keep "undesirable" and "unassimilable" non-European immigrants (e.g. asylum seekers and illegal migrants) out of their countries so that their societies do not diversify to the extent that their countries' values, cultures, traditions and social cohesion are threatened (Crul & Mollenkopf, 2012; Hollifield et al., 2014; Winter, 2015). In many European immigrant-receiving countries, Crul and Mollenkopf (2012) argue,

[T]he white majority of native descent feel deep anxiety... They see people speaking other languages filling their neighbourhood schools and shopping places, they encounter minority group members in public spaces... [they] worry that their way of life is at risk of being displaced. These experiences and reactions make them—especially those in precarious positions—available for anti-immigrant mobilization not only under the right-wing banners of patriotism, protecting a *leikultur* [dominant culture], or obeying the law, but also under the left-wing banners of the emancipation of women, tolerance for homosexuality, and secularism (p. 3-4).

The liberal segment of society, through the media and political rhetoric, often scrutinize and urge (implicitly and explicitly) non-European immigrants to assimilate. More problematically, populist far-right parties that promote nativist and xenophobic views (i.e. 'immigrants are

welfare depended and a threat to national unity and security'), have "normalize[d] an anti-immigrant discourse that links unemployment, crime, and Islamist extremism with immigrants and their children" (Crul & Mollenkopf, 2012, p. 4; Buonfino, 2004; Joppke, 2007; Soroka, Johnston, & Banting, 2007; Yilmaz, 2012). Despite European countries' anxiety and wishes to maintain the status quo, many European societies will most likely become more dependent on non-European immigrants. Global demographic and economic trends suggest internal (i.e. developed countries populations are aging due to low fertility rates and high life expectancy) and external factors (i.e. increasing global inequality and higher fertility rates in developing countries) will most likely force developed western countries to accept non-European migrants, subsequently diversifying these societies (Ezeh, Bongaarts, & Mberu, 2012). Therefore, figuring out how to manage diversity in an equitable manner that facilitates the economic, social and civic participation of all members of society, including vulnerable non-European immigrants and their children, is an important public policy issue with which western societies need to engage.

Canada has been more at ease with diversity and receiving immigrants compared to the United States and Europe; the large number of non-European immigrants settling in Canada each year (Zilio, 2016) illustrates this. In fact, immigration is a primary vehicle of population growth in Canada; it currently accounts for about 60% of Canada's population growth (Statistics Canada, 2015). The demographic shift in the global migrant stock and the abolishment of racist immigration policies have increased the non-European population in Canada (for review of historical trends and policies see Borjas, 1991; Boyd & Vickers, 2000; Li, 2003). According to the 2011 Statistics Canada National Household Survey (NHS), 78% of immigrants settling in Canada between 2006 and 2011 were of non-European descent (i.e. from Africa, Asia and Latin America) compared to approximately 12% prior to 1971 (Statistics Canada, 2013). Furthermore,

the NHS revealed that nearly 21% of Canada's population was foreign-born and there were more than 200 ethnic groups in Canada. Naturally, the demographic profile of immigrants has diversified the Canadian-born population (Triadafilopoulos, 2013). Nineteen percent of Canada's population in 2011 was racialized non-white (non-European and non-Aboriginal); among this group, 30% were Canadian-born (Statistics Canada, 2013). Although recent immigrants have greatly diversified the ethnocultural urban landscape of Canada, the Canadian society has not uniformly diversified. The vast majority of non-European immigrants and their children have settled in Canada's largest urban centres, namely Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal (Papillon, 2002).¹

The growth of the segment of society that is of non-European descent in Canada is not generally seen as a controversial issue chiefly due to the existence of multiculturalism policy and the absence of a significant illegal and 'undesirable' immigrant population (Reitz, 2012, 2013). Canada, because of its geographic location, has for the most part been able to control the type and number of immigrants that arrive on its territory (Ibid). Since the introduction of the points system, the Canadian government has mostly admitted economic immigrants with high human and often financial capital—in other words, the 'more desirable' type of immigrants (Reitz, 2013). Unfortunately, most employers do not value the skills and knowledge of highly educated immigrants; this plainly becomes clear when examining the statistics on the number of economic immigrants employed in unskilled/semi-skilled occupations (e.g. taxi drivers and personal care workers) (Bauder, 2003; Reitz, Curtis, & Elrick, 2014). Perhaps, immigrants' willingness to take

¹ Racialized non-white is a term used to describe individuals who are not recognized as being 'white' or 'caucasian'. Under the Canadian Employment Equity Act, a person who is consider non-Aboriginal and 'non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour' is referred to as a visible minority. I use the term racialized non-white in the place of 'visible minority' to denote that racial categories are socially constructed, unstable and context-bound (i.e. someone might be considered a visible minority, but they themselves do not self-identify as such or a person might be considered white because they look "white", but they self-identify as a visible minority).

jobs that are not appealing to the mainstream (high demand jobs) might be another reason that the majority of Canadians do not loudly protest the number of immigrants admitted into Canada each year. Furthermore, in Canada and other nations of immigrants, immigration has historically played and continues to play an important role in developing these countries (Halli & Driedger, 1999). For this reason, nativist and anti-immigration views in nations of immigrants are not as popular as they are in immigrant-receiving European countries (Winter, 2015). Usually, the political discourse of the left, which celebrates differences and promotes western liberal values (e.g. inclusiveness, freedom and democracy), prevails over divisive anti-immigrant and white supremacist rhetoric of right-wing political parties that specialize in the politics of fear, deception and division (Soroka, Johnston, & Banting, 2007; Wallis, Sunseri & Galabuzi, 2010). The popularity of a liberal discourse does not mean that racist attitudes and behaviours do not exist in nations of immigrants; they do exist, but they are concealed under pro-diversity, pro-democracy and pro-universalism discourses that mask inequality and white privilege (Henry & Tator, 2006).

Nations of immigrants constantly and actively promote notions of equality, diversity and unity through a shared immigrant history. For instance, in response to the Republican Party's 2016 presidential candidate's (the current president of the United States) anti-immigration stance and proposed xenophobic policies (e.g. a ban on Muslim and Mexican immigration) (Smith, 2015), President Obama passionately urged Americans to reject fear and division and to remember the historical effects of divisive and racist political rhetoric on social cohesion in 'nations formed by immigrants'. He stated,

Immigration is our origin story. And for more than two centuries, it's remained at the core of our national character...After all, unless your family is Native American...all of our families—come from someplace else...We celebrate this history, this heritage...And

we are strong enough to acknowledge, as painful as it may be, that we haven't always lived up to our own ideals...We succumbed to fear. We betrayed not only our fellow Americans, but our deepest values...And the biggest irony of course was—is that those who betrayed these values were themselves the children of immigrants. How quickly we forget. One generation passes, two generation passes, and suddenly we don't remember where we came from. And we suggest that somehow there is “us” and there is “them”, not remembering we used to be “them” ...we need to resolve never to repeat mistakes like that again. We must resolve to always speak out against hatred and bigotry in all of its forms...In the Mexican immigrant today, we see the Catholic immigrant of a century ago. In the Syrian seeking refuge today, we should see the Jewish refugee of World War II. In these new Americans, we see our own American stories.²

As can be seen in Obama's impassioned speech, the racialized white mainstream in America seem to be as anxious as their distant European cousins about the non-European American population that have ethnically, culturally and religious diversified the American society.

Like Republicans in America and right wing political parties in Europe, nationalist and conservative parties in Canada also espouse views that are divisive and intolerant of diversity. For example, in recent years, Harper's Conservative government and the Parti Québécois (led by Pauline Marois) alienated, excluded and created fear and suspicion of 'new stock Canadians' (i.e. non-European immigrants branded to have 'barbaric cultural practices') (Bryden, 2015; Root, Gates-Gasse, Shields, & Bauder, 2014; Kennedy, 2015). These parties attempted (and are still attempting) to gain and maintain political power by championing the interests of the mainstream and by advocating for the maintenance of unequal power relations through the preservation of the history and culture (e.g. Quebec Charter of Values) of 'old-stock-Canadians' (European

² This excerpt is from a speech President Obama made at a naturalization ceremony on December 15, 2015 at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. A transcript of the full speech can be found on The White House's website: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/12/15/remarks-president-naturalization-ceremony>

‘settlers’ and immigrants) (Clark, 2015; Flanagan, 2014; Snow & Moffitt, 2012). Nonetheless, unlike European nations, public support for these parties and their divisive political rhetoric has not been strong; as a result, both of these parties were ousted from their positions of power in the last several years. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, the leader of the Liberal Party, had the following to say after defeating Harper's Conservative government in 2015:

You want a Prime Minister who knows Canada is a country strong, not in spite of our differences, but because of them, a PM who never seeks to divide Canadians, but takes every single opportunity to bring us together...We know in our bones that Canada was built by people from all corners of the world who worship every faith, who belong to every culture, who speak every language. We believe in our hearts that this country's unique diversity is a blessing bestowed upon us by previous generations of Canadians, Canadians who stared down prejudice and fought discrimination in all its forms. We know that our enviable, inclusive society didn't happen by accident and won't continue without effort...Have faith in your fellow citizens, my friends. They are kind and generous. They are open-minded and optimistic. And they know in their heart of hearts that a Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian.³

A big part of the current Liberal government's mandate is to amend relationships with marginalized members of society and to re-establish Canada's image as an inclusive, humanitarian and peacekeeping nation (Blanchfield, 2016; Mackinnon, 2015). To further this agenda, one of the first tasks of the new Liberal Government was to assist in responding to the "huge global [migration] crisis" that is "threatening the European Union in a profound way" (CBC, 2016). The Liberal Government admitted more than 25,000 Syrian Refugees into Canada in a matter of several months, something the conservative Government were reluctant to do (Zimonjic, 2016). Upon these refugees' arrival, John McCallum, then Canada's Minister of

³ The full transcript of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's victory can be found at the following link:
<http://www.macleans.ca/politics/ottawa/justin-trudeau-for-the-record-we-beat-fear-with-hope/>

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship exclaimed, "[we are] going in the opposite direction from many countries...Many countries from around the world today are making it more difficult for refugees to come, and they are setting up more barriers, and we are among the few countries who are saying, 'No, come on in...'" (Ibid). Although the Liberal-led Canadian Government is using a more positive and pro-diversity/pro-immigration rhetoric, this does not necessarily mean that Canadian society will become more equitable and immigrants will more easily incorporate into society. This is because dominant or popular political discourses on immigration and diversity in Canada (usually the discourse of the ruling party) shifts from one political party to another and from one time period to another; however, empirical studies documenting the experiences of non-European immigrant families have constantly painted a sombre picture (Hansen, 2014; Soroka, Johnston, & Banting, 2007).

Non-European immigrants' experiences of exclusion in Canada

Non-European immigrants' immigration and settlement experiences are well documented, especially in large metropolitan immigrant-receiving cities. Although Canada brands its self as an inclusive pluralist society, Canadian immigration research found that most non-European immigrants in Canada encounter numerous social, cultural and economic barriers that hamper the speed and extent they could fully participate and become a part of society (Abdi, 2005; Danso, 2002; Johnson & Enomoto, 2007; Kazemipur & Halli, 2001; Li, 2001; Omidvar & Richmond, 2003; Bauder, 2003; Reitz, 2013; Winter, 2015). Some researchers argue that racialized non-white immigrants' difficulties adjusting to Canadian society stem from their newcomer or immigrant status (e.g. Reitz & Banerjee, 2007). That is to say, unfamiliarity with Canadian society and its institutions, lack of proficiency in the official languages (Pottie, Ng, Spitzer, Mohammed, & Glazier, 2008), difficulty accessing formal support or settlement services

and affordable housing (Dion & Dion, 2001; Kanu, 2008; Francis & Yan, 2016) are settlement-related issues that hinder immigrants' incorporation into society temporarily or indefinitely for some. Reitz & Banerjee (2007) argue that many non-European immigrants' socioeconomic positions improve overtime as they become accustomed to life in their new country. However, a number of studies found that racialized non-white immigrants are disadvantaged in the labour market and marginalized in society. Cultural and linguistic differences (i.e. way of dress, accent, and behaviour) from the mainstream and discriminatory institutional practices that devalue foreign credentials and non-Canadian experience are a couple of ways these immigrants are excluded (Basran & Zong, 1998; Neuwirth 1999; Li, 2001; Kazemipur & Halli, 2001; Bauder & Cameron, 2002; Bauder, 2003; Breton, 2003; Creese, 2010, 2011; Social Planning Council of Ottawa, 2008). Labour market discrimination and devaluation of credentials have caused a significant number of non-European immigrants to be unemployment or underemployment and underrepresented in high paying professional occupations and managerial positions (Lian, & Mathews, 1998; Pendakur & Pendakur, 1998; Li, 2000; Nakhaie, 2006; Creese & Wiebe, 2012). For these reasons, there is often a weak or no correction between recent immigrants' education and skills and their occupation—the 'PhD cab driver' phenomenon is evidence of this (Reitz, 2001).

Moreover, systemic exclusions have made recent racialized non-white immigrants vulnerable to poverty (Galabuzi, 2006). Even though the majority of non-European immigrants are 'skilled migrants' that have higher educational levels than their Canadian counterparts, they have higher poverty rates compared to former cohorts of European immigrants (Bauder & Cameron, 2002; Hum & Simpson, 2000). Non-European immigrants were also found to be spatially marginalized as a consequence of social and economic exclusion (Omidvar &

Richmond, 2003). In large metropolitan areas, the majority of recent non-European immigrants resided in ethnic enclaves and low income neighbourhoods (Murdie, 1994; Fong & Shibuya, 2000; Kazemipur & Halli, 2001; Phillips, 2007; Hiebert, 2015). For instance, in Toronto and Ottawa, the majority of families residing in low income neighbourhoods were racialized non-white and were recent immigrants (Qadeer & Kumar, 2006; Walks & Bourne, 2006; Social Planning Council of Ottawa, 2008). The observed association between neighbourhood poverty and the spatial concentration of racialized non-white immigrants, is causing some to fear that racialized minorities and recent immigrants are becoming ghettoised (i.e. Murdie, 1994; United Way of Greater Toronto, 2005). However, there is no strong evidence indicating ghettos—geographic spaces marked by undying poverty, hopelessness, deviance, victimization, crime, substance abuse and social disorganization—found in American urban cities are forming in Canada (Murdie, 1994; Walks & Bourne, 2006). Ghettos take generations to form (Brown, 2012; Wilson, 1996). I think it might be a little premature to start discussing ghettos in relation to the spatial segregation of racialized non-white immigrants. It is safer to argue that we are in a period of transition. To understand the long-term effects of immigration, it is important to examine how the progeny of socially, economically and geographically marginalized non-European immigrants fare in Canadian society. Theoretically, the study of children of non-European immigrants controls for the effects of foreign education and experience and language related barriers; therefore how children of non-European immigrants incorporate into the society will provide a better indication of the challenges that lie ahead for Canada (i.e. formation of racial ghettos, social unset, and increased conflict or tension between racial groups). Furthermore, the examination of the experiences of the non-European Canadian-born population is important because this segment of society is predicted to increase in size and importance. Statistics Canada

population projections indicate that nearly half of the second generation population will belong to a racialized non-white group in less than two decades (Malenfant, Lebel, & Martel, 2010). Accordingly, this group will make up a larger proportion of the working-age population; thus, the elimination of barriers to educational attainment and labour market incorporation for racialized non-white Canadians is crucial for the economic prosperity of Canada.

Overview of current study on marginalized non-European immigrant offspring's experiences

A substantial amount of research has been conducted on the incorporation patterns and educational achievement of children of non-European immigrants living in western nations in the last couple of decades (e.g. Abada, Hou & Ram, 2009; Alba & Waters, 2011; Boyd, 2002; Dronkers & de Heus, 2012; Dustmann, Frattini, & Lanzara, 2012; Levels & Dronkers, 2008; Portes, 1996; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Reitz & Somerville, 2004; Reitz, Zhang, & Hawkins, 2011; Simmons & Plaza, 1998; Vermeulen, 2010; Zhou, 1997). Research in this domain has identified numerous factors that facilitate and hinder the educational achievement of different non-European immigrant groups. The problem with these studies is that they mostly only provide insight into the experiences of the majority within each racialized group; they establish common trends. Furthermore, in concentrating on differences between groups (and not within them), the literature creates and perpetuates stereotypes of racialized non-white groups. For instance, the literature has perpetuated 'positive stereotypes' about East Asian youth by describing them as 'model minorities', studious and intelligent; conversely, racialized black youth have consistently been described as 'at-risk' to fail, drop-outs, underachievers, aggressive, prone to commit crime, and intellectually slow (i.e. in need of special education or vocational training) (Chou & Feagin, 2015; Dei, 2008; James, 2007, 2011; Museus & Kiang, 2009).

In order to capture the diverse experiences of racialized black youth and provide a more nuanced account of these youths' experiences, the objective of this research is to add to the scant research that examines the educational 'success' (e.g. able to adapt to their various social environments and complete high school) of a segment of the racialized black youth population. By examining the experiences of racialized black children of immigrants who are able to successfully navigate the compulsory education system, this study aims to explore how children of African immigrants and their communities exercise agency to oppose structural and institutional barriers that attempt to place them in their 'rightful places'—at or near the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder—in the society's racial and class ordering. More specifically, the objective of this research is twofold a) to understand how a group of racialized black youth navigate multiple situated social contexts and come to understand themselves, others and society, and b) to identify individual and micro-level factors (e.g. 'community-level forces') that are conducive to the educational achievement and upward socioeconomic mobility of racialized black 1.5 and second generation African Canadian youth.

This dissertation is mainly divided into five major sections (review of theoretical and empirical literature, methodology, findings, discussion, and conclusion sections). Chapters 2 to 4 provide a review of pertinent literature. More specifically, chapter 2 provides a brief historical overview of how North American societies became racially and economically stratified and unequal. This historical overview contextualizes the contemporary incorporation experiences of immigrant families and their children. It situates recent immigrants' experiences within the broader continuing history of the formation of North American societies and the social, cultural, economic, legal and political structures that sustain them. The following two chapters examine the theoretical and empirical literature on children of racialized non-white immigrants. The

reviewed literature principally focuses on the predominant theories of second generation incorporation (the segmented assimilation theory and the cultural ecological model) and educational attainment and its determinants. Herein, the general gaps and critiques of the literature on non-European immigrant offspring are identified. The methodology and research design chapter outlines the research objective, theoretical framework, and research design employed in this qualitative narrative study. Subsequently, the research findings are presented in chapters 6 to 9. Chapter 6 examines how a group of racialized black children of immigrants—Sub-Saharan African immigrant offspring living in the nation's capital—navigate unequal geographies, which have the potential to impact their life trajectories. This chapter provides insights into the participants' views of and experiences living in low and higher income neighbourhoods. Chapter 7 reports on participants' schooling experiences and educational outcomes. More precisely, this chapter explores how subtle forms of exclusion (institutional and social), schools' social make-ups and cultures, and participants' access to educational supports affect participants' educational achievement. The following chapter (chapter 8) explores the different identities participants formed and how they navigated their multiple social and cultural environments. The last findings chapter (chapter 9) relates parents' and key informants' perspectives on the experiences of racialized black African immigrant offspring. This chapter takes a closer look at the larger socio-historical context racialized black immigrant offspring grew-up within and the interconnection between African immigrants' experiences and their offspring's life trajectories. The discussion section (chapter 10) ties the findings chapters together and revisits the empirical and theoretical literature reviewed to position this study in the larger body of work it belongs to. The concluding chapter summarizes the significance, limitations, and implications of this research.

2. Racial stratification of North America: The lasting legacy of colonization, racism, and the social construction of race

My father migrated to the United States in 1949...He came through Ellis Island...in a ship from England. At that time, his identity was a 'British subject' not a citizen, but a subject because...our country was ruled by the British...His ship was full with mostly Irish [people] and he was the only black man...he was directed to live in Harlem and the rest had the liberty to live wherever they wanted.

In 1964, I came through Kennedy Airport and I was given a form to fill for the immigration... [on the] form there was a line that said Caucasian, Native American, Negro, this [and] that. I looked at it and I didn't know where I fitted. Honestly, I didn't know where I belonged because...there was nothing about Africa...I knew what Negro meant...black...in the British system of my country at that time, Africa was introduced as the Dark Continent. So, I said black-dark, you know I associated [the two] and I crossed the line that said Negro and I put African and I ticked it. I went to the line and... the immigration officer, looked at me, looked at my passport, crossed what I put...and put Negro. I was surprised...My father was waiting for me, I asked him what's a Negro? And he said that's your clan name in America.

Fatima Jibrell, Founder of Adeso⁴

In the United States, a long history of slavery, legal racial segregation and racism have led to the formation of a large African American underclass and a racially divided society (Omi & Winant, 1994). As Fatima's and her father's immigration stories illustrate, racialized black immigrants are greatly impacted by this history of racial inequality and the racial ordering of society. Immigrants of African descent have to tackle and negotiate with new negative classification systems that is “loaded with hegemonic meanings that locate immigrants in a subordinate identity” (Kusow, 2006, p. 543). From the moment racialized black immigrant families arrive to 'the land of the free'—the United States of America—they have to contend with societal structures that forcibly try (less so overtly over time) to unite them with their long-lost kin—they never knew they had—at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder (Gans, 1992). While

⁴ Fatima Jibrell shared her family's immigration experience at an event in Minneapolis, MN on January 2009. The event was a celebration of the inauguration of Barack Obama as the first racialized black President of the United States. The full speech can be heard at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYjxJyK3dTU>

contemporary American and Canadian societies have different political systems, immigration and integration policies, demographics, and histories, immigrants of African descent in Canada, as mentioned in the introductory chapter, have to also contend with racist ideologies and practices that make it difficult for them to incorporate into society and eventually achieve social mobility (Berns-McGown, 2013; Creese & Wiebe, 2012; Galabuzi, 2006; Henry, 1994; Johnson & Enomoto, 2007). This is because Canada and the United States—both nations of immigrants—have similar colonial origins and were shaped by the global African Slave Trade (Alba & Foner, 2015).

The fact that nations of immigrants (former European colonies that evolved from ‘white settler societies’ to ‘diverse societies’), which pride themselves of their multicultural populations and neoliberal ideals, were born out of colonization and racism is often trivialized and conveniently forgotten, especially in Canada (Backhouse, 1999; Henry & Tator, 2006).⁵ This history—European colonialists annexation of North American territories from Indigenous peoples and the oppression of racialized non-white people—is not insignificant, irrelevant or something to acknowledge in passing as an unfortunate part of our past; this history has shaped and continues to shape the lives of Indigenous peoples and non-European immigrants (Wallis, Sunseri, & Galabuzi, 2010). To understand how recent racialized non-white immigrant families incorporate into Canada, we must first understand the social structure of society and how former generations of immigrants have been incorporated into the nation—both in the national narrative and on the ground. Therefore, a starting point of this study is a brief overview of the historical manufacturing of racial hierarchies and inequalities in North America.

⁵ Diversity, per se, is nothing new to North American societies. Canada, for instance, has always been a diverse society. Before the arrival of British and French colonialists, there were diverse groups of Aboriginal inhabitants that belonged to different tribes and spoke numerous languages (Harper, 1997).

The origins of race and a racial view of the world, that is "perceiving the world's people as being divided into exclusive and discrete groups, called races, that are ranked hierarchically vis-a-vis one another" (Smedley, 2002, p.145), is debatable. One widely cited and supported historical account of the origins of race is provided by Audrey Smedley. Sifting through historical literature, Smedley found that our current ideas and beliefs regarding race did not exist in the 17th century (Smedley 2002, 2007). In the 15th century, upon first encountering 'natives', Western European 'explorers' (both early Catholic Spanish and Portuguese explorers, and Protestant British, Dutch and French explorers that followed suit) of the 'new world' (i.e. the Americas) used their religious worldviews to understand people who they viewed as 'alien' and 'exotic' (Smedley 2002, p. 147). Smedley (2002) argues that European explorers' Catholic and Christian worldviews did not allow them to view natives as a separate race or lesser than themselves, but rather their scripture taught them to view all humans as having the same origin (e.g. deriving from Adam and Eve) and for this reason "equally significant in the eyes of God" (p. 147). However, scripture was not the only thing guiding their behaviours and attitudes. Europeans dealings with 'natives' was also influenced by their ethnocentric view of the world. Europeans believed in the superiority of their culture, religion, behaviours, attitudes and thoughts. Smedley notes that Europeans had a long history (starting with the Greeks) of dividing the "world's peoples into those who were civilized (i.e. like themselves) and those who were "savages" or "barbarians" (the 'Other') (2002, p. 150). Furthermore, during the early centuries of 'exploration' and colonization (16th and 17th centuries), there emerged two views of savages (e.g. non-Europeans and/or non-Christians): a) the 'noble savages', which were considered gentle, innocent, a product of their harsh environments and able to be civilized; and b) the 'vicious savages', which were thought to be incapable of learning and unassimilable due to their sinister,

evil, immoral, animalistic, violent and irrational natures (Smedley, 2002, p. 150- 151). Early European colonialist seemed to view most natives as noble savages that could be civilized (i.e. converted into Christianity and taught the ways of the Europeans) through biblical and cultural teachings. Europeans civilizing missions were not altruistic (only about 'saving the souls of savages'), but they were closely tied to Europeans' economic interests (Omi & Winant, 1994). Transporting churches and European culture to the new world allowed European colonial empires to have access to and the ability to exploit the Americas more easily (Smedley, 2002).

In Europe, particularly in England, the enlightenment era (17th century) gave rise to a new way of thinking that centered on science and rationality (as opposed to tradition and religion) and promoted intellectual pursuit, equality and individual rights and freedoms (many of the values that present-day western democracies were built on) (Smedley, 2002). However, this liberal worldview was challenged by the development of a contradictory racialized worldview in the 18th century. Smedley (2007) argues that the ideology of race was born in Jamestown, Virginia during the 18th century. Initially, the goal of English colonialists was "to emulate the Spanish" by obtaining wealth through the enslavement of the 'Indians'; "[h]owever, the Indians didn't take well to slavery; many died of European diseases and others escaped to unknown territories" (Smedley, 2007, p. 2). Instead, Smedley reports, European colonialists established a class-based society. Wealthy Europeans and a small number of Spanish/Portuguese-Africans (who arrived after English colonialist) acquired land and indentured servants/slaves (comprising of poor Europeans (mostly Irish), Africans, and Indians) to cultivate cash crops on plantations. In the early decades of the colony, Africans and Europeans from the same class intermingled freely due to their similarity in culture, behaviour and status (Smedley, 2007). Hence, Europeans were ethnocentric, and not Eurocentric before the 18th century (e.g., the British thought they were

more civilized than the Irish; and Africans who adopted the British culture and religion could be seen in a more positive light).

It was not until 1676, when a rebellion broke out and caused social instability, that the notion of race was constructed, according to Smedley (2007). The concept of race, defined in terms of phenotypical characteristics, was used to divide poor Europeans from Africans, mulattoes and Indians so that they could not form solidarities with one another to oppose socioeconomic inequality, wealth disparities and the tyrannical rule of wealthy colonialists (Ibid). Colonial rulers used a number of strategies to create racial slavery and a caste-like racial underclass, including (from Smedley, 2007, p 4-6):

- importing Africans, who were unfamiliar with European culture, from Africa against their will;
- colour-coding laws by passing regulations stripping Africans of rights (e.g. voting and right to an education), mobility, and freedom (they could not be freed from slavery), and concurrently passing laws socially privileging poor Europeans to distinguish them from Africans, mulattos and Indians;
- developing race and racial identities to homogenize (based on their physical characteristics, primarily skin colour) a previously ethnically, culturally, and socioeconomically diverse population (e.g. Europeans, regardless their class or ethnicity (e.g. Irish, English and Portuguese) were first and foremost considered white);
- dehumanizing Africans—referred to as Negroes—by comparing them to apes, considering them property of their masters, and assigning characteristics to them, such as uncivilized heathens and vicious savages;

- spatially separating the races (e.g. Indians had to live on reserves) and prohibiting interracial relationships to avoid blurring the colour line (especially the white category with the others).

In essence, wealthy English colonizers created racial categories and inequality to disunite the subjugated class in order to maintain their dominance (in terms of status and wealth) and to have a cheap and submissive labour force at their disposal (Smedley, 2007). On top of the social construction of race, a racist ideology was discursively formed to justify the oppression of 'non-whites' and the removal of 'Indians' from their land, which were acts that contradicted the liberal and Christian values of Europeans of that time (Backhouse, 1999).

In addition to establishing an association between blackness and slavery, one of the legacies of racial slavery in North America has been the use of racial identities and the belief that different races “have distinct physical and behavioral traits that were inherited ‘in the blood’, and passed on to their children. Thus, we have the continuing stereotype of African Americans as lacking in intelligence, lazy, overly-sexed, loud, irrational, musical, emotional, and superstitious” (Smedley, 2007, p.7). In the late 19th-early 20th century, social scientists attempted to provide creditability to the idea contrived by colonialists that some races were naturally more inferior to others by using the scientific method to establish genetic links to race (Backhouse, 1999). Humans were phenotypically (e.g. skin, hair and eye colour, hair texture, and facial features) classified into mainly three races—Asians/Mongoloids, Caucasians/Caucasoids, and Africans/Negroids—in the same manner animals were classified into different species in the field of biology—and their 'inherit' intellectual, social and behavioural difference were identified (Fairchild, 1991). Theorists advancing the biological view of race argued that blacks and whites significantly differed in status and educational achievement due to their difference in inherited

intellectual abilities (e.g. measured by IQ and brain/skull size in earlier studies) (e.g. Herrnstein & Murray, 1994; Jensen, 1969; Rushton & Jensen, 2005). This view considered racial inequality natural rather than socially engineered. Furthermore, race was also considered natural as opposed to a social construct that is context-bound (in both space and time). The core argument of this perspective is that races can be hierarchically ranked (e.g. whites and Asians are more intellectually superior to blacks) and that "superior races produced superior cultures" (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 64). The biological view of race has popularized the notion that race is "an *essence*, as something fixed, concrete, and objective" (Ibid, p. 54, emphasis in original).

Although this view of race spread widely and made its way into school curriculums (i.e. many textbooks in North America made reference to people as belonging to the red, white and black races), race as a biological concept was heavily criticized and debunked in the early to mid-20th century (Fairchild, 1991). In the academic realm, opponents of the concept of race, argued:

- race "is an ideological invention that supported European and American imperialism", therefore it is bound to particular sociopolitical contexts;
- humans do not neatly fit into several races, as such, characterization based on phenotypic characteristics would produce thousands of races;
- there are more biological variations within racial groups than between different racial groups;
- and there is an "overwhelming commonality in the genetic history of homo sapiens...this biological evidence points to one race" (Fairchild, 1991, p. 103).

Politically, it became unfashionable and politically incorrect to discuss race as a way to distinguish people following the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the international community (United Nations) in 1948, and even more so in the 1960s due to the rise in human rights and independence movements initiated by racialized non-white people in colonized countries and in North America (Alba & Foner, 2015).

In the last quarter of the 20th century, race was reconceptualised as a sub-category of ethnicity (Backhouse, 1999; Omi & Winant, 1994). This perspective considers race and ethnicity as social constructs—i.e. race, culture (including language and customs), religion, and nationality are deciding factors in the ethnic group formation process (Backhouse, 1999). The ethnicity paradigm emphasizes 'origin' (e.g. country of origin or ancestral ethno-cultural group) over 'colour'; it focuses on how immigrants incorporate and acculturate (e.g. do immigrants retain their 'ethnic culture' or assimilate?) and how immigrants' incorporation patterns affects society (e.g. is the society becoming more culturally pluralistic?) (Omi & Winant, 1994). This shift from 'race' to ethnicity is evident in the Census, according to Backhouse (1999). For instance, in 1901, the Canadian government instructed its employees to classify the population into races. They provided the following instructions to enumerators:

The races of men will be designated by the use of “w” for white, “r” for red, “b” for black, and “y” for yellow. The whites are, of course, the Caucasian race, the reds are the American Indian, the blacks are the African or Negro, and the yellows are the Mongolian (Japanese and Chinese). But only pure whites will be classed as whites; the children begotten of marriages between whites and any one of the other races will be classed as red, black or yellow, as the case may be, irrespective of degrees of colour [sic]. (Cited in Backhouse, 1999, p.3)

The colour variable, in the 1901 Canadian Census Public Use Microdata File, was coded in the following manner: !, illegible; #, illogical; ?, guess; B, black; O, other; R, red; W, white; Y, yellow. This census reveals that there was a common-sense understanding (e.g. 'of-course' whites are the Caucasian race) that people could be sorted clearly and logically into mutually exclusive 'scientific racial categories' based on their skin colour. Also, it is clear that there was a common belief that whites were a superior race and "intermixtures resulted in the degradation of the superior racial stock" (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 64). Non-white status was determined by the 'one-drop rule'—a person who had any non-white relatives (non-Caucasian blood) was considered non-white even if they looked white (Backhouse, 1999; Kusow, 2006). In contrast, the labels that appeared under the variable 'ethnic and cultural group' (a variable that was introduced in the 1951 Census) in the 1971 Canadian Census included, British Isles (44.3% of population), French (28.8%), German (6.2%), Italian (3.4%), Jewish (1.4%), Chinese (.06%), Japanese (0.2%), Native Indian (1.3%), and Negro (0.2%). Noteworthy, the ethnicity variable groups some segments of the population racially (e.g. Negro and Native Indian) and others based on their ethnic, cultural, national, or religious backgrounds.

Backhouse (1999) argues that the change in paradigm, from a racial to an ethno-cultural one, is "more semantic than substantive. The belief that humanity is divided into discrete groups, and that such groups can be differentiated by specific characteristics, remain unshaken" (p. 7). This argument is supported by the fact that racial categories and hierarchies have remained despite the introduction of new labels identifying individuals. What has changed is the way in which white/Euro-supremacy and racist ideologies are articulated. For instance, assimilation theory, which falls under the ethnicity paradigm, argues that 'non-white' and non-European immigrants have to abandon their cultures and customs and adopt the values and cultures of the

majority (which are considered racially white and of European origin) to fully participate in society. This theory more or less rearticulates early European colonizers views regarding 'the natives' and others considered savages/uncivilized (e.g. the Irish)—'those not like us must adopt 'our civilized ways' in order to live better lives'. The ethnicity paradigm, as Porter (1965) in his classical book 'The Vertical Mosaic' points out, structured society along ethnic and class lines—the top of the socioeconomic ladder was predominantly occupied by descendants of English colonists, followed by descendants of French colonists and other European immigrants, and at the bottom of the hierarchy were racialized non-white people. It should be noted that racial categories are not static or fixed; the meaning of white/non-white has changed. When they first immigrated to Canada, many Irish and Southern and Eastern Europeans (e.g. Italians, Ukrainians, and Jews) were not considered 'white'; they were considered "some distinctive, stigmatized "other"" (Perlmann & Waldinger, 1997; Brodtkin, 2004). It did not matter that "the immigrants of old shared a common European heritage with the then-dominant WASPs [White Anglo-Saxon Protestant]", they were considered 'the inferior other', and like the new immigrants of today (non-Europeans), they were required to assimilate into the dominant (English) culture (Perlmann & Waldinger, 1997, p. 894). Perlmann and Waldinger (1997) cite that,

[T]he Irish were...regularly characterized as "savage", "simian", "low-browed", and "bestial". Black Americans were referred to as "smoked Irishmen" suggesting that these two groups were then looked at through a remarkably similar lens. Later observers stressed the "Saracen blood" of the southern Italians, whose dark complexion... sometimes resembled African more than Caucasian hues. (p. 902)

Moreover, the preference for some European immigrants over others can be seen in a 1910 government publication outlining Canada's immigration policy at that time, which was:

The policy of the Department...is to encourage the immigration of farmers, farm labourers, and female domestic servants from the United States, the British Isles, and certain Northern European countries, namely France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Iceland. On the other hand, it is the policy of the Department to do all in its power to keep out of the country undesirables...those belonging to nationalities unlikely to assimilate and who consequently prevent the building up of a united nation of people of similar customs and ideals (Manpower and Immigration Canada, 1974b: 9-10 cited in Li, 2003, p. 18-19).

Canada's immigration policy in the past was both colour-coded (non-European/white immigrants were not permitted entry into Canada) and ethnocentric. Immigrants were ranked in terms of desirability: the English (living in Britain or America) were first sought after, then North/west Europeans, then Central Europeans; Southern and Eastern Europeans were less desirable, as were Jews (Li, 2003, p. 21). The goal of the government was to maintain the status quo by mandating that immigrants assimilate into the dominant cultures of Canada, depending on location of settlement. The nation-building objective of Canada's immigration policy shifted in the mid-20th century; there was more of a focus on keeping Canada a racially white nation. In 1947, Canada's Prime Minister, Mackenzie King, argued that the function of immigration policy in Canada was "to foster the growth of the population" and "to ensure the careful selection and permanent settlement of such numbers of immigrants as can advantageously be absorbed in our national economy" (in other words, meet labour market demands without taking jobs away from Canadians); however, King argued "the people of Canada do not wish, as a result of mass immigration, to make a fundamental alteration in the character of our population. Large-scale immigration from the orient would change the fundamental composition of the Canadian

population” (Canada, House of Commons Debate, 1 May 1947, p. 2644-6; cited in Li, 2003b, p. 23). There was an explicit desire to keep out non-Europeans and non-whites. Nonetheless, by the 1960s, rapidly growing American and European economies made it difficult for Canada to attract skilled and large number of immigrants from these 'desirable regions' (e.g. western Europe and the United States) to meet labour market demands; as a result, Canada's immigration policy was reformed to allow highly educated and skilled non-European immigrants to enter Canada (Boyd & Vickers, 2000).

Past immigration policies show that there has been a strong association between social and cultural assimilation and labour market integration in North American white settler societies (sociocultural assimilation has normally been required for economic integration) (Li, 2003). For example, Southern and Eastern Europeans were at first undesirable, but by second generation, they were able to achieve upward social mobility by assimilating (i.e. through public school education and socialization) into the dominant culture (Perlmann & Waldinger, 1997). Over the years assimilation of European immigrants into the mainstream has stratified the society along racial lines (Alba, 2005; Lian and Matthews, 1998)—e.g. most Canadians of European descent (especially those from the same region) have become indistinguishable from one another in terms of language(s) spoken, level of education, cultural orientations, and class distribution. Descendants of different European ethnic groups who have similar educational levels have become part of the same class, whereas many non-European immigrants have not been able to attain income levels as high as Canadians of European descent with the same level of education (Kazemipur & Halli, 2001; Pendakur & Pendakur, 1998, 2002; Reitz & Banerjee, 2007).

Canada's social structure is somewhat unique and distinct compared to other white-settler societies (e.g. America and Australia) because Canada was colonized by two European

powers: the British and the French. To preserve the privileged status of English and French colonialists, the Canadian Federal government established the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1963-70). The purpose of the Commission was to "inquire into and report upon the existing states of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races" (Haque, 2012, p. 5). Interestingly, the report refers to French and English colonial settlers as the "founding races", indicating that the meaning of race in this context refers to ethnicity (i.e. the two groups, which are to have 'equal standing', are separated by culture not 'colour'). The establishment of the commission, largely a response to French Canada's (Quebec's) discontent with their lack of sovereignty and Canada's "Anglo-Celtic dominant national narrative of belonging", marked another shift in Canada's nation-building exercise—there was now a desire to privilege the descendants (and those that became undistinguishable from them) of English and French colonial settlers (Ibid, p. 5). Non-English and non-French Canadians (referred to as 'other ethnic groups' by the Commission) and Indigenous peoples' opposition to the commission's purpose led to the creation of the Multiculturalism Policy (1971) in conjunction with the Official Language Act (1969) (Haque, 2012). This Act and policy, along with the commission, allowed Canada to rearticulate "white-settler hegemony" (Canada was declared an unequal society—e.g. English and French were legally privileged) "while also disavowing racial and ethnic exclusions" (Haque, 2012, p. 5). From that point forward (1970s), French and English language and culture were to be legally protected, persevered and taught, while other ethnocultural groups could maintain their own cultures and languages at home and in their communal spaces. These legislations reaffirmed that French and English communities build and established Canada, and non-European immigrants

and Indigenous people (which were lumped in the same group/position as non-European immigrants) also contributed to the building of Canada. I think more importantly and subtly, the Multiculturalism Policy, which granted non-European ethnocultural groups cultural rights, masked the enshrinement of the privileged position of Anglo and French racialized white Canadians over other 'ethnic' and indigenous groups through the Official Languages Act (and subsequent language protection legal provisions). Worded differently, the protection of English and French language and culture gives English and French Canadians the ability not only to set the cultural norms of society, but also the ability to maintain their hegemony (i.e. power, through consent, over the economic, political, and social development of the country) (Haque, 2012; Wallis, Sunseri & Galabuzi, 2010).

What arises from Canada's multiculturalism policy 'within a bilingual framework' (Haque, 2012) is an integration policy that explicitly promotes cultural pluralism and the value of diversity but at the same time discourages "specific cultural differences, especially those deemed to be far removed from the Canadian standard" (Li, 2003b, p. 316). Li (2003b) argues that "there is a strong expectation that immigrants should accept Canada's prevailing practice and standard and become similar to the resident [predominantly white] population"; thus, immigrants are expected to adopt "the English or French language, [eventually] mov[e] away from ethnically concentrated immigrant enclaves, and participat[e] in social and political activities of mainstream society" (p. 316). The paradoxical nature of Canada's integration policy led Li (2003b) (and others who criticized Canadian multicultural policy) to conclude,

[M]ulticulturalism [policy] is mainly symbolic, as it merely encourages individual multiculturalism in private life while leaving institutional homogeneity and ideological uniformity intact, thus implying that liberalism has comfortably incorporated

multiculturalism by relegating the latter to the margin. In short, the official multiculturalism policy has lent support to a symbolic version of cultural difference that poses no possible threat to universalism and cohesion of liberal democratic society (p. 317).

Multiculturalism policy and its accompanying discourse, which is often contrasted to the United States 'melting pot' model, has further been criticized for masking racial inequality by promoting complacency in the national promotion of cultural diversity and tolerance of difference (Dei, 1996).

As the Canadian society diversified starting in the 1970s, a number of equity and equality laws—e.g. the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (part of Canada's 1982 Constitution), the Canadian Human Rights Act of 1977 and the Employment Equity Act of 1986—were introduced in an attempt to make Canadian society more egalitarian. As previously stated, however, racial inequality in Canada has increased over the last couple of decades (e.g. Omidvar & Richmond, 2003). The social, political and economic structure of society and unequal racial relations established by European colonialist have by in large been safeguarded by European immigrants that have reaped the benefits of unearned privilege enabling them to occupy the higher echelons of the socioeconomic ladder by virtue of their perceived connections (racial, ethnic and social) to the recognized 'European fathers of the nation' and the 'builders of society' (Dei, 1996; Wallis, Sunseri, & Galabuzi, 2010). Therefore, there exists a contradiction between the dominant neoliberal discourse (and the laws and policies that support them) and the reality of racial inequality (Henry & Tator, 2006). The reason this is so is because racism—defined broadly as “the use of racial categories to create, explain, and perpetuate inequalities” (Backhouse, 1999, p. 8)—and white privilege did not disappear, they just became hidden and

normalized (made a normal part of society). For instance, although white settler societies are multi-ethnic, they are still Eurocentric—the experiences, behaviours, values and worldviews of those racialized white are considered the norm (McIntosh, 1990). Leonardo (2004) argues that “whites enjoy privileges largely because they have [historically] created a system of domination under which they can thrive as a group” (p. 148).

One way the status quo has been maintained is through the use of negative stereotypes—extending negative stereotypes used to subjugate non-immigrant people of colour to racialized non-white immigrants. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001) assert,

Today’s immigrants of colour are seen by many as possessing traits that make them “unmeltable” and incompatible with modern American culture. Like other minority groups (such as African Americans...), some new immigrants have been characterized as being culturally inferior, lazy, and prone to crime, and therefore less deserving of sharing in the dreams of dominant mainstream society (p. 8).

Furthermore, the status quo is maintained by a subtle continual transmission of racist and white supremacist ideologies (e.g. negative representation of racialized non-white people in the media and school curriculum), which is usually masked by the ideology of democratic liberalism (Henry & Tator, 2006; James, 1994). At the macro level, racial inequality is sustained by discourses that promote colour-blindness and universalism and those that call for the maintenance of traditional (in other words European) values and norms (Henry & Tator, 2006). These discourses ignore structural inequalities that exist and past transgressions that were committed by ‘European settlers’ against racialized non-white people. Additionally, some racialized white groups in society use liberal values, such as freedom of expression, to express racist and white supremacist views (Ibid).

The maintenance of power is an active process. The dominant group (i.e. the elite) need to reinforce their dominance and superiority to maintain power and advantageous positions in society (Leonardo, 2004). Significant demographic changes over time and a shift in power dynamics oftentimes prompts moral panic and feelings of uneasiness in the mainstream. In 'democratically racist societies'—societies in which liberal values, racial inequality and social injustice coexist—racialized non-white people are structurally, institutionally and culturally excluded from society through mainstream discourses and the policies and practices that support them (Henry & Tator, 2006). However, the way race and racial exclusion operate in modern society is complex. This is owing to the fact that racialization, "an ongoing process that takes place continually at both macro- and micro-levels and involves...the assignment of bodies to racial categories... and the association of symbols, attributes, qualities, and other meanings with those categories", has become somewhat of a more interactive process (Lewis, 2003, p. 285-87). Historically, racial identities were forcibly imposed. However, in contemporary society, individuals can reject, redefine, and/or perform external ascriptions (ascribed identities) in particular contexts (Lewis, 2003). Nonetheless, although racial categorizations are no longer imposed from above, ascribed racial categories "matter as much as one's self-identification, if not more" due to the fact that the way an individual is racialized determines whether they are included or excluded "from a range of institutions, activities, or opportunities" (Lewis, 2003, p. 287). For instance, Kelly (1998) argues that "when young Black males are seen it is often with a specific gaze; eyes that see the 'trouble-maker,' 'the school skipper' or 'the criminal.' The gaze constrains as it removes the degree of autonomy that would allow free physical and social movement" (p. 19). Kelly further asserts, "[t]he importance of the gaze [e.g. suspicious looks, negative stereotypes] is that it allows individuals belonging to a dominant group to control social

spaces and social interaction" (p. 19). It is for this reason race matters although it is a social construct. In addition to race, racialized black immigrant offspring's experiences are also shaped by their gender, class, immigrant status, ethnicity, religion and other social signifiers that can privilege them in certain contexts or furthermore marginalize them. Therefore, it is important to consider how race intersects with other systems of oppression and markers of difference (Crenshaw 1991; Dei, 1995; Dei & James, 2002; Frankenberg, 1993).

The paradoxical nature (e.g. outwardly egalitarian and covertly racist) of colour-coded societies makes the process by which racialized non-white immigrants and their offspring incorporate into society complex (Alba & Foner, 2015). A large part of the incorporation process, returning back to Fatima's narrative, involves a struggle between the larger structures of society, which have been historically shaped, that try to place racialized non-white individuals in geographically, socially, economically and politically inferior positions in society, and racialized non-white individuals that try to situate themselves differently (i.e. define their own selves and station in life) (Wallis, Sunseri & Galabuzi, 2010). The next section reviews theories that closely examine how racialized non-white immigrants and their children incorporate into colour-coded societies and the segments of societies they become a part of. These theories show that racialized non-white immigrant offspring's incorporation trajectories are strongly linked to their parents' experiences (i.e. their parents socioeconomic standing in society) and their parents' and their communities' ability to shield them from structural and institutional barriers that hinder their full participation in society.

3. The incorporation of non-European immigrant children into racially stratified societies: Theoretical perspectives

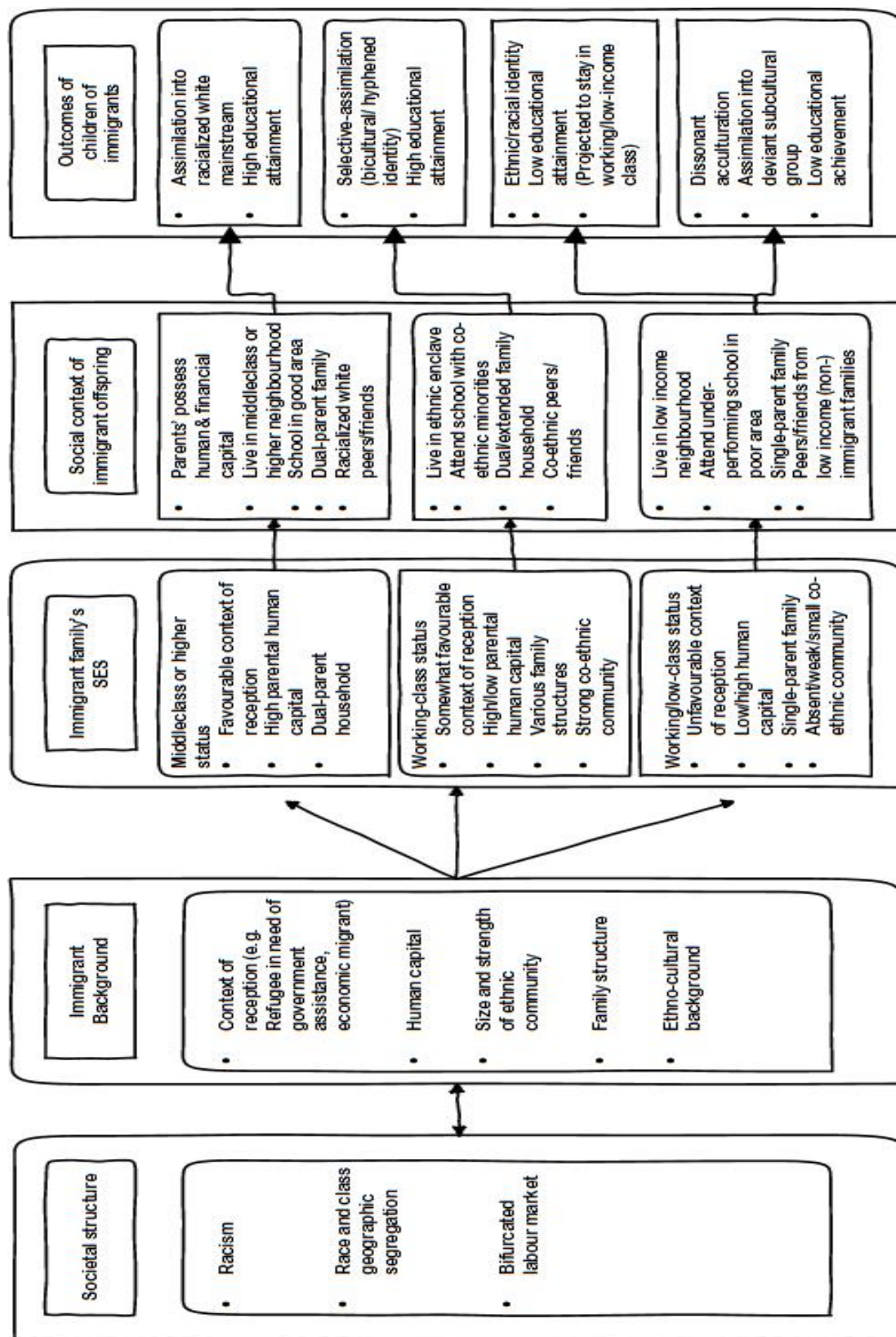
There has not been much theorizing about the ways racialized non-white children of immigrants incorporate into society and achieve social mobility in Canada. However, American researchers have advanced several theories derived from empirical studies examining the experiences of racialized non-white immigrant families in the United States. Two particularly relevant American theories that can inform Canadian research on the incorporation experiences of non-European immigrant offspring are the segmented assimilation theory and the cultural ecological model.

Segmented assimilation theory

The segmented assimilation theory is an influential social stratification theory that underpins a significant number of empirical studies exploring the adaptation and incorporation patterns of racialized non-white second generation immigrants (Portes, Fernández-Kelly, & Haller, 2009; Portes & Rumbaut, 1996, 2001; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Rumbaut & Portes, 2001). This theory emerged from a critique of assimilation theory (Gans, 1992; Portes & Zhou, 1993). Assimilation theory, as mentioned previous, is based on the notion that the adoption of the language, culture, values, behaviours and attitudes of the racialized white middleclass (often referred to as the 'mainstream'), would allow second generation immigrants and subsequent generations to achieve upward social mobility and inclusion into the society overtime (Alba & Nee, 1997; Gordon, 1961, 1964). Assimilation theories and discourses, link social and cultural assimilation to socioeconomic mobility. In contrast to this influential theory, which has been criticized for being too linear and ethnocentric, the segmented assimilation theory postulates that there is no uniform 'mainstream' to assimilate into (Portes and Zhou, 1993). Historic relations of

power have stratified society along racial and class lines, thus the process of ‘assimilation’ is segmented in American society (Gans, 1992; Zhou, 1997). Consequently, children of racialized non-white immigrants incorporate into different sociocultural, ethnic and/or racial groups occupying different positions in the society’s socioeconomic hierarchy. Segmented assimilation theory reconceptualises the relationship between social contexts, the socioeconomic groups immigrants and their children form attachments to, culture and socioeconomic mobility.

This theory, as shown in figure 3.1, identifies three board segments of the society racialized non-white immigrant offspring could incorporate into: a) incorporation into the racialized white middleclass; b) incorporation into immigrant ethno-cultural groups occupying different socioeconomic positions; or c) incorporation into a multi-ethnic and racial underclass (e.i. marginalized non-immigrant minority groups) (Portes & Zhou, 1993). Contrary to assimilation theory, segmented assimilation theory argues that the abandonment of non-European ethnic cultures and values and the adoption of the values of the mainstream is not the first step to achieve upward social mobility. But it could lead to downward assimilation—incorporation into the underclass (deviant inner-city sociocultural groups). Even if racialized non-white immigrants and their offspring adopt the behaviours, attitudes, values, language and other aspects of ‘white middleclass culture’, structural racism, exclusionary institutional and social practices and unfavorable economic conditions (e.g. low demand for semi-skilled, unskilled and manual workers) could prevent racialized non-white immigrant families from joining the middleclass (Gans, 1992, 2007). Therefore, cultural assimilation cannot solely lead to upward socioeconomic mobility. But, the opposite is more probable. Racialized non-white children and youth from middleclass families could adopt the culture of the ‘white middleclass’



Source: Portes & Rumbaut, 2001

Figure 3.1: Segmented assimilation theory

due to their close geographic and social proximity (i.e. living in middleclass neighbourhoods and going to school in these areas) to the mainstream (Phelan, Davidson, & Cao, 1991; Zhou, 1997).

The theory posits structural exclusion, rejection of parental ethnic culture and support (i.e. parental guidance and assistance), lack of economic opportunities for the parents' generation, low parental education and socioeconomic status, lone-parent families (or dysfunctional families unable to provide support) and exposure to pathologies associated with poverty and low income neighbourhoods (e.g. crime, alcoholism, drug use and pessimism) often lead racialized non-white immigrant offspring to incorporate into the underclass (Portes & MacLeod 1999; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Rumbaut 2005). Racialized black children of immigrants that are from low income backgrounds are particularly considered 'at-risk' to assimilate into the underclass because of their close proximity and perceived close resemblance (e.g. skin colour) to poor African Americans (Gans, 1992; Portes & Zhou, 1993). More specifically, dissonant acculturation, which occurs when non-European immigrant offspring adopt a racialized white or black western culture and perspectives when immigrant parents have retained their 'non-western' ethnic cultures and values, makes low income non-European immigrant offspring prone to experience intergenerational conflict and poor child-parent relations, and consequently susceptible to assimilation into the underclass (Gil & Vega, 1996; Portes & Hao, 2002). Children of poor racialized non-white immigrants are also vulnerable to adopting a reactive ethnicity (or a oppositional identity) when excluded by the mainstream society.

Alternatively, children of non-European immigrants who remain securely embedded in their parents' ethno-cultural community could achieve upward social mobility, according to the segmented assimilation theory (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Bankston & Zhou, 1997). However, Portes

and Rumbaut (2005) note non-European immigrant offspring that adopt their parents' culture could also remain in their parents' social class (e.g. working class). They argue that there are some for whom their ethnicity is a source of strength. It is a strength for those who may experience social and economic mobility with the resources and networks offered by their communities. On the other hand, there are those for "whom their ethnicity does not appear to be a matter of choice nor a source of progress, but a mark of permanent subordination" (Portes & Rumbaut, 2005, p. 986). Children of racialized non-white immigrants' ability to attain high educational achievement and social mobility is not only contingent upon adopting similar identities and cultures as their parents, but it also depends on their social contexts and their immigrant parents' ability to provide their children with instrumental (e.g. financial and homework assistance) and social support (e.g. encouragement) by way of the financial, cultural, social and human capital they possess (Ibid).

The strength of the segmented assimilation theory lies in its examination of the intersection of multiple interconnected factors such as race, ethnicity, immigration status and class. This theory provides an overview of the various paths racialized non-white immigrant families take to incorporate into society and the ways in which some non-European immigrants can attain social mobility in a racially stratified society. One weakness of this theory is that it is unidirectional. The theory accounts for how different non-European immigrants incorporate into immigrant receiving-societies, but it does not examine how non-European immigrants (especially those that possess foreign-earned capital) can transform the social structure of settler societies. For example, many wealthy Asian immigrants have shifted the socioeconomic ladder (i.e. how much one needs to enter the middleclass, upper middleclass, etc.) of some world-class immigrant-receiving cities, such as Vancouver (Hiebert, Mendez, & Wyly, 2008; McCarthy,

2011). This, in turn, has made it difficult for many racialized white non-immigrant locals (or the mainstream) to achieve middleclass status (i.e. own a home and have disposable income).

Furthermore, this theory cannot fully answer the question: what factors or process enables racialized black children of immigrants from marginalized and poor communities to acquire an education and incorporate into the mainstream in a racially stratified ‘white-settler society’?

The goal of this macro-level theory is to explain common trends and averages (Portes, Fernandez, & Haller, 2009). That is, it mostly examines an obvious phenomenon and the behaviours and outcomes of the majority within any given group. For instance, if the majority of a particular group of racialized non-white youth have been underachieving, researchers using this theoretical framework are preoccupied with identifying the reasons why the majority of children belonging to the same racial group are underachieving and ‘assimilating into the underclass’. Moreover, the problem of underachievement, deviance and downward assimilation are usually framed in a comparative framework. Researchers interested in this issue usually ask a question, such as why are some racialized non-white students underachieving compared to other racialized non-white children/youth, whose education levels are on par with the children of the racialized white majority? These types of questions lead to descriptive victim-blaming theories, as opposed to transformative theories. Moreover, what frequently gets masked in these studies are the experiences of a smaller, but usually significant, number of youth that follow a different life trajectory than the majority examined. The problem, or rather limitation, with many universal macro-level social theories (e.g. assimilation theories and immigrant integration theories) is that no matter how comprehensive they attempt to be or complex they appear to be, one or even a couple of theories cannot fully explain our complex social worlds and the divergent views of reality individuals hold of it. For this reason, I think micro-level theorizing (e.g. examining the

diverse experiences of one group or examining the influence of micro sociocultural environments (e.g. home, community, and school) on individuals' outcomes) is valuable and important.

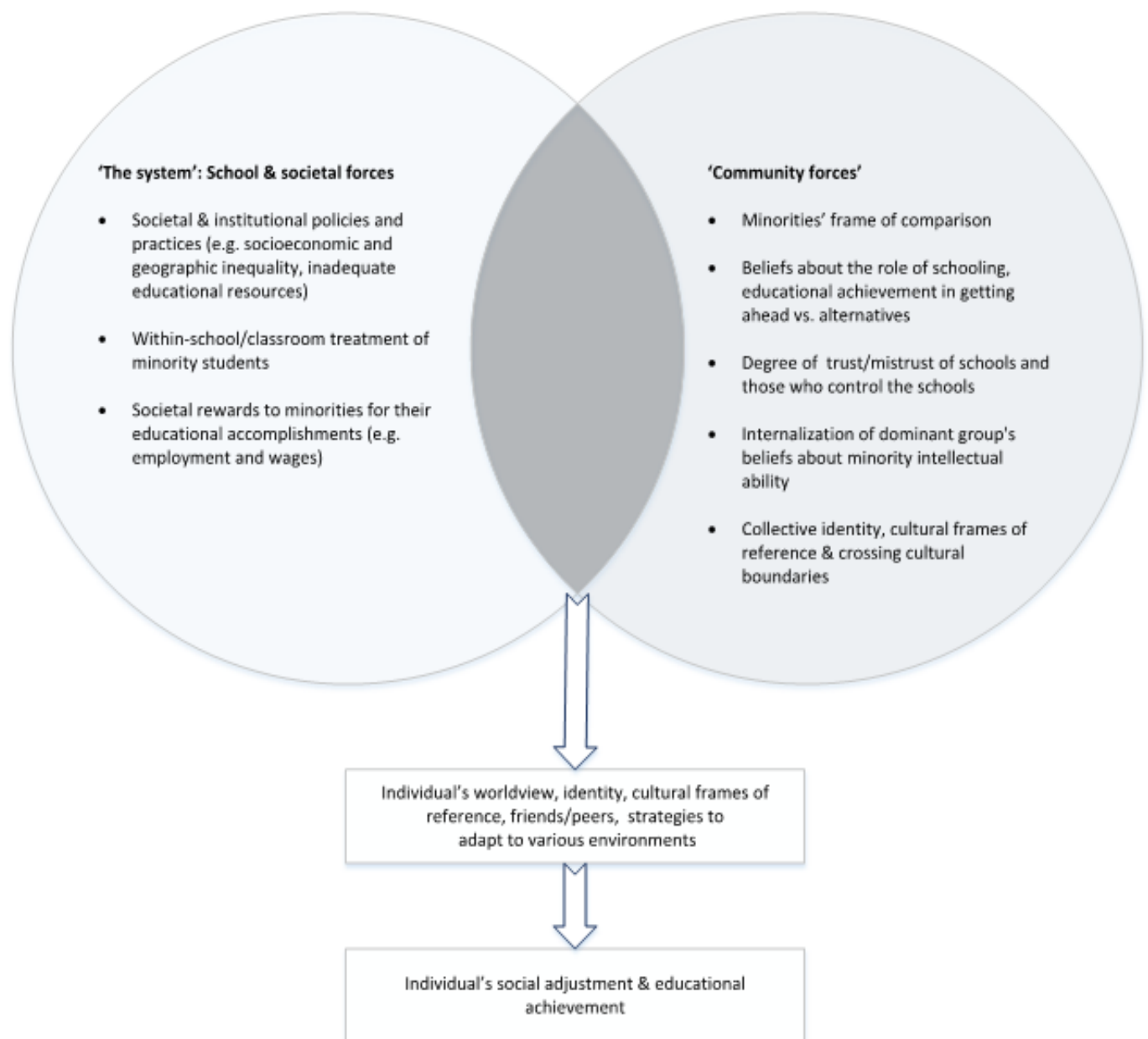
Nevertheless, I also think it is important to examine how theories link to and inform one another, especially micro-level and macro-level theories (e.g. how societal policies, discourses and laws impact a group of individuals and how individuals challenge social structure).

Cultural-Ecological Model (CEM)

One theorist that has extensively researched the micro-level factors that led marginalized non-white people living in nations of immigrants to acquire an education and incorporate into mainstream society is anthropologist John Ogbu. In his cultural-ecological model (CEM), Ogbu (1978, 1983, 1987, 1991) theorizes that the educational achievement of racialized non-white minorities is largely influenced by 'the system'—larger societal and institutional forces (e.g. racism, social structure, educational institutional practices and policies, unequal distribution of wealth/funding, and racial/ethno-cultural inequality)—and 'community forces'—cultural orientation of minorities (e.g. the way minorities, individually and collectively, perceive their social worlds and act within it) (Figure 3.2; Ogbu & Simons, 1998; Ogbu, 2008).

The CEM recognizes that "[s]tructural barriers and school [institutional] factors affect minority school performance; however, minorities are also autonomous human beings who actively interpret and respond to their situation" (Ogbu & Simons, 1998, p. 158). That is to say, structural and institutional forces attempting to reproduce social hierarchies and racial inequality shape and are shaped by individual and community agency (Postone, LiPuma, & Calhoun, 1993). Unlike the segmented assimilation theory, CEM examines within group differences. The CEM tries to explain why racialized non-white minorities from the *same class* have different educational outcomes, and more precisely why some racialized black children do well in school

while others do poorly or drop out. Ogbu (1978), through his model, was interested in understanding how and why some socially and economically disadvantaged minorities were able to fit into Eurocentric educational institutions and able to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to incorporate into society while others with similar backgrounds were not able to do so.



Source: Adapted from Ogbu 2008, p. 12

Figure 3.2: The Cultural Ecological Model

To answer this question, Ogbu, in addition to advancing the CEM, developed a typology of minority groups. In this typology, minority groups, which are defined as a population that “occupies some form of subordinate power position in relation to another population in the same society”, are classified into three groups: autonomous minorities, immigrant minorities (or voluntary immigrants), and castelike minorities (or involuntary non-immigrant minorities) (Ogbu, 1983, p. 169). Autonomous minorities are or have become a part of the mainstream over time. They are not necessarily economically, socially or politically distinguishable from or inferior to the racialized white majority. Autonomous minorities are minorities because they belong to a relatively smaller sub-population that distinguishes itself from society in some way, such as culturally, ethnically and/or religiously (e.g. Mormons and Jews). These type of minorities, Ogbu (1983) argues, ordinarily do not have trouble attaining high educational credentials and achieving social mobility. Assimilation theory is able to explain the ways in which non-WASP immigrant groups (e.g. Southern and Eastern Europeans) become autonomous minorities (essentially by adopting the culture and views of the racialized white majority over a couple generations).⁶

Of particular interest to this study is Ogbu’s conceptualization of racialized non-white people. He classified racialized non-white people mainly under two groups: (voluntary) immigrant minorities and ‘castelike’ or involuntary (non-immigrant) minorities’ (Ogbu, 1983, 1987, 1991). In white settler societies, castelike/involuntary minorities have a long history living on the lands the ‘nation’ (imagined community) claims to own and control. Historically, castelike minorities were involuntarily made a part of the society by Europeans who dominated and oppressed them. In the United States, many African Americans are considered involuntary

⁶ WASP refers to White Anglo-Saxon Protestant.

minorities because they were brought to America against their free will to work on plantations as slaves. North American indigenous groups could also be considered castelike minorities. They were made to live on reserves apart from Europeans and they were forcibly required to culturally assimilate into the dominant culture in the past. With the arrival of Europeans, indigenous groups were no longer an autonomous group self-governing themselves on their ancestral territory. As these examples illustrate, although a part of society, castelike minorities were not always permitted to freely participate in society (e.g. during the slavery and legal racial segregation era in the United States).

Ogbu refers to these ‘type’ of minorities as castelike minorities because it is as though these minorities are permanently stuck in the lower strata of society. While castelike/non-immigrant minorities are no longer forcibly placed in subjugated positions (e.g. made slaves through violence), they nonetheless still remain in low socioeconomic positions because society has been structured in a way that makes it difficult for them to achieve upward social mobility. They have access to poorly funded and resource deprived schools; crime is not prevented in their areas of residence; they are not able to gain entry into the labour market, and if they do they are employed in low paying/low status occupations; they are not able to reside in liveable (e.g. functional and structurally sound) homes in safe and clean areas; and they are socially excluded, stigmatized and negatively stereotyped by the wider society (Ogbu 1983, 1987). Ogbu (1983) argues, castelike minorities

...have traditionally been regarded by the Anglo white as inferior and ranked lower than whites in all desirable respects... [They] often have little or no political power—a reality reinforced by economic subordination. Economically they tend to be relegated to menial jobs, a situation which is then used to argue that they are naturally suited for their low

status. Once the structural subordination is firmly established, appropriate cultural features, including some overarching ideology, develop to support and rationalize their position (p. 171- 172).

By reason of their long history of being collectively oppressed and in a state of perpetual poverty, most castelike/non-immigrant minorities have a deep distrust, an unfavourable opinion and an antagonistic relationship with racialized white people and societal institutions run and controlled by them (e.g. schools) (Ogbu, 1987). Castelike/involuntary minorities have come to view racism as ‘permanent and institutionalized’ due to the injustice, inequality and discrimination they continue to encounter (Ogbu, 1991, p. 14). While involuntary immigrants believe, like immigrants and the mainstream, that education leads to social mobility, they just do not think that society values their credentials, skills and ability as much as other groups in society—history has taught them that (Ogbu, 1987). Education has not and does not always lead to social mobility for castelike minorities, even if they adopt the culture of the racialized white mainstream (i.e. ‘act white’ by mastering the English language, doing well in school, working/studying hard and socializing with racialized white people) (Ogbu, 1991). This bleak outlook of society and negative view of the mainstream often leads castelike minorities to develop oppositional identities—a collective social identity defined dialectically opposed to the identities of racialized white people—and an oppositional cultural frame of reference—behave and think in ways that are different than racialized white people (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Forming oppositional identities and using an oppositional cultural frame of reference are reactionary strategies that castelike minorities use to develop a sense of pride in their culture and collective identities as oppressed people. Nevertheless, oppositional identities can be problematic in the sense that they create a division between the oppressed group and the dominant group,

thereby keeping oppressed people in their subjugated place in society (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986). Fordham and Ogbu (1986) argue that castelike minorities, with oppositional identities, discourage one another to speak proper English, dress similarly to the racialized white mainstream, and adhere to societal and institutional norms and standards in order not to lose their cultural identity and assimilate into the white culture by ‘acting white’.

Furthermore, Ogbu (1987, 1991) argues that the ‘folk theory of getting ahead’ that develops within a castelike minority community is: society and its institutions are racist (e.g. ‘black people’s efforts and educational credential are devalued and not reward’), therefore, “survival strategies” (e.g. hustling) and alternative ways to get ahead (e.g. drug dealing or becoming a musician or athlete) need to be adopted. Getting ahead through schooling competes with this alternative view of getting ahead. Moreover, as a community, castelike/non-immigrant minorities do not feel the education system meets the needs of their children. Ogbu (1987) argues that non-immigrant minorities feel that the education system will only change through their collective efforts to demand change. Furthermore, non-immigrant minorities customarily disregard school rules and practices, which are seen to be promoting white cultural practices and norms, because they view these rules as unnecessary and unrelated to the acquisition of subject-based knowledge (Ogbu, 1987). School personnel, as a result, “approach the education of involuntary minorities defensively through strategies of control and paternalism, which divert attention from efforts to educate minority children” (Ogbu 1987, p. 325). This in turn, “makes it more difficult for minority parents and [their] community to teach their children effectively to accept, internalize, and follow the school rules and practices that lead to academic success...especially as they get older” (Ibid, p. 325). Ogbu (1991) asserts that involuntary minority students adopt strategies, such as developing poor studying habits and attitudes (e.g.

spending more time socializing with friends than studying, aiming to just pass or get average marks in classes, taking easy courses and doing homework but not regularly studying), that are not conducive to educational success. Parental and community factors that could lead to involuntary minorities students' school failure include the following: uncooperative relationships with schools, lack of involvement in the education (teaching) of their children, weak control of time use, and an inability to instil in their children the values (e.g. hard work and perseverance) and attitudes required to do well in school (Ibid).

Unlike involuntary minorities, voluntary immigrants and their children, Ogbu (1987) argues, are able to attain higher educational levels and upward socioeconomic mobility for a number of reasons. For one, immigrant minorities, as the category label suggests, are individuals who grew up and are accustomed to a different society. Immigrants usually have a positive 'dual frame of reference', they compare their life in the settler society to life 'back home' (Ogbu, 1991). Most voluntary immigrants immigrated to a white-settler society in search of a better life and opportunities; therefore, they normally evaluate their situations better than their peers in their old country of residence. In other words, immigrants often do not compare themselves to the mainstream. Ogbu (1987) asserts if immigrants encounter discrimination, institutional barriers and are unable to achieve social mobility, they tend to rationalize their predicament (e.g. 'my accent and foreign credentials are holding me back'). Also, voluntary immigrants are able to maintain a positive outlook on life in the settler society because they "believe that while racism exists...it can be overcome or circumvented through hard work, perseverance, and the right values and attitudes" (Waters, 2009, p. 309). Another source of optimism for immigrants is the availability and accessibility of education, in particular western education and credentials that are considered an asset. Many immigrants, especially those with children, have a positive outlook of

the future because they find comfort in thinking that their children will be able to achieve social mobility by acquiring an education in their new society (Ogbu, 1987, 1991). In the folk theory of getting ahead that emerges among immigrant minorities, “education plays a central role” and is considered “the single most significant avenue to status mobility in the new land” (Ogbu, 1991, p. 11). Similar to the mainstream, immigrants believe that “they, too, can get ahead through hard work, school success, and individual ability” (Ogbu, 1987, p. 325). Furthermore, this perception of education and success results in immigrant communities and families adopting schooling strategies, such as encouraging or guiding children to develop good academic work habits, that enhance academic success and promote social adjustment (Ogbu, 1991, p. 22). Thus, children of immigrants are equipped with “clear instrumental messages about education” (Ogbu, 1991, p. 22).

The community forces that propel racialized non-white immigrant children to strive to incorporate into society include: learning to work hard and to persevere in the face of adversity; believing in the value of education as a community; community gossip (to discourage poor academic performance) and praise (to encourage high academic excellence); peer isolation and ridicule of poor academic performers; being taught the importance of respect for authority and adhering to societal and institutional rules and regulations; and receiving supervision and sanctions for not meeting high parental expectations (Ogbu, 1987, 1991). In contrast to involuntary minorities, immigrant minorities are considered more open to adopting certain cultural aspects of the mainstream without abandoning their cultural beliefs and practice—a practice known as ‘accommodation without assimilation’ (Gibson, 1988, 1991). Immigrant children are expected to “understand the way the majority society operates and [how to] gain the

social skills and personal networks that open doors” (Ogbu 1991, p. 20-21). Due to their historical difference, immigrant minorities, as opposed to non-immigrant minorities,

...do not perceive or interpret learning the features of the school required for social adjustment and academic performance as threatening to their own culture, language, and identity, but rather as an additive learning, that is, as acquiring another language (standard English) and aspects of the dominant group culture that will help them succeed in school and later in the labor market...they are willing and actually strive to play the classroom game by the rules and try to overcome all kinds of difficulties in school because they believe so strongly that there will be a payoff later (Ogbu, 1987, p. 327-28)

According to Ogbu’s CEM, immigrant minority children are, if they are receptive to their parents’ and community’s guidance, more studious, likely to comply with school rules and standards, have better relations with the mainstream, and are likely to selectively assimilate while maintaining ties to their immigrant communities compared to involuntary minorities. It is due to these differences in community forces that immigrant minorities and involuntary/castelike minorities differ in educational outcomes and life trajectories.

Ogbu’s analysis of the educational attainment and life trajectories of minorities has several shortcomings. The first issue pertains to Ogbu’s classification of racialized non-white minorities into two categories that seem to be mutually exclusive. Voluntary immigrants are described in a way that only refers to economic (and maybe family class) migrants. Refugees, temporary migrant workers, undocumented/illegal workers, and ‘binationals’ (dual citizenship holders) are not considered voluntary immigrant minorities according to Ogbu for one or more of the following reasons: they do not come to the host society voluntarily; they do not plan/or cannot settle permanently; and they straddle two countries and base their decisions on the

opportunity structure of more than one country (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). While these types of migrants might not have left their country of origin by choice, such as in the case of refugees, or they might stay in immigrant-receiving countries temporarily (e.g. here on a working visa or might be deported if entered country illegally), these migrants could still be conceptually thought of as immigrant minorities, in the literal meaning of the word and figuratively. Immigrants, regardless of their class of entry, have a dual frame of reference due to the fact that they lived in more than one country. Since all immigrants come to nations of immigrants for better opportunities, political freedom and/or safety, one could argue that they are comparing their experiences in their new country of residence to their experience in their 'home country'. Therefore, these migrants would presumably have a more positive outlook on life in their new country of residence upon arrival.

Another issue with Ogbu's theory is his analysis of children of immigrants. Ogbu lumps children of immigrants into the same category as their voluntary immigrant parents (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). Ogbu (1987) does point out that minorities can move from one minority category to another. For instance, many eastern Europeans were voluntary (immigrant) minorities, but by second generation, most eastern Europeans have become autonomous minorities. Similarly, racialized black voluntary immigrants could become non-immigrant minorities. However, Ogbu's analysis does not "account for the shifting identities of individuals that he classified as involuntary and voluntary minorities" nor does he "explain how...attitudes, norms, values, and behaviours shift over time among cultural actors" (Foster, 2008, p. 587). Some children of immigrant minorities, for example, could be classified as both voluntary and involuntary minorities based on their behaviours, attitudes and lived experiences in the settler society. Many theorists, including those that advance the downward assimilation and segmented assimilation

theories, note that racialized black children of immigrants are likely to assimilate into non-immigrant minority groups instead of their parents' immigrant minority group (Gans, 1992; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Kao & Tienda, 1995). This is primarily due to the mainstream society's racist tendencies to racialize people black based on their phenotypical characteristics (e.g. dark skin colour). Thus, both involuntary and voluntary minorities are treated in a discriminatory manner and are usually socially and economically excluded from society (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). Furthermore, economic and social exclusion forces voluntary immigrants, especially those who arrive with low financial capital, into segregated neighbourhoods that are occupied by non-voluntary minorities (Ibid). This in turn, exposes children of racialized black immigrants to castelike minorities and their oppositional cultures (Gans, 1992; Portes & Zhou, 1993). Ogbu and Simons (1998) argue racialized black immigrant minorities' offspring who "grow up with their non-immigrant peers, tend to identify with them, and assume the same sense of peoplehood or collective identity... [they] eventually become "Black American" (p. 166).

Some researchers question the applicability of the 'becoming black' thesis in the Canadian context. Boyd (2002), for instance, argues that since there is no large pre-existing non-immigrant minority population in immigrant receiving Canadian cities, children of immigrant minorities are not at-risk of downward assimilation into non-immigrant minority groups, such as the black underclass in American urban centres and indigenous peoples. However, a number of studies have found that some children of racialized black (Sub-Saharan African and Afro-Caribbean) immigrants are nonetheless 'becoming black' in Canada (e.g. Ibrahim, 1999). Racialized black youth, and other youth groups, are exposed to the 'black underclass culture', hip-hop culture, and more generally American popular culture mainly through the media (Kelly, 1998; Ibrahim, 1999; hooks, 1992). For the most part, many racialized black youth learn what it

means to be black in a white society through the mainstream's representation of racialized black people through various mediums, especially the media, and through their interaction with the mainstream (Kelly, 1998). However, Kelly (1998) found that children of racialized black immigrants form different black identities; therefore, she cautions against having a monolithic and one-dimensional understanding of blackness or a black identity.

Ogbu is further criticized for his characterization of involuntary minorities' identities and cultures (Foster, 2008). By not studying within group difference (i.e. what identities, culture and community forces are associated with involuntary minorities' educational success), Ogbu perpetuates the culture-of-poverty and cultural deficiencies arguments (such as those advanced by Lewis (1966) and Wilson (1996)), which, to a degree, blame poor African Americans for their failure to achieve social mobility (Gould, 1999). Ogbu's analysis is described as simplistic and one-dimensional due to his negligence of not examining the "dynamic interaction between system forces and community forces" and the interplay between "self-acknowledged identity" and "identity as ascribed by others" (Foster, 2008, p. 584). Moreover, Ogbu, in treating culture, I would also include identity, as a "fixed variable" (as static, singular, bounded and linear) promotes "stereotype thinking and invidious forms of comparative research" (Fischer, 1994, p. 7 quoted in Foster, 2008 p. 585- 587).

Despite these shortcomings, the CEM, like the segmented assimilation theory, provides an insightful and historically conscious analysis of how immigration status, ethnicity, family history, parental experiences, socioeconomic status, and social contexts can influence the worldviews, life trajectories and educational attainment of children of non-European immigrants. The following section reviews empirical literature on non-European immigrant offspring and examines how this research relates to the segmented assimilation theory and CEM.

4. Review of empirical research

The 'new second generation' in American immigration literature

Research on children of non-European immigrants has formed a relatively new body of work referred to by some as the 'new second generation' literature (e.g. Portes, 1996). Prior to the early 1990s, there was limited North American research on non-European second generation immigrants due to data limitations (e.g. generation status and parental place of birth information was not available) and the young age of this group (Boyd & Grieco, 1998; Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, Waters, & Holdaway, 2008; Reitz & Somerville, 2004; Reitz & Zhang, 2011). Immigration literature concentrated on the adaptation and incorporation experiences of first generation non-European immigrants and the experiences of European immigrant offspring. However, it should be noted that literature on second generation non-European immigrants extends previous empirical and theoretical research on the educational and life experiences of African Americans and immigrant youth, and more generationally the literature on status attainment and the educational achievement of 'minority youth' (e.g. Gibson, 1988; Ogbu, 1991; Suárez-Orozco, 1989). With the exception of anthropologists that customarily examine the culture of specific ethno-cultural groups in conjunction with their schooling experiences (e.g. Ogbu 1974, 1978; Gibson, 1987; Gibson & Bhachu, 1988; Matute-Bianchi, 1986), extant research, prior to the 1990s, classified racialized non-white children of immigrants into broad racial and pan-ethnic categories (e.g. Hispanic, Asian and black). Although this is still normally the case, especially in quantitative studies, most studies now make an empirical and theoretical distinction between different generations within broader racial/ethnic categories (e.g. first generation Mexican immigrants, second generation/1.5 generation Mexican immigrants, Mexican Americans) (Portes, 1996).

American researchers noticed that children of non-European immigrants—both those who were the second generation (born and raised in the US) and the 1.5 generation (foreign-born children raised in the US)—were a unique group that had distinct challenges and outcomes compared to first generation non-European immigrants, second generation Europeans and non-immigrant racialized groups (e.g. Native Americans and African Americans) (Ogbu, 1987; Rumbaut & Ima, 1988; Rong & Grant, 1992; Portes & Rumbaut, 1990; Rumbaut, 1994). Consequently, a new research domain dedicated to the study of the identity construction and social (e.g. educational outcomes, geographic mobility, civic participation) and economic outcomes of racialized non-white children of immigrants was born in the U.S. in the early 1990s, and later expended by researchers in other western immigrant-receiving societies, such as Canada, France, Germany, Britain, and the Netherlands (Alba & Foner, 2015; Alba & Waters, 2011; Crul, & Mollenkopf, 2012; Dustmann, Frattini, & Lanzara, 2012).

Empirical studies on the ‘new second generation’—children of non-European immigrants—have largely examined the educational achievement of non-European offspring to gauge the degree to which they could potentially incorporate into post-industrial societies. This literature has mainly focused on education, its determinates and related factors due to the strong association that has been established between educational achievement and social mobility (via labour market participation) in knowledge economies (Alba & Waters, 2011; Rumbaut, 2008). American studies, which make-up a substantial proportion of the non-European second generation literature, found significant group differences in educational outcomes among and between different generations of racialized groups. In aggregate, children of immigrants have higher educational levels compared to the first generation and the third-plus generation (Baum & Flores, 2011; Chiswick & DebBurman, 2004; Farley & Alba, 2002; Kao & Tienda, 1995). Given

recent immigration patterns, racial group differences in educational achievement closely mirrors achievement difference by generation status (the majority of first and second generation immigrants are non-European and racialized non-white). Overall, children of racialized non-white immigrants have the highest education levels, followed by their foreign-born parents' generation, and then those racialized white with non-immigrant parents. At this high level of analysis, generational differences between racialized groups seems to support the CEM in that immigrant children of immigrants, when grouped together, have higher educational levels than children of non-immigrant parents. The CEM is predicated on the notion that racialized non-white immigrant children would have higher educational outcomes compared to other racialized non-immigrant groups due to the high value immigrant families place on education and doing well in school. However, within the racialized non-white second generation category, educational outcomes greatly vary.

Some racialized non-white children of immigrants have overcome societal barriers (e.g. structural and institutional exclusion) and immigration-related challenges (i.e. adapting to different home and school cultures simultaneously), and consequently have been able to incorporate into mainstream institutions while others have not (Hirschman, 2001; Kasinitz et al, 2008; Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Qin-Hillard, 2014). For instance, Baum and Flores (2011) examined the educational levels of 25 to 34 year olds using the 2009 U.S. Current Population Survey. They found that Asian first and second generation immigrants had the highest educational levels compared to any group (nearly 60% completed a university program), while Hispanics had the lowest educational achievement (less than 20% of both the first and second generation had a university degree). Interestingly, a significantly higher percentage of first (30%) and second (42%) generation racialized black immigrants had university degrees

compared to racialized black Americans (18%) that were in the United States for three or more generations (Baum & Flores, 2011). It is worth emphasizing that although racialized black immigrant children had comparatively low educational levels compared to other immigrant offspring, they nonetheless fared better than involuntary minorities (African Americans), as theorized by the CEM.

Rong and Grant (1992) previously found similar findings. In both Asian and the racialized white populations, the second generation had higher educational attainment rates than their respective first and third-plus generations. Even though Hispanics had lower educational levels than racialized white individuals and Asians in every generation, they had higher educational outcomes from one generation to the next (Rong & Grant, 1992). The trends that emerged from Rong and Grants' (1992) study was that educational attainment decreases with each successive generation (presumably plateauing in the third generation) for the racialized white population, educational levels increase in each successive generation for Hispanics, and the number of years of schooling increases from first to second generation then stayed the same in the third generation for the Asian population. Generally, children of racialized black and Hispanic immigrants fared better than their parent's generation, but they still lagged behind the mainstream in social and economic outcomes; conversely, many Asian immigrant offspring, such as Chinese children of immigrants, have closed the gap between themselves and the mainstream (Kasinitz et al, 2008). Nonetheless, there were further variations within these racial and panethnic categories. Immigrant children from Chinese, Japanese, and Korean families had the highest postsecondary education attainment rates, as did many children of Indian, Vietnamese and Cuban immigrants (Farley & Alba, 2002; Rumbaut, 2008; Portes & MacLeod, 1996). On the contrary, immigrant children from families originating from Haiti, Laos,

Cambodia and some Latin American countries, such as Guatemala and Nicaraguan, did not do well educationally compared to their cohorts (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Rumbaut, 1994). In addition to low educational achievement, children of Mexican, Laotians, Cambodian, Haitian and other Afro-Caribbean immigrants had high teen pregnancy and incarceration rates compared to other immigrant offspring (Portes et al., 2009). They were groups considered at-risk to experience downward assimilation.

Pervious research identified a number of historical (e.g. history of colonization and racism), structural (e.g. class, gender, race), institutional (e.g. school level factors, such as cultural incongruence, school environment and culture), geographical (e.g. negative neighbourhood effect), family/community (e.g. parental education, cultural orientation, length of residence in country of immigration, size and strength of ethnic community and family structure), and individual (e.g. motivation, educational attitudes and past academic performance) factors that account for group differences in educational attainment among racialized non-white children of immigrants (Alba & Foner, 2015; Gibson & Ogbu, 1991; Schmid, 2001; Zhou, 1997). Despite the proliferations of empirical studies on the new second generation, there have not been many theories drawing connections between various interrelated variables that account for (to varying degrees) the divergent incorporation patterns non-European immigrant offspring traverse. Most empirical studies in this field have tried to conform or challenge the segmented assimilation theory and selected explanatory variables of the CEM (e.g. immigrant optimism).

Though somewhat contested, the general tenets of the segmented assimilation theory have been supported by empirical studies (Haller, Portes, & Lynch, 2011; Kroneberg, 2008; Portes, Fernández-Kelly, & Haller, 2005, 2009; Vermeulen, 2010; Stepick & Stepick, 2010). Children of non-European immigrants' ability to achieve upward socioeconomic mobility is

associated with several exogenous variables: on their families' mode of incorporation (or context of reception), their parents' education level and occupation status (parental socioeconomic status), their family structure and the social contexts that they are raised in (which greatly determines the social groups immigrant children come into contact with and how they acculturate) (Portes & Fernández-Kelly, 2008; Portes & MacLeod, 1996). Parental socioeconomic status, in particular, was reported to be a strong predictor of educational attainment for children of immigrants (Kao & Thompson, 2003; Loury, 1977; Portes & MacLeod, 1996; Portes & Rivas, 2011; Rumbaut, 1994). Immigrant offspring that lived in non-poor neighbourhoods and went to schools in higher income neighbourhoods, tended to assimilate into the mainstream (western) culture or adopt a bicultural frame of reference and have high educational outcomes (Alba, Reitz, & Simon, 2012; Phelan, Davidson, & Cao, 1991; Xie & Greenman, 2011). Parental socioeconomic status was equally a strong determinate of the educational attainment of children of non-immigrant parents. Generally, children of middleclass professionals were more likely to pursue a postsecondary degree compared to children of working-class parents (Archer, Hutchings & Ross, 2005). Much of the difference in educational attainment rates between non-European children of immigrants was accounted for by family socioeconomic status (Kao & Tienda 1995; Rumbaut & Ima, 1988; Schmid, 2001). Using data from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS), Portes and Fernandez-Kelly (2008) found that children of Chinese, Filipino and other Asian immigrants that had family mean incomes of nearly \$60,000, were more likely to pursue university studies and were less likely to have a child as a young adult or to be arrested compared to Mexican and Loatian and Cambodian immigrant offspring with average family incomes of about \$35,000 and second generation West Indian and Haitian immigrants with median family incomes of around \$30,000 (p. 19-21).

Household income also accounted for within group differences. Middleclass Cuban immigrant children had high educational levels and less than 4% had a child in early adulthood; in contrast, lower income Cuban refugee offspring had lower education levels and 15% of them under 24 years old had a child (Portes & Fernandez-Kelly, 2008, p. 19).

The context wherein non-European immigrants are received (i.e. settlement assistance provided and ability to enter the labour market barrier-free) mediated the extent immigrant parents could provide financial and non-financial assistance to their children (Portes & Rumbaut, 1990; Alba & Foner, 2015). Baum and Flores (2011) argued,

Recent immigrant flows to the United States have, in essence, divided newcomers into two groups, each with highly distinctive characteristics. One is composed of highly skilled professionals primarily from Asia who fill high-demand positions in engineering, the medical professions, and other technical occupations. The other consists of unskilled labor and manual workers primarily from Latin America, the Caribbean, and some Southeast Asian countries. The latter group of immigrants faces obstacles...that are difficult to overcome, while the former... [do] very well in U.S. (p.172)

Research found that the majority of economic East Asian immigrants possess sufficient human capital (e.g. high education and skill levels) to enter the labour market upon arrival (Feliciano, 2005). Even if excluded from the labour market, many East Asian immigrants were able to turn to entrepreneurship and they were able to develop robust ethnic communities/enclaves (Li, 2003; Zhou, 1997). Non-European immigrants that belong to tight-knit ethnic communities often draw from their ethnic groups' collective social, financial and human capital to provide their children resources and guidance to achieve social mobility (Borjas, 1992; Li, 2004). More specifically, strong and cohesive ethnic communities aide racialized non-white immigrants to develop both

bonding—relationships and social networks of trust within ethno-cultural groups—and bridging social capital—social networks with the mainstream—which enables them to better adjust to life as a minority in an unfamiliar context (Holland, Reynolds, & Weller, 2007). Chinese immigrants, for instances, have established strong ethnic organizations and institutions (i.e. ethnic businesses within Chinatowns) in large urban centers with a sizeable Chinese population (Zhou & Kim, 2006; Zhou, 1997). Chinese ethnic institutions maintain and establish social networks within the community by offering services such as Chinese language classes to immigrant offspring and Chinese language media to Chinese parents (Zhou & Kim, 2006). Zhou and Kim (2006) reported that through Chinese liaison services, Chinese parents, who lacked proficiency in the official language of the country of immigration, were able to become familiar with the mainstream education system and were able to actively participate and monitor their children's educational progress. Moreover, ethnic enclaves reinforced the worldviews, attitudes, norms and values of immigrant parents. In these types of communal environments, children of immigrants were able to more easily adopt their immigrant parents' positive outlooks, perspectives and attitudes about educational attainment and enjoy lower levels of intergenerational conflict (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Zhou & Kim, 2006). In this case, community forces were able to protect Chinese children of immigrants and their parents from structural and immigration-related barriers, such as parent's lack of familiarity with the dominant culture and mainstream institutions, which could have had negative impacts on the life outcomes of Chinese immigrant offspring.

Conversely, non-European immigrants that arrive to a new country with limited human and financial capital, and are subsequently excluded from the labour market, are forced to reside in poor neighbourhoods that have a relatively high crime and delinquency rate compared to

higher income neighbourhoods (Hirschman, 2001; Portes & Rumbaut, 2005; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Zhou, 1997). Children, especially racialized black and Mexican immigrant offspring, that grew up in these poor neighbourhoods were found to be at-risk of underperforming in school, dropping out, adopting oppositional identities, joining inner-city sociocultural groups and committing deviant activities (Altschul, Oyserman, & Bybee, 2008; Gans, 1992; Miller & Gibson, 2011), lending support to the segmented assimilation theory. Even if deviant social groups (e.g. gangs and criminals) are absent from a low income neighbourhood, it is theorized that poor neighbourhood social contexts can turn low income youth into criminals or disengaged members of society. According to the social disorganization theory, low income neighbourhoods are considered undesirable and 'socially disorganized'; as a result, they have high turnover rates (neighbourhood demographic changes), weak communal ties and low social control (Shaw & McKay, 1942). Poorly regulated youth, living in low income neighbourhoods, are usually exposed to an oppositional culture that endorses crime and delinquency; thus, adoption of this culture leads youth living in poverty to join the underclass (Ibid).

Many empirical studies do not examine the mechanisms that enable children of socioeconomically deprived immigrant parents to overcome barriers to educational attainment and social mobility. The limited studies that examine how immigrant offspring from low socioeconomic backgrounds achieve high socioeconomic outcomes have offered sociocultural explanations, aligning with the CEM. For instance, Rumbaut and Ima (1988), in examining how children of Southeast Asian refugees with low human and financial capital fared in the American education system and the larger society, found that the mechanisms that allowed children of poor Southeast Asian refugees to succeed educationally and develop effective interpersonal skills

included: a cultural orientation that valued a strong work ethic, discipline, education, and respect for their parents and others in positions of power; living with or in close proximity to extended family; a strong sense of obligation to the family; and belonging to a close-knit ethnocultural community that supported parents in maintaining parental control and instilling ethnic pride and identity in their children. Conversely, the factors that led Southeast Asian immigrant offspring to have relatively high suspension rates, get into trouble with the law, and perform poorly in school were structural and institutional exclusion, loss of parental control, lack of respect for authority, assimilation into American cultures, being peer-oriented, and having an individualistic outlook and a weak sense of obligation/connection to parents and their ethnocultural group (Rumbaut & Ima, 1988).

Zhou and Bankston (1994) found similar results in their study of Vietnamese children of immigrants living in New Orleans. Although Vietnamese immigrant parents in this study had low human and financial capital and they lived in a poor neighbourhood primarily inhabited by African Americans, their children were able to attain high educational levels by adopting their parents' positive cultural orientation and through social capital (Zhou & Bankston, 1994). Within this community, Zhou and Bankston (1994) reported, "individual members of families are integrated into a densely knit system of relations with the church as a physical and social center" (p. 209). The Vietnamese community was able to support one another through their shared values, behavioural standards, and desire to assist their children in achieving high educational attainment and social mobility into the middleclass (Zhou & Bankston, 1994). The ethnic community has an important function, it reinforces immigrant parents' values, and it promoted behavioural conformity. Zhou and Bankston (1994) noted, "[t]hrough frequent involvement in

the ethnic community, Vietnamese children tend to develop and employ ethnic communication skills, behavioural standards, and expectations specified by the community" (p. 209).

What can be concluded from American research on non-European second generation immigrants is that racialized non-white second generation immigrants' incorporation patterns are largely shaped by their parents and their ethnic groups' incorporation patterns (i.e. how they are received by the society; the financial, human and social capital they acquire; and their socioeconomic and geographic coordinates) (Alba & Waters, 2011; Zhou, 1997). Some children of immigrants do poorly in school, and are consequently unable to achieve social mobility, because they encounter many barriers that collectively become insurmountable to overcome. For instance, children of Mexican immigrants were found to perform poorly (e.g. high drop-out rates, low GPAs and low standardized test scores) in school due to a combination of the following factors: they were from a low socioeconomic background, they resided in poor neighbourhoods and went to low income schools, their parents worked in manual or unskilled occupations as a result of their illegal immigrant status and/or low education levels, and their parents had limited proficiency in English and lack of knowledge of mainstream institutions (López & Stanton-Salazar 2001; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Warren, 1996). On the other hand, some children of immigrants are better situated (socioeconomically) to succeed and overcome challenges, such as institutional and structural exclusions. For instance, many children of East Asian immigrants, such as Chinese and Japanese immigrants, are able to do well educationally, to a large extent, because their parents often have high financial capital (accumulated wealth in country of origin or able to find employment in high paying fields, such as the medical/science, technology and engineering fields, in country of settlement), high educational levels, and they are able to reside in safe neighbourhoods that have access to good schools (Alba & Foner, 2015; Schmid, 2001;

Zhou, 1997). There are several factors that facilitate adaptation to mainstream society and moderate the negative relationship between low socioeconomic status and educational attainment. These factors are social and ethnic capital. Lesser well-off immigrant families who belong to tight-knit ethnocultural communities are able to benefit from social ties to their ethnic communities and a positive cultural orientation (beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviours, such as immigrant optimism, high parental expectations, selective acculturation and parental oversight and control) (Gibson, 1988; Rumbaut & Ima, 1988; Kao & Thompson, 2003; Kao & Tienda, 1995; Portes, Fernández-Kelly & Haller, 2009; Portes & MacLeod, 1996).

Canadian research on children of non-European immigrants

Similar to American research, Canadian literature on immigration has focused on the settlement and incorporation process of the first generation. It was not until the early 2000s, that Canadian immigration research started to focus on the experiences of second generation non-European immigrants. When national level data that included information on parents' country of birth became available, a few researchers were quick to test the segmented assimilation theory (Portes & Zhou, 1993) or elements/variants of this theory (e.g. downward assimilation/Gans' (1992) second generation decline thesis) that were developed in the United States using qualitative data. Boyd (2002) found, using data from the 1996 Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) survey, 1.5 and second generation visible minority (racialized non-white) adults aged 20-64 were more likely to complete high school and generally had more years of schooling compared to the (mostly racialized white) third-plus generation. Boyd tested the segmented assimilation theory by simply examining whether or not children of non-European immigrants had higher educational levels compared to individuals living in Canada for three or more generations. However, Boyd failed to test the most basic premise of the theory: children of

racialized non-white immigrants incorporate into different segments of society. The educational achievement of children of immigrants from different ethnocultural groups were not compared to each other and to children of Canadian-born parents due to sample limitations.

Canadian studies on the educational experiences of non-European second generation immigrants mushroomed over the last decade. Many quantitative studies have consistently found that racialized non-white second generation immigrants and immigrant children who were reared in Canada (1.5 generation) have higher education levels compared to the first generation and the third-plus generation from the same cohort (Abada, Hou, & Ram, 2008; Areepattamannil & Freeman, 2008; Aydemir & Sweetman, 2006; Boyd, 2009; Finnie & Mueller, 2009; Hansen & Kucera, 2004; Hum & Simpson, 2007; Kucera, 2008; Sweetman & Dicks, 1999; Thiessen, 2009). Although some studies report that immigrant children (including the 1.5 generation) have a lower educational achievement compared to children of Canadian-born parents in core elementary school subjects, the educational disparities between children of immigrants and children of non-immigrants disappears as immigrant offspring progress through the education system (Worswick, 2004). Canadian immigrant children who came to Canada before the age of 11 and had a longer exposure to the Canadian education system had higher mean education levels than immigrant children who arrived in Canada at an older age (Aydemir & Sweetman, 2006). In other words, the 1.5 generation had similar educational outcomes as the second generation, not the first generation. For this reason, most studies investigating the educational attainment of 1.5 and second generation immigrants group these two categories together, preferring a less stringent definition of the second generation.

The educational outcomes of non-European immigrant offspring were not uniform in Canada, as was found in other nations of immigrants (Sorokina, Chung, & Jimeno, 2012). Reitz,

Zhang, and Hawkins (2011) compared the educational and labour market outcomes of children of Canadian-born parents and racialized non-white second generation immigrants in Canada, the United States and Australia. The study found that Chinese and South Asians had completed the most number of years of schooling in all three countries. Chinese and South Asian second generation immigrants were two times or more likely to complete a university degree compared to the mainstream racialized white populations in their respective countries. Other Asian second generation groups also did better than the mainstream in the United States, Canada and Australia—they had more years of schooling and a higher university completion rate. With regards to racialized black Afro-Caribbean immigrant offspring, they fared a little better in Canada than the United States. In the United States, Afro-Caribbean immigrant offspring had the same number of years of schooling as the third-plus generation, but a higher high school dropout rate. Conversely, in Canada, racialized black Afro-Caribbean immigrant offspring had a higher number of years of schooling, a lower high school dropout rate, and they were more likely to have a university degree compared to the third-plus generation. However, second generation Afro-Caribbeans were more likely to achieve upward socioeconomic mobility (i.e. higher educational levels than their parents) in the US than in Canada. The only groups that had a low educational attainment (in all measures) compared to the racialized white mainstream were Mexicans and Puerto Ricans children of immigrants in the United States (Reitz et al., 2011).

Using the 2002 Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS), another study compared the university completion rates of children of immigrants belonging to different European and non-European ethnic groups to children of Canadian-born parents (Abada, Ram, & Hou, 2008). In aggregate, children of immigrants had higher university completion rates and lower high school dropout rates compared to racialized white children whose parents were Canadian-born. The EDS

revealed more than 50 % of 25 to 34 year old Chinese, South Asian, Other East Asian (Japanese and Koreans) and West Asian children of immigrants attained a university degree compared to about 25% of those racialized blacks and 38% of Filipinos (Abada, Hou, & Ram, 2008).

Although racialized black youth/young adults had lower university participation rates, Finnie and Mueller (2009), using the longitudinal Youth in Transition Survey, found they had high post-secondary participation rates. A number of studies reported that many black students attend college, as opposed to university, because they are more likely to take or be streamed into college and vocational preparatory classes in high school instead of university prep courses (Dei et al., 1997; Yau, Cheng, & Ziegler, 1993). Black males were particularly found to be at a disadvantage in achieving high educational outcomes (Guppy & Davies, 1998).

The educational attainment of some racialized non-white immigrant children varied by region. Second generation racialized black Afro-Caribbeans living in American cities with a high concentration of immigrants and minorities (racialized non-white population—e.g. African Americans) had lower university graduation rates compared to the mainstream (Reitz & Zhang, 2011). However, Afro-Caribbean offspring living in other American cities with a low concentration of non-white minorities had, in aggregate, a slightly higher university graduation rate compared to the mainstream. Similar results were observed in Canada. In Toronto, where the majority of the racialized black population in Canada resides, a lower percentage of racialized black Afro-Caribbean immigrant offspring had a bachelor's degree compared to their cohorts. Contrarily, Afro-Caribbeans living outside of Montreal and Toronto had a higher university bachelor completion rate compared to similarly aged racialized white children of non-immigrants (Reitz & Zhang, 2011). Of note, in both the United States and Canada, Chinese children of immigrants had higher university graduation rates compared to the racialized white mainstream

irrespective of the city they resided in. This finding is in accordance with the segmented assimilation theory, which hypothesizes that local social contexts are important—e.g. racialized black immigrant offspring living in close proximity to a large racialized non-white/racialized black population would be vulnerable to low educational achievement.

Canadian research is largely consistent with American research findings when it comes to determinants of group differences in educational attainment among children of non-European immigrants. Extant research has established a correlation between parental human capital and the educational attainment of children of immigrants (Abada & Tenkorang, 2009; Finnie & Mueller, 2009; Picot & Hou, 2011). Generally, immigrant children whose parents had a university degree were more likely to attain a post-secondary degree compared to children of immigrants whose parents had lower educational levels (e.g. less than high school) (Abada, Hou & Ram, 2009). Immigrant parents' socioeconomic status was also associated with their children's education levels. Upon arrival, immigrant families joined different socioeconomic strata of society, as postulated by the segmented assimilation theory. Some immigrants, particularly those from China and India that were endowed with financial and human capital, became a part (perhaps not socially, but geographically and economically) of higher socioeconomic classes (Abada & Tenkorang, 2009). Immigrant families with high socioeconomic status were able to provide their children with financial and non-financial educational supports to prepare for higher educational pursuits (Corak, 2001). Furthermore, some children of immigrants were able to benefit from associating with their ethnic community. Children of immigrants who maintained ties with their parents' ethno-cultural group (i.e. by way of retaining their mother-tongue language), who were mostly friends with youth from the same ethnic group during their adolescence, and who belonged to an ethnocultural group that possessed high 'ethnic capital' (high average earnings of

the parents' generation) were found to have high educational achievement (Abada, Hou & Ram, 2009).

Conversely, children of immigrants from resource-deprived low income communities encountered numerous barriers that impeded their educational achievement. Youth from low income backgrounds were more likely to live in lone-parent households, have limited access to financial and instrumental resources, and were more likely to be exposed to delinquent behaviour and substance abuse in low income neighbourhoods (Ungerleider & Burns, 2016). More specifically, racialized black children of immigrants relatively low educational levels were partly attributed to their parents' marital status (i.e. high proportion of single parents), unemployment or underemployment status and poverty rates (Mata, 2011). Moreover, Kelly (2014) found that second generation Filipino youth had lower educational achievement than children of other racialized groups for mainly the following reasons: their parents' precarious financial situation, their family structure (many one-parent households as a result of prolonged family separation), and their tendency not to adopt positive self-concepts or ethnic identities due to lack of role models and a negative representation of Filipino's in the wider community. Because many Filipino parents' foreign credentials were not recognized, they worked long hours and at multiple jobs that required flexible hours; consequently, they were not able to supervise and assist their children (Kelly, 2014). Interestingly, however, some children of immigrants whose parents had low human and financial capital (i.e. had low educational levels and were from a low socioeconomic background) were able to achieve higher socioeconomic mobility compared to children whose parents were well-educated and from a higher socioeconomic background (Aydemir, Chen & Corak, 2013). The association between parental human capital (i.e. educational attainment and occupation status) and youth's educational outcomes was stronger for

the non-immigrant population (Hum & Simpson, 2007; Picot & Hou, 2011). In other words, immigrant offspring's educational attainment was less contingent on their socioeconomic status than children of non-immigrants (Fuligni, 1997). For example, low income children of immigrants were found to have higher educational achievement compared to children of non-immigrant parents from the same class (Bonikowska, 2008). In agreement with the CEM, this dissimilarity was a reflection of differences in educational aspirations—children of immigrants from a low socioeconomic background had higher educational aspirations (about 75% of them aspired to attend university) compared to low income children of non-immigrant parents (only about 40% of them aspired to attend university) (Krahn & Taylor, 2005; Kao & Tienda, 1995; Picot & Hou, 2013).

Outside the domain of the sociology of immigration, much research on children of racialized non-white immigrants has been conducted, notably in the field of education. Canadian educational scholars have mostly conducted research in Canada's largest metropolitan immigrant-receiving cities, especially Toronto. Additionally, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), the largest and most diverse school board in Canada, is one of the few school boards in Canada to make student achievement data for different racialized groups available. This data has made it possible to statistically track the educational attainment of racialized children of immigrants over time.

How racialized non-white students in Toronto fared in the education system between the late 1980s to the early 1990s was documented in a report entitled "For the Love of Learning: Report of the Royal Commission on Learning". A Royal Commission on Learning, which was established by the Ontario Government, produced this report in 1994. The Commission examined the state of the education system by reviewing literature, scanning school board data

and hearing from parents, teachers, students and community leaders. Some of the main findings of the report included:

- children from low income and working class families were two times more likely to drop out compared to those from higher classes (p.177);
- in addition to low income, factors that made students vulnerable to low educational achievement (i.e. dropping out, taking basic and general courses) were low parental education levels and living in a household with a single-parent and/or parents who were recent immigrants;
- students who were Aboriginal, racialized black or from Spanish and Portuguese-language communities were more likely than other students to dropout and take general or basic level courses instead of university-track courses.

This report provided an overview of the demographic and academic profile of the groups, such as racialized black students, that were considerably underperforming. It found about 40% of racialized black students were ‘at-risk’ of dropping-out from a high school under the jurisdiction of the Toronto Board of Education in 1992/1993 (p. 431). When the ‘black’ category was disaggregated by generation status (i.e. first generation immigrant, Canadian-born) and by parental country of origin (i.e. Africa and the Caribbean) the trend was consistent; racialized black students, no matter their generation status or parental country of origin, were more likely to fail/drop-out compared to most of their peers (both those racialized non-white and those racialized white). Black students were more likely to drop out partly due to the fact that they were in educationally less rigorous classes (students taking basic and general classes were significantly more likely to drop out than those in advanced courses) (p. 431). Disconcertingly, the commission disclosed even if racialized black students were from dual-parent families and

their parents were university educated and employed in professional or semi-professional occupations, they were still disproportionally more likely to do poorly (i.e. have low grades and drop-out of high school) compared to other students from similar backgrounds (p. 431). At the conclusion of their extensive inquiry, the members of the commission concluded, “there is a crisis among black youth with respect to education and achievement” (p. 432). Furthermore, they called for systemic changes to address the educational barriers encountered by racialized black students. They stated,

We can hardly stress too strongly our conviction that the school system must better accommodate the needs of black children and young black men and women. Schools must become more inclusive, staff must become more representative of our society as a whole, courses must reflect the perspectives and contributions of minority groups. But even that is not enough. We must, as a matter of great urgency, mobilize the best talent available throughout Ontario to develop innovative strategies for improving the academic performance of black students (p. 433).

The Ontario Ministry of Education did not implement many of the recommendations of the commission members (Schriever, 2004). The same groups that were reported to be underachieving in the early 1990s were still having difficulties nearly two decades later, according to student data released by the TDSB over the years (Brown, 2006; Brown, 2006b; Brown, 2008; Brown & Sinay, 2008; Brown, 2010). For instance, Brown and Sinay (2008) linked TDSB’s first student census conducted in 2006 with TDSB administrative student academic data and found that TDSB students’ academic outcomes differed by gender and racial/ethnic background. Among students in grade 7 to 10, females generally had higher educational achievement than males. With regard to racial/ethnic differences, at the junior high

school level (grade 7 and 8), East Asian Students had the highest educational achievement (76% were meeting or exceeding provincial standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science) and black students had the lowest educational levels in the board (40% were meeting or exceeding provincial standards) (Brown & Sinay, 2008, p. 14-15). When student achievement data was broken down by language spoken at home, Brown and Sinay (2008) found three quarters of students who spoke Chinese, Bangali, Hindi, Korean and Romanian met or exceeded provincial standards, whereas only 50% of Somali-speaking and Dari/Pashto-speaking (languages spoken by Afghani people) students met or exceeded provincial standards (p. 17-18). Students who spoke Portuguese and Spanish were also identified as being at-risk of underachieving (Brown, 2006b; Brown, 2010). Similar patterns were observed at the high school level. Grade 9 racialized black students and Spanish-speaking students were considered at-risk of underachieving and dropping out—only about one third of them were meeting or exceeding provincial standards in English, science and geography courses (much less were meeting expectations in mathematics courses); conversely, the majority of East Asian, South Asian, Southeast Asian and racialized white students were meeting or exceeding expectations in these core subjects (Brown & Sinay, 2008, p. 32-33). Middle-Eastern students and students from a mixed heritage had higher educational outcomes compared to racialized black and Latin American students in grade 9 core subjects, but they were more likely to be at-risk of underachieving compared to racialized white and Asian students. Noteworthy, racialized black grade 10 students had the lowest EQAO grade 10 literacy pass rates.

More recent TDSB educational attainment data (2011-12) shows that achievement gaps have improved overtime; however, the achievement gap between Aboriginal, Afghani, Portuguese, racialized black (children of Somali, other African, Caribbean and Canadian-born

parents), and Latin American students and other TDSB students still persists in many areas (Brown, Newton & Tam, 2015; Yau, Rosolen, & Archer, 2015a, b). Furthermore, the 2011-12 data reveals differences within some groups. For example, while Latin American students underperformed on Grade 6 reading, writing and mathematics standardized tests compared to the overall TDSB student population, Latin American student differed in their standardized test scores at the high school level. Grade 10 South American students performed as well as the overall student population (72% passed the provincial literacy test on their first attempt); Central American students, nonetheless, underperformed on the provincial secondary literacy test (only 58% passed) (Yau, Rosolen, & Archer, 2015b p. 6). Similarly, even though all racialized black students, regardless of their parents' background, equally did poorly in grade 6 mathematics standardized tests and they had lower educational outcomes compared to the overall TDSB student population, racialized black students whose parents were African performed better in grade 6 reading and writing and grade 10 literacy standardized tests compared to racialized black students whose parents were Canadian-born or Caribbean (Yau, Rosolen, & Archer, 2015b p. 6).

TDSB researchers have identified a number of factors that could account for academic underachievement and for the academic achievement gap between students from different ethnic/racial groups. Students who underachieved were more likely to: live in a low income neighbourhood, have a single-parent, have parents with low educational levels, take applied and vocational courses, have high absenteeism (especially in grade 9), get suspended, frequently arrive late to classes, have less than 15 credits accumulated at start of grade 11 year, work more than 15 hours a week, not participate in extracurricular activities and perform poorly (e.g. low standardized test scores and grades) at the elementary and junior high school (grade 7 and 8) levels (Brown, 2006, 2010; Dei & James, 2002; Sinay, 2009).

Instead of examining the individual characteristics and family background of students that underachieve (which inadvertently portrays racialized non-white youth and their families negatively and solely responsible for their life choices and outcomes), many academic educational researchers have examined larger institutional and structural barriers that lead to the underachievement of racialized non-white students (Alladin, 1996; Brathwaite & James, 1996; Codjoe, 2001; Dei et al., 1997; Dei, 1996; James, 1990, 1994, 2007; Simmons & Plaza, 1998; Solomon, 1992; Zine, 2007). These researchers highlight how schools and systemic barriers greatly shape the schooling experiences, identity formation, and incorporation trajectories of racialized non-white youth. For instance, in a comprehensive study examining the problem of dropout in the Ontario public school system, Dei et al. (1997) found that many “drop-outs are, in fact 'push-outs,' having been motivated to leave school prematurely by the structures of schooling which institutionalize racial inequality” (p.243). Dei et al. (1997) argue that in Eurocentric racist Ontario public schools, racialized black students are made to feel excluded, racially and culturally inferior, disregarded, alienated and invisible because they are differentially treated and evaluated, streamed into intellectually less rigorous classes, not respected and well regarded, ignored in the classroom setting and discouraged. Furthermore, Brathwaite and James (1996) found although racialized black students have high educational aspiration and know the importance of education for getting ahead in society; they become disengaged from school on account of teachers’ low expectations, lack of encouragement from predominantly racialized white school personnel, and having to endure negative representation of their ethnocultural group in the curriculum. Consistent with the CEM, in these type of school environments, many racialized black students form ‘oppositional identities’ (subjectivities

opposite to the dominant culture) and resist school personnel's attempts to subjugate them (i.e. by rejecting school policies, pedagogies, rules, etc.) (James, 2007; Solomon, 1992).

Literature documenting the existence and effects of systemic racism on racialized non-white people is a crucial first step in challenging racial inequality and social injustice in a colour-blind society. However, the challenges confronting racialized black youth needs to be examined from different angles. Perspectives that have not been examined enough are the views of students who successfully complete their compulsory education. Research examining the experiences of racialized black youth who complete high school and pursue post-secondary education is limited (Codjoe, 2007; James & Haig-Brown, 2001, James & Taylor, 2008; James, 2010). Codjoe (2007) examined the factors that allowed African, Afro-Caribbean, and racialized black Canadians living in Alberta to achieve high educational attainment. This study reported that high parental education and income, high parental expectations, parental social and educational supports, and a positive self-concept facilitated racialized black students' educational success. More specifically, Codjoe's study found that racialized black youth, whose parents were able to gain employment in professional, managerial and technical occupations, were provided sufficient educational support and encouragement to combat a hostile school environment and to become self-reliant and confident in their educational abilities. This finding suggests that racialized black students are as likely to succeed in the education system as other racialized non-white children of immigrants whose parents are able to secure well-paying jobs and provide them with an environment that is conducive to educational achievement.

Controlling for socioeconomic status, James (2010) explored the experiences of two Afro-Caribbean university students who lived in a working class/ low income neighbourhood often described as 'a bad and violent place'. He found that these students were able to pursue a

university degree because they were academic-oriented, isolated from their negative neighbourhood context (they did not hang around their neighbourhood or bad influences), their parents had high expectations of them, they were supported by teachers in their racialized black high school (a high school attended by mostly racialized non-white students), they developed a strong sense of belonging to Canada and pride in their ethnic heritage, and they did not think there were barriers to their success (Carl, 2010). Similar to Codjoe's study, this study supports the argument that racialized black students are capable of overcoming geographic and institutional barriers as suggested by the CEM.

This dissertation seeks to add to scant research that examines the process which facilitates or aids racialized black youth to incorporate into mainstream society. While I am interested in analyzing 'educational success' and 'successful adaptation' to hostile environments, I am not particularly interested in examining only the experiences of university-bound or current university students or graduates. Rather I am interested in exploring the different post-secondary life trajectories racialized black youth, who successfully complete secondary school, follow and how this relates to the multiple embedded social environments they grew up in and their understandings of themselves, others and the larger society and their place (structural position) in it. The next chapter provides an overview of the methodology and research design of this study.

5. Research design and methodology

Research aim

The objective of this study is to understand the process or mechanisms that enable children of Sub-Saharan African immigrants to successfully adapt to mainstream institutions (namely the educational system) and the larger Canadian society. In other words, this study is interested in examining how Sub-Saharan African immigrant offspring (a group racialized black) overcome structural, geographic and institutional barriers to higher educational attainment and social mobility. More precisely, this study aims to explore how the different sociocultural contexts Sub-Saharan African offspring grow up in shape their educational experiences, aspirations and identity formations.

Paradigm and theoretical framework

The overarching paradigm this research is situated within is critical theory. Critical theory exposes historically grounded social relations of inequality and injustice and power structures that privileges one group and makes others feel disempowered or complacent in their subjugated positions (Agger, 2006; Calhoun, 1995; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002). Moreover, this paradigm is interested in examining "manifestations of resistance", and more specifically in the "ways in which actors come to terms with and struggle against" domination and oppression (Creswell, 2007, p. 28). Given this dissertation is particularly interested in exploring experiences of African immigrant offspring (individuals racialized black), a racialized critical lens was utilized. In other words, the tenants of critical race theory underpinned this study. A racialized critical perspective tries to "ascertain how society organizes itself along racial lines and hierarchies" and how "to transform it [society] for the better" (Delgado & Stefaniec, 2001, p.3). In line with this perspective and the literature reviewed in the previous chapters, there are several

theoretical propositions that underlie this study: a) white-settler societies are racially stratified and inherently unequal; b) structural, institutional, and social racisms covertly operate to try to place ‘people of colour’—those racialized non-white—in subordinate socioeconomic positions in relation to those racialized white and are non-poor; and c) racialized non-white people (and more specifically racialized non-white immigrants) usually attempt to subvert ‘system forces’ (upon entering settler societies or overtime) at the community/grassroots level. Even though race is at the center of analysis in critical race studies, this perspective recognizes the intersectionality of different systems of oppression (e.g. race, gender, class).

Taking the historical, theoretical and empirical discussions in chapters 2 to 4 into consideration, figure 3 provides an outline of a modified version of the CEM, the theoretical framework used for this study. While the segmented assimilation theory, the dominant theory in the ‘new second generation’ literature, informs this research, the CEM is the main analytical lens used for this study because it more directly addresses the questions explored by this research. The segmented assimilation theory addresses more general and larger questions about ethnocultural group differences and intergenerational socioeconomic mobility. This theory relies heavily on socioeconomic explanations of social mobility (e.g. immigrant families with substantial human and financial capital are able to more easily achieve social mobility than those lacking human and financial capital). Sociocultural explanations are seen to be complimentary (and secondary) to socioeconomic explanations in this framework. The CEM, on the other hand, principally offers a sociocultural explanation of social mobility. As shown by the empirical literature reviewed, there is existing empirical evidence that supports both of these theories. For instance, the claim (advanced by the segmented assimilation theory) that poor and working class racialized black immigrant offspring will experience downward assimilation due to the multiple

societal barriers (e.g. geographical and structural) they encounter is strongly supported. The literature review found that many children of racialized black immigrants, especially racialized black males, have difficulty incorporating into the education system—the institution that enables children of immigrants to achieve socioeconomic mobility—in both Canada and the United States (e.g. Davies & Guppy, 1998; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). The existing empirical research also revealed that children of immigrants from low socioeconomic backgrounds have to rely on social and cultural capital (beneficial social relations, including close family ties/networks, and a positive cultural orientation) to achieve social mobility (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). For instance, Southeast Asian children of immigrants from low socioeconomic backgrounds have been able to adapt to American society by way of the sociocultural factors identified by the CEM (Rumbaut & Ima, 1988). What is not yet clear in the empirical literature on non-European immigrant offspring is the process that facilitates the incorporation of racialized black immigrant offspring into Canadian society, or more broadly nations of immigrants. The CEM offers possible explanations (a useful point of departure) to the question: how do non-European children of immigrants from low socioeconomic backgrounds successfully adapt to life in racially unequal societies and achieve social mobility?

The guiding theoretical framework for this study (figure 3) acknowledges that individuals live, learn and develop in multiple embedded social contexts—e.g. micro, community, institutional and macro environments—that are interconnected (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). At the same time, the framework recognizes the micro environment, especially the home/family environment, has the largest bearing on individuals' development and social outcomes during their formative years and even later in life (Heckman, 2006). The literature on second generation non-European immigrants emphasizes that the social and cultural contexts children of

immigrants grow up within play an important role in shaping their school and life experiences as adolescents (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). More

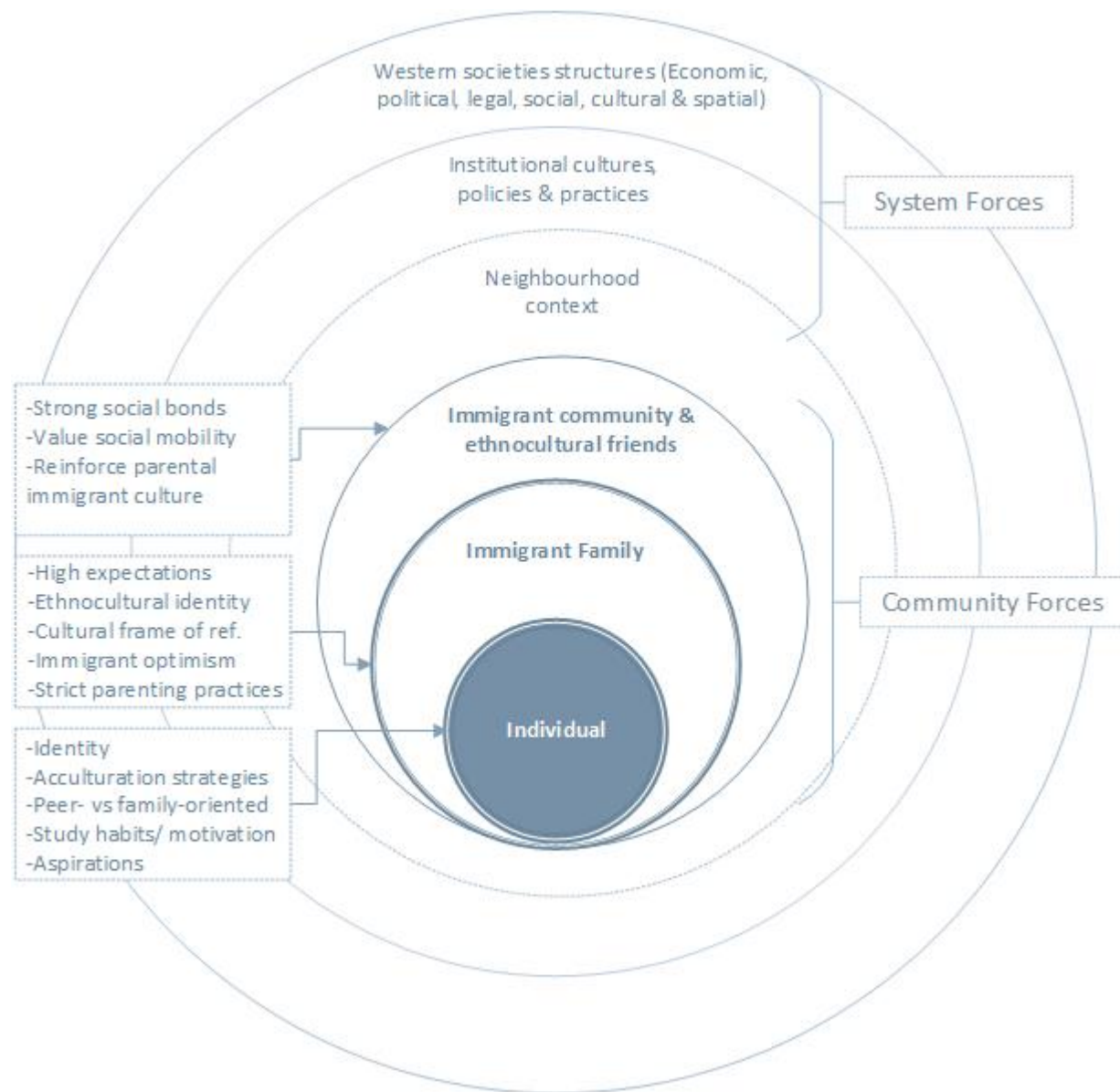


Figure 5.1: Sociocultural ecology of high achieving non-European immigrant offspring

specifically, immigrant families and the ethno-cultural communities they lean on for support are theorized to serve a detrimental function in facilitating the educational success (e.g. acquiring

secondary and postsecondary qualifications) of children of immigrants. Ogbu (1987) postulates that all immigrants, including racialized black immigrants, have an optimistic outlook of society and place a high value on education. This is because immigrants have a dual frame of reference and they buy into the myth that every individual can achieve their goals and social mobility through hard work and educational attainment. The children of non-European immigrants that adopted an immigrant cultural orientation—a positive cultural orientation (e.g. value education, family, a collectivist outlook; aspire for upward mobility; and prefer delayed over instant gratification)—were found to live in micro cultural contexts that were conducive to higher educational attainment (Zhou & Bankston, 1994). In keeping with these points, the theoretical framework posits there are preventive and liberating forces (the community forces) that can enable children of racialized black immigrants to overcome repressive system forces that attempt to keep them in their subjugated positions. According to this framework, racialized black children of immigrants' successful adaptation to mainstream society and its institutions (e.g. schools) is contingent on immigrant offspring being family-oriented or at the very least respectful of their parents' expectations and immigrant culture. This relationship between family and individual—e.g. youth's secure connection to their families—is shown in figure 3. The first ring (in bold) that surrounds the individual is the family social context. If children of immigrants put their family first, valued above friends and others in society, they can more easily adopt their parents' optimism, high expectations, values, culture and be receptive to their guidance and supervision. Immigrant communities (including ethnocultural friends) also have an important function; they reinforce parents' values and cultures and provide an added layer of protection against low income neighbourhood risks, institutional exclusion and social traps that lead to downward assimilation.

Research location

Most studies that examine the incorporation experiences of immigrant families have focused on Canada's three largest metropolitan cities—Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal (i.e. Qadeer & Kumar, 2006; Walks & Bourne, 2006). However, over the last decade there has been a push by the Canadian government to settle new immigrants in cities other than Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal due to concerns over the large concentration of non-European immigrants in those cities (McIsaac, 2003). For instance, in 2002, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration proposed a 'dispersion' strategy for the settlement of immigrants in second tier cities (i.e. Ottawa, Calgary, Winnipeg) (McIsaac, 2003, p. 1). To achieve this goal, there have been multiple initiatives and campaigns to create more welcoming and inclusive urban areas across Canada (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003). Consequently, it is important to examine the incorporation patterns of immigrant families that have settled in second tier cities.

This study examined Sub-Saharan African immigrant offspring's experiences living in various neighbourhoods, mostly low income, in Ottawa. Ottawa has the second largest concentration of racialized black immigrants in Ontario and the fifth largest immigrant population nationally—nearly one in five Ottawa residents belong to a racialized non-white group (Statistics Canada, 2013). The majority of recent racialized black immigrants in Ottawa have settled in Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) and other non-profit housing neighbourhoods because of their high poverty rates (Social Planning Council of Ottawa, 2008). Most of the participants in this study grew up in a social housing community in Ottawa. A few of the participants' had experience living in more than one neighbourhood during their childhood and/or adolescences.

Research design

A narrative qualitative research approach was used to examine the influence of multiple social contexts on the incorporation experiences of children of Sub-Saharan African immigrants. Critical race theorists chiefly use narratives as a method of inquiry; their stories are their method (Delgado, 1995). Narratives (counterstories) are gathered to challenge racial oppression and conventional wisdom. The strength of a narrative approach is that complex topics, such as identity, exclusion, inclusion and agency advanced in the CEM, can be explored. Using this approach, a nuanced understanding of the way different participants understand themselves and their social world can be gained. Furthermore, multiple historically situated social realities can be weaved together to uncover various forms of power and resistance and the intersection between socioeconomic outcomes (e.g. educational achievement) of immigrant offspring and race, ethnicity, class, religion and gender.

This qualitative study sought to explore two central research questions. The first question was how do children of Sub-Saharan African immigrants attempt to overcome structural, institutional and geographic barriers that could hinder their full participation in society? Again, the assumption underlying this question is racialized black people are disadvantaged in Canadian society (historically and in the present). In essence, this question (if asked in reverse) seeks to understand the factors and process that is associated with an upward life trajectory (e.g. completion of secondary education and moving onto postsecondary education) for children of Sub-Saharan African immigrants. In North America, youth are expected to enrol in a post-secondary institution immediately or a short while after they complete high school. This is because high paying professional jobs, and even less paying ones, normally require a postsecondary education, and more particularly a university degree—university degrees

generally have a higher economic return than shorter duration college and trades programs in post-industrial societies (Guppy & Davies, 1998; Boothby & Drewes, 2010). Therefore, it is important to examine more closely what motivates some children of Sub-Saharan African immigrants to complete secondary school and strive to attain postsecondary credentials necessary to enter the knowledge economy and the middleclass. The second main question guiding this research was how are the educational experiences and identity formation of Sub-Saharan African offspring—considered to be on an upward life trajectory (e.g. completed high school and transitioning into or out of postsecondary institutions)—shaped or influenced by the multiple micro sociocultural contexts (e.g. home, school and neighbourhood) they were raised in?

Recruitment

The target population for this research was second and 1.5 generation Sub-Saharan African immigrants. Participants were required to meet the following requirements: a) born in Canada (second generation) or immigrated to Canada at the age of 12 or younger (1.5 generation); b) child of at least one immigrant parent from a Sub-Saharan African country; and c) have lived in (or in close proximity to) low income neighbourhoods/areas in Ottawa. Children of Sub-Saharan African immigrants were chosen as participants for several reasons. Firstly, this group has a recent history in Canada—they have been in Canada for a shorter period compared to Afro-Caribbean immigrants and African Canadians, who have a long history in the Maritimes (Milan & Tran, 2004). Sub-Saharan African immigrants, although a rapidly growing population, are understudied. Furthermore, this group's incorporation patterns could be different from those identified in existing literature. The majority of the literature on racialized black immigrants in Canada is based on the experience of previous waves of racialized black immigrants (mainly

Afro-Caribbeans). Lastly, children of Sub-Saharan African immigrants were chosen to participate in this study for practical purposes. They are an accessible group in Ottawa. Sub-Saharan Africans are the largest racialized black group in the city. Furthermore, the majority of those who reside in low income neighbourhoods are racialized black immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa (Social Planning Council of Ottawa, 2008).

Study participants (including parents and key informants) were recruited and interviewed between April 2014 and February 2015. Participants were recruited in a number of ways. Flyers were posted and given out to racialized black students on the University of Ottawa campus, in Ottawa Community Housing neighbourhoods, and at events (geared towards African youth) held at the University of Ottawa and in the community. A snowball recruitment method was also employed. Several participants who took part in the study provided my contact information to their friends and acquaintances. A few of the participants contacted me to express interest in this study. Furthermore, I was able to benefit from my knowledge and link to the Somali community in Ottawa.

Initially, I tried to recruit Sub-Saharan African youth not engaged in society—those considered on a road to downward assimilation (i.e. dropped out of school and not employed, involved in deviant behaviour, and/or are in and out of detention centres)—in addition to those who completed or were progressing in their studies (e.g. currently enrolled in a post-secondary institution). I found it difficult to recruit the former group, even with the assistance of community leaders and key informants. For instance, I would schedule an appointment with a potential participant who was at the time disengaged from society (e.g. not going to school or working) and this individual would not show up to our scheduled interviews. This experience caused me to pause and reflect. I adjusted my recruitment plan after conducting several

interviews and upon reflecting on the potential unintended consequences of comparing Sub-Saharan African offspring on different paths in life (one considered desirable according to societal standards). For the most part, I targeted recruiting 1.5 and second generation Sub-Saharan African immigrants who had experience living in low income neighbourhoods in Ottawa and were graduates of high school.

I found that many youth were more eager to discuss what leads to 'successful incorporation' and higher educational attainment than school failure and deviance. I think some youth did not want to feed into the narrative of 'why some racialized black youth fail to integrate into society'. For instance, one male I approached in a low income neighbourhood told me he was not interested in participating because "he was not struggling"; he was a university student. I found it interesting that this individual assumed I was looking to interview "struggling" youth or that he thought I thought he was struggling. Perhaps he was aware of stereotypes that portrayed racialized black youth as 'failures' and 'underachievers' or he thought that only youth who are 'struggling' were sought-after research participants ('drop-outs' could be over studied compared to high school graduates). This encounter reaffirmed my decision to only interview participants that completed high school (or were about to) and aspired to or completed post-secondary studies. I wanted to highlight individual, family and community strengths and assets (not 'deficiencies') of the Sub-Saharan African community in Ottawa. At the start of the research process, I thought interviewing and analyzing data on youth following different life trajectories could have provided deeper insights and a more holistic perspective on how social contexts and actors within them influenced Sub-Saharan African youth differently. However, this approach (which could be seen as identifying factors that lead to 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' adaptation) risks negatively portraying and further marginalizing a segment of the Sub-Saharan African

youth population—something this research strives not to do. Additionally, the research questions could be fully explored by examining how one segment of the Sub-Saharan African youth population in Ottawa (those who completed or are aspiring to or are currently pursuing post-secondary education) construct their social realities from their situated place in society and how their situated view of the world impacts their educational attainment and understanding of themselves and others in society.

In total, twenty-three children of Sub-Saharan African immigrants participated in this study. All the interviews were conducted in-person. The average length of the interviews was approximately forty minutes. There was no quota in terms of the number of participants that could participate in the study. I used as a guideline the data collection timeframe approved by the University of Ottawa Social Science Research Ethics Board (March 2014 to March 2015). Anyone who met the recruitment criteria and wanted to participate in the study within the specified timeframe had the opportunity to do so. The first six months of data collection, I was interested in interviewing anyone who met the recruitment criteria. After this point, I was more selectively recruiting participants that I knew had a different experience from the participants already interviewed. For instance, I recruited an individual who was not only a participant of a popular youth program that encouraged marginalized youth (mostly racialized black youth) to pursue post-secondary studies, but this individual became a mentor for program participants once he entered university. I wanted the collected data to capture the diverse experiences and views of Sub-Saharan African immigrant offspring who graduated (or were close to graduate) from high school.

Participants

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 provide an overview of some of the demographic characteristics of the participants. Of the 23 children of Sub-Saharan African immigrant youth interviewed for this study, 12 were female and 11 were male. The participants' ages ranged from 17 to 30.

Table 5.1 Female participants' demographic information

Pseudonym	Age	Educational level	Family structure	Language spoken/ understood	Country of birth	Parental country of origin
Dalila	22	University student; 4th year	Single-mother household	English & Somali (mixes two)	Canada	Somalia
Emaan	21	University student; 4th year	Dual-parent household	English, French & Somali	Canada	Djibouti
Degmo	23	University grad; looking for work	Single-mother household	English, comprehends Somali	Canada	Somalia
Hawa	20	University student; 3rd year	Dual-parent household	Somali and English	Kenya	Somalia
Marian	19	University student; 2nd year	Dual-parent household	English, French and Somali	Canada	Djibouti/ Somalia
Nadira	20	University student; 3rd year	Single-mother household	English, French, & Somali (understands, doesn't speak fluently)	Canada	Somalia
Natasha	30	University graduate student	Single-mother household	Mother tongue, English, French and Spanish	Zambia	Zambia
Rahema	18	University student; 2nd year	Dual-parent household	English, understands Somali & French	Canada	Somalia
Salwa	20	University student; 3rd year	Dual-parent household	English, understands Somali	Canada	Somalia
Sofi	20	Left university after 1st year; working	Single-mother household	English, French & Somali	Canada	Somalia
Zola	19	University student; 2nd year	Dual-parent household	French, English, Fulani	Canada	Guinea/Senegal
Hayat	25	University grad, contract employee	Dual-parent household	English and Somali	Somalia	Somalia

Table 5.2 Male participants' demographic information

Pseudonym	Age	Educational level	Family structure	Language spoken/ understood	Country of birth	Parental country of origin
Idris	17	High school, planning to attend college	Dual-parent household	English, Somali, a bit of French	Canada	Somalia
Issa	23	College grad; working full-time	Single-mother household	English and Somali	Djibouti	Djibouti
Jebil	17	High school, planning to attend university	Dual-parent household	Somali, French and English	Canada	Somalia
Jaleel	21	High school grad; upgrading marks to enter university	Dual-parent household	Somali, English, conversational French	Canada	Somalia
Mu'ad	23	University grad; law school student	Dual-parent household	English, Somali, & Arabic	Somalia	Somalia
Ottoman	23	University Grad; Working full-time in STEM field	Single-mother household	English, understand Somali	Canada	Somalia
Sahil	19	University student; 2nd year	Single-mother household	English, French & 'some Somali'	Djibouti	Djibouti
Hakim	18	College student; 1st year	Dual-parent household	Somali, English & French	Canada	Somalia
Walid	18	University student; 1st year	Dual-parent household	English, understands Arabic	Canada	Eritrea
Yahya	18	College student; 1st year	Dual-parent household	English and Somali	Canada	Somalia
Samuel	22	University student; 4th year	Single-mother household	French and English	Rwanda	Rwanda

Most of the participants were born in Canada (second generation). The seven participants that were foreign-born came to Canada at the age of seven or younger (1.5. generation). The majority (60%) of the participants grew up in a dual-parent household. With regards to their education, all except two of the participants completed high school at the time of their interviews. The two high school students interviewed planned to acquire a post-secondary education upon completing their secondary studies—one was accepted into university and the other into college. Many of the participants (11) were enrolled in a university undergraduate program. Only two of the participants were in college. Five of the participants completed an undergraduate degree (two of

them were completing further university studies) and one of the participants graduated from college.

Data collection

Data for this research was collected using semi-structured interviews. A general interview protocol was developed to ensure all my areas of interest (based on the theoretical framework and literature review) could be covered in the interviews. The interview protocol was designed in a way that permitted me to answer the research questions in a flexible way. I kept the interview questions as broad and as open as possible to capture the incorporation experiences of the target population and the contexts that made certain outcomes possible. For instance, from their perspective, the participants were asked to recall their experiences growing up within a marginalized and disadvantaged community/neighbourhood (see Appendix A for interview protocol). The questions were revised from interview to interview to probe for different insights. These interviews provided a window into the social worlds of the participants as well as the society from the participants' structured positions.

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with 5 parents and 5 key informants who were active, visible and leaders at the community level (Table 5.3). The key informants included a long-time OCH resident that worked with youth and was involved with community development activities, a youth worker and educator, a community police officer, a community development coordinator with a community health centre, a homework club coordinator and a community leader. Most of these key informants were also parents of second-generation immigrant youth. Therefore, key informants had experience dealing with Sub-Saharan African offspring as parents and in various other roles. Key informants and parents were asked to discuss their experiences working/living with children of Sub-Saharan African immigrants and the social

context these youth lived within (See Appendix B for interview protocol). Furthermore, educational statistics and information about existing programs designed to assist marginalized youth living in low income housing communities were gathered through key informant interviews, a Community Health Centre, creditable on-line sites (e.g. government and university sites), and through program participants (some of the youth participants).

Table 5.3 Parents and key informants profiles

	Pseudonyms	Background information
Parents	Nasteexo	Single female parent, works from home as caretaker, OCH tenant
	Canab	Married female parent, fulltime healthcare worker, previous OCH tenant
	Amburo	Married female parent, Homework club coordinator, OCH tenant
	Yasir	Married male parent, City employee—bus driver, former OCH tenant
	Dalmar	Married male parent, City employee—bus driver, current OCH tenant
Key Informants	Cilmi	Community leader & organizer
	Daahir	Youth worker/Educator
	Luqman	Community development coordinator
	Murid	Community police officer
	Khalil	Long-time OCH resident & community volunteer

Positioning self

In qualitative studies, knowledge production is not considered separate from a researcher's identity and their social situatedness. Hence, it is imperative that a qualitative researcher situates themselves—makes their identity known (or their subjectivity) and their relationship with the subject—as to not render themselves invisible in the research process (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2000). Peshkin (1988) argues, "subjectivity operates during the entire research process"; therefore, it is important to "disclose to...readers where self and subject became joined" (p. 17).

In this study, I would be considered an insider (as well as an outside in some instances as a researcher). I am a member of the group—children of Sub-Saharan African immigrant offspring—being researched. I chose to research the acculturation and incorporation experiences of Sub-Saharan African immigrant offspring because the diverse voices of racialized black groups are often not heard. Furthermore, I am a strong advocate of the advancement of racialized non-white people, inclusive schooling and anti-racism. It is my desire to see an inclusive Canadian society where racialized black immigrant offspring (and more broadly racialized non-white people) can reach their full potentials without the need to work twice as hard as other members of society. I feel this research advances this sociopolitical agenda by exploring the ways racialized black immigrant offspring and their community subvert system forces that relegate them to the lower echelons of society.

Coming into this research as an insider, I am privy to some experiential knowledge about the incorporation experiences of 1.5 and second generation Sub-Saharan African Canadians and can offer a nuanced and deeper understanding of this subject. Moreover, my insider status allowed me to more easily recruit segments of the target population (e.g. Somali youth). For instance, a number of the participants, parents and key informants commented that they were pleased that I (someone from the community/someone racialized black) was pursuing a doctoral degree and was additionally researching a topic that was of great importance to the Sub-Saharan African immigrant community. I felt at ease conversing with this population in many places, including low income neighbourhoods and public spaces (whether I knew them before this research project or not).

Nonetheless, the diversity within the Sub-Saharan immigrant community made me an outsider to some individuals that participated and did not participate in the study. As a racialized

black 1.5 generation Somali-Canadian Muslim female, I had similar experiences with some of the study participants and different experiences with others. What I mean by this is that I could identify on a personal level with some of the experiences and feelings of the participants. I did not fully and only identify with participants who had a similar identity as me (e.g. Somali-Canadian Muslim females). For instances, a Somali-Canadian Muslim female participant reported that wearing a hijab (an Islamic headscarf) and modest clothing was a struggle. While I understood her experience, which is shared by a few Muslim females I know, I did not personally go through this struggle.

Strands of my views and experiences appeared in several of the participants' narratives. For instance, among the experiences I could identify with were: living in two different neighbourhoods with varying socioeconomic levels, going to schools with contrasting sociodemographic profiles, experiencing covert racism in everyday life, having a close relationship with a parent and family members, not having access to educational supports outside the family as a child and adolescent, fast-tracking through high school, and successfully adjusting to university. Additionally, the views I shared with some of the participants included: the compulsory schooling system is uninspiring; it is important to be dutiful to parents; religion and spirituality are important; and ethnocultural maintenance (e.g. language) is desirable.

Although I did not experience such things as visiting back home when I was younger, having an affinity for racialized black American culture or being 'a rebel' (according to the standards of African immigrant parents), I listened with an attentive and non-judgemental countenance to those that had different opinions and experiences than me. I tried to capture the experiences of the participants in their own words by asking probing questions. I knew from living among racialized black immigrant offspring that our experiences and responses to our

circumstances in life are diverse. Generally, my experiences taught me that social contexts matter, identities are fluid and supportive social relations are important. My experiences have also taught me that no matter how much I think or a participant thinks we have in common (by making statements, such as ‘you know what I mean’), our life experiences are most likely somewhat unique or we might have been different from the person we appear to be at the moment of our encounter(s). As suggested by Peshkin (1988), I tried to be aware of my subjectivities during the data collection, analysis and writing part of the research process by being reflexive. Reflexivity is a measure against “the trap of perceiving just that which my own untamed sentiments have sought out and serv[ing that] up as data” (Peshkin, 1988, p. 20; Berger, 2015).

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed through a process that involved organizing, codifying and reducing the data into themes (Creswell, 2007). I used a qualitative software package, Nvivo, to simplify the process of coding and analyzing the data. Prior to the analysis of the data, audio recordings of the participants’ interviews were transcribed verbatim. These transcripts were reviewed multiple times. Individual word files of the transcribed interviews were then imported into Nvivo. To start off, I created several broad categories (codes/nodes in Nvivo) that were derived from the theoretical framework and the reviewed literature. It should be noted, however, that throughout the coding and analysis process, new codes were created, existing codes were amended, and some codes were collapsed (e.g. a main code was turned into a sub-code). Several of the pre-determined codes were: individual, family, ethnic community, neighbourhood, schooling, and outcome variables. These codes generally corresponded to the different layers of influence (e.g. individual, family, community, neighbourhood and institutional contexts)

identified by the theoretical framework reviewed above. Furthermore, these codes aimed to capture how individual level characteristics and the various social environments participants grow up in interact to influence the types of identities participants formed and the highest level of education they completed or were in the process of completing or aspired to complete. These broader codes had sub-codes (or sub-nodes). For instances, background information such as family structure (during formative years) and generation status were coded under the family and individual categories, respectively. Other pre-determined categories, which were sub-codes of the broader codes mentioned, were: parental views & practices, identity, low income neighbourhood context, primary school and secondary school.

Codes or themes also emerged from the data. Several codes that emerged from the data included, living abroad, higher income neighbourhoods (coded under neighbourhoods, alongside the low income neighbourhood sub-code), level of religiosity, school cultures, inclusive practices (under the code school context), and community-based supports (sub-code under educational supports). It should be noted that many themes that were identified by the literature would have also emerged from the data. For instance, the literature acknowledges the important role of immigrant parents in the lives of children of immigrants. Many of the participants, without prompt, spoke about the assistance they received from their parents and their appreciation for them. Moreover, one major theme that kept coming up in the interviews was high parental expectations. Again, unprompted, participants would mention in different ways that their parents' high expectations and their strong believe in the value of education strongly influenced their educational attainment.

To answer the research questions of this study (how do Sub-Saharan African immigrant children overcome multiple societal barriers and how do their situated social contexts influence

their life trajectories and identity formations?), the many codes that were created were organized under three broad sections, which are explored in the next three chapters (chapter 6, 7 and 8). The first findings chapter (navigating unequal geographies) examines spatial manifestations of structural inequalities, neighbourhood cultures and how participants and their families circumvented low income neighbourhood pitfalls. Also, a short discussion is included on higher income neighbourhood contexts and how they compared to low income neighbourhoods. The following chapter examines the schooling experiences (from elementary to the post-secondary level) of the participants and the (individual, family, and community) factors that participants identified as facilitators of their educational attainment. Chapter 8, as the chapter title suggests ('Identity, culture and living in/between multiple social environments'), explores the complex topics of identity and culture. This chapter explores how various variables—e.g. social contexts (local and global), the media, social relationships (indirect and direct association/identification with different people), experiences of exclusion, socialization and exposure to various cultures, values, beliefs and behaviours—influenced participants' understanding of themselves, their social worlds, and their place within society. Succeeding an exploration of the experiences of children of Sub-Saharan African immigrants (from their perspectives) is an examination (in chapter 9) of the experiences of Sub-Saharan African offspring from the perspective of Sub-Saharan African key informants and parents. This chapter puts the experiences of the youth participants into a broader perspective. Key informants and parents identified the major challenges children of Sub-Saharan immigrants living in Ottawa encountered over the last couple of decades and how these challenges were closely tied to the experiences of immigrant parents. Additionally, key informants and parents discussed some of the ways Sub-Saharan African

families, and the various communities they were a part of, adapted and have tried to overcome structural and institutional exclusions in recent years.

6. Navigating unequal geographies: Sub-Saharan African immigrant offspring's perspectives on life in the 'hood'

Many of the participants grew up in a low income neighbourhood. A few of the participants' families, however, were able to achieve upward geographic mobility—they were able to move to a higher income neighbourhood—during these participants' formative years. To capture participants' experiences living in different geographic environments and how these environments shaped their lives, this chapter is divided into two sections. The first sub-section of this chapter provides insights into participants' gendered experiences living in low income neighbourhoods. The second sub-section examines participants' experiences transitioning from a lower to a higher income neighbourhood. This latter section also looks at the differences between the cultures and environments of lower and higher income neighbourhoods from the perspective of the participants.

Evading low income neighbourhood minefields and taking shelter

The first premise of much of the empirical and theoretical literature on children of racialized non-white immigrants is that society is geographically segregated and socially stratified by race and class (e.g. Portes & Zhou, 1993). Taking America's history of legal segregation (and the subsequent formation of urban racialized ghettos) as an example, it is not unrealistic to argue that geographic inequality—the physical separation of lower income and poor people (a significant proportion of which are racialized non-white) from the mainstream (those that have political control and an unequitable access to societal resources)—is one of the strongest mechanisms that reproduces socioeconomic inequality and keeps existing social structures intact. Immigrant offspring's families' positions on the socioeconomic hierarchy, for the most part, is theorized to determine children of immigrants' life chances (Gans, 1992; Portes

& Rumbaut, 2001). Racialized non-white immigrant families that find themselves at the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy have to contend with living in unsafe neighbourhoods and living among marginalized non-immigrant populations that are often disillusioned with society (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Ogbu & Simons, 1998; Portes, 1996; Zhou, 1997). Therefore, immigrant families and communities have to find ways to safeguard their children from negative direct (e.g. living in hostile environments) and indirect (e.g. access to poor quality education) neighbourhood effects that lead to downward assimilation. This chapter explores the ways in which participants, their families and communities tried to overcome or circumvent structural and geographic barriers to incorporation into mainstream society.

Keeping in mind that much of the theories in the non-European immigrant offspring literature are based on the American context (a context quite different from the Canadian one), I asked participants (that had experience living in low income neighbourhoods—which was most of the participants) to describe the low income neighbourhoods they lived in as they saw them. According to the participants, the biggest problem with low income neighbourhoods was they were perceived to be a breeding ground for illicit activity and deviance. While most of the participants mentioned one or more undesirable aspects about living in their low income neighbourhood, such as exposure to drugs, violence and negative peer influences, participants indicated that these neighbourhood problems were not widespread or inescapable. Illicit activities were said to be usually isolated in specific areas and were visible during certain hours of the day depending on the social housing/low income neighbourhood in question.

Negative activities happen when the sun goes down. [Walid]

Nothing has happened to us except for once, it was [the] middle of the night, they broke into the garage... I don't remember what they took. [Jaleel]

If you live in the hood [neighbourhood], it's easier [to get involved in negative activities] ...There [are] more gangster people in this hood, you just talk to them, well gangsters talk to us...They know how to talk to you. [Sahil]

It's public housing, you know, it's [illicit activity] not something you can avoid. [Yahya]

Furthermore, as Sofi importantly points out below, youth who were not involved or associated with negative crowds or criminal activity were seldom directly impacted by relatively unsafe neighbourhood environments.

[In the neighbourhood] There were gun shots, robberies, people got killed. Thank God I was not targeted because I was not into that stuff. You always hear stuff from other families that get impacted. [Sofi]

Moreover, there were gender differences in terms of exposure to low income neighbourhood risks. Participants argued male youth were more likely to be exposed to negative peer influences and illicit activities because they spent a significant time outdoors, especially at basketball courts, an area frequently visited by those that perpetrated illicit acts. Female youth, on the other hand, were usually told to stay in their homes and not to wander aimlessly in the neighbourhood. Consequently, they were more shielded from these negative influences and environment. In addition to being influenced by the overall negative neighbourhood context, one respondent, Issa, mentioned that male youth who engaged in negative or illicit behaviours influenced their younger siblings (especially younger brothers) and in turn they influenced their peers. Thus, there were direct (e.g. coming into contact with gang members and crime) and indirect (e.g. friends with the brother of a drug dealer) negative neighbourhood influences on youth.

Personally, for me, I feel like my neighbourhood, because maybe I'm a girl, didn't have the strongest impact on me as it would say my brothers. [Nadira]

[Many of the] guys [I knew] now have really changed. The neighbourhood really affected them. There were always gangsters around the neighbourhood doing drugs, smoking, [walking with] big dogs, etc. They [got] influenced by that. They were kids once having fun and now they are all into stuff like drugs, they dropped out of high school, they don't do anything...When it comes to Sub-Saharan African [youth], the boys easily get affected. The girls are more sheltered. The parents really let the boys do whatever they want, so they get influenced easily. But they protect the girls and preserve them to make sure they are good. That's why we don't [get] affect[ed] as much. [Sofi]

I did not go out much. My mom liked to keep me home...a few times, I went to [my] neighbours' houses. I didn't spend much time outside. [Emaan]

Contrary to consistently negative media portrayals of low income neighbourhoods, participants did not have a static or one view of low income neighbourhoods. In aggregate, participants' narratives painted a lively and multidimensional image of low income neighbourhoods. They had varying perceptions of the degree different low income neighbourhoods were liveable and safe based on their experiences and knowledge. Some of the participants thought their current or past low income neighbourhood had improved over the years, while others thought the opposite trend was occurring, their neighbourhood was getting worse. One factor believed to affect change in neighbourhood dynamics was a change in the type of residents that lived in a neighbourhood.

I used to think this neighbourhood was a lot safer. But I feel now, like if I'm taking my little sister outside, I don't feel as safe because I don't know new people living in the area. It's not like it was before for me. I have to keep my eye on her because I feel less safe than before. [Selwa]

The neighbourhood is kind of wishy-washy...I think every few years it's just new dynamics. [Delila]

Most of the people [were into] drugs, gangs, stuff like that...If you look around Westpoint now and Westpoint 10 years ago, you'll see a huge difference...It is a lot better now...A lot of people moved out...and a lot got kicked out. [Hawa]⁷

A more active process of neighbourhood change (renewal), one participant argued, occurred through the effort of residents (usually immigrant parents), who were determined to bring about positive changes in their neighbourhood. Ottoman reported that his neighbourhood significantly improved through the efforts of an immigrant parent who persistently pressured public housing officials and the police to address the pervasiveness of crime in the neighbourhood.

[An] individual actually changed the neighbourhood altogether. Before it was open, you could see all the drug dealers—people would make runs [sell drugs], you understood the patterns...Once he came, he really helped the neighbourhood get better... All of the sudden there [was] more security from Ottawa Housing...they would have regular checks, more police [officers] would be around. [Ottoman]

Regardless of the current state of their neighbourhood—whether it was presently considered 'bad' or 'acceptable'—the majority of participants tended to relativize the reputation of their neighbourhood, and more generally their social status. Several participants argued that their neighbourhood was not as bad as other low income communities. The assessment of a neighbourhood's reputation (e.g. bad/not that bad) was based on the presence of neighbourhood gangs, street violence, drug dealers and users, and a significant number of people roaming the streets unproductively. The perception of other neighbourhoods seemed to be worse than participants' evaluation of their neighbourhoods. For instance, Jebril argued that his neighbourhood generally did not have a bad reputation (i.e. it was not known in the city as a

⁷ All names of neighbourhoods and geographic places are pseudonyms.

‘bad’ neighbourhood) nor was, or currently is, as well known as more troubled social housing neighbourhoods (that often appear in the media).

We don't have gangs, we don't have a lot of hood-rats [someone always walking around the neighbourhood doing nothing] outdoors—we've got a couple, but not that much. Our neighbourhood is not even that bad to be honest. There's not that many druggies. Maybe a year ago it was kind of popular with druggies and stuff, but it's not that bad. We don't got people killing each other in the streets...Rivercrest is not even that bad compared to Downton. Downton is more ghetto. They got people killing each other there...us, we are known, at the same time we are not known. [Jabil]

Equally, Samuel declared that his neighbourhood was safer than other surrounding low income neighbourhoods. Even more, Samuel alluded to an important point. Although one neighbourhood might not have a crime problem and is considered generally relatively safe and quiet, youth can be indirectly exposed to negative influences of neighbouring low income and social housing neighbourhoods by way of social contact with youth living in these neighbourhoods at a shared home school. In some parts of the city, multiple social housing communities were clustered around one another.

Trillium Place, it's multicultural. It's not dangerous; it's safe. It's not like Sliverlake, Cloverdale, and the other ones where it might be a little bit rougher. But at the same time, a lot of our friends, we took the same bus, and a lot of our friends lived there. [Samuel]

Another participant, Ottoman also positively ranked his neighbourhood over other social housing communities in Ottawa. He argued that problem areas in the city have shifted over the years. Moreover, this participant referred to larger societal trends to put the problems (e.g. drug use) found in his neighbourhood into context. For example, Ottoman asserted that overall Ottawa has a low crime rate and that the use of drugs among youth has become commonplace in the city.

Ottoman's point is partially supported by the current Liberal Federal governments' proposal to decriminalized marijuana in Canada, following in the footsteps of several states in America and countries in Europe (e.g. Netherlands).

The west-end is better than the east-end I guess. I don't know if it is the east-end specifically, or if it is—well Westpoint used to be bad [and] this neighbourhood used to be bad, but now [it's bad] down near Charm Road. But it's Ottawa; we don't have that many problems in terms of murders. But in terms of kids using drugs and stuff, I think it is all around Ottawa. All high schools, whether or not they are smoking marijuana or shisha, it's a social norm for most youth. Even older people now see it as a normal thing.
[Ottoman]

Interestingly, participants' understanding of their social status was not entirely and simplistically informed by their geographic and socioeconomic location. Participants drew a line of demarcation between themselves and other racialized groups living in and defined by the same geographic space. Many of the participants thought that low income racialized white families (a marginalized non-immigrant group) were below their social standing. Racialized white social housing residents were not only perceived to be receiving social assistance (instead of employment income), but they were also perceived (or seen) to have substance abuse and mental health issues. Additionally, a number of the participants did not think racialized white residents aspired to achieve social mobility in the same way immigrants did. For instance, Jebril argued,

The white people that live in this neighbourhood are like more druggies, they smoke, some of them are living with welfare, they are crazy. There's not that many black people that live in our neighbourhood, most of them are Somali. They work and stuff.

Another participant made a similar observation. Dalila argued that racialized white individuals living in her community lived a more turbulent and unstable lifestyle. She also noted that social

housing communities were considered transitory for immigrant families. This was a point mentioned by several of the participants. Sub-Saharan African immigrant families desired to leave low income neighbourhoods once they could afford to do so (either when they got better jobs, or the family was able to pool enough money to move into a more desirable area), according to the participants' narratives.

The whites here are, most of them, are junkies, dunkers. Life is rough. This is the thing, usually a lot of people [minorities] they have pretty big families. As their children grow older, a lot of people end up moving out...more people now started working and are able to contribute to being able to move out. [Dalila]

We moved around a lot because my mom was always going where the jobs were...we lived in mostly apartments, and housing projects [low income neighbourhoods]. But my mom was able to build a bit of wealth. Half way through high school we moved into a nicer neighbourhood. [Natasha]

[Immigrant] parents, nowadays, are buying homes and things. I know a lot of people that moved out of these houses because they don't want their children hanging out with children in these communities and having them impact and influence [their] children in negative ways. [Degmo]

I think the problem with them [racialized white residents] is that they want to live here for the rest of their lives. They want to live off the government, whereas, I don't want to live off the government. [Ottoman]

MacLeod's (1987) study of marginalized youth living in the projects (poor neighbourhoods) in Boston provides insight into the participants' narratives concerning the different worldviews that various racialized groups living in spatially marginalized communities hold. He found that racialized white male youth he interviewed adopted an oppressional culture and had low aspirations due to their pessimistic view of society—views such as school is useless

and chances to find stable full-time employment were bleak. Conversely, racialized black youth from migrant and more stable families were found to have a more optimistic view of society and they believed in the value of education; thus, they were not enticed by the drug trade as much as the racialized white youth that lived in the same poor neighbourhood. These youth's divergent aspirations, cultural orientations and views of society were partly informed by their intergenerational experiences of poverty. These racialized white youth lived in the projects longer, whereas racialized black youth thought their living conditions improved compared to where they used to live before. Racialized white youth that lived in the project MacLeod investigated were part of the white lower class, which were described as:

Societal rejects who fail to keep stable jobs, drop out of school, live in public housing most of their lives, espouse antisocial values, commit and brag about their multiple crimes, come from "broken" homes, drink alcohol and do drugs on door stoops, and father children by teenage girls whom they don't marry—they are as surly and as distrustful of "American Dreams" (and dreamers) as the most sullen black ghetto youth (Royster, 1996, p.153).

Like MacLeod's (1987) American study of racialized low income groups living in social housing communities, participants made a distinction between racialized white people and racialized non-white immigrants living in low income neighbourhoods. A significant number of the participants were of the opinion that racialized white poor people were in their current low socioeconomic state due to laziness and a lack of effort—they appeared to be dissociated from society. Sub-Saharan immigrant parents, and immigrants more generally, were viewed in a more favorable light by the participants. They were considered to be hard-working and far removed from drugs and other social ills that were linked to poverty and plagued some social housing communities.

Immigrant families, unlike poor racialized white people, were thought to be in their reduced circumstances (low income status) through no fault of their own—they had immigration related barriers (e.g. lack of proficiency in the official languages and foreign credentials) to overcome. Participants had a racialized view of the world; they did not acknowledge in their narratives that racialized white poor youth encounter similar barriers as them by way of their low socioeconomic status. What participants' narratives suggest is that racialized black youth from low income and immigrant backgrounds can have similar attitudes (e.g. believe in meritocracy) and goals as the mainstream population, without living among this population, by virtue of their family's immigrant status. In other words, much like middleclass youth, low income children of immigrants could acquire cultural capital (e.g. attitudes and behaviours conducive to social mobility) by adopting their immigrant family's views. Thus, immigrant offspring's access to cultural capital is not tied to their socioeconomic status as argued by assimilation theories.

While participants' conceptualization of immigrants is similar to Ogbu's (1987) conceptualization of voluntary immigrants, participants' opinions of poor racialized white people somewhat contradicts Ogbu's conceptualization of 'castelike' or involuntary (non-immigrant) minorities'—a group unable to break the cycle of poverty. Furthermore, participants' views of themselves (and other immigrants) as being different from low income non-immigrants challenges one of the principal assertions of the dominant theoretical framework on the incorporation patterns of non-European offspring—that racialized non-white, and more specifically racialized black, immigrant offspring from low socioeconomic backgrounds are susceptible to incorporate into marginalized non-immigrant groups and their subcultures due to their close physical proximity to these groups (Gans, 1992; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). According to participants' social realities, the racialized white poor were a different class of their own, one

that was below the immigrant low income class. In their minds, what separated immigrant and non-immigrant families living in Ottawa's low income neighbourhoods was culture and race. For this reason, racialized non-white immigrants living in low income neighbourhoods did not interact or identify with non-immigrant low income groups. Participants' narratives are partly consistent with CEM's postulation that immigrants are a distinct group (culturally) from non-immigrant marginalized groups; they are much more inclined to engage with the mainstream society and are more likely to attempt to achieve social mobility compared to non-immigrant groups from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Ogbu, 1987). Participants' narratives suggest that racialized white poor people and 'castelike' minorities/involuntary immigrants have similar lifestyles and outlooks; whereas immigrants have similar outlooks and goals as the mainstream population.

Participants discussed a number of strategies immigrant families employed to overcome spatial barriers (e.g. presence of crime and negative influences) to upward socioeconomic mobility. As residents in low income neighbourhoods, some immigrant parents strived to provide their children with a stable and tolerable environment to grow up in, participants argued. One way this was accomplished was by trying to actively develop their neighbourhoods into safer and more vibrant communities. For instance, Dalila stated that her mother volunteered at their neighbourhood tenants' association and their neighbourhood community house. She thought that the neighbourhood was improving with more first generation immigrants getting involved in community-building activities. Even though Ottoman agreed that most parents of second generation immigrant youth wanted their neighbourhood to improve, he argued that only one or two parents actually tried to bring about change by getting involved in neighbourhood politics.

Furthermore, Ottoman asserted that those who got involved confronted many challenges, such as corruption and competition over resources and funds.

The problem is [in] a lot of these communities, the guys that are major organizers and leaders, not the volunteers, but the people getting paid, are not getting paid enough in their eyes. And I don't know where all this money is going. They get these government grants and I'm wondering why is this getting cancelled and why is this happening. I remember when [one] organizer came in and wanted to keep a record of exactly where the money went... [some people] wanted to not have those records. I was like why not? We can keep track of everything and we can know exactly where the money is going. They did not want that. Generally speaking, I guess if you are corrupt, you want things to stay the same so they could manipulate [the system]. [Ottoman]

Moreover, Ottoman asserted that there was a difference between the interests, attitudes and behaviours of racialized white non-immigrant residents and racialized non-white immigrants living in social housing neighbourhoods. According to Ottoman, most first generation immigrants desired to 'clean up' or eliminate criminal activities, such as drug dealing, and to make the community safer and more liveable. However, some residents obstructed or were resistant to change in the neighbourhood. Ottoman argued that residents that engaged in or who had a family member involved in illegal activities (e.g. selling and buying drugs) "felt more insecure" in a crime-free and dynamic neighbourhood. Racialized white residents, Ottoman attested, were interested in having "these parties and stuff for the holidays" to make the neighbourhood more enjoyable to live in, but not necessarily safer. Participants' narratives reveal that low income neighbourhoods are difficult to change or improve with the presences of individuals engaged in deviant behaviour.

Albeit only a limited number of immigrant parents and community leaders were observed attempting to bring about changes in their social housing communities, most of the participants'

parents used strict parenting styles and exercised parental control to shield them from everyday risks and negative influences found within their neighbourhoods. Participants narrated that many immigrant parents have learned the importance of limiting their children's (both male and female) time spent wandering pointlessly outdoors and being exposed to their neighbourhood environment. Additionally, participants' parents also tried to minimize their contact with the poor non-immigrant population within the neighbourhood. Without these parental safeguards, youth living in social housing communities were susceptible to negative influences, peer pressure, and joining the underclass.

My parents were very strict on me, but I know people who live in this place who either don't have good parents or whose parents are too busy working trying to keep everything up. They slip through the cracks and there's no support system. [Mu'ad]

It all really goes back to peer pressure. And it's not just drug dealing, it's picking up on bad language, aggressive behaviours, etc. I think more so [now] a lot of the Muslim families...know what's going on in the neighbourhood, we know what's happening. [Dalila]

[T]here was always that negative stuff hanging around, but my mom...wanted to keep me sheltered and more traditional so I wasn't allowed to hang out with certain kids, like the troubled lower income white kids. I wasn't allowed to go to their houses or sleepovers and things like that...I was only allowed to hang out with my best friend when I lived in the projects [who] was Jamaican and then my neighbour was Nigerian. I was only really allowed to hang out with those people because she thought that bad things would happen—the kids might get me into drugs and dealing and smoking and things like that. [Natasha]

Many of the participants recounted that their parents would advise and provide them guidelines as to where they could hang out and who they could interact with. Sub-Saharan African parents

also closely monitored their children's whereabouts and the company they kept to ensure they followed their guidelines.

[I would be told] don't stay out late, beware of who you hang out with. Growing up [we were told] make sure you don't hang out with this kind of person because this can happen. [Dalila]

My mother always told me to stay away from drugs and all that. Without my mother, I guess I would of been in that situation. [Issa]

As a kid, I grew up in my neighbourhood and I would play outside a lot. But after some point, when it's Maghrib [sunset] you have to come home. You're not [allowed] going out. [Marian]

We sometimes play with drug dealers at the basketball courts. Sometimes we don't know they are drug dealers until we see them later in the streets. Other times we just play with them on the court for competition, but when we see a mother we play only with our groups and stay away from them. We don't talk to them off court. We only say what's good. [Hakim]

The last comment (Hakim's comment) is worth highlighting. Hakim notes that the mere sight of a Sub-Saharan African mother/parent was enough to reinforce his parent's guideline to stay away from negative peer influences—this is the community forces in action.

A few of the participants mentioned that in some social housing communities, Sub-Saharan African parents were more proactive—they were interested in changing the environment or creating safe spaces instead of only policing their children and their 'bad/unsafe' environments. Immigrant parents were able to collectively create a positive environment/spaces for their children by organizing events, programs and activities that engaged youth and made them feel like they were a part of a close-knit community. Several of the participants indicated that they enjoyed living in their social housing neighbourhoods because of the close ties the

ethnic community within the low income neighbourhood were able to form. These participants felt a strong sense of belonging to their community. For instance, Jebril expressed contentment and pleasure living in his neighbourhood due to the social bonds he was able to establish with neighbourhood youth from similar ethnocultural/religious backgrounds as him. Jebril, as well as Rehema, reported that their ethnocultural groups were able to establish a close connection and solidarity with one another as a result of their close proximity to each other.

We got everything, living here, like together. Everyone knows each other very well. We know everyone's family. Everyone knows the area. We know who to talk to and who not to talk to. I (we) don't chill with [certain people]. We know who does what, when, where...The whole neighbourhood is [mostly] Somali. The whole clique, it's me and four other guys, that [are] like the main clique. But even though that's our clique, we are still brothers, everyone from the hood, we play ball together, we chill together. [Jebril]

The community was in a circle and there was a park in the middle of where we lived. The community that surrounded the circle was all close. My friends and family all lived there. It was a really close community, you could literally go over to your neighbour [and] ask for a cup of sugar. Everyone was close, everyone knew each other's names. [Rehema]

The program, the Somali Soccer League [started by Somali parents], helped me stay with my Somali culture. We were playing sports all together...it was very amazing. [Sahil]

According to the participants' narratives, racialized black children of immigrants living in low income neighbourhoods do not come from culturally deprived communities that do not exercise agency. Low income Sub-Saharan African immigrants have the ability to create ethnic enclaves—a place within which an immigrant community is well-connected, immigrant families are insulated from others not a part of the community, ethnic associations and businesses are established, and essential services, such as after-school programs, are made available to youth—within low income neighbourhoods.

In addition to collective efforts to improve low income neighbourhoods' conditions or to isolate the immigrant community, one participant, Nadira, related that her single mother went to great lengths to ensure that she and her siblings were not stigmatized by the mainstream society for their low socioeconomic status. According to Nadira, her mother worked two jobs to make sure she had a comfortable upbringing and she was able to engage in recreational activities.

For me, the neighbourhood was always an adventure—it was always like go to the park and play. As a child, I think I had an amazing childhood because I never ever felt like I grew up in a low income area. I never felt like there was anything missing from my life. My mom was everything we needed. She was working two jobs, but she was always home to help us with our homework. We were always well-fed, we always dressed nice. We did extra-curricular [activities at] ...the community centre, [it was] subsidized. I played soccer and basketball. My mom worked at home, so that made it easier. [Nadira]

Youth participants were asked to list the major factors that deterred them (and other youth) from personally falling victim to the traps found in low income housing neighbourhoods, in addition to parental influence and guidance. Some of the participants (mostly females) reiterated that they were not impacted by their neighbourhood context, they stayed inside their home when not at school. Other participants stated that it was crucial for them to stay away from negative peer influences and to have good friends and/or positive role models. The majority of the participants were generally able to stay away from negative peer influences by reason of their knowledge of the negative consequences of associating with people that did drugs and partook in illicit activities. They knew, among other things, mixing with individuals engaging in deviant activities and anti-social behaviour possibly led to a negative life course and disappointing their family. A couple of the participants, including Hakim, argued that their friends did not have their undying loyalty. There were grounds for ending friendships, irrespective of length of friendship.

For instance, Hakim argued if a friend was derailing him from achieving his life goals or from his efforts to achieve upward social mobility, he would end his friendship with this friend. This was a sufficient ground to terminate a relationship. Sahil, on the other hand, stated that he would try to positively influence friends or individuals he associated with if they were headed down a negative path rather than decisively severing ties with them.

I live here, but I don't associate myself with bad people. But if I did, I would actually try and get them out of there [from the world of illicit activities]. [Sahil]

You come first, you put yourself first. You just focus on school and stuff. If you want to hang out with these people [negative peers], first you should really get your head straight. You can't make a living off of this [drugs/criminal lifestyle]. You have to cut them off...they are going to bring you down in your life. [Hakim]

I try to make friends with people I can relate to and I also see as good people themselves. And I do know about [the negative influences of] drugs, that helps. [Selwa]

Moreover, a few other respondents affirmed that knowing the future repercussions of actions and choices made as a young adolescent, were enough to deter them from taking a negative path in life.

I wanted to be a cop, so I was like if I do this, I won't have a chance to [take] that path...I wanted to help out my community. Also, my dad was a police officer. So, I want to follow in his footsteps. [Issa]

You have to be smart. You have to know what is right [and] what is wrong. Some people they don't care. They are ignorant. Some people they don't think when they are younger. They don't think [about] what they are doing. [Jaleel]

Additionally, having a strict moral code—e.g. considering deviant and anti-social behaviour morally bad and wrong—was another deterrent from entering the criminal world or leading an

unproductive or unfulfilling life. Religion played an important role in the lives of several participants. Youth who strongly adhered to their parents' religion were able to develop a list of personal convictions to guide their behaviour, a behaviour that was consistent with their parents' high expectations of them. Some neighbourhoods had a place of worship that Sub-Saharan African parents and their children would visit, sometimes often. For instance, Muslim male youth were encouraged to pray at their neighbourhood musalla (prayer hall/space) and to attend religious study classes offered there. Muslim male participants that went to a musalla in or near their neighbourhood said that they tried to adhere to the tenets of their faith and encouraged others to do so as well.

I think sticking with religion and sticking with the right people is what is going to get you though. [Yahya]

Since there is a musalla right next to my house, it helped me. I went to the mosque...It kept me straight [away from negative things]. [Sahil]

It is sometimes hard to go there [musalla]. Sometimes we're just too busy. We always have it right there... to be honest, its good [having a religious circle]basically you are just going on the path of Allah [God] ... [you are] getting people motivated and you are also motivating yourself to do better. [Jebriel]

Another key factor that kept youth away from joining negative peer groups and engaging in illicit or unproductive activities was participation in organized community activities during out of school critical hours (e.g. after school, holidays and summer breaks).

Young people can get easily distracted if they are not busy... If they are not doing school, work or anything, they could go into something, like they could easily do something wrong. So, it's always good to keep them busy in like after school programs, stuff like that. Community is always a big part of young kids and students and how they succeed. [Jaleel]

Sahil and Hakim both stated that their after school and summer hours were occupied when they were in high school, which kept them away from engaging in negative activities. For example, Sahil stated that "they [people who engage in deviant activities] are trying to get money the haram [unlawful/criminal] way and they [youth employment workers] give you a job without even an interview...we got money just like that". His experience points to the importance of providing youth alternative ways to make money, such as through youth employment programs that make it easy for youth to find employment that occupies their time purposefully. Participants had difficulty finding jobs on their own. For instance, Marian stated, "the whole finding a retail job is so difficult". A few participants, through the efforts of community workers in their neighbourhood, were able to find their first summer job. Community workers informed them of programs offered by mainstream organizations, like the Youth Services Bureau (YSB), which helps youth between the ages of 15 and 17 find their first job (YSB, 2015). Selwa and Walid found these types of programs beneficial.

They (YSB) were able to help me find a job, my first job. That helped a lot. I worked for several months. [Salwa]

It was helpful and useful. I got a good job and a good reference. I got some experience working with kids. [Walid]

Sub-Saharan immigrant offspring's narratives uncovered that low income neighbourhoods are more dynamic, vibrant and demographically diverse than they are often framed to be in the media and in the imagination of many people. Although there were risks associated with living in poor neighbourhoods, such as exposure to negative peer influences and deviance (largely as a consequence of poverty), participants' narratives revealed that low income Canadian neighbourhoods do not seem to be as restraining, structurally limiting, and debilitating

as poor American neighbourhoods (urban ghettos) are reported to be in the literature (e.g. Gans, 1992; Lewis, 1966; Wilson, 1996). Immigrant families living in low income neighbourhoods, once familiar with their social contexts, exercised agency. They strove to improve their neighbourhood living conditions and to protect themselves against geographic threats that impeded their incorporation into mainstream society. These protective mechanisms (community forces) included, immigrant families making a distinction and distancing themselves from non-immigrant (racialized white) residents; individually and collectively monitoring and supervising their offspring; advising youth and informing them about the repercussions of engaging or associating with individuals who engaged in deviant and unproductive activities; getting involved in community-building, crime prevention and other community-based initiatives; establishing religious/ethnocultural associations and meeting spaces; and building a strong sense of community (i.e. organizing ethnocultural community events and running recreational and other activities for youth).

Most of the participants did not require all the above-mentioned safeguards. The extent to which participants were vulnerable to negative neighbourhood risks hinged on their exposure to risk factors (i.e. if they hang out in the neighbourhood); their personal beliefs, values and attitudes; their understanding of the consequences of associating with deviant peers and transgressing beyond the limits/guidelines set by their parents; and access to programs during critical hours (after-school, weekends and summer time). More specifically, participants' susceptibility to the seduction of street life in the neighbourhood depended on the type of person the participants were, their gender and the amount of freedom they were afforded while growing up (usually determined by their parents' cultural practices). Participants could be placed in three (not necessarily mutually exclusive) camps based on their description of their level of interaction

with their low income neighbourhood and residents (i.e. low income youth). Participants could be categorized as being: the homebodies—those that were not exposed to their environment context and fellow youth; the steadfast—those that held strong convictions and were able to self-regulate themselves; and/or the entertainment-seekers—those that were peer-oriented and preferred hanging-out in the neighbourhood rather than staying inside their homes (e.g. to study). Those that fell under the ‘homebodies’ category were not all homebodies by choice. As stated earlier, most of the female participants were not allowed, for cultural reasons, to hang-out or interact very much with their neighbourhood. However, a few of the participants mentioned that they were anti-social and/or preferred to stay inside the home (e.g. individuals that preferred to play video games, watch movies, and/or to read a book or to study often); they were homebodies by choice. Participants who were in the steadfast category, some of which were also homebodies, did not seem to have any desire to go near illicit activities or to communicate with individuals that did not appear to be striving to achieve upward social mobility, let alone those engaged in illicit activities. They were not peer-oriented. They were internally-driven by their own beliefs, values and desire for upward mobility. They were not attached to their neighbourhood or its residents. The last category of participants were the entertainment-seekers. Entertainment-seekers were the most at-risk of being influenced by their neighbourhood context and their peers. They were also the most likely to be attached to their neighbourhoods compared to the participants that fell under the other two categories. An individual that was an entertainment-seeker spent time playing at the basketball court and hanging out with their neighbourhood friends and ‘other brothers from the hood’. Despite the fact that entertainment-seekers wanted to incorporate into the mainstream and they held similar values as their parents, they needed extra

guidance and community supervision, as well as community activities and employment to keep them busy and out of potential trouble.

A few of the participants had experience living in middleclass neighbourhoods, in addition to low income neighbourhoods, as children and adolescents. These participants provided insights into their experiences living in two often contrasting socioeconomic spatial contexts.

Moving on up: Reflections on neighbourhood cultures and spatial disparities

The participants who made a transition between a low socioeconomic neighbourhood and a higher one, noticed a stark difference between their old social housing community and their new neighbourhood. One of the biggest reported benefits associated with moving from a low income to a higher income neighbourhood was an increased sense of safety and a decreased rate of male delinquency. Higher income neighbourhoods were reported to be quiet (people remained inside their dwellings), less diverse and more guarded (e.g. it was visually void of deviant behaviour compared to low income neighbourhoods). Children of Sub-Saharan African immigrants living in these neighbourhoods felt isolated, which was not necessarily a negative thing.

Because it [the old social housing neighbourhood] is [in] more of a bad area, you would see people who would go off the wrong path in that neighbourhood. In this [higher income] neighbourhood, it's secluded—you go to school, you come right back home.
[Rahema]

I moved out... [of a low income neighbourhood] when I was in grade 6/7... [The new] neighbourhood was very safe, very quiet; [there was] nothing going on. It wasn't community housing. So, it was a nice transition then where I was before. [Mu'ad]

Mu'ad argued that it was more difficult living in a low income neighbourhood than a higher

income neighbourhood. In low income neighbourhoods, it was customary that youth pressured one another to hang-out and play outdoors in the neighborhood, which made youth more prone to commit mischief. Mu'ad stated,

I give more credit to the people who become successful coming out of [low income] neighbourhoods because there is more running against you, more influences, more young people. I hung out with the young [youth in the neighbourhood] until my 6th - 7th grade. There would always be someone knocking on the door [saying] 'come outside and play'. But when I moved out, there was no kids there, so I was always in the house. There was no chance. My philosophy is that the more you are outside with people your age, the more, especially at a young age, [there is] impetus for trouble to happen.

Samuel also had a similar experience when he moved from a low income neighbourhood to a higher income neighbourhood. Samuel argued that “the [higher income] neighbourhood did not have much of an influence” because “there was none of that lets go play”, “let's go play basketball”. He said that “everybody was inside their houses” by a certain time. Samuel reported feeling isolated, but he thought it “was a good thing” because there were no distractions.

Furthermore, Samuel observed that,

A lot of white, non-immigrant Canadian kids benefit from not only their neighbourhood, but also the sort of support they get from their friends [and] also little things like having structure—parents that tell them okay you study after class this much and then after that you can go play. But [in low income neighbourhoods] ...all the neighbourhood kids would meet afterschool and just play. We did homework barely.

As Mu'ad's and Samuel's experiences show, neighbourhood social contexts could have a significant impact on youths' life trajectories directly and indirectly through variables such as schooling experiences and acculturation, in addition to exposure to deviant behaviour. The participants' observations and experiences reinforce extant research that found middleclass and

higher income neighbourhoods were advantageous contexts that facilitate the achievement of favourable social outcomes compared to low income neighbourhoods (Pong & Hao, 2007; Portes & MacLeod, 1996). Participants' narratives revealed that children living in middleclass neighbourhoods were mostly all homebodies (little opportunity existed to be an entertainment-seeker within these neighbourhoods). A conspicuous feature of middleclass neighbourhood culture was social isolation and restricted social contact between neighbourhood youth. Thus, immigrant parents living in middle income neighbourhoods potentially had more control over their children. These findings, as well as the supporting literature, show that neighbourhoods concretely influence the life trajectories of youth not only through their contexts and cultures, but also through their association with school quality. Neighbourhoods often determine the school youth attend and the quality of education they received. The next chapter explores the interrelationship between socio-economic location and schooling. More specifically, the next chapter discusses how participants' socioeconomic status and spatial coordinates affected their schooling experiences and educational outcomes.

7. Divergent institutional cultures, yet similar deficiencies: Relying on self, family and community to reach educational goals

The literature on the educational experiences of racialized black youth in Canada strongly suggests that schools are the biggest obstacle to children of racialized black immigrants' incorporation into mainstream society (e.g. Brathwaite & James, 1996; Codjoe, 2001; Dei et. al., 1997; James, 2007). Social exclusion, living in a neighbourhood with a low quality of life, and attending poorly resourced schools offering a lacklustre education are the system forces or the unfailing recipe society uses to maintain racialized non-white (as well as racialized white) poor people in their low socioeconomic positions (Ogbu & Simons, 1998; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Building on the findings of the previous chapter, which examined how neighbourhood environments impacted the incorporation experiences of the participants, this chapter explores the following questions pertaining to participants' schooling and knowledge acquisition experiences: How do participants respond to or cope with discriminatory treatment, institutional exclusions and structural racism (if they perceive to experience it)? How do Sub-Saharan African immigrant offspring and their families overcome institutional barriers to educational attainment? What type of educational resources and supports did participants have access to and use? Before these questions are explored, the type of schools participants attended and these schools' climates and cultures are first discussed to better understand the schooling contexts of the participants.

Structural inequality and social contexts of schooling

The majority of the participants went to schools in the English public school board, several went to schools in the French public school board, and a few attended faith-based schools

(e.g. an Islamic school or a school in the Catholic (public) school board). Participants were asked to describe the school cultures and socio-demographic contexts of the primary and secondary schools they went to. Most of the participants attended their designated schools—schools located in or near their neighbourhoods. Participants that were able to attend schools located in middle and higher income neighbourhoods cited the following reasons for being able to do so: a) their families' household incomes increased enabling them to relocate to a higher income neighbourhood; b) their social housing communities/lower income neighbourhoods were nested within a higher income neighbourhood; c) their parents had knowledge of their school board's cross-boundary process (how to gain access to a school in a different geographic zone or 'better' district). Two participants that lived in low income neighbourhoods were able to gain access to a school in a higher income neighbourhood because they enrolled in a program (e.g. French immersion) that was not offered at their designed or home high school. A few of the respondents noted that schools in low income regions offered basic regular English, ESL and core French programs, whereas schools in higher income areas had more enrichment programs, including gifted, International Baccalaureate, and French immersion.

The respondents used a number of different terms to describe the high schools they went to. Most schools located in middle and higher income neighbourhoods were colloquially referred to as 'white' schools by the participants due to the fact that mostly racialized white students attended these schools. Some schools in higher income areas were also referred to as 'gifted' or 'rich' schools because many students were enrolled in the gifted program and were perceived to be from a privileged background. Multiple terms were used to describe schools in low income areas, such as 'FOB' (Fresh off the Boat) school, 'black' school, 'ghetto' school, and multicultural school. Many of the nicknames participants assigned to schools were primarily

based on the socioeconomic and demographic profile of the student population. For instance, a FOB school had a large recent immigrant population. Respondents' opinions and subjective evaluations of schools were based on numerous variables, including school culture and climate, behavior and academic performance of the students, parental and community involvement, and general appearance and resources of the school.

A number of participants noted that not all schools offered the same quality of education and had a good reputation. For the most part, schools in middle to high income neighbourhoods had good reputations and were considered 'good schools' due to the fact that these schools had higher academic outcomes (i.e. students performed well on provincial standardized tests), greater parental involvement and more resources compared to schools in low income areas. Mu'ad narrated that he, along with his siblings, went to a school in "a white upper class area so the schools there [were] predominately [populated with] upper class working professionals' kids." He stated, "[these kids] get high grades [and] their parents are involved in the school... [because they] have the resources and time to be involved." In contrast, Mu'ad argued, "[those from] my elementary school in these [low income] neighbourhoods, probably 20% have graduated high school because I am still in touch with them".

Similarly, Samuel shared that he attended a diverse school, where he estimated approximately 40% of students were racialized non-white and 60% were racialized white. At this school he noticed,

By the time we got to grade 11/12, most of the black students were, or at least the black male students, were kicked out of high school or weren't in the high school anymore....black females did very well...But also the reality is a lot of students who didn't necessarily do well came from specific regions in Ottawa, like some specific neighbourhoods...I think it was more so socioeconomic factors.

Consistent with past research that reported racialized black students from poor neighbourhoods had low educational attainment rates (e.g. Brown & Sinay, 2008), Samuel observed that racialized black male students from low income neighbourhoods performed poorly at his high school, whereas racialized black females did relatively well. One participant speculated that this trend could be partially linked to male and female students' uneven exposure to low income neighbourhood risks and culture (e.g. males were more likely to hang-out in the neighbourhood during out-of-school hours instead of doing homework). Degmo argued that "the ones that are outside [in the neighbourhood] doing whatever they do, playing basketball or hanging out with their friends or out and about, during school [year] time are the boys. Usually the girls are inside". Of course, it is more complicated than this. Black males do not fail solely based on their actions, but they are frequently pushed out of the education system by social, structural and institutional racism (Dei et al., 1997).

Reflecting on structural inequality, Mu'ad argued that it was more difficult for students from low income neighbourhoods to do well educationally "because there is more running against [them]" compared to students from higher income backgrounds. This observation is more or less a central argument of the segmented assimilation theory. Both the neighbourhood and school environments poor immigrant children grow up and learn in put these youths at-risk of having negative life outcomes. Mu'ad's experience in both low income and high income social contexts led him to conclude:

[T]here is a divider that I see between the neighbourhood that I was raised in, in my formative years, and the one I went to in my later years...I think that's where education is sometimes unfair... it's not that they [low income kids that fail] are unintelligent, it's just the system does not facilitate their success.

Mu'ad believed that the education system produced unequal outcomes because educational

achievement was linked to social and spatial inequality. He asserted that educational achievement did not only hinge on intellectual ability, but also on larger structural issues. Mu'ad's reflections and perceptions of his social contexts are in agreement with previous research that found schools reproduce inequality and exacerbate social inequalities (Bankston & Caldas, 1996; Rumberger & Palardy, 2005). Since schools were based on residential boundaries, racialized non-white youth from low income backgrounds were segregated in low income schools, while racialized white middleclass youth were concentrated in schools in suburban areas. Schools in wealthier neighbourhoods can draw from the financial and non-financial resources of the students' parents; whereas schools located in low income neighbourhoods usually do not have the same luxury (Coleman, 1990; Coleman et al., 1966; Jencks & Mayer, 1990). Thus, some schools are more endowed and better equipped to meet the educational needs of their students.

Another participant, Hayat, reported that her parents also noticed disparities between schools, and as a result, did not allow her to attend particular schools near her low income neighbourhood. Hayat disclosed,

[In] high school and middle school, because we were getting a lot older and younger people start having their own identities and they start experiencing different things, my parents were more concerned. So, I feel at this point, they didn't just allow us to go to any school... Now, they were focusing on us not just [getting an] education, but at the same time having [a good] surrounding. The middle school we went to was a very good school in terms [of] its reputation in the city... students were more serious, there was a lot more international students, a lot of ambitious people [and] there was French immersion...My home school didn't have that good of a reputation because of its social make up. They are known more for their troublemakers...The high school we went

to...was my home school, but at the same time it had [a good] reputation in the city and because of that there was no point for us to go somewhere else.

One strategy immigrant parents used to overcome geographic and school inequalities, was to find a way to enrol their children in a reputable school (a school known for their educational excellence and highly motivated student population). With knowledge of school rankings and reputation, Hayat's parents made a conscious effort to ensure that she went to a school, regardless of where it was located, with a good reputation in terms of academic achievement and school environment. The school environment was considered as important as the academic reputation of the school because these two factors were often closely related. It is important to note that not only racialized white schools in middle (and higher) income neighbourhoods were considered reputable schools by the participants. Hayat (and her family) considered the multicultural school she went to reputable because it offered a number of programs, it had a good academic standing, and the students (overwhelmingly immigrant offspring) at the school were studious and ambitious.

Even though schools in low income areas were not homogeneous (as well as those in higher income areas), many participants noticed some general differences between schools in low income areas and those in wealthier areas in terms of school culture and climate. The majority of schools in higher income neighbourhoods were described to be stricter and more educationally rigorous than schools in low income neighbourhoods. Most schools in higher income areas were reported to have firmly established rules and goals that created a competitive environment more conducive to higher educational attainment. High expectations and standards were set for students, and through discipline and social control, these standards were upheld. Low income schools in comparison were perceived to have lower standards, a more social

environment, and a lenient and tolerant school culture. Yahya attended a low income multicultural high school in grade 9 and 10 and a school with “a lot of white people” in a high income area for grades 11 and 12. He argued that these schools were very different: the higher income school “was more strict—everything had to be done a certain way” and the low income school was “more lenient”. Hakim also went to a few high schools with various socioeconomic compositions due to his family changing residences. He argued that the low income school he attended was more social and permissive compared to the higher income schools he attended. Hakim claimed, “the whole environment in a black [low income] school is more rowdy, less organized, the teachers have less control. The white school [was] more proper and strict”. According to Yahya, “strict is better because it puts you on a straight path”. These participants argued that students could be more inclined to procrastinate and be unproductive if the school is very social, lenient and less structured. Jaleel shared that after he graduated from high school, he attended an alternative adult high school that gave students the flexibility to not go to classes and the opportunity to work at their own pace. Jaleel stated that this school structure did not work for him. He switched to a high school with a more traditional and structured set-up because he was not able to raise his grades to get into university at the alternative high school. He required formal instruction and assistance from a teacher to understand certain subjects, such as science, not a flexible school structure and lenient teacher.

Studies that examined the impact of sociodemographic composition of schools on the educational achievement of minoritized students (e.g. poor and or racialized non-white students) found that there was a significant relationship between these two variables (Coleman et al., 1966; Jencks & Mayer, 1990). Many theorists (e.g. Coleman, 1990; Portes & Zhou, 1993) argue that racialized non-white students are able to have higher educational outcomes if they attend a

school dominated by middleclass racialized white students because racialized non-white students can benefit from the human, cultural and social capital of the racialized white middleclass. These schools, like a few of the participants mentioned, have a culture of high expectations and a motivated school community that works toward achieving these high expectations. Contrarily, racialized non-white low income students that attend low income schools are “doubly disadvantaged”—first by their families low socioeconomic status, and secondly by school poverty (Rumberger & Palardy, 2005, p. 2001).

While schools in middle and higher income areas reportedly had high standards and high educational outcomes, a few of the participants argued that teachers at these schools did not assist underachievers to meet expectations. Walid argued, “I feel like schools...that have high academic priorities, they care more about the high achieving students than the low [achieving] ones. Giving them [low achievers] more attention [is needed]”. At these schools, students were typically expected to independently strive for excellence or to meet expectations with parental financial and non-financial assistance. Inside higher income schools, expectations were to be met with regular classroom instruction and uniform assistance provided to all students. Furthermore, racialized white schools in higher income areas were consider less inclusive than schools in low income districts. Hakim stated,

[Elementary school] was the most multicultural experience I've ever had. Every single season, every celebration, every religion—they would involve everyone. It was really inclusive. In Ramadan, we [Muslim children] were all fasting as little kids, you know we tried fasting, [and] they would have little presentations in the gym where they had sections [such as] ...how to pray salat [Islamic prayer]...the story of Noah (prophet), stuff like that. They helped you understand different religions and how to respect different people. [The other school], was not bad. [But] [t]hey [just] didn't involve you in different activities.

According to Hakim, a positive aspect of schools in low income areas is that they are diverse and more accommodating. These schools attempt to be more inclusive in comparison to schools located in higher income areas that were mostly populated by racialized white students. By including multicultural content (i.e. celebrating and increasing awareness of non-Judo-Christian cultural and religious heritages) in the curriculum and by teaching students to respect differences, participants felt diverse low income schools were more inclusive. Equally important (as creating inclusive environments) was having a diverse student body as well as teacher and guidance counsellor population. Participants that went to a diverse school felt more included in their school environment. As Selwa, Salih and Nadira indicate below, they, as racialized non-white students, felt more at ease attending schools that had a significant racialized non-white population.

Being a hijabi [a Muslim girl who wears a head scarf] in school kinda helps if you are in a school with other hijabis as well. You hang out with them. But if [I] were in a school that didn't have many hijabis, I think I would personally be more excluded in my opinion. I never really experienced that [exclusion] because there [were] always people who are similar to myself. [Selwa]

Our school was supportive...because a lot of teachers were black. My counsellor was black too. We bonded. He gave me daps [form of handshake] and everything. He was very nice...He taught me how to get my head straight. [Salih]

I went to a high school that was really multicultural. There were a lot of immigrant communities.... I always felt like I belonged. [Nadira]

Conversely, students that attend a racialized white school could feel alienated and isolated. For example, Natasha was in a gifted program in a racialized white school in a higher income area. Albeit the school met Natasha's academic needs, socially Natasha was marginalized and

excluded. She revealed,

I felt myself marginalized because I was the only black kid in that school in that class. I think they thought okay she is in gifted now, let's just worry about the academics, let's forget about the socialization. I was bullied at school and I was left out of a lot of things because I did not look like the other kids. My only other friends were Asian kids. I was sort of aligning myself with them. I could never get in with the white kids and be part of the cool kids.

The participants' narratives about schooling contexts somewhat challenges the dominant perspective that schools with mostly middleclass students offer better learning environments to minoritized students. In these contexts, it is argued, racialized non-white and poor students can adopt their middleclass peers' high aspirations and their behaviours that are conducive to higher educational outcomes (such as being studious); they can also benefit from these schools' cultures, which promote high expectations (Coleman, 1990; Portes, 1996). However, the issue is not that racialized non-white immigrant offspring lack motivation and high aspirations—on the contrary, immigrant families place a higher premium on education than the mainstream and immigrant offspring often set high educational expectations for themselves (Brathwaite & James, 1996; James, 2007; Ogbu, 1987)—the problem is the socioeconomic organization of society and the mainstream's exclusionary treatment of racialized non-white students in schools. Natahsa's experience shows that there is more to schooling than setting high standards, promoting academic excellence, and creating an intellectually challenging learning environment. Additionally, schools need to be supportive, equitable, inclusive and barrier-free in every possible way (e.g. curriculum, environment and relationships). Although schools with a diverse population were reportedly more inclusive than schools lacking diversity, the core tenets of multiculturalism and inclusivity were described to be superficially adhered to by schools striving

to embody these ideals as opposed to substantively implemented inside and outside classrooms.

Experiences of exclusion in schools

As briefly touched upon above, a couple of participants believed that racialized black and marginalized students encountered structural and institutional barriers. In addition to larger structural and institutional barriers (including unfavourable schooling contexts), many of the participants felt that they or other racialized black students were subtly excluded and discriminated against by school personnel. This section primarily takes a closer look at participants' experiences of exclusion (or lack thereof) in mundane life at the schools they attended.

Irrespective of the socioeconomic and demographic composition of the student population of schools participants attended, most of the respondents reported experiencing covert forms of exclusion sometime during their schooling careers. Many of the participants declared that racism in the education system was hidden and not easily identifiable. Jaleel, for example, asserted that racism is “not something that is obvious”, but he argued “you can tell minorities [are] not like a priority”. Nadira affirmed,

I don't think in my life I've ever been harshly confronted but it is more along the lines of side comments, just the way people treat me... You know some people you kind of get a feeling they're not being fair and stuff, but you can't really put your finger on it because they treat you almost the same as everyone else.

Marian also stated,

Never so plainly or bluntly someone excludes you, but definitely there [we]re times that I felt excluded ...I remember in grade 9 [in] my science class my teacher really hated it whenever I raised my hand for a question. Me or just any other Muslim girl. I don't know if it was just because we were Muslim or just minorities. I'm not sure, but she just hated it

when we participated. It was just so weird. Again, it wasn't blunt, it wasn't clear black and white, it was very indirect. She was very negative towards us.

Jaleel, Nadira and Marian narratives highlight racialized non-white students are not explicitly excluded from mundane life in educational institutions, but by being deemed unimportant, invisible, barred from participating and by being differentially treated based on their identifiable characteristics (e.g. race, gender, culture and religion), racialized non-white students are indirectly and covertly excluded.

A couple of participants argued that some forms of exclusion were institutionally legitimized. For example, Marian argued that guidance counsellors discouraged students who achieved low grades from pursuing certain classes and educational pathways. According to Marian, “[t]hey would look at your grades and then if they see that you're not really doing so well, they'd be like I don't think you should be going for this class or something like that. Just very discouraging”. Jaleel also shared, “I had counsellors that would tell me, ‘yeah I don't think that you could get into this’... They might discourage me a lot”. While helpful guidance, advice and information were appreciated, participants did not appreciate guidance counsellors that were discouraging and obstructive. Most of the participants merely wanted guidance counsellors to allow them to take courses and the educational paths they wanted to take despite any reservations counsellors or teachers might have had. Guidance counsellors could create hardship and unnecessary barriers for students when they impose their views or make decisions on behalf of students, as Rehema’s experience (below) illustrates.

I had two guidance counsellors throughout high school. The first one was the most helpful. I told her how I wanted to do reach ahead and she planned everything for me whereas the second one she was kind of like, ‘do you really want to do this? I don't think you should’. She did this from a great place. She just wanted to slow it down for me, not

push myself too hard. But when I kept insisting she was like, 'no I don't think so, I don't think we should do this'... I literally went to a different guidance counsellor. I went the days I knew she was not there. I was like oh my guidance counsellor is not there. I purposely did that.

Rehema's experience demonstrates that not only are low achieving students discouraged, but high achieving students could also be hindered from achieving their personal educational goals. Because Rehema was tenacious, she was able to achieve the goal (to complete high school in 3 years) she established for herself before entering high school.

Furthermore, some of the participants reported that racialized non-white students, and in particular racialized black youth, were encouraged to take applied classes, pushed to pursue college as opposed to university and were discouraged from aspiring or striving to enter particular (prestigious) fields by their teachers and guidance counsellors. Participants noted, instead of being motivated and provided support to reach their goals, racialized black students were often urged to lower their expectations.

[Teachers] would always try to push people [into particular streams]. [They would say] Oh if it is too hard, we can always put you into applied and once you are in applied, it's so tough to get out. [Marian]

In high school, there were periods where I felt excluded...I had teachers tell me this education lane is not for you. [A teacher] told a peer of mine who was black that he ought to drop out and go into music and these type of things. And I told the teacher I want to become a lawyer and they would tell me that's not your place...When I told my guidance counsellor I want to go to law school, he told me no that's not something feasible for you to think of, something else, college perhaps. The institution itself was a barrier I would say to success and advancement. [Mu'ad]

They pushed us more to go to [a particular] college. I don't know if it was some secret contract or something, but they kept pushing us to go to that College. [Emaan]

Several participants argued that teachers negatively stereotyped dominant racialized black groups in their schools because they were considered overtly social and less interested in learning, particularly male students. It was implied that teachers favoured female students more than male students because they performed better academically and were not seen as troublemakers. However, it could be possible that racialized black students seem disinterested in learning at school due to being negatively stereotyped and not the other way around. Racialized black males often rebel (e.g. attend classes late, skip classes, fail to meet teacher's expectations) as a form of resistance against institutional racism and "hegemonic discourses of education that construct them as troublemakers, criminals, and gangsters, as illiterate, and as at-risk low achievers" (James, 2007, p. 24).

I feel like my teacher had a sort of prejudice against Somali people to be honest cause like there was a lot of Somali people at my school and a lot of them would fool around. So, they would just all classify us as delinquents or something. [Marian]

I know some teachers had bad experiences with other Somali boys and then they automatically think oh he is Somali, he is a trouble-maker. [Yahya]

They definitely liked the girls more than the boys because the boys were kind of a little bit more mischievous. [Nadira]

Jebril also argued that all students were not treated the same at the high school he attended. He asserted that students from a privileged background were favoured at his high school. More specifically, Jebril argued that racialized white students were favoured because they were often obsequious, smart (i.e. identified as gifted) and from a higher socioeconomic class. Jebril

suggested that socio-economic class, race, and behavioural attitudes were intertwined factors that influenced academic performance and teacher attitudes. Jebril further argued that,

Teachers literally don't care about you at all. They just teach you and they just leave you. They don't care where you're going in life. They don't care about your well-being... [if] you are a good student, they will kind of give you sympathy and stuff... But if you don't show interest in the class, they won't even try to help you.

According to Jebril, racialized black students were ignored and not assisted by teachers in his experience. However, students that were performing well were given sympathy. A few other participants also mentioned that students that were naturally smart or independently worked very hard to excel, were differentiated from the larger social group they were categorized belonging to. Both Emaan and Nadira shared that they were considered smart and were consequently treated better than other racialized black youth. Similarly, Marian argued that teachers took her more seriously when she was able to get into a highly regarded competitive program.

[Teachers] were [approachable] because they thought I was smart—that's the thing. They differentiated me from the rest of the blacks. They knew I was different, but when I was younger, not in high school but younger, I did have teachers that hated me; I don't know if it was just my face. [Emaan]

My high school was divided not just into academic and applied, there was more. There was IB, International Baccalaureate. I went in that. ... most of the people were like 'oh you're in this IB program okay you're serious, you want to learn'. [Marian]

I did really well in high school...I never really had a problem with teachers because I was always kind of a favourite. They had strong favourites in my high school. [Favouritism was based] more on how smart you were. [Nadira]

By default, racialized black students were considered underachievers, disengaged learners, and were sometimes not liked, according to the participants. Some participants even suggested that

schools that had diverse and inclusive environments expected racialized black youth not to perform well and succeed. This is not surprising, given that past studies provide evidence to uphold the view that “educators and school officials consistently respond to high concentrations of poor minority students with lower expectations and a less challenging curriculum”

(Rumberger & Palardy, 2005, p. 2002). Dalila and Hawa declared,

I wish my teachers [told me] you are so smart, you're so bright. You just put a lot of work into it [e.g. assignments], and it feels like they dismissed what I was going through...And sometimes, actually most of the time, a lot of [the teacher's] comments weren't even positive. It was kind of like, I don't know— the way they would write these reports to your parents was kind of—it makes you think they didn't see you in anyway, they didn't think you would amount to anything. [Dalila]

When you are in these schools that are full of all these diverse cultures, mostly black type of cultures, most of the people [school staff], it's almost [as] if they're condescending because they expect you to either mess up or they except you not be able to measure up to all the other expectations. And then even if you do measure up to their expectations, they kinda make it seem like they should reward you because they never thought that you would even get to that level. Let's say it's parent interviews or something along those lines where you bring up oh my mom's English is not that well it's almost like I knew it...it's as if they [i.e. teachers] are always trying to justify why you are what you are. [Hawa]

Hawa argued that teachers assumed children of low income immigrants would inherently perform poorly in school due to justifiable and predictable reasons (e.g. parents not proficient in English). She thought it was patronizing that some teachers needed to reward racialized black students for just meeting expectations instead of expecting all students to excel. These narratives show that the burden is on racialized black students to perform well and to show they do not fit the stereotypic view of the ‘black underachieving, poor behaved student’. However, one

participant's experience illustrates that even if a racialized black child is an exceptional student, teachers try to hold that student back due to teachers' inability to imagine a black child as being smart. Natasha affirmed,

I was actually a really good student. I was identified as gifted when I was younger, but the teachers always thought that they had to hold me back. And my mom didn't agree with that. Luckily, my mom is a lawyer, so she really advocated for me. She was very involved in my education...I would always finish the work before everyone and have nothing to do and be so bored in class. So, my mom is like you have to do something about this. It took one teacher who was more, I guess compassionate and socially aware, to actually get me tested for gifted. And basically, my mom had to fight them to actually get me to do those tests. Of course, I aced the test and I got sent to [a] gifted school... I think the expectation was that a black child could not be capable of such intelligence.

Natasha argued that once she was able to prove (with the help of her mother) that she was 'smart', teachers gave her more attention and recognition. Although the school system was not responsible for Natasha's high intellectual aptitude, she stated that "I was always their pet project...they sort of painted me as their model minority: 'isn't she so bright', 'isn't she so smart'". What can be deduced from this is that school personnel readily blame racialized non-white students and their communities for their academic failure and take credit for their success.

Participants dealt with and overcame discrimination in different ways. A few of the participants, by proving they were capable of high academic achievement, were able to dispel negative stereotypes their teachers held about them. Other participants depended on their parents/guardians to advocate for them and assist them to reach their educational goals. Most of the participants did not let racism discourage them from pursuing their goals. For example, Issa stated, "I have [experienced racism] but I never let that bother me". Similarly, Hayat declared "even though there is always that possibility [of experiencing racism] and people are racist, I

never let that get in the way of my personal pursuits”. Nonetheless, not all of the participants said they had the disposition to ignore what they perceived to be unjust or unfair behaviour. Zola argued,

I always stood up for myself. I want to pursue law. I'm going to be defending other people's interests; I have to be able to defend mine. I'm kind of sassy sometimes; you could say it's in a good way or in a bad way. It depends on how you see it. But for me, I'm not gonna let anyone walk all over me. I always had that mindset, even in high school. That's why sometimes I got in trouble. I went to the principal's office.

Zola implied that standing up for one's self and defending one's interests are sometimes grounds for discipline. This is a major flaw of the education system. In many circumstances, students become rebellious in response to school personnel and teachers' biases and persistent unfair treatment (James, 2007). School personnel are quick to discipline minoritized students and confirm their biases, but they are reluctant to examine their own actions and prejudices that cause minoritized students to rebel. For instance, in describing an experience with a teacher thought to be racist, Nadira reflected,

In the beginning, I thought okay it's all in my head. But it just started getting more and more to the point I would act up. I did not confront [the teacher] right away, but I started being rude to him because there is so much that you can take from a person. He would say things to me and I would roll my eyes and that was purposely [done]. I'm like you treat me like I have attitude, I'll give you attitude. So, I'm like what are you going to do? We weren't allowed to speak English; I would loud talk in English. Maybe I was wrong to do those things, but I was acting out on purpose for a little while... I don't need you to like me and I don't like you, but you have to treat me fairly.

Nadira explained that she would initially overlook her teacher's unjust behaviour, which included 'mistakenly' marking right answers wrong on tests and not being permitted to participate in class. But she grew frustrated with her teacher's persistent unfair behaviour and rebelled as a

result. Nadira's experience demonstrates that a student could defy their teacher if they perceive them to be unfair or biased. In turn, the student's insolence could confirm a negative stereotype held by a teacher (e.g. black students have behavioural problems or attitude).

Participants suggested that compliance and respect for authority was enforced in schools. Actions, such as disrespecting authority, being rebellious, and insubordination were not tolerated. Respondents who did not perform poorly and adhered to the behavioural expectations of their schools, reported to have an indifferent or neutral relationship with their teachers and a satisfactory ('okay', 'alright') high school experience.

All teachers aren't the same. For me personally, [for] most of my teachers, I didn't find them bad. I didn't give them trouble; they didn't give me trouble, usually. [Hakim]

I was the type of person that was always taught to have respect for authority... I wasn't a rebel... Obviously you get different types of teachers. Sometimes you don't understand each other, but regardless that never deterred me from going to them and seeking their service...I wasn't very distant from my teachers, at the same time I didn't have that very intimate relationship with them...and because of that I don't think they either encouraged me or discouraged me. [Hayat]

High school was alright. I got along with everyone and stuff. I don't think I had any conflicts with other people in the school. It was very academic-based, so I didn't really do any other things other than study. [Salwa]

Of note is that participants held varying views of their teachers and guidance counsellors. The majority of the participants acknowledged that most schools had what they considered 'bad', 'okay' and 'good' educators and counsellors. Generally, most of the participants based their opinions of teachers and guidance counsellors on how helpful, personable, encouraging, impartial and supportive they were. For example, several participants had positive views of their guidance counsellors due to their supportive and helpful practices. Samuel and Hakim, for

instance, appreciated the support and advice guidance counsellors provided them.

I remember the one guidance counsellor that I would always go see, they were always supportive and very good at giving positive reinforcement in order to get you to go where you want to go. [Samuel]

I feel that [my guidance counsellors] helped me out a lot. They helped me choose a right path. I was trying to go straight to university... [but] they told me there is a better way you can get your college degree and university degree [2 years college, followed by university]. It's cheaper and you get both and coop. [Hakim]

Teachers were seen in the same light (some were considered helpful, others not so much). For instance, Rehema stated

I found them somewhat useful, only if you had direct questions. There wasn't much teachers that you could go to just talk to or have a one-on-one conversation with. There were very few. I think I could only name one or two teachers out of all my high school.

Rahema's assessment of her teachers was grounded on their willingness to provide sufficient support and establish a rapport with her. Similarly, Ottoman 's positive view of a few of his high school teachers was based on their efforts to assist him and other students to learn (sometimes going beyond their job requirements) and the effort they put into socializing with him (i.e. discussing topics of relevance to students). Ottoman stated,

There are a couple [teachers] that [were] really nice and really good and helpful. I remember one [teacher] he came to our house one time to deliver a CD because I forgot it ...I was like that's pretty nice. That's the one teacher that every student connected with. ...I liked the science teachers. They were supportive in terms of homework and [they] talked about soccer and stuff.

A couple of participants based their assessment of teachers on their level of engagement and interest in the school and its community. For example, Dalila perceived teachers working at

her low income school to be dissatisfied. She stated, “I don't know if the job satisfaction was all there for them [teachers] dealing with a bunch of low income immigrants”. Dalila’s perceptions are partly supported by research. Research has shown teachers that work in schools with a high concentration of low income and racialized non-white students have low job satisfaction because they perceive these schools have a dysfunctional and unsupportive school culture (Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012). Zola further argued that many students could become disengaged from high school because teachers themselves seem to be disengaged from the teaching-learning process. Zola declared,

I should be fair and just be like oh in everyday situation, we're going to have good people, we're going to have bad people, we're gonna have good teachers we're gonna have bad teachers. But I thought, well—I wasn't a big fan of education in high school. They were trying to impose their ideas and I've had some lazy teachers...I just felt they didn't know what they were doing... I'm saying when I get up in the morning and I sit in your class and you are standing up there, look or act like you want to be there. If the teacher is disengaged, how are your students going to be engaged?

Although Zola was a high achieving student, she was absent from school often in her last year of high school. Zola stated “in grade 12, I was absent a lot. I would just study at home...But my friend would send me the notes, I did all the work...It wasn't a simulating learning environment...I just thought I could do some more valuable things with my time”. Zola’s experience reveals that lack of engagement and unresponsive pedagogy could alienate students and make them disinterested in educational institutions. Zola was very much interested in learning and education in general, but she did not like nor find high school a useful institution to acquire knowledge. She was, however, able to incorporate into university very well. Zola stated,

"I'm in second year...I was so prepared for university, because in grade 12, I was so independent. I would do all my readings...I was just reading all the time. I was doing it on my own".

Furthermore, students could also be discouraged from school and dislike certain subjects as a result of teacher's actions and approaches to teachings. Dalila shared,

When I was in grade 8, I wrote [a] poem to a teacher. It was for an English class and it was spoken word. I thought it was the best poem ever. I put heart and soul into it. She gave me a B-. I've never been more mad in my life...So, that's when I decided I hated English. In grade 12, they started offering spoken word workshops afterschool...I started doing those workshops, then I took a writer's craft class...I did okay in English in high school, but I think that year especially, I saw a lot of my growth...I dropped a poem [at a poetry slam] and one of my favourite poets was visiting from Toronto. She came and [told] me she loved it. I was so amazed.

Dalila's experience illustrates that a teacher's ambivalence and unawareness of a student's efforts, feelings, passions and interests could lead them to undervalue a student's school work; in turn, this can cause a student to dislike a subject they could possibly excel in. Luckily, Dalila's passion for writing and the English language was reignited through an after-school program and by becoming part of a supportive spoken word community. Some students might not be as fortunate; they might not discover their passions and talents and strengthen their skills.

What can be gleaned from participants' experiences of exclusion and their interactions with school personnel at mainstream educational institutions is that, racism is pervasive and very covert in school settings. On a more positive note, most of the participants did not think that teachers and other school personnel who let their biases guide their behaviour were ill-intentioned or malicious (out to get minorities students). School personnel's biases, which caused them to ignore, to not sufficiently assist, to have low expectation, and to be extra critical and

impartial in grading racialized black youth, seemed to be a source of annoyance for participants but not a deterrent from their educational pursuits.

Participants had different reactions to experiencing exclusions. Some of the participants pushed back (e.g. by giving attitude, or by being ‘sassy’) at times (this is the key word) against school personnel’s prejudice, unfair treatment, and macroaggressions when they encountered them or when that behaviour became intolerable and persistent. For the most part, however, participants toed their school’s line; that is, they followed school rules and expectations. Several of the participants thought that a few teachers they had were personally mean or racist, but they did not think the school system, on the whole, was racist and limiting. These findings do not support Ogbu’s (1987) CEM’s postulation that immigrant offspring have an easier time (because school rules are compatible with their parents’ cultural expectations—i.e. people in authority and elders must be respected and not challenged) incorporating into authoritarian mainstream educational institutions compared to ‘caste-like’ none-immigrant minority groups. Racialized immigrant offspring’s experiences are somewhat unique. Children of Sub-Saharan immigrants share similarities with other immigrant offspring (e.g. they have an optimistic view of society, they see education as an avenue to achieve social mobility and they are taught to respect school personnel/authority) and they have some shared experiences with racialized black non-immigrant youth and other caste-like minorities, such as Indigenous peoples (e.g. they have to contend with negative stereotypes and discriminatory treatment).

Surviving a Eurocentric education system: Personal drive, high parental expectations and community-based supports

The previous two sections in this chapter explored the ways, from participants’ perspectives, societal structures impact educational institution’s organization, culture, quality of

education, and personnel's behaviours and attitudes towards racialized black students.

Notwithstanding remarks on how participants' responded to covert forms of racism in schools and inequalities between schools, these sections mainly provided a sketch of the institutional contexts in which participants received primary and secondary education. The question that remains to be answered more directly is how participants overcame institutional and structural barriers that often limit racialized black students' abilities to meet provincial educational standards and curriculum expectations. To answer this question, participants' assessments of their various schools' curriculums (i.e. how easy or difficult they found school curriculum) and the type of educational supports they needed and received at various stages of their educational journeys are examined. Furthermore, how the knowledge participants acquired in school and the educational support they received or failed to receive is related to their educational outcomes and their capabilities to reach their goals is also briefly discussed.

At the elementary level, some of the participants stated that they could transition from one grade to the next doing very little daily homework. Others, on the other hand, experienced some difficulty learning the curriculum they were taught. The degree to which participants found primary school curriculum easy or difficult depended on the program participants enrolled in. Participants that were enrolled in early/middle French immersion or were enrolled in a French school, even though no family member spoke French, reported experiencing difficulties at school. Marian shared,

[M]y parents thought it was much better to put your child into a French school. That way they are bilingual and doors open up more for them...My parents decided to put me and my little brother in French school, [but] my little brother decided to opt-out...It was really difficult. It placed a huge toll [on me]. [At my] elementary school, people wouldn't even speak French...I was speaking English and Somali [at home]...I didn't feel good that I wasn't doing so good in school and that all my friends were doing good...I

understood the reason. I got tutoring and stuff like that and I really did put effort to improve my French skills. I definitely took advantage of [private] tutoring.

Despite Marian's parents' well-intentions (i.e. their desire for her to be proficient in both official languages, so that, in the long-term, she could more easily incorporate into the local labour market), Marian experienced hardship academically adjusting to her French elementary school. She was not able to receive sufficient classroom support and opportunities to learn French in the school's corridors and playgrounds. However, it should be noted that children with a non-English background (or allophone students, in the Canadian context) experience difficulty during their first few years in school because they are required to learn the language of instruction in addition to various core subjects (e.g. Valdés, 2001). Implicitly, Marian discovered that her school expected children to be proficient in the school's language of instruction. Marian observed that students learned French at home and spoke English in school when socializing amongst themselves. Although no one spoke French in Marian's home, Marian's parents tried to get her to 'read more books' and they provided her with what she considered "so much [private] tutoring". Marian, on her part, did "a lot of studying". Through hard work, many hours studying and with the help of tutoring, Marian was able to meet her elementary school's curriculum expectations. Furthermore, the support Marian received enabled her to become not only proficient in French, but also able to enter the IB program (an academically rigorous, prestigious program) at the French high school she attended.

Marian's experience affirms a couple of points addressed by the theories on immigrant offspring's adaptation patterns discussed earlier. Both the CEM and the segmented assimilation theories acknowledge that immigrant parents are optimistic about their children's future prospects to incorporate into mainstream society and they are willing to help their children

achieve social mobility in any way they can (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Ogbu, 1991). Where immigrant offspring can fail is at the conjunction between experiencing difficulty in the classroom/school and failing to receive support to compensate for inadequate classroom instruction or lack of educational assistance. Poor immigrant parents can often provide their offspring non-financial support (e.g. social support, supervision and encouragement to study/complete homework) like any other immigrant parent with a higher socioeconomic status. Furthermore, some immigrant parents from a low socioeconomic background who value education can still try to meet their children's educational needs using the limited resources they have. But immigrant parents (who lack human capital) that are unable to provide their children financial assistance to support their children's educational success are unable to protect their offspring from the system forces that usually circumscribe racialized non-white youth. This is a salient point. Marian, although her parents encouraged her to read and study and she was studious and motivated to do well, this was not enough to do well in school. She required a personal tutor to provide her after-school educational support, which came at a cost to her family. However, education is something immigrant parents are willing to make economic sacrifices for (e.g. pooling money to spend on education) (Zhou & Bankston, 1994).

The majority of the participants that were placed in the regular English program at the primary level, found they could easily meet curriculum expectations with little assistance. Nevertheless, many of these participants found the transition to high school difficult. Hayat and Jaleel stated,

You kind of realize, maybe not fully, that...it is not just the school that is preparing you, but it is also you yourself. You are supposed to be pushing yourself...when we went to grade 9, I found certain subjects more difficult, such as math and English. Those are things in grade 7 and 8 and even before we kind of took it for granted. We think it was

easy, brushed it aside. But then I really did feel it for those four [high school] years. I realized I had to put in a lot more effort by myself; I couldn't just rely on the teacher.
[Hayat]

When I got to middle school and high school it got more [difficult]. I needed outside [of school] help. Usually I could do the work myself in elementary [school]. When I was really young I didn't really ask for help; I could just do the work myself without any problems. [Jaleel]

Understanding information presented in class and successfully completing required assessments in primary school did not seem to prepare some participants for high school. Hayat and Jaleel both found that they were ill prepared for high school, although they did not have educational troubles at the primary level. Hayat pointed out that students cannot be too dependent on teachers to acquire necessary knowledge. In retrospect, Hayat thought that students needed to learn to become independent learners. For instance, students could be better prepared for high school by doing extra work without a teacher assigning it and by applying knowledge learned in class.

What is noteworthy is that Hayat and Jaleel found primary school easy and high school difficult; conversely, Marian had trouble in elementary school and excelled in high school. Hayat and Jaleel reported only doing what was expected of them. They did not receive much homework or complimentary out-of-school instruction to solidify the skills and knowledge learned in school. Marian, on the other hand, studied, received one-on-one tutoring in addition to classroom instruction, and her parents encouraged her to do extra work when she was in elementary school. Nonetheless, whether the amount of schoolwork completed can account for these differences is not clear. What is known is a strong correlation exists between time spent on homework and academic achievement at the high school level, but not the elementary school level (Cooper, Robinson, & Patall, 2006). Homework, which can be used for instrumental and non-instrumental purposes, was not found to be a strong determinate of elementary students' school performance;

educational achievement seemed to be more related to indicators such as the quality of instruction children receive and their grasp of knowledge taught. Additionally, a lack of preparedness for high school could be linked to inequality between schools. That is, a student could experience difficulty meeting the expectations of a high school in a higher socioeconomic neighbourhood if they attended a primary school in a low income area (again, this is due to the differences in educational standards and expectations between low income and higher income schools).

Moreover, Jebril provides further insight into how students' progress through the public education system. Of his elementary and high school experience, Jebril stated,

When I was in elementary school, I never studied. I did projects and stuff, but studying was never like a main thing back in elementary school... [In] high school you have to study...but usually grade 9 and 10 is the year that you not fool around, but you're looking around, you are keeping your options open...It won't hurt you to get a bad mark, but still you would want to do better. Grade 11 and 12 are the most important years of your high school career. Grade 11 is where you choose where you want to go in life... So you have to be smart on what you choose...you have to be sincere and commit to those courses and get a good mark because that is the only way you are going to get into the program you want. [Jebril]

Jebril's experience demonstrates that a student could progress through much of the school system [up to grade 10] without developing sound knowledge of core subjects. More specifically, he noted that he was able to complete his primary education effortlessly, without devoting time at home to read, practice or review subject matter covered in school. In high school, however, Jebril asserted that students need to study; but he argued that they could get by with little effort (i.e. just passing the course) in their junior years. The first two years of high school were seen as the exploratory years—the years where students adjusted to a new style of

education, learned about themselves and figured out what life path they wanted to pursue. Jebril argued that students usually become serious about school in grade 11 when they set their sights on post-secondary education and realize that the decisions they make from that point forward greatly impacts their future.

Although many of the participants did not know what career path they wanted to take in grade 9/10, the majority of the participants took academic level courses because they aspired to attend university. Many participants, like Marian, viewed university as the road to success. Further, for most participants, going to university was the expected thing to do. Samuel, for instance, thought that his parent's expectation—attending university—was the norm. In fact, he viewed going to university as the natural and only path forward. Other options, such as taking a 'gap year'—a year off between high school and post-secondary education—or going to college, were not explored.

Most people really wanted to go to university. Because they say, I think less now, but back then people where like university is so much better than college...I used to think that. I'm going to be honest, I used to think if you really want to make it, you want to make it to university. [Marian]

I don't even know that my mother knew that college was an option. I don't think I even knew college was an option. It was set, it wasn't a question. It wasn't even are you maybe going—no; it was you're going to university and your gonna do your masters. It's high expectations. I don't know if it's expectation or more like—it's genuinely so engraved in your mind that they don't become expectations, it just becomes the norm. There wasn't another option. I think that maybe other kids get that, 'oh do you want to take a gap year', I didn't even know gap year was a thing then. I got here [university] and I realized that oh my God 5-6 of my friends took a gap year. [Samuel]

For Dalila, going to university was an obligation. She felt pressured to go to university as the first person in her family to get the opportunity to do so.

For me, if I were to say, 'I'm not going to university', that was not an option. It's like 'excuse me, no what are you doing?' ...My dad's side of the family, no one went to university. I'm the first one. So, there... [was] a lot of pressure for me going into it [university]. [Dalila]

University was highly regarded by participants and their parents who wanted them to attain the highest level of education. This finding is consistent with both the CEM and the segmented assimilation theory, as well as supporting empirical literature that found immigrant parents, regardless of their national origin or ethnic background, set high expectations for their children with regards to higher educational attainment (Kao & Tienda, 1995). Immigrant parents' standards, participants argued, were so high that college was not favourably viewed; only getting into university was considered something worthy of praise. Hawa stated,

I think college, not as much now, had a stigma attached to it. It's like 'oh really, you go to Algonquin college?'. You know when someone mentions 'I go to Carleton University' they say it with a little bit of pride. Even when they say university. Even when my mom is talking to other moms, they go 'oh my daughter, she goes to the University of Ottawa'. [Hawa]

Hawa's views about college and university were indirectly (through her parents) shaped by her parent's ethnocultural community's views of these institutions. Immigrant communities use mechanism, such as praise and censure, to communicate to immigrant offspring and their parents what they expect of them in terms of educational outcomes and life accomplishments (Ogbu, 1987). University seemed to be preferred by participants' immigrant parents because they were aware this institution granted professional designations required to enter prestigious fields

like law, medicine, and engineering (a clear line existed between graduating from university and achieving social mobility).

Although university is still highly regarded, a number of the participants' views of college shifted over the years once they learned more about the institution. Also, participants' opinions and views about college differed by age. Participants that were in high school or recently graduated from high school at the time of our interview, had a more positive view of college. However, one participant, who was still in high school when interviewed, had mixed feelings about college. Jebril stated,

[W]e see college as low because college is usually more easier to get into and stuff. College is for people who want to—you can call it [an] easy way out. It's basically you...want to take your program and then you just get a job right away. It's for people that don't take school seriously. Actually, to be honest sometimes you do at the same time sometimes you don't. It depends on the program and it depends on who that person is. For example, is that person doing low in school and going to college? All these people are looked down upon because they didn't do anything [in high school]. But like I could be a 90 average student and I can go to college because of the program and also I want to go easier. But you could also take 2 years of college and than go 2 years in university.
[Jebril]

Jebril did not necessarily view college negatively because it was industry-oriented (i.e. focus on practical knowledge needed for a specific occupation) and therefore 'easy'. Rather, he considered college undesirable because it was easy to get into [compared to university]. A negative stigma was attached to underachievement; thus, college was negatively viewed because students that did not do well in high school or could not study at the university level were admitted into college. In essence, college was equated with not being 'smart'. However, this assumption was undermined by high achieving students that chose to attend college and by

college students that made a successful transition into university after completing a college diploma. What was important to immigrant communities, according to the participants' narratives, was that racialized Sub-Saharan African immigrant children strived for excellence, showed that they were intellectual, and they were serious about their studies. In the immigrant community, one was judged based on their educational achievement.

While the majority of the participants aspired to attain a post-secondary education, a number of participants had difficulty with some academic level subjects, commonly math and science. Consequently, a problem some youth encountered in grade 11 was that if they performed relatively poorly in earlier high school years, they were encouraged to take applied level courses or told to pursue a different course/area of study by teachers and/or guidance counsellors even though these youth believed they were capable of doing well if they tried. To achieve their goal to pursue post-secondary studies (at the university level), students sought educational assistance from teachers at their schools, from family members and from individuals that lived in their communities.

Most of the participants thought in-school homework assistance provided by teachers was limited and inconsistent. Some teachers were available before school, at lunchtime or after school, several participants acknowledged. Nevertheless, teachers' assistance was normally limited to answering a few questions and giving guidance, they argued. Students were expected to become somewhat independent and to seek out answers to questions on their own. According to participants, not many teachers at school were available to assist struggling students to gain a good understanding of concepts or topics covered in class. Jaleel, for instance, shared that he was able to graduate from high school with his cohort. However, he had much difficulty acquiring the marks needed to enter the university program he was interested in. Jaleel shared he completed a

victory lap (an additional year of high school) and attended an alternative school and adult high school after graduating. He acknowledged that he had some nice teachers that would help him to a degree, but he argued that teachers did not help him thoroughly comprehend material he found difficult. Jaleel turned to private tutoring. Unfortunately, Jaleel did not find paid private tutoring helpful. The tutors he found were more interested in being paid than helping him. And some private tutors he could afford, were not considered knowledgeable. He stated “I had private tutors, but then it was too expensive. It was a horrible experience. A lot of them were just in it for the money, that’s it”.

Another participant, Dalila, also shared that she struggled to learn a couple of subjects due to lack of educational resources not due to lack of effort. In her own words,

Growing up, I didn’t really have much access to tutors and that sort of thing. I had to rely on family members. So, it was more challenging and I did have a lot of disadvantages in comparison to my peers... [because] in the beginning you are struggling academically [and] you are lacking academically because you don’t have resources. [Dalila]

To overcome learning difficulties, Dalila was able to receive effective free tutoring from a compassionate educator. She shared “[t]here was a supply teacher who we had, I don’t know how she connected with my mom but somehow she did, and she started offering us free tutoring. That really helped me. And it was mainly with math, everything else I was okay in”. Many low income immigrant offspring that experience difficulty mastering the curriculum require access to knowledgeable individuals (e.g. siblings, other family members, tutors, and teachers) that can provide them the necessary educational assistance they need to gain entrance into higher educational institutions (Portes & Fernandez-Kelly, 2008). This is a key difference between Dalila’s and Jaleel’s experiences. Dalila did well in high school and she was able to get into university more easily due to her access to a knowledgeable person who invested in her learning

during out-of-school hours; Jaleel, on the other hand, was not as fortunate. Only a few participants were able to get satisfactory assistance from a parent or a significant person in their lives when they experienced difficulties understanding a subject(s). One participant, Ottoman, indicated that he relied on peer assistance and help from his neighbor. Ottoman's neighbour, who was an immigrant parent, sometimes extended the educational assistance he provided his children to Ottoman. Ottoman stated "[in] high school it was more students helping students more than going to places and...my neighbour's dad would help us out [when needed]".

A couple of participants that were independent learners turned to online tutorials for help. Independent learners were those that tried to solve complex problems on their own or sought out the answer from available sources. For instance, Emaan stated "I'm the type of person that doesn't like to seek [help from teachers]. I like to figure things out on my own". Overall, there were a few participants that stated they required very little educational assistance from anyone to meet high school and university course expectations. These participants expressed they could easily progress through high school and adjust well to university studies. However, a significant number of the participants relied on homework clubs, especially in their senior high school years, to complete assigned homework and to better comprehend certain subjects. Homework clubs were located in low income neighbourhoods or at schools, community centres, Boys and Girls clubs and other similar places in/or near low income neighbourhoods.

On the whole, homework clubs were described positively. They were considered indispensable and useful. Participants reported that homework club volunteers and tutors were diverse. Also, a number of homework club programs were reported to be started, organized, coordinated and facilitated by concerned Sub-Saharan African parents or community members.

For example, Jebril stated that the homework club in his neighbourhood was started by a Sub-Saharan African mother, whom he referred to as his aunt (fictive kin). He expressed that,

Everyone looks high of her...what she did was started our homework club. She wanted to get the children motivated; help them to get a good education...She helps us a lot. She gives us motivation...we do our homework there and she also talks to us as individuals...she gives a lot of good advice. I remember she gave advice to one of my friends. He was going down a bad route and she helped him and talked to him about personal stuff too...she's like our mom. She is one of our moms. [Jebril]

By running the homework club, a Sub-Saharan parent was able to gain the trust of youth and provide a safe place for them inside their low income neighbourhood. At the particular homework club Jebril attended, youth were provided guidance and motivated to attain a high level of education. A number of high school students attended their homework clubs often to take advantage of the free tutoring service. Sahil stated “We went to homework clubs... Since they are free, and there are tutors around us. It’s very supportive”. The majority of the participants that attended homework clubs found them to be useful and supportive. Dalila stated, “I used to go to homework club... they were really useful...My brother, the younger one, however, went to a lot of them”.

Although valuable, homework clubs reportedly had a number of issues. One issue was that homework clubs were too crowded and the ratio between students and tutors was too high. Walid stated “[s]ometimes when you get help with math and stuff, there's only one math teacher”. Salwa shared a similar experience. She considered some homework clubs to be above others in terms of the quality of assistance they offered. She stated,

[Some tutors] were very knowledgeable in math and stuff like that. So I got help from them. [When] I felt like it wasn't useful enough, I went to other places, other homework

clubs.... There are [useful people], but there's just so many people. They can't really go around [to everyone]. [Salwa]

Salwa went to different homework clubs in search of assistance from a person knowledgeable in math or other subjects she needed assistance in. From her experience, homework clubs varied in the type of support that was available. One persistent issue Salwa faced was that math tutors could not adequately assist all the students within the homework club hours. Another related problem was that tutors would just provide the solution to the problem students were stuck on.

Hakim argued “[t]hey are good, just sometimes I feel like they are doing too much work.

Sometimes they are doing the work for you... they just have too many students there and they have little time. So they are basically giving you the answer then to [the] next person”.

Furthermore, Sofi asserted that it was hard to concentrate at the homework club because some of the kids had behaviour problems and were disruptive. According to Sofi, homework clubs were helpful “but at the same time it was full with a bunch of rowdy kids. You can't really concentrate there... [the kids] giv[e] people a hard time. It's really hard putting together a bunch of hyperactive kids in one place, there's no control”.

Participants who lived in selected low income communities in the west end of Ottawa had access to more comprehensive educational support through the Pathways to Education program. The Pathways program, administered by the Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre (PQCHC), was launched in 2007 (Pathways to Education, 2015). In addition to providing tutoring at homework clubs, the program provides mentoring, and financial support in the form of monthly bus passes, lunch vouchers and postsecondary education scholarships. Furthermore, Student/Parent Support Workers (SPSW) are assigned to each program participant to monitor program participants' educational progress and school attendance, as well as to assist students

and their families to navigate the education system.

Of the participants that were in high school at the time the program launched, two of them were a little hesitant to join at first due to concerns their parents had. Hawa shared,

My parents didn't think that I would be able to study in such an environment. I had to be with people that I grew up with...when you see your friends you're never going to want to study...obviously on my own time I would hang out with my friends, but when it came to school work and I needed to finish things, my parents thought that if all these people would be—not even my friends, people who I grew up with, people I'm familiar with, mostly Somali, if I'm in the same environment, then it would take me away from my school, and...my school work [would] start to decrease. [Hawa]

Hawa's parents' concern stemmed from fear that neighbourhood kids would negatively influence one another socially and educationally through increased contact via the Pathways program. As discussed in chapter 6, one approach parents used to combat negative neighbourhood effects was to keep their children isolated from the neighbourhood environment and neighbourhood kids. In essence, immigrants wanted to keep their children inside their homes, under their purview. However, Hawa eventually entered the program as a result of persistent encouragement from Pathways program recruitment staff.

If [you] don't go into it, they tell you to recommend it to friends. I did not go into it [the program] until grade 11. They kept asking me and saying please come. They come to your school. They find you [those kids that are not in the program] if you live in this area. If you live in certain areas, they come to the neighbourhood. They did it so they could provide services to those kids that don't have resources. They are proactive. [Hawa]

According to Hawa, Pathways outreach workers actively recruited students by visiting their homes and neighbourhoods, and by making presentations about the program at schools in the

programs catchment area. Also, program participants were encouraged to recommend their friends to join the program. The participants that enrolled in Pathways had a good opinion of the program. They liked the different mix of supports the program provided.

Pathways is a phenomenon program. I say that because it provides you with things that you wouldn't have if you weren't a part of that program, such as bus pass and food vouchers. They gave me job opportunities and numerous stuff. [Idris]

I used to go to pathways. [I started] when I was in grade 9...They help you... you always have someone to talk to like your SPSW. When you go to the centre, someone will help you with your homework. You get bus tickets and bus pass to get to school. They give you food vouchers. [Yahya]

Both Samuel and Dalila did not get a chance to join Pathways, but they wished they had the type of support the program offers available to them when they were in high school.

The program] came the year after I finished high school...My sister is actually in it [Pathways]. I think it is amazing. [You] get a thousand dollar bursary for every year that you complete it. That's 4 thousand dollars at the end when you're done! [Dalila]

A few of my friends did that [program] and they would give them like a bus pass; they would give them food vouchers for lunch. I was so jealous of that. I don't know why [I didn't do Pathways]. Oh yeah, because it wasn't offered for [my neighbourhood]. I don't know if it was offered, I'm pretty sure it wasn't... I wish I would've done it. [Samuel]

The financial assistance provided by the program was not solely an alluring incentive to join the program, but it was also an incentive to stay in the program for most. For instance, Hawa particularly found monthly bus passes and other financial assistance an appealing aspect of the program. Marian, on the other hand, did not need a monthly bus pass; her school already provided one to her. She was particularly interested in receiving a post-secondary education

(PSE) scholarship and she appreciated the assistance and social support her student support worker provided her.

They give you all these little things that would make you want to come...once you get attached to these incentives, you start to come [to the program activities]...Money is always an incentive to people. The bus pass was the most appealing because you don't have to go out of your way and buy a bus pass. It's really expensive at this point. [Hawa]

It was a good program. At first, I thought it was amazing, I was like wow \$1000 every year...these lunch vouchers, and stuff, so that [was] amazing...and we have our own student-parent support worker... She was so helpful, so sweet... She would talk to me like O' how are you doing [name of participant omitted]? How's class? How is everything? Every two weeks, you meet them... she would tell me about volunteer opportunities [and] work opportunities. [Marian]

The program was found to be effective in supporting students to graduate from high school because it worked at the community and school level. By targeting all high school students living in a low income neighbourhood, Pathways was able to create a more positive environment at the neighbourhood level. Samuel and Hawa argued that students worked together to achieve the common goal of meeting their educational goals.

They started [to] bring in programs...and [through] these programs, the students were able to work together and kind of form these links in which they would help one another. [Samuel]

There's people that come in and tell you 'what are you doing, you have class tomorrow', 'you have this'. Even [if] you think that the time is too little, there's people that come to help you if you have a project. Everyone does stuff, it's a team thing, everyone tries to help you. [Hawa]

At the school level, Pathways monitors student's educational performance. Hawa reported that

her student support worker closely monitored her educational achievement and guided her through the postsecondary education application process. For Hawa, student support workers partly performed the duties traditionally assigned to guidance counsellors in a more personalized way.

[The program] motivated me [and] it helped me. They [program workers] called if you weren't there [in school]. They would show up to your classes, if you didn't go to them. They'd supervise you throughout however many years you go there [high school] just to ensure you actually...[follow] a verbal contract saying you are going to do all these things if you want the end result...It's kind of like a guidance counsellor. She [student support worker] fills out your school stuff for you, she fills out your OSAP stuff with you, she sits down with you, she does all these things with you. Even when... [I] applied for Carleton ['s] Social work [program], she helped me with the essay. They are very good.
[Hawa]

Research that formally evaluated Pathways found the program was successful in addressing many of the challenges youth from low socioeconomic and immigrant backgrounds encounter (Rowen & Gosine, 2006). For instances, challenges identified in the literature such as immigrant parents' unfamiliarity with mainstream educational institutions, high absenteeism, tardiness and underperformance (Brown, 2006; Dei et. al., 1997; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001) were monitored and addressed by program components (i.e. through SPSW and homework clubs).

Despite the effectiveness of Pathways' program design, participants that participated in the program noted that Pathways' tutoring and mentoring services had room to improve. Participants that attended Pathways' homework clubs reported that tutors were in short supply and some of the recruited tutors were not seen to be knowledgeable about the subject area they were assigned. It should be noted that all homework clubs, whether part of the Pathways program or not, were reported to have similar shortcomings.

With regards to mentoring, Hawa and Marian thought that mentoring would be more effective if a mentor shared some commonalities with students they mentored. Marian further specified that she preferred one-on-one mentoring with the same person instead of group mentoring sessions with “a totally different mentor every single second week”. She stated,

I think there should be more mentoring. The mentoring was more like little activities. Like okay go play basketball or go play soccer... I think they [should've] assigned a specific mentor to a student that [they] can really relate to... say for example someone who's gone to your high school...[or] someone who you identify with... or whoever you feel the most comfortable with... for me, someone who is Muslim. [Marian]

Marian argued that she would feel more comfortable receiving advice on “how to tackle life sometimes” from a person she could identify with. Furthermore, Hawa asserted that the mentoring program could be more beneficial if students were mentored by successful individuals from their ethnocultural or religious community. She stated that being exposed to such a person “motivates you...it will help you see different doors”. When program participants can identify with mentors (i.e. the mentor looks like the mentee or the mentee can identify with the mentor in some other way personally), they can be seen as role models.

Another program a few participants participated in was Youth Futures. Unlike Pathways, which focuses on helping students to graduate from high school, Youth Futures aims to encourage youth from low income families to acquire a postsecondary education and to make their transition into post-secondary institutions easier (Youth Futures, 2015). The program provides high school students' leadership and skills training, summer employment and exposure to college and university institutions. While anyone who lives in a low income neighbourhood in the city can participate in this program, Youth Futures was not widely known by many of the participants. Program participants discovered the program through friends and family, from

posters at community centers/houses in their low income neighbourhood, or through community workers.

[The] recruiting method in the program is word-of-mouth. So, I've participated and told both of my sisters to participate, but they would've not done it if it wasn't for me... there's not much advertisement, the way Pathways does. Pathways is very much a machine. [Samuel]

Program participants complete program components (post-secondary experience, advanced leadership and certificate trainings, community engagement, and summer employment) over a 7-month period. While one participant did not mind the length of the program, Jebril and Marian thought the program was too long and time consuming.

I mean the program started in February, and you have to go every Saturday at 9 am and it finished at 4. And no one wants to go to [training from] 9 to 4 on a Saturday. If you didn't go, you weren't allowed to do the employment piece. It was compulsory. [Jebril]

[We meet] every single Saturday for almost a year. It was so difficult. It was pretty much training sessions. We woke up so early to play games, little tag or something random like that. They were useful. I got to know people at that program that I'm still friends with now. There's a ton of training sessions... [but] I think it runs a little too long. [Marian]

The biggest incentive to join Youth Futures was getting summer employment. When participants were asked what motivated you to join the program? They replied “money”, “jobs for sure”, “I think it was the employment” and “it gave me something to do”. Participants found it difficult to find particular jobs and student summer jobs. Marian stated,

[The program was] totally useful. It helped you to get a job with the City of Ottawa. And I always wondered how do you do that... [Youth Futures] is kind of opened up towards

minorities so that way when they...work with the City of Ottawa, there's that mix. There is diversity and not just all white people. [Marian]

Participants thought that the training they received was valuable. Also, learning about college and university programs, receiving information and advice from professors and students, visiting postsecondary institutions in Ottawa, and becoming informed about PSE financial and non-financial supports was found to be beneficial, as Jebril, for instance, explained.

The first part of the program was advanced leadership [training]. Basically, they were telling us how to be good leaders... [and] how to take initiative...And then there was the AODA training, basically training to work with people with disabilities. We also had CPR training...It was really a beneficial program...The program starts in February...and then after May, when school is done, we started the employment piece. We get to work around the City of Ottawa...So some of us worked at wading pools. We were lifeguards... [Other students worked at] a community centre or YMCA or Ottawa Community Housing...During the program, we also went to Ottawa U a couple of times to learn about programs and stuff like that...We also went on tours to Algonquin College and Carleton. And basically, we were learning about scholarships and bursaries, OSAP, what you should do when you get into University, what are your goals, what do you want to achieve. They also give us advice about doing well in university and stuff. Most of it was helpful. [Jebril]

Furthermore, participants were given the option to complete 40 volunteer or community engagement hours at a number of community organizations. This option allowed program participants to meet a high school diploma requirement and to broaden their social and professional networks. Marian shared

Youth Future can give you 40 hours of volunteering. It is an option and I decided to do it. I did it for a week at [a] community centre. The coordinator was like 'we really like you', 'we would love to give you a job here at the community centre for the summer'.

There were a few criticisms of the program. The first critique of the program concerned mini-lectures students were required to go to. Professionals and professors were invited to speak to program participants about their fields in particular and post-secondary education in general. One participant preferred being given the option to attend lectures of interest to him instead of being required to attend all career/field information sessions.

Some of the professors were really interesting and some of the professors were like whatever. It depends on what you are interested/ not interested in. If you are talking about business and you weren't interested in business, it's going to be boring for you. There were other people that came too—like police officers, paramedics come to talk about their jobs and what they took when they were in university. That was more interesting. There was a lawyer lady that came too. She was hype [good]. [Asking students their] personal preference, like what you are interested in, it would make the talk more interesting. In the first week, we have to sit down and listen to lectures. The second week they gave us a list of all the programs that were going on during the week and we got to choose which ones we wanted to listen too. That was way better because [we] got to choose what we wanted to listen to. [Jebril]

Another criticism of the program was that it could only be recruiting students that are already motivated to acquire a post-secondary education. Samuel suggested that the program mostly attracts youth that are doing well educationally and are well adjusted. Youth that are unmotivated and directionless are possibly not participating in the program.

[The] Youth Futures program I think is good. It has its challenges in that often times it — like for students like myself—if the original intent of the program was to motivate, encourage youth from lower income families to pursue post-secondary education, but if I was going to pursue it anyways, it doesn't really have an effect on me. [Samuel]

Moreover, Samuel argued that program mentors could play a more important role in the program. He asserted that mentors were helpful and informative, but they did not really guide or personally counsel students.

The mentoring...is the most important aspect. But the mentors don't have neither an incentive nor the time and resources to be able to truly mentor each kid one at a time. The best thing mentors can do is use their knowledge to give information to students, like if there is a scholarship that is coming, help them with that; if they need help with budgeting, help them with that; if they need help with their OSAP, help them with that. And we do a lot of that, but there is so much more that we could do. [Samuel]

Generally speaking, place-based or community-based programs and initiatives can play a vital role in the incorporation process of non-European immigrant offspring (Wong, 2008), especially for youth who are entertainment-seekers and those that are not self-starters when it comes to their education. Community-based programs, according to participants' narratives, often serve dual or even multiple purposes. For example, an existing place-based program targeting marginalized youth might focus on education explicitly (e.g. homework clubs), but it usually also indirectly has the added benefit of occupying idle youth's time and providing safe places for youth to socialize. For some Sub-Saharan African youth, community/place-based programs partly prevented them from falling victim to negative neighbourhood effects and institutional barriers that would lead to downward assimilation. Furthermore, although all the participants did not require educational program support, most of the participants thought youth and student-gear employment programs and financial assistance for low income youth played an important role in facilitating their incorporation, as racialized non-white Canadians, into mainstream society. These programs allowed racialized black low income youth to acquire financial and social capital required to participate in society.

In addition to working with grassroots organizations, participants' narratives have shown that participants' immigrant parents (and the various members of the communities they were a part of) tried a number of different strategies to assist their children to incorporate into mainstream institutions and acquire a good education that prepared them for university studies. Some of the participants' parents enrolled their kids in a good school by either moving to a higher income neighbourhood if they had the means to do so or by requesting admission into a program (e.g. French immersion) offered by a school in a higher income zone. A couple of the participants had an enriching school experience because they were able to get admitted into an academically rigorous high school program (e.g. gifted or IB program). There were positive and negative aspects associated with attending reputable higher performing schools and schools in lower income areas. Participants noted that overt forms of racism and exclusion existed at both higher income and lower income schools, although these schools had different institutional cultures. A theme that emerged from the participants' interviews was that mainstream schools do not meet the needs of racialized black students. Participants that experienced difficulties in high school relied on educational support from parents, siblings, neighbours, and other compassionate individuals in their lives that had knowledge about a core subject area (e.g. math, science and English). Younger participants were fortunate enough to have homework clubs started in their low income neighbourhoods. Some of these participants additionally benefited from being a part of a proactive and supportive ethnocultural community.

Participants that described themselves smart, gifted and/or independent learners were able to make a relatively easy and successful transition (as measured by their ability to do well in their courses, their ability to complete their degree within the prescribed time limit, and by their ability to gain admission into second entry programs) into university. One thing that should be

noted about participants that considered themselves studious and/or an independent learner was that their performance in university (all the participants in this category attended university) was linked to the type of program they enrolled in. These participants had the drive and work ethic to complete a university program, but they just needed to find a program that they were interested in (some of them switched programs) or they had the ability to understand the subject matter independently. A couple of the participants entered a program that their parents strongly recommended (e.g. their parents preferred that they went into a science-related field, instead of the humanities/arts, for instance), but they found out it was not a program for them. One participant, who found her program a little challenging, adjusted her course load instead of switching out of the program. This participant would rather adjust her course sequence and do better than finish another easier program in the recommended timeframe. The participants that had the most difficulty adjusting to postsecondary studies were the ones that received a lot of support in high school and had little or no support at the post-secondary level and the ones that were not able to personalize their postsecondary education, find a program they liked or develop effective study habits. One participant noted that there are some supports available at the postsecondary level, but students are required to seek out these services. Dalila stated, “there is [the] first-in-family program, which helps first generation university students...But at the same time you have to seek out these types of things. You have to know what they are and a lot of people unfortunately don’t know these services”.

The past two chapters provided a glimpse into the neighbourhood and school environments of children of Sub-Saharan African immigrants that participated in this study. Participants discussed their schooling experiences and the types of supports they had available to them. The subsequent chapter explores how the various social contexts participants grew up in

influenced the type of identities they formed and the segments of society they felt they belonged to.

8. Identity, culture and living in/between multiple social environments

Leading theoretical explanations of second generation non-European immigrants' incorporation and educational trajectories have placed a strong emphasis on acculturation and identity (Gibson & Ogbu, 1991; Phelan, Davidson & Cao, 1991; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Waters, 1994). According to the segmented assimilation theory and CEM, how children of non-European immigrants incorporate into 'white-settler societies' or nations of immigrants cannot be fully understood without an examination of racialized non-white immigrant offspring's acculturation strategies; the types of groups they belong to, have an affinity for or associate with; and how they view society and their place in it. This chapter examines the relationship between identity, acculturation and immigrant offspring's life trajectories through the lens of the Sub-Saharan African immigrant offspring interviewed. Due to the complex, layered and transitory nature of identity (Hall, 1996; James & Shadd, 2001; Rumbaut & Portes, 2001), most of the participants had difficulty describing their identities. In order to tease out the complex web of factors that often encircles an individual's identity and cultural orientations, participants discussed how they saw themselves, how they were perceived by others, what cultures they were exposed to, what cultures they adopted, what morals and ethics they subscribed to, what social and peer groups they belonged to, and what their relations were with their parental group, the mainstream and others in society.

Cultural plurality, contending values and competing expectations

As youth, participants were taught their parents' culture, values, morals, and theology at home. Concurrently, participants were taught the history, values and culture of the mainstream through the education system. In addition to home and school teachings, participants were

exposed to a racialized view of western liberal secular culture through the mass media. Children of racialized non-white immigrant's educational success depends on their ability to smoothly cross the boundaries between family, peer, and school cultures (Phelan et al., 1991; Rumbaut & Portes, 2001). For the most part, participants conformed to their home culture when at home. At school, participants were required to learn and adhere to the culture propagated by the official curriculum and school personnel. When with peers and friends, most participants adopted various cultures found in popular youth culture or their ethnic/religious cultures. More specially, participants preformed different identities depending on the schools they attended, the peer groups they were a part of or able to gain access to, and the type of media they or their friends consumed. For instance, Dalila shared

Where I went to [in] middle-school, Sage Park, everybody, I don't know how it is now, but at the time everybody lived for ball. Come to school we played ball, lunchtime basketball, after school—all day, every day, that's what everybody thought about...I had the worst fashion sense, I would go wearing a long-sized jersey with a skirt, and every day I was thinking I'm so cool. And it wasn't necessarily the music, it was more so picking up the slang, picking up the other aspects of [popular] culture...we don't think about these things when we're young right. The way everyone else acts, you just pick up on these behaviours. It's from what we watch, it's from what we listen to and from your friends. [Dalila]

As Dalila's experience demonstrates, youth are very much influenced by popular culture. Even if parents tried to limit youth's intake of media, youth were exposed to popular culture at school and through their friends. At their low income multicultural school, Dalila and her schoolmates adopted elements of black hip hop culture in the manner they dressed and in the activities they took part in. It could be said that these youths learned to 'act black' through the media (Ibrahim, 1999; Kelly, 1998). The students' focus was not on academic achievement, but rather on

basketball, which is a sport predominantly played by racialized black people, and on ‘acting cool’. Participants argued that their environments greatly influenced the way they behaved and how they spoke and dressed. Degmo argued, “even if you don’t want to use it [slang] it becomes a habit because everyone around you is using it”. Similarly, Dalila stated “[In] middle school and high school there is a lot of peer pressure and you feel like you have to succumb to that...I feel like everybody just had to put on this whole face you know or act as if they were somebody they were not”. Whether youth wanted to or not, they picked up the habits and speech of the dominant culture they were engulfed in.

While receiving primary and secondary education, a few of the participants that lived in low income neighbourhoods were exposed to black popular culture in their neighbourhoods and white popular culture in their ‘white schools’. Accordingly, they had to adjust their behaviour two to three times to adhere to the cultures of their different social environments. For a couple of participants, such as Sahil, this was difficult.

I went to St. Vincent...It was really white. I remember when I was coming back to the neighbourhood it was really black. So, I had to make an effort to keep both happy—the neighbourhood and the school. I felt like I was living...a double life. I was trying to act white [in school] and black [in the neighbourhood]. So, it was kind of hard. [Sahil]

Sahil highlights, neighbourhoods, like schools, are racialized. Low income neighbourhoods are sites where some youth learn to be ‘black’. ‘Becoming black’ (i.e. forming a racial identity) is not necessarily a negative thing (when it comes to educational outcomes), but what is problematic is low income neighbourhoods are sites where racialized black youth could develop a negative stereotypical ‘black’ identity. Youth who live in poor and low income neighbourhoods could possibly identify with African American low class culture, which arguably glorifies poverty,

crime, violence, ghettos and deviant cultures (Gans, 1992; Zhou & Kim, 2006). None of the participants adopted this identity, which was considered an oppositional identity.

As discussed earlier, many of the participants that lived in low income neighbourhoods attended schools near their place of residence. For youth that attended their home school, there was an overlap between their neighbourhood and school youth cultures. The participants that attended a 'white school', schools with a large racialized white student population, and lived in a 'white middleclass neighbourhood' were not exposed to black culture to the extent that participants that lived in a 'black neighbourhood' and attended a multicultural school had been. However, they were introduced to 'blackness' from a racialized white perspective (a racialized 'white' person's interpretation of 'blackness'). Mu'ad relayed,

In high school, we had proms and parties, cocktail nights and casino nights...[events] originated by white people in our school...I went to the dances, I went to casino nights, mock cocktail nights—I didn't drink, that's beside the point... that's where my idea of whiteness was constructed. Even at home my parents would say that is so white, that's what white people do. That was reinforced in my mind, that if you do that, then that is white. So, that is my idea of whiteness—everything that was opposite to my cultural background... [However,] in high school I would clearly [be] told "you are the black kid", "this is the black guy". And at a point it would be part of our culture in my high school to associate [with blackness]—so everyone wanted to be black. So, by default, being black, I found that coolness there—oh you are the black kid, you can play basketball kind of stuff. Stereotypical attitude that they could access and mould into that black identity ...I actually listened to a lot of white music at that time... [and] consum[ed] white culture. [Mu'ad]

In his 'white' high school, Mu'ad declared that he 'acted white' by participating in common 'western' activities that were organized by racialized white students at his school. However, he also abided by his parents' conservative culture and values (i.e. he did not drink at social

gatherings he attended with racialized white youth). Whiteness to Mu'ad was any activity that was done predominantly by racialized white people and it was anything antithetical to what his parents valued. Although Mu'ad consumed white culture, students at his school labelled him black, presumably due to his skin colour, and assumed he possessed the stereotypical skills and characteristics popular culture attached to blackness. According to Mu'ad, racialized white youth at his school wanted to 'act black' and associate with a 'black' person because blackness was portrayed as 'cool' in youth popular culture. One thing that becomes evident in Mu'ad's narrative is that racialized black students are assigned a stereotypical black identity by members of the racialized white majority even if they do not adhere to or practice the culture associated with this identity.

Unlike Mu'ad who 'acted white' but was considered 'black', Zola was labelled white because she 'dressed white', her friends were racialized white, she was 'smart' and she played badminton. She stated,

At my high school there wasn't that many black people and the group that I was involved [in], they were all white, and it wasn't by choice...I was in the badminton program, I was the only black person there...I remember in high school, I would always wear Abercrombie and Fitch and Hollister, you know the kind of things you see everyone wearing so you want it too....Unfortunately, people often link a certain type of behaviour to a certain colour. That's what people think. I obviously don't agree with that. I think it is stupid and ignorant... I personally didn't have any troubles fitting in in high school. I was never really like discriminated [against] except for the unfortunate comments, like you are white, but I would just think you're stupid. I never really took it personally. And even then, for them being white would be presented as a good thing. So, the way it was said, it wasn't even a way to belittle me, but it was belittling blackness. [Zola]

Zola was able to fit into her white school because she assimilated into the dominant white school culture, something that was not done deliberately. Zola acknowledged that in addition to people, many things, including activities were racialized. Hakim also mentioned that many youth had a racialized view of the world. He argued “it doesn’t matter if you are black or white. If you are black and you grew up in a white environment, you’re going to be considered white... [to] people you are a white black guy”. It’s interesting that Hakim used the term ‘white black guy’ to denote that someone is black in skin colour and white due to being socialized in a white space, such as a racialized white school. To participants and many youth they encountered or were friends with, the terms black and white were used as descriptors to describe an individual’s appearance. Behaviours, activities and things were also racialized black or white. For example, a certain activity is considered black if that activity is predominantly only performed by someone described to be black. One of the problems with racialization, as Zola mentions, was that positive attributes, like smartness, were associated with whiteness and in the process blackness and those racialized black were 'belittled' and negatively viewed. There are many restrictive notions of blackness that circulate in racially stratified white settler societies that serve to limit racialized black youth’s educational achievement and their incorporation into mainstream institutions (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Zola distanced herself from negatively constructed black identities and understandings of blackness, as did many of the other participants. She did not like how particular activities were racialized. What is noteworthy is that although Mu'ad and Zola both assimilated into their white school cultures, Mu'ad was still labelled 'black' and Zola was not. This could be linked to their genders; males could be more susceptible to being assigned a stereotypical black identity. Also, in Mu'ad's case, labelling Mu'ad black was important to the

development of his 'white' (presumably liberal-minded) schoolmates' cool identity because whiteness and blackness coexist and depend on one another.

Racialized white students were not the only ones who had a racialized view of the world. Some racialized black students also reportedly equated smartness or high academic achievement with whiteness. This is most likely due to that fact that mass media propagates common stereotypes of socially constructed racial categories.

When I was in high school, well actually grade 7, I used to hang out with the whites because my classes were full with whites...By the black community, I was being called you know she is acting white...I did hang out with them, but it was she's smart she's not like us. [Emaan]

I don't understand [why] when they see a minority, like really smart people, [they] would be like this guy is acting white—if a guy seems really educated, and he is talking smart, he expressed himself in a clear manner, there is a lot of that. [Jaleel]

Most of the participants did not personally think that intellectual ability was associated with one's socially constructed race. One participant, however, reported that the common representation of blackness and 'the black female' she and her peers were accustomed to seeing caused her to hide her gifted academic status. In order to appear cool, Natasha reported that she rebelled to shed her smart girl image and to be liked by boys at her school. She mirrored society's representation of her, well at least her perception of a racialized black girl.

I was gifted, but I would also rebel. I would go out to the canal and smoke cigarettes just to be cool and do things like that to avert that image of being the nerdy black girl. I always felt like it sort of wasn't acceptable to be that nerdy black kid. And I think some of it has to do with representations...Black women are not expected to be in that position of being the nerdy kid. There's not many representations of that... I was still accepted, I still got to go to the parties, but it [being smart] always felt like a stigma...You notice...boys in

high school and you don't want them to think that you're not one of the cool girls. That was part of it as well, the male gaze. You're sort of forced to perform this identity of being smart, but not too smart. [Natasha]

The media was not only seen as a powerful medium to reinforce dominant racial hierarchies and stereotypes—racialized black people are portrayed as possessing negative characteristics and living in ghettos and those racialized white are represented more positively (e.g. smart, middle-class, etc.)—but it was also seen more broadly as a promoter of western liberal secular values and a culture of consumerism and materialism.

The media, in its self, effects all aspects. It makes you realize that you are almost a product of that society. There is a new product and you have to get that product, you have to be like that, you have to smell like that, everything has to be like that, then you lose yourself...because if you want culture, you can't have religion or you can have religion, but if you want culture and you want to incorporate it into the religion it will cost... For [Muslim] women...it [the media] creates these desires that you don't want to wear the hijab because the hijab is restricting, you don't want to wear all these clothing. I know this girl that was wearing a hijab for a very long time and she randomly took off her hijab. Obviously, people are going to be taken back by it... [She thought] that the hijab was preventing her from developing a style of her own, almost as if it [the hijab] was constricting and she couldn't do what she wanted to. She wanted to take her fashion to the next level and that [the hijab] was stopping her. [Hawa]

Hawa asserted that the values and culture that are promoted by the media and society conflict with the theology of some minority religious groups, such as Muslims. As a result, Hawa argued, one has to choose to abide by liberal secular values or more conservative religious values or try to combine both although they are not fully compatible. Hawa thought that it was particularly difficult for some Muslim women to combine western liberal culture and the values of their religion. According to her narrative, it was challenging for Muslim youth to negotiate between

different cultures and to resist pressures to modernize and adapt to secular ways, in addition to coping with racism, discrimination, and Islamophobia. Rehema further argued,

I grew up with being Muslim and you have your own dress code, you have your own moral code. I can't do this, but the guys are more free [and] they are more open to interpretations to other people's suggestions. And it's not like wearing this snapback [baseball cap] is against my religion or against my morals so I can do it. I'm wearing my pants low, I'm not showing anything, I'm not going against anything so you could do that... it's kind of like you are getting black-washed. You have to take on this identity of, I'm black, I have to have my pants sagging, I have to have a snapback. I have to have...swag.... fashion-wise or by style of talking, then yes you can [act black] because it doesn't affect your religion in anyway. It only goes to the point where it affects your culture of how you act and react to things. [Rahema]

As a Muslim girl, Rahema had to adhere to an Islamic moral, ethics and dress code, which limited the extent she could adopt others' views, cultures and western fashion. However, Rehema stated that racialized black Muslim young men, like her brothers, had some leeway in adopting racialized black western culture and style because it was often not in contradiction to their faith's core values (i.e. following standards of modesty). For instance, racialized black Muslim males could talk slang and dress 'black' while still adhering to the Islamic theology. However, many of the participants argued that their parents were not fond of racialized black western culture. Participants were in agreement that sub-Saharan African immigrant parents discouraged their children from developing a racialized black identity. Natasha argued,

*I feel in our community there's sort of a sentiment of, I must say, anti-blackness. The parents are really trying to make you preserve your culture from back home. So, when I align myself with a lot of African American culture and things like that, my mom would be uneasy about it. Basically, why do you listen to this rap music, it has all that swearing and they're calling people bi***es and hoes. They don't quite understand it because they*

grew up back home; they never were forced to consume that culture. So usually in our communities there's really a big I guess impulse to separate being African from being African American and even from being Caribbean...I think a concern for them is that we're going to turn to this culture [that] they perceive... [is] lesser than African culture and I guess almost tinted because of the representations they see...They think a lot of it has drug culture, a culture of dependency, and they sort of really don't understand the history behind that. So, the impulse for them is to keep us away from it. It has to do with the feeling that they are protecting us against going down the road of the negative representation they see in African American culture. [Natasha]

Natasha reported that Sub-Saharan African parents did not want their youth to adopt a racial identity and a non-African identity, and more precisely a racialized black identity, which they associated with African American low-class culture. They thought adopting a racialized black identity would lead to downward assimilation—assimilation into a deviant underclass. Natasha perhaps had a more positive view of African American culture and a black identity, but Natasha's personal experiences illustrate that Sub-Saharan African parents' concerns are legitimate and justified. Adopting parents' ethnocultural identity and distinguishing one's self from African American people and 'their culture', particularly the stereotypical black underclass that is portrayed in the mainstream media, is crucial for racialized black children of immigrants' incorporation into mainstream society. Despite the fact that not all participants' parents were from the same Sub-African nation and from the same faith group, all the participants were expected to adhere to similar values and traditions in their conservative traditional household while growing up. Some of these values and traditions, outlined by Natasha below, included: no pre-marital sexual relations, parents must always be respected and obeyed, bad habits (e.g. smoking and drinking) must be avoided, and children (in some households, females) are obliged to help out with housekeeping and meal preparation duties.

Basically, when it comes to daily things, like telling me to clean up the house or to do things... And you know there is a whole set of cultural practices that we still do in our house, like how I have to sort of take care of my mother and serve her, offer to cook and things like that, which are very much from back home.... And I also feel there is a lot of pressure to preserve virginity and to get married and start a family in ways that are kind of different than other communities. I still hid it [smoking] from my mother. [Natasha]

There was another distinction that was made between African and Canadian values.

Samuel argued that African cultures tend to be more collectivist; they value the collective over individual rights. Canadian society, on the other hand, values individualism—the rights and freedoms of individuals.⁸

African culture[s] are a lot more collectivist or communitarian. And there is a high value and importance that is held on the community, so the family and the community, the city, the people that you live with, your town or your village... Whereas in Canada, you place such a high value on the individual—individual rights, individual freedom. There are some cases in which we do defend community rights, but it's still always through the lens of the individual—that the individual should be able to do whatever they do. [Samuel]

Collectivism was not only a distinctive part of Sub-Saharan African cultures. Immigrant families that adhere to a collectivist and conservative culture are able to provide their children (if they adhere to this culture) an environment that is conducive to higher educational outcomes (Portes & MacLeod, 1996; Rumbaut & Ima, 1988).

⁸ Using the example of home ownership, here is an example of the difference between collectivist and individualistic cultures from my perspective: In collectivist cultures, adult members of a family purchase a home, which they collectively own, using money they pooled; whereas in an individualistic culture, each family member may be inclined to purchase and own their own home once they have the means. It should be noted that there are many collectivist and individualistic societies/cultures around the world.

Participants whose families adhered to one of the dominant religions in Canada (i.e. Christianity) did not have an easier time adapting to western youth culture compared to participants whose families practiced a non-traditional European religion, such as Islam. As young adolescents, participants were not permitted to drink, date, attend parties and participate in other activities that were part of youth culture in western societies. For participants from Muslim families, their religion did not permit these activities. Participants whose families adhered to Christianity or another religion that does not prohibit engaging in activities such as drinking, dating, and partying, were not permitted to do these activities because it was seen as an impediment to higher educational attainment. In other words, it was not that common western youth activities were impermissible for them, but rather they were considered an unwarranted distraction from educational achievement and excellence.

I'd just say my African roots are very different than that of my Canadian roots. I have friends and a lot of the time there is so much that is so different from me. My parents never condoned the idea of going out and partying in high school. I never partied. It wasn't a thing. Same thing for drinking; it wasn't acceptable. And the same thing for dating or having any sort of pre-marital sex or anything of that sort. Those are informed by both the religious background, but also from the African background... I think that my mom... [believed] the idea that education is everything. Everything else is secondary. Dating is secondary. Sure, it's not the end of the world, but it's not what you should be focusing on when you are in high school nor is it what you should be focusing on when you are in your undergrad. You can do that when you are in your last year of your PhD.
[Samuel]

Not having much of a social life as a teen and following parents' strict guidelines and expectations is a common theme that emerges from participants' narratives.

While most of the participants adopted their parents' view of education, many found it difficult to abide by their parents' religious and ethno-cultural values because the urge to conform to western liberal youth culture was strong for some participants.

We know what our religion [is], it's just that we are fighting it with the western religion and culture—I think it is more culture then religion. I think in the end, I'm going to be honest, I think religion, at the end of the day, is what's going to help you. [Degmo]

[Religion] stops you from doing bad things. At the same time... it's hard for people to practice for sure... We are westernized to be honest. We were born here...we are trying to fit in... some teenagers...just do stuff...do drugs and stuff. Yeah, because everyone is trying to do stuff...we just want to have fun. And then once you get older, that's when you realize you have to stop [and] practice and stuff. [Jebril]

Both Degmo and Jebril acknowledged that religion deters youth from engaging in western youth cultural practices, such as doing drugs. However, they noted that the urge to adopt or engage with western youth culture was strong for youth, particularly in high school. Ottoman argued that it was easier for youth that “were followers and influenced a lot” by others to assimilate into western cultures. However, environment was also a factor. Jebril asserted that it was difficult to fulfill his religious obligations, such as praying, while attending a public high school. Jaleel further argued that it was hard to find places to pray in society at large. He stated, “you don't know...what people's reactions are if I pray here”. Generally, public spaces and secular institutions were not environments conducive to religious observance. Even if religious observance was permitted in these spaces, those who wanted to observe their religion were made to feel uncomfortable because they perceived the uneasiness of those that did not practice their faith.

Moreover, Hawa argued that youth did not follow their religion and ethnic culture in part due to not gaining an understanding of their religion and culture. Hawa stated,

I think that religion does help, but it's how much you understand the religion. When we were younger, most of the Somali community decided to put their children into Quran studies and all these classes and stuff and it almost becomes a chore. It becomes something that is forced and not something that they want to do. So basically, what happens is yeah they have this religious background but they start to tune it out because they don't want that lifestyle; they want another lifestyle. Just because you have a religious background but it could go either way because of the environment... Sometimes I think that you can be the strongest person but you could always be peer pressured... it's all stepping stones that you take. You take a step then another step then you realize yourself changing. [Hawa]

According to Hawa, many youths from her ethno-cultural community were forced to learn about their religion. She asserted that while youth gained basic knowledge of aspects of their parent's religion, they did not develop a deep comprehension of the religion or "realize the importance of Islam". As a result, some youth were gradually swayed by their peers and environment because they did not develop a strong religious foundation to guide them in their mundane lives.

To prevent youth from engaging in what Sub-Saharan African parents deemed 'negative western youth culture', Nadira argued that it was important for parents to be aware of popular youth culture and to have mature and frank conversations about the pitfalls of this culture. Emaan concurred. She similarly stated that parents should establish a good relationship with their children instead of commanding them to do and abstain from doing things.

When they're just entering high school, I feel like that's when they [youth] are the most vulnerable...they don't want to be treated [like] a child. They don't want to be [told] you're not allowed to go because that kind of gives them incentive to rebel. So I feel like

they should be given the right tools, they should be made aware, 'listen, let's be real your peers are doing all these things...' and you kind of have to give them the tools to say these are the consequence if you engage in these type of activities...I reached a point, because I'm older now, I can talk about things with my mom and I appreciate that a lot because she is a lot more open to those kind of conversations, but other parents may not be.

[Nadira]

Parents should be interacting with their children, not just giving them commend[s]. They should be involved [in the life of their kids] ...keeping a clean relationship with [my] parents...helped me a lot. [Emaan]

As stated above, some participants that lived in low income neighbourhoods indicated that they were having the type of conversations that Nadira mentioned with their parents. These participants were informed about the dangerous associated with drugs, negative peer groups and violence. However, having these sorts of conversations with youth does not mean that youth will follow their parent's advice and instruction. Hawa maintained that youth that are receptive to their parent's advice are those that have adopted their parent's values and morals and are able to value their parents.

In every culture, there is always a few good apples that have been embedded with good morals and values and are able to realize that I value my parents more than this, whatever is going on. They value their [parents] advice...when we are at an age, you don't really see your friends are a problem and that's the problem. You don't see these things and then when your parents tell you that there is something wrong, and you don't see that something is wrong. You see these are my friends, these are people I'm going to be friends [with] forever...I think when your parents say choose your friends wisely, that is the best advice that they could have given you because it is a factor in all aspects.

[Hawa]

Furthermore, while strict parenting styles shielded low income youth from low income neighbourhood risks, Hawa argued that strict parenting styles could also lead youth to rebel. Thus, strict parenting styles could lead youth to do what parents wanted to prevent them from doing.

Those people who do tend to turn to drugs and alcohol and all those other stuff are usually people who are...easily influenced and are rebelling and they want to do something for themselves and they don't want to listen to their parents...[Also] I think that when the parents are very strict the child tends to rebel a lot... [But my friend's] mother was really strict on her, [but] she was able to become positive. She got a positive life out of it, but there are so many people, countless amount of people, that are born into families that are so strict and...their children are corrupt, the girls are crazy, the boys are crazy. [Hawa]

Natasha's experience is a good case in point. Natasha revealed that she secretly rebelled against her mother and her strict rules. As a result of defying her ethno-cultural and religious values and tradition, Natasha's mother sent her to her country of origin. Through this experience, Natasha was able to gain a new perspective—what Ogbu's CEM refers to as a 'dual frame of reference'. Natasha became more compliant and she developed empathy towards her mother.

I rebelled quite a bit and I did the dating, I did the smoking, I did the drinking, but I felt that my mom was always there to ground me. I did it in secret, but when I got a little bit out of control she was always there to reel me in, threatening to send me back home and one time she actually sent me back home... It was grounding. It was wonderful now that I look back on it, even when I was there. I was like wow, this is what life is about. I know I shouldn't be doing these things and stressing out my mom. She always pulled me back in. I'm naturally rebellious, but she was always there to ground me and pull me back in and give me that firm foundation. [Natasha]

Idris also had a similar experience. He was also sent back home. He was also able to gain a dual frame of reference—to see his life in Canada in conjunction with life back home. Like his parents, Idris was able to see the opportunities he was afforded in Canada that many people back home were deprived of.

I think my whole vision would be entirely different if I didn't go back home...it changed my perspective on life completely because it made me more appreciative of what I have in life... I think, for me, knowing the struggle my parents had to go through to make something out of nothing. That's what motivates and drives me the most. Because I want to be able to do what my parents were not able to do for themselves. [Idris]

Sending kids back home to live with relatives is a strategy immigrant parents can use to prevent their children from assimilating into or becoming a part of the underclass.

The vast majority of participants were able to develop an appreciation for their parents and their efforts to keep them focused on attaining a higher education and a career in a professional field (e.g. careers as doctors, lawyers and engineers). Degmo declared “if I didn’t have my mom, I don’t know where I would be. I think that’s what I’m going to do when I have children [i.e. use the same parenting strategies]”. Similarly, regarding his parents, Hakim stated that “as a kid you think get out of my head, stop pushing me, stop forcing me, but without that you end up on the streets and you wouldn't care about anything”. Many shared Degmo and Hakim’s sentiments. What gives second and 1.5 generation immigrants an educational advantage is their immigrant parents’ constant push for them to reach for excellence (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Portes, 1996). For this reason, children of immigrants’ close ties with their immigrant parents is a source of social capital. I think many children of immigrants can relate to their immigrant parents not being pleased with them getting anything less than the highest mark (i.e. A+). Immigrant parents’ expectations for their children might decrease if their children are not high achievers,

but they nonetheless have high aspirations for their children (Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, & Garnier, 2001). Moreover, the majority of the participants also developed an appreciation for their ethnic culture, as Natasha, Dalila and Zola shared below.

[N]ow that I'm older, I'm just sort of embracing it [my ethnic culture] more. I never understood why we have to serve our parents, and I totally understand where it comes from—cause they served their parents and their parents served their parents. [Natasha]

I think it's [ethnic culture] something where you start to appreciate more as you grow older. Because when I was younger, it was kind of like I hate my culture. Now as I grow older...understanding my oral history, my personal history in terms of religion, culture, etc. [is important]. [Dalila]

In high school you never talk about colonialism and you start to learn about all these things... you are like no one has ever taught me that so I find it interesting and... I mean the Eurocentric education plays a lot into that. And because of that it makes me even more interested. Now I want to know more about my culture, more about my history, and it's things that I feel I should know. [Zola]

Picking up on Zola's point, it is easy for children of Sub-Saharan African immigrants (and more generally children of racialized black immigrants) not to have an appreciation for their parent's culture, religion and heritage because it is not something that is valued and made visible in the mainstream school curriculum and society. Immigrants', especially those who are racialized black and have limited financial capital, task of guiding their children through the education system and society is not easy, according to participants' narratives. Immigrant parents' have to prevent their children from adopting western cultures that they find impedes their offspring's educational achievement. For their part, immigrant offspring have to adopt their immigrant parent's conservative culture, or they have to have close ties with their parents, or they have to respect and/or have a strong sense of obligation to their family in order for them to do well. Most

of the participants adopted their parents' optimistic worldviews and high expectations. Participants also abided by their parents' firm rules and high expectations, which restricted their movement and social life and focused their attention on their schooling. However, a few of the participants that adopted what their parents considered deviant social practices (e.g. smoking, partying, dating, etc.) were sent back home to become cultured, to be reasoned with, and to refocus their attention. This experience (being sent back home) set these participants back on track in terms of finishing their compulsory schooling or continuing on their journey of achieving upward social mobility through the acquisition of higher education. One way immigrant offspring could deviate from their immigrant parents' conservative cultural norms and expectations and still maintain good relations with them was to hide how they acted outside the home from their parents and conform to their parents' expectations inside the home. Nonetheless, problems can arise if immigrant parents perceive their offspring to be unmotivated, not serious about their future (e.g. as measured by their educational performance and the amount of effort they put into their school work) and not respectful and receptive to their guidance/advice.

Race & identity: Rejecting ascribed racial identities and repositioning self

The previous section shows that there is a fairly strong association between the way participants acculturated (e.g. how participants blend various cultures they are exposed to—e.g. parental culture and mainstream culture) and their social outcomes (e.g. education). Complying with their immigrant parents' conservative cultures (i.e. by choosing an acculturative strategy that allowed them to do so) helped participants to remain focused on their schooling and achieving their educational goals (e.g. graduating from high school and pursuing PSE). The relationship between identity and socioeconomic outcomes is less clear. Despite being exposed

to a racialized view of the world, many of the participants did not develop a simple, one dimensional identity, such as the stereotypical racialized identities that are promoted in popular culture. The participants, as adolescents and young adults, started to figure out who they were and where they fit-in in the Canadian multicultural landscape. Forming a social identity was a complex and dynamic process for many of the participants due to the multiple and diverse social contexts they grew up in. The participants went through different processes to figure out who they were and where they fit in. Some of the participants were very much influenced by external forces, such as their social environment. Other participants' social identities were shaped and informed by internal forces, such as their personal beliefs, morals and character. Most, however, were influenced by both internal and external factors.

For many of the participants, a big part of forming a social identity was figuring out how others viewed them, how they viewed themselves, and what they believed in (in terms of ethics, values and worldviews). Most of the participants agreed that in Canada racialized non-white individuals were labelled based on their physical appearance. More specifically, the majority of the participants argued that regardless of how they acted or viewed themselves, society labelled them black. Idris argued,

I find...that a lot of people are very stereotypical and they judge based on your racial background—just like what your colour is. So, right off the bat, you will be very quickly judged when they know nothing about you. And that's what I find is one of the toughest things about [living in] Canada. [Idris]

One of the most significant external forces that influenced participants' identity formation was society's use of racial categories to classify individuals. Some of the participants used the dominant North American racial classification system that has been historically formed (Omi & Winant, 1994) to identify themselves and the groups they belonged to and others rejected

ascribed racial identities. Idris, for example, did not consider himself black due to the negative connotations that were associated with blackness. Several of the participants rejected the black label they were assigned by society. For example, Rehema vehemently argued that she was not black, but Somali. She stated, “I am not black, I am Somali. I feel when people say black... [they’re referring] mostly [to] people whose ancestors grew up as slaves. I’m from Somalia, we never had slavery. I am just Somalian. Black comes from the whole thing of slavery”. Rehema associated a black racial identity with slavery. To her, those who can trace their history to slavery, are considered black. Since she was of Somali ancestry, she did not consider herself black. Rehema’s opinion of blackness and ‘becoming black’ was similar to that of first generation Sub-Saharan African and Afro-Caribbean immigrants, who often reject a black identity and identify along ethnocultural and religious lines (Berns-McGown, 1999; Kusow, 2006; Waters, 1990).

A few other participants did not mind being called black, because to them, blackness was associated with one’s skin colour. Race, to participants that had this view, was seemingly an unproblematic identification system in Canada. To these participants, someone does not become black, they are black.

In terms of race, I don't think Somali is a race, it's an ethnicity. So, if you ask me what race am I? I would say I'm black...I would not say [I follow a] black culture, more like African culture. [Jaleel]

Do I see myself as a black person? Yeah obviously; look at my skin colour. But I don't usually call myself black, but like I am black because there is only three types of people—Caucasians, Asians, and blacks. [Jebril]

Both Jaleel and Jebril treated race as a social fact; something that was fixed and a normal part of society. This view, as mentioned in the historical review of the social construction of race, was

popularized by scientist (e.g. Herrnstein & Murray, 1994; Jensen, 1969) who tried to establish a biological argument for race and racial inequality. However, while they did not resist the label black, they also did not voluntarily self-identify as black. Their black identity did not appear to be important to them, although a black social identity is indeed important in a racialized society—it influences the way one is perceived and treated in society (Kelly, 1998). A couple of other participants also did not resist being considered black because they thought that all Africans were labelled black. And since they were African, they did not have a problem being called black. Salwa stated “if someone were to say I'm black I would be like okay yeah. But I prefer to be called African, because my parents are from Somalia”. Again, Salwa also did not mind being called black, but she would rather self-identify as African. This is due to the fact that she has ancestral ties to the African continent. Similarly, Sofi considered black to be synonymous with African. Sofi stated, “I consider black being more like African”. For Sofi and Salwa, the black label was also meaningless; they identified along religious and ethno-cultural lines.

Ottoman also thought that black was synonymous with African; but unlike Sofi and Salwa, he voluntarily identified as black. His black identity was meaningful. Ottoman stated,

I'm black. I see myself visually...I'm not I guess black colour, but I'm not white. I'm a coloured individual; so, I'm black...I'm African before that. I wouldn't categorize myself or say black comes before African; they're interchangeable for me. The thing that's most important for me is Islam...but it's [black identity] important to me because if somebody discriminates against me or somebody else because of their skin colour, that's pretty messed up... I know the perception or what people see... [they see] black...I know being black is maybe a challenge, but it's good to be challenged...In place, there are laws, but based on your lawyer or how good your income is, then you will have different terms of sentences. So, of course for black people, generally speaking, the perception is they're

guilty. I remember even in high school, the English teachers were the worst, when they said black, they said black as if it was like something bad. [Ottoman]

Ottoman adopted a black identity as a form of resistance to racism and negative characterizations of racialized black people. His black identity was a political and strategic identity. Ottoman argued he first identified as a Muslim, but he said that his black identity was more salient—he was black first. He identified as black for several reasons: a) he knew that others viewed him as black; b) he knew those racialized as black were negatively viewed and unjustly treated; c) he felt a sense of solidarity with others racialized as black; and d) he wanted to challenge misconceptions about black people by outperforming others and the mainstream (those that have the power to ascribe a racial identity to people racialized non-white). Interestingly, Ottoman chose to self-identify by his ascribed racial identity instead of his lived religious identity; he lived as a Muslim but identified as black. His black identity was the one that was visible to society.

It should be noted that none of the participants fully identified as black, became black or fully adopted the black African American culture uncritically. A primary reason for this was that none of the participants wanted to lose their history, denounce their ethno-cultural heritage or fully assimilate into a black North American socio-cultural group that had a different history than them. This sentiment was explained by Nastasha.

I really feel a strong affinity for the black immigrant community. That's where most of my friends are from... [I]n high school, I started to think of myself more as a black person and also identifying more as African....because I grew up here, I was informed a lot by African American culture. Culturally, although I have my Zambian culture, a lot of the culture that I guess I identify with and perform comes from African American culture because of the consumption of popular culture. I grew up watching BET and reading black magazines...I guess it was a choice, but when you come here, people just see you as

black. So, you just kind of have to, you are forced almost to align yourself with that identity...[But] I really want my children to at least keep the [Zambian] language and learn the culture...even though we're identifying with this black American culture, there's always that impulse to hang on to our culture because I think assimilation is very difficult. It's a negotiation and a struggle. You only want to assimilate so much, but you also want to maintain your culture [and] your history. [Natasha]

Although Natasha retained aspects of her ethnic culture, such as her language, she felt a strong sense of belonging to the larger racialized black/African immigrant community, and more generally to black North Americans. Natasha argued that many racialized black children of immigrants feel compelled to adopt an ascribed black identity because that is how they are seen in North American society and this label greatly influences their everyday experiences.

Natasha's consumption of black popular culture also allowed her to form ties with others racialized black. While Natasha strategically adopted a racialized black identity to form bonds with other racialized black people, she still wanted to resist full assimilation by passing her Zambian culture to her children. She still had a desire to maintain her history and heritage.

Hakim also thought that racialized black youth came to think of themselves as black due to the highly racialized nature of social life in Canada. He described his upbringing in various social environments in the following manner:

Just [by] going to school, going to Sweetland, I got used to talking to white people and everyone. So, it wasn't different when I went to go play hockey...Then I moved to Evergreen [a middle income suburb], which a lot of people called me white for that. The environment there was...next level white...A lot of people... in Evergreen... don't really leave Evergreen, so they don't really have much respect for black people. They don't know what's going on. So, they attack—they don't have a filter...when they speak...Even though I moved to Evergreen...I'm still with the people I grew up with. I still do the same things that I do with them. Even though it's easier for me to be with the people in

Evergreen, I don't have to travel or anything, it's just my mentality and what I enjoy...everyone that I still hang out with are [from] the same culture. So, it makes it that much easier. [Hakim]

Hakim reported that he was able to adapt well to his different social environments as an adolescent. More specifically, Hakim was able to transition from a low socio-economic context to a middle class social environment. Although Hakim was able to adapt and fit into his new social milieu (he was able to join a racialized white peer group), he did not feel comfortable and he sometimes even felt disrespected by his racialized white friends as a racialized black individual. He felt that 'white youth', to varying degrees, held negative stereotypical views and were ignorant about racialized black people. Hakim did not appreciate this because he knew he was seen as a black person. Hakim argued "If we were to look at it from [the] white people's views or other people, we are all the same from their eyes. So, I guess we are all black... [or] African American". Hakim maintained close ties with his childhood friends that lived in his old social housing neighbourhood despite moving far away from them. He felt more comfortable with his social group because they had many similarities, including a shared culture and experiences of exclusion as racialized black males. Interestingly, Hakim's low income neighbourhood became a part of his identity although he did not live there anymore. This was primarily because his old neighbourhood also bonded him to his social group. Hakim said that he and his social group had a strong sense of belonging to the low income neighbourhood they grew up in.

Due to his experience, Hakim self-identified as black because he identified with the struggles of African Americans. He described himself as a black male trying to survive in a hostile social context. He stated I'm "not really those hood black people you think, but like a

young African American trying to get through school”.⁹ Hakim simultaneously identified with African American and distinguished himself from them. A difference between him and black African Americans was the desire to get an education. Hakim stated,

I think from the outside point of view...they look at the [black] American grades, they look at like an 80% non-graduate [rate]...but us—we all know in the household there is high expectations for school, education and everything. Our parents are trying their hardest to make us not have to work that hard when we get older like they did because it was harder for them to integrate as immigrants. For us, inside, we have high expectations...From the outside [there] is low expectations. They expect us not to graduate...It's all what you think. So, if you think you have to go with [or become] the stereotypical black person that doesn't pass or passes with low grades and doesn't even graduate that's on you, but I want to be successful...even if you don't get a job with your education, education is big in the world today. Anything you know is important. There is a lot of people that don't even go to university and then they become millionaires, like Steve Jobs. [Hakim]

Hakim argued that society's negative views and low expectations of racialized black people are based on the experiences of racialized black Americans. He asserted that those racialized black in Canada have the option to adopt a stereotypical black identity and conform to the low expectations society sets for them as racialized black individuals or they can adopt more positive views that lead to upward social mobility and full participation in society. Hakim was well aware of how others viewed him as a black person, but he dismissed this negative view. Hakim adopted his parents' optimistic view on education. He believed that education leads to upward social mobility and prosperity. He was inspired by his parents (and their hard work) to have high aspirations. Furthermore, Hakim viewed individuals that became rich through their intellect as

⁹ Hood is an abbreviation of neighbourhood and also another word for projects or ghettos. Hood black people, by extension, refers to African Americans that live in the ghetto.

role models; and conversely viewed members of the black underclass very negatively and stereotypically. Hakim seemed to somewhat view the black American underclass through a mainstream lens. He thought that racialized black people could exercise agency and not give into racism. He considered them responsible for their state of destitute.

Participants that adopted a black identity did so for different reasons and their understanding of what it meant to be black varied. Nadira argued that racialized black people were diverse and there were many difference within this group. For instance, in North America, Nadira argued that there were two broad groups of blacks: those with slave ancestry and those that recently immigrated to North America. There were many differences within and between these two groups of racialized black people, but their shared experiences of exclusion in their respective communities was something that unified them, according to Nadira. She stated,

I'm not African American, I don't have the slave ancestry... [We are alike] I guess more or less [in] the fact that we look alike and the fact that we feel like we can claim that [black identity] because other people probably think of us in that way... there are [similarities and difference]... a lot of the black Canadians in Canada, other than in the East—like the Maritimes—most of us don't have that slave ancestry. A lot of us are new immigrants, relatively new like second generation, third generation...to a degree yes definitely we're moving towards that whole suburban black culture... in Toronto and Calgary, there is that gang culture as well... [We] consume it [black culture] to a degree. And we do feel we have the same kind of struggles in away in terms of the system, like not having enough opportunities and maybe the males not being as educated [and going to] jail, and things like that. [Nadira]

Compared to Nadira, Jebril drew a more defined line of demarcation between black African Americans and racialized black second generation immigrants. He argued,

[In] black culture, they got the guns, they got the gangs, they have the sagging pants, they got the chop [drugs], [and] the crack house. They are pretty ghetto too. They are weird people. They walk around with no shoes, no shirts, most of them go underfeed. All the guys got baby mommas. Us, we are Somali. Even though most of the guys our age they try to be more westernized, but still we follow our culture...we try to...mix both worlds. We don't try to follow other cultures. We are our own culture. [But] there is a difference between culture and swag... Sagging pants is not culture. That's just swag. Everyone sags their pants a little you know...It [the fashion] was baggy, and then it went to skinny and now it's regular size pants, like the slim kind of fit. We don't try to go skinny... [it's—sagging pants—a] type of swag and stuff. It's like a fashion. White people could do that too. Asians could do that too. So, everyone does it. [Jebril]

Even though Jebril, much like Hakim, identified as a ‘black person from the hood, but not that type of hood’, he differentiated his culture and neighbourhood from his perception of low-class African American culture and the ‘black American ghetto’. To say the least, Jebril did not think highly of black low-class culture nor did he identify with the stereotypical ‘poor/ghetto black person’. Similar to theorists that argue low class African Americans (or the black underclass) have deficient cultures that keep them in their low socioeconomic positions (Lewis, 1966; Wilson, 1996), Jebril argued that black low-class culture was characterized by violence, drugs, poverty, ‘sagging pants’, ‘weird’ behaviour and hypersexuality. Low income neighbourhoods in Ottawa were not considered nearly as ‘ghetto’ as American low income neighbourhoods or even ghettos at all. Jebril argued that Somali youth tried to mix elements of western popular youth culture with Somali culture. However, following western fashion trends, Jebril stressed, did not necessarily mean that youth adopted the culture of those that originated the style—by dressing ‘black’ one is does not necessarily become ‘black’. In other words, adopting mainstream black hip hop style does not mean that one adheres to low-class American black culture or gangster culture, nor does it mean one has adopted a stereotypical black identity. Ottoman also thought

that aspects of black hip hop culture, such as hip-hop music and style, is popular with youth, regardless of their socioeconomic background or race. He argued, “before we could generalize stereotypes that black people only do it [such as] ...baggy pants...It's a style now”.

A number of other participants concurred with the opinion that racialized black individuals in North America differed from one another. Isse argued “most black people rather listen to hip hop and it influences the way they act...the way they talk, the way they dress... [but] the [black] culture over there [America] is different from here [Canada]. The slang they have over there [America], it's different from over here [Canada]”. Isse maintained that racialized black Canadians that consume black popular culture do not completely embrace the culture; they adapt it and take parts of it. Isse further argued that different black sociocultural groups in Canada used different slang words and language. For example, Isse said that he and his friends used Somali words, slang words from African American popular culture and words they made up. Isse said “someone comes up with it [words] and then it is catchy”. Sahil similarly shared that although he primarily identified as black, and black Canadian more specifically, he and his friends culturally drew from Somali, white and African American cultures. They adapted their culture (e.g. language and behaviour) to fit into their different social environments—peer, school, work, neighbourhood and home. Sahil declared,

We are trying to take all these cultures together—Somali, white, and African American—[and] making it our identity and our character. We can listen to hip hop, we can act Somali and we can act white with white people...if you go to school, you speak proper...when you are in the neighbourhood, you speak with your friends with slang and with abbreviations. Some people won't understand us. [Sahil]

As touched upon briefly before, a couple of Muslim female participants not only identified as black, but they also adopted aspects of black popular culture. Unlike Muslim male participants

that adopted some elements of hip hop culture (e.g. dress), these female participants found it somewhat difficult to adopt some aspects of black popular culture because it conflicted with their religious tenants. For instance, Nadira considered herself black because others saw her as black and she adopted aspects of black popular culture. She stated,

I'm pretty sure people when they see me they associate me with being black. And I do identify as being black. It's just that there is so much to it; people make it seem like it's simple...It's more than a skin colour...I strongly identify as African not just Somali, but African...I identify I guess as black in the whole sense of it...When I watch shows [on] BET and things like that, yeah I subtly identify with it, I'm not going to lie.¹⁰ Sometimes I say the N-word and stuff like that. [Nadira]

In addition to viewing herself as a black African Canadian, Nadira also identified as a Muslim.

She declared,

I identify strongly with being a Muslim, but I would be lying if I said that I didn't struggle with it.... identifying as a hijabi is another level of identity. There's also a lot of connotations [associated] with [a] hijab...If you are a hijabi, you're identified publically that you're Muslim...[and] there's also these connotations that you're a hijabi you're not supposed to be doing that...The hijab adds another level [on top of being black]. I can't change my skin colour, I'm obviously black that's how I was born, but I have the option, if wanted to tomorrow, to take off my hijab. Will that make it easier? I don't know, but for me it almost seems like my hijab is my identity, so it's what comes with it.¹¹ [Nadira]

Nadira shared that it was difficult being a practicing Muslim female and a black person because there were many meanings attached to these identities. She said that wearing an Islamic head covering visibly identified her as a Muslim and for this reason, she found it difficult to act

¹⁰ BET stands for Black Entertainment Television. It is an American television channel that targets African American audiences.

¹¹ A hijabi is a Muslim female who wears a hijab. A hijab is an Islamic head covering or scarf.

contrary to the Islamic theology (i.e. dressing immodestly while wearing the hijab). Nadira argued that she could not get away from being black and from stereotypes associated with blackness due to the fact that this was an identity ascribed to her based on her skin colour. As for her religious identity, Nadira affirmed that she was unwilling to take off her hijab and erase her physical religious marker to avoid Islamophobia and the gaze and criticism of those that policed her religious identity and religiosity.

Since religion and aspects of western culture (e.g. wearing revealing clothing styles, improper physical contact with the opposite sex, etc.) could conflict, Hawa argued that she, and other second generation Muslims, had to create their own culture, which adhered to their faith as well as other popular cultural practices—if that was something they fancied. This culture was a mix between western liberal culture and their more conservative ethnic culture, which somewhat conformed to their religion.

When it comes to Islam, I think that Islam is absolutely true and we should abide by those [religious] rules...when it comes to culture, take bits and pieces from the culture. But when it [culture] clashes with religion, go with the religion...when it comes to languages, when it comes to things that are not haram [forbidden] or things that are helpful to you... [they] are okay. I don't have a problem with that. ...Islam is simple, but culture is really complicated and I think that is where the problem is. [Hawa]

Depending on what is important to an individual (e.g. faith, culture, fashion, or a combination of these things), the incongruence between religions, such as Islam, and secular western liberal culture can be negotiated in several ways. For Hawa, religion was more important than culture. She advocated for the use of the Islamic theology as a guide to determine what aspects of different cultures can be adopted and which should be abandoned. Alternatively, a more

moderate interpretation of a conservative religion could be adopted to address the dissonance between secular liberal culture and religious beliefs.

For some of the participants that were Muslim, their religious identity did not stop them from becoming a part of non-Muslim socio-cultural groups and adopting aspects of black popular culture, and more generally liberal western culture. Using an Islamic lens, they were able to fuse together multiple identities and adopt parts of western and non-western cultures. For example, Dalila shared,

You learn that identity is something that is very intersectional, so I am a woman, but also Muslim, I'm also black, I'm also coming from a low income neighbourhood. So, there's all these different aspects... "disadvantages". I think those are the things that make me stand out and [make me] more passionate about what I do—activism, community organizing, all that good stuff...I see myself as all these things, but I think there is also one general framework that kind of shapes everything and that's my Islamic, Muslim identity. So, Islam really does shape me and it guides me and helps me make decisions you know like tells me what I should and shouldn't do. [Dalila]

Dalila embraced being categorized in multiple socially constructed 'disadvantaged' categories. Embracing ascribed labels and aligning herself with marginalized people did not make Dalila feel inferior. In fact, her low socioeconomic status allowed her to form a positive professional identity—an activist for social justice. Her background shaped her ambitions and aspirations. Socially, Dalila felt a strong sense of belonging to other racialized non-white individuals. Dalila was also able to form friendships with socially conscious racialized white individuals. She asserted,

When you see another person of colour you're like "what's up"... I've always been mostly around other people of colour...I think I probably only had maybe one, probably two people, who I considered good friends who are white and it's because they understand...

their...own white privilege...they're not telling you 'O' you can live this Canadian dream, you just have to work for it', you know. They understand and they know society is messed up. So, they don't step on anyone's toes. [Dalila]

Regarding consumption and adoption of black popular culture, Dalila stated,

Hip hop culture now it's kind of been redefined for me in the sense that when you look at the elements of hip hop, like breaking, I can't break dance, I love looking at graffiti art, I can't [do] graffiti [art]... and when it comes to hip hop music, I don't listen to the mainstream rap or whatever. I listen to content with meaning...Of course I have my moments where I listen to a Drake song...[But] when I was younger I used to listen to what's his name Fat Joe and I'm just like why did I listen to this, it's mind poisoning. I don't live it, it's not a daily reality for me, but it's something that I enjoy. [Dalila]

Dalila explained that she uncritically consumed and was influenced by black popular culture as a young adolescent. However, when she got older, she was more selective with respect to her exposure to black popular culture. Said differently, Dalila did not adopt black popular culture or 'act black' like she did when she was younger, but she merely enjoyed consuming selected aspects of black hip hop culture that she deemed to be meaningful and interesting.

As discussed above, some of the participants adopted socially constructed identities that they were ascribed. Nevertheless, many of these participants created their own cultures and redefined and attached their own meanings to ascribed identities they consciously decided to adopt. Other participants, as mentioned however, rejected socially constructed ascribed identities, such as black; and if they adopted this label, they were meaningless to them. The next section explores the types of identities these participants formed, which was a mix of their inherited ethnocultural, religious and/or national identities.

Redefining & delimiting inherited ethnocultural, religious and national identities: Finding/creating spaces to belong

The participants that rejected racialized identities developed identities based on their morals, beliefs, cultures, ethnicity, behaviours, and generation status. These participants stopped conforming to their multiple sociocultural contexts and they started to contemplate what they believed in. A starting point for many was examining the extent to which they agreed with and wanted to adopt their parent's religious beliefs and ethnic culture, which was different than the culture and worldview of the mainstream in Canada.

Regarding her identity formation journey, Rehema shared,

[In] high school, I dressed a different way. I did not dress modestly in grade 9. I still had my hijab on, but other than that, it was skinny jeans and a t-shirt. I felt like the hijab was culture more than religion...I was never told to dress modestly because that's the whole religion aspect of it. And then slowly going through high school I started to understand more about [my] religion, through religious studies, then I started to dress modestly and stuff like that. [Rehema]

During her junior year of high school, Rehema described her fashion as a fusion of Muslim and western culture. Rehema dressed in accordance with western secular popular culture and she draped a headscarf over her head to pay homage to what she thought was her ethno-cultural heritage that was heavily influenced by Islam. Her clothing was a symbol of incoherent compliance and a disjointed, dissonant identity. When Rehema gained a better understanding of her religion, she was able to commit to the tenets of her faith and form a more coherent identity. Her identity became more coherent in the sense that the western clothing Rehema wore conformed to her understanding of the Islamic concept of modesty, a concept she was formerly unaware of. Rehema more consciously identified herself as a Muslim Somali-Canadian. Her

Muslim identity was central to her, and her style of dress confirmed this. As touched upon by another participant (Hawa), Muslim females struggle to reconcile their Canadian (western) and Islamic identities. Some Muslim females try to negotiate and display their hybrid Canadian (western) and Islamic cultural identities. Other Muslim females, like Rehema, are less inclined to engage with western culture due to their strict interpretation and adherence to the faith.

Sofi also had a strong Muslim identity, however, her route to developing a Muslim identity was different than Rehema's. Sofi stated "I consider myself a Muslim...I was raised in a family where Islam was very important... I can't see myself leaving it or changing it. I am happy we grew up in that". Sofi developed a strong Muslim identity due to the fact that her family was religious, and she went to an Islamic school. The peer and schooling social context that Sofi was exposed to reinforced her home values, morals and ethics. In instances such as these—when the home, peer and school cultures reinforce one another—it is easy for racialized non-white youth to cross between the multiple social contexts they live in-between (Phelan et al., 1991). Sofi shared that she was "sheltered" and not exposed a great deal to popular culture. In addition to her religious identity, Sofi also valued her ethnic heritage. She stated,

[I'm] born and raised Canadian, but also, I don't [want to] forget my roots. You know, I am Djiboutian. So, I always keep that in mind. People...born and raised here, they forget their own culture. So, they describe themselves as Canadian: "I am Canadian". They forget, no, you are from another place. Your family is from there, you might be born here, but never forget your roots at the end of the day. [Sofi]

Ma'ud as well started to value and adopt his parents' religion when he got older and graduated from his 'white' high school. He narrated,

In that time in my life, and especially earlier high school years, I think religion was at the back [of my mind]. Sometimes you could say I was a pretend minority in that sense. You

could get away with it because everyone would always tell you, you are one of us. So, you would form identities that really wouldn't be yours. I would act white, you could say...At university, that's where I met MSA [Muslim Students Association], Muslim people. And that's where I began to reconstruct and reassess my identity and move from that predominately white identity to a more Muslim identity...Then I met more people of Somali background who also strongly adhered to the faith. So, I thought you could balance those [two identities] because at first, I thought identity was just faith-based and you can't be cultural because it goes against it. So, it gradually went from a white high school teenage mentality to a different identity after university. [Mu'ad]

When Mu'ad was in high school, he conformed to the culture of racialized white students at his school to fit into his social environment. By 'acting white', students included him in their social circles. However, Mu'ad thought that the racialized white identity he performed in high school was not really his identity—he did not feel it was an authentic identity. In essence, Mu'ad's 'white' high school identity was nothing more than a cloak; a situational identity, an identity he adopted to fit into a particular social environment. Once he entered university, Mu'ad was able to choose a different identity; one that aligned with his beliefs, experiences and heritage. Although not without difficulty, Mu'ad discovered that he could adopt other social identities in addition to his religious identity, which he considered his 'primary identity' and "a big influence in [his] life, more so than ethnic or cultural forces". In addition to being Muslim, Mu'ad also considered himself a "Canadian with a Somali background". Mu'ad explained, "I mostly identify myself with other young Somali-Canadians...whose parents come from Somalia to Canada and who were raised here. We can converse in English together [and] we have shared experiences". Mu'ad felt the strongest sense of belonging to Muslim-Canadians of Somali descent because he had the most similarities with this group.

Mu'ad's transformation was triggered by internal forces, particularly his Muslim faith, as well as external factors, such as changing social contexts and meeting other individuals that had a similar heritage, belief system and experiences as him. After reassessing his social identity and repositioning himself, Mu'ad stated "I'm fine where I am". Mu'ad's social identity (e.g. his behavior and peers) reflected his personal identity (e.g. his beliefs, ethics, morals and appearance). In high school, his personal identity and social identity conflicted. For instance, Mu'ad would go to dances and cocktail parties with his racialized white friends, but he would not drink because this conflicted with his religious beliefs. Many of the participants solved this dilemma by not being a part of social groups that engaged in activities that contradicted their personal ethics and values. For instance, Hayat stated,

I associate with people from my religious background just because it [i]s a lot easier. You could do things a lot more easily. You can go out and you wouldn't have to worry about drinking, for example. And you wouldn't have to worry about doing certain things that you are not allowed to do because of your religion. Because of that, I... surrounded myself with those type of friends. [Hayat]

Hayat's social circle primarily comprised of members from her faith community. Hayat found it more difficult to join non-Islamic circles because they normally engaged in activities, such as drinking, an activity central to western secular liberal culture, prohibited in Islam. She did not have to explain herself to those that were Muslim; and therefore, it was easier to be herself—there was no pressure to do what she did not want to do or be where she did not want to be. Hayat's social identity was more broadly defined than Mu'ad's. Hayat felt a strong sense of belonging to Canada and her fellow Canadian citizens, whether they were from her ethno-cultural group or not, but she mostly associated with Canadians who adhered to her faith, Muslim-Canadians. Conversely, Mu'ad's social circle comprised mainly of second generation

Muslim Somali-Canadians. For both Mu'ad and Hayat, their religious identity shaped their social identity. There was a tendency for participants, especially when they got older, to seek out social groups that they felt comfortable to be a part of. Sofi and Nadira argued,

I feel like everyone ends up doing that at a certain point. They just adapt with their people. You are not disregarding the other people, but you just feel more comfortable with your people. Like if you say certain words, you know that you will not offend them and you don't have to be tippy toeing around them. You're just all the way comfortable. It's like you are at home. [Sofi]

When you meet someone else who you have a lot of things in common with in terms of experience and the way you see the world you just naturally gravitate towards someone like that. [Dalila]

It should be noted that the social identities of participants that were Christian did not seem to be affected by their personal beliefs and theology. Samuel and Natasha, for instance, adopted their parent's religious faith and considered it of importance, but their religious beliefs did not determine their social identities and the groups they associated with to a large extent (if at all). They stated,

My mother is protestant and my father is Catholic. I've been baptized... but I don't necessarily go with one or the other. I guess I rather go to a protestant church... [I attend church] mainly for the important holidays and every now and then when I do find a need to go to church...I definitely do practice it [religion] on a daily [basis], not in the institutional sense that I go to church, but I do pray daily and I do keep it in my life.... [Religion is] only layers in which people identify themselves with. But it's a very low layer. Like nobody goes around asking you are you Christian or anything. [Samuel]

I come from a family that is religious. We're Christian and we still follow the religion, but my mom is not as fervent as other people. So, we do live by the religious tenants. My mom reminds me and I guess today I went to church as well. I still feel that obligation to

at least go to church and to follow the religion and we pray before dinner and my mom prays for me all the time and she reminds me to pray as well. [Natasha]

On the other hand, several Muslim participants were greatly influenced by their religious beliefs.

Emaan, in particular, only formed a Muslim social identity. She asserted,

I mostly identify myself as a Muslim. So, I identify with my religion...my mother would disagree with me, but I don't feel attached to the Somali community. I know I'm Somalian, it's just the whole culture thing I have a problem with it...I'd like to say that I'm Muslim and that's it. [Emaan]

Emaan's Islamic identity solely shaped her behavior, ethics, morals, attitudes and worldview.

Emaan recognized her Somali ethnicity, but her social identity was not Somali due to her feelings of disconnectedness from the wider Somali community. Emaan became a part of the Muslim-Canadian community that were strong adherers to the Islamic faith; she was not specifically attached to an ethno-cultural segment of the Muslim-Canadian community. Idris was also another participant that only considered himself a Muslim. He stated, "I like to just say that I'm Muslim". Their personal and social identities completely converged. Their social identities were primarily informed by their internal beliefs and convictions.

Moreover, Marian too reported that her religion shaped her attitudes, behaviour, and manner of dressing. She stated,

[My religion is] ...a huge part of my life. It's the first thing that I actually identify myself with. So, whenever I feel troubled or if I'm not too sure of what I'm doing or if I'm doing the right thing for myself, I always come back to my religion and tell myself you know you're a Muslim woman you shouldn't forget that. So, it's really my base, my motivation. [Marian]

Although Marian considered herself religious, her social identity was not only based on her personal religious identity. Marian self-identified as a Djibouti-Canadian because she felt the strongest sense of belonging to Djibouti-Canadians that were educated in the Canadian French school system. She stated “I grew up with Djibouti people. They went to my school throughout my entire years. Djibouti people tend to go to French schools more, so I definitely identify myself more with them”.

Interestingly, when the participants hyphenated their identities, they attached different meanings to this identity. For example, when participants identified themselves as Somali/Djibouti-Canadian, it meant a couple of things. First, it meant that they were of Somali heritage and born in Canada. For example, Degmo stated “I am a Somali-Canadian. I am from Somalia, but I was born here”. Similarly, Sofi asserted “[I’m] born and raised Canadian, but also, I don’t [want to] forget my roots. I am Djiboutian. So, I always keep that in mind”. And secondly, for some, their hyphenated identity signified the segment of the Canadian society they belonged to and their generation status. For instance, Somali-Canadian only referred to Somalis born or raised in Canada or Canadians with Somali immigrant parents. Participants made a distinction between themselves and their parents’ generation. This is because second generation Somalis did not really feel like they were a part of their parents’ home country or the first generation. Hawa explained,

I am Somali. Everything I do—I am more attracted to Somali people, Somali culture. I tend to speak Somali to those who do speak Somali, so that’s something that attracts me to Somalis... when you come from the same culture as somebody, it’s a comfort zone for somebody...[but] when you talk to somebody that just came from Somalia, you distance yourself—oh that person is a FOB [fresh off the boat]. That person is uneducated. They don’t speak English. There is a distinction... [and] when you go back home...the way that

you are not from here, it's the same way you are not from there. Because you are not Somali compared to them. You don't talk like them, you don't walk like them, you don't act like them—there is nothing about you that seems Somali. [Hawa]

Forming a social identity can be a complex and dynamic process, as Hawa explained. The social identity development process is both passive (a participant is excluded by others) and active (the participant and their social group exclude others). Identities, according to Hall (1996), are temporary meeting points (sutures) "between on the one hand the discourses and practices which attempt to 'interpellate'... hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses, and on the other hand, the processes which produce subjectivities [practices of subjective self-constitution]" (p 5-6). Identities are discursively constructed through exclusion: they can only be constructed in relation to 'the Other', in relation to what it is not (Ibid). For several of the participants, a big part of forming a social identity was figuring out what groups of people they shared the most similarities with and were comfortable being around. For example, Hawa stated that she retained her ethnic culture, including language, and was more inclined to associate with individuals from her ethnic group. However, she did not feel an affinity for immigrants from her ethno-cultural group even though they spoke the same language and had a shared heritage. Instead of focusing on similarities, Hawa focused on her difference from this group. Hawa argued that children of immigrants that were born and/or raised in Canada did not associate with recent immigrants from their ethnic group because they were not fully proficient in the official language(s), they were not educated in Canada, and they are not aware of the cultural norms of Canada. Furthermore, Hawa noted that children of immigrants, even if they spoke their mother tongue and were knowledgeable about their ethnic culture, were not considered a part of their parent's country of origin because they spoke their ethnic language with an accent and they behaved differently—they were Somalis cultured and socialized in Canada, a hybrid of some

sort. Therefore, some children of immigrants did not identify themselves solely based on their ethnicity. They were their own group—second generation Somali Canadians—that often further branched out into other groups (e.g. Muslim Somali-Canadians and Somali black/African-Canadians). These youths are forming their own sub-cultures and are redefining what it means to be black, African, ethnic, religious and Canadian. Many of the participants did not fit, due to exclusion or unwillingness on their part, into pre-existing and well-defined groups.

Consequently, many of the participants formed a social group with other second generation immigrants. Some, such as Jaleel, who considered Islam to be a big part of his life, associated with other Somali-Canadians who considered their religion important. Others, like Walid, who self-identified as Muslim and Eritrean, more broadly associated with second generation immigrants from diverse backgrounds.

As a result of living in a highly interconnected world and being exposed to multiple cultures, worldviews, ethics and values, participants formed a diverse array of social identities. How does this finding inform the relationship between educational attainment and identity formation? Educational attainment seems to be more related to the educational supports participants received (if they need it), strict parenting and close parental supervision (especially, of those that were entertainment-seekers), and personal characteristics (e.g. studiousness, outlook on life, attitudes towards parents/authority, personality, etc.). Moreover, acculturation seemed to be a particularly important determinant when it came to the participants' educational attainment. Despite forming different identities, as minorities, the participants became knowledgeable about several cultures (e.g. their ethnic culture, mainstream culture and various cultures in popular culture) and competent at cross-cultural interactions. By learning to successfully adapt to their

diverse micro socio-cultural environments, most of the participants learned how to live among diverse groups of people in their multicultural city and communities.

9. Key informants' and parents' vantage points

In their narratives, many of the participants mentioned the important role immigrant parents and community-based supports played in their lives. To gain a more holistic understanding of participants' experiences and how community forces influenced their life trajectories, this chapter presents the perspectives of a select group of parents and key informants. The narratives of parents and key informants serve to further enrich and inform participants' accounts of how they and their community responded to their changing social environments and system forces that could have impeded their incorporation into mainstream institutions and the larger society. Sub-Saharan African parents discussed the challenges they faced in raising their children in a country that they were not familiar with. They also shared the strategies they used to keep their children safe from falling victim to system forces once they learned about the multiple challenges racialized black youth encountered. Key informants, on the other hand, shared their experiences working with Sub-Saharan African immigrant offspring. Most of the key informants were parents; thus, they could speak as parents and from the position they held within their community. Similar to parents, key informants identified a number of structural barriers children of African immigrants encountered. Additionally, key informants disclosed how youth from the Sub-Saharan African community were assisted to overcome structural and systemic barriers at the grassroots level over the last several years. Overall, the views and observations of key informants and parents aligned closely with the perspectives of the youth that participated in this study.

Manufactured inequality: The importance of being alert & knowing 'the system'

Affirming participants' observations, key informants and parents reiterated that one of the leading challenges that children of African immigrants (and more generally racialized black youth) encountered were structural and institutional barriers. Immigrant African parents' lack of knowledge about structural barriers and the functioning of the broader society compounded these barriers. Furthermore, African immigrants have encountered numerous social, economic and geographic barriers, which have slowed their incorporation process into Canadian society (Berns-McGown, 1999; Creese & Wiebe, 2012; Galabuzi, 2006; Social Planning Council of Ottawa, 2008). When African immigrants, many of whom came as refugees, first arrived in Canada, they were merely trying to adjust (e.g. learning the mainstream language and culture, securing a job, finding housing) to a new life in a foreign country. As a result, the majority of African parents were not in a position to help their children navigate a racially and economically stratified society that they had not grown accustomed to socially and culturally. Parents shared,

Honestly, it's not only our children. It's us. We got lost because we ha[d] [a] culture shock. We ha[d] weather...language... [and] cloth[ing] barrier[s]...We face[ed] a lot of things. [Amburo]

The major challenges are we have a culture that is different from the dominant culture in Canada. We have a religion that is different from the ones in Canada. We have values that are different from the [dominant] ones in Canada. [Canab]

One parent exclaimed, African parents thought it was "like Africa, where you just send your kids to school" and they would turn out good—i.e. become productive members of society—with the support of the broader community and its institutions. In a like manner, a key informant asserted that many African parents allowed the culture of their 'home country' to guide their child-rearing

practices in their newly adopted country. This key informant, Cilmi, a community leader and organizer, stated,

The girls are very protected than the boys. If a girl does [something] bad, it is shameful for the community. But if a boy does something bad, it is very likely that it will be accepted as normal. It is not a good culture, but that's what it is...In this society, if a child is not closely watched, he can go with his friends... Mothers and fathers don't know it is a different society. It is not a place where you can let your kids go. You are not expecting your child will do drugs, drink, steal something...end up arrested. [Cilmi]

Ironically, even though cultural practices like different behavioural expectations for girls and boys, restricting the freedom of girls and guarding girls' chastity could be considered negative under a feminist lens, these practices reportedly benefited girls educationally. Conversely, the practice of 'allowing boys to be boys' and affording boys freedom to move about in society, was discovered to be an unwise practice that placed Sub-Saharan male offspring (as racialized black males) in a vulnerable position in a racist society.

Nesteexo, who raised her kids as a single parent, further argued, "[African immigrant] parents were asleep—they were in deep sleep...Even me, that is literate, did not understand many things". Nesteexo thought that she, like many African immigrant parents, was out of touch with the lives of her children and the societal roadblocks that stood in the way of their social mobility. Her awakening moment was when she accidentally learned about the practice of streaming in schools. She recalled,

My child was in grade 8... [and] I saw her getting 90s... [M]y son said 'it's because she is in a dumb class'. I said what do you mean by dumb? I compared her book to a book of another kid at the same level, but different class. The books were different... I would have never known... there is something wrong with the system... [I] asked the teacher what's going on. I said I have the grade 7 report card; there's no problem... She said my daughter was tested. No one told me... [I] spoke to the principal...She said

congratulations your daughter is in the regular program. I left the issue at that. I don't know what happened [to cause them to change their minds]. It's maybe because they did not get me to sign papers or because I told them I will request to have both my children transferred to another school. The kids in my daughter's old class were all put into Applied in high school. They easily stream kids. [Nesteexo]

Daahir, a youth worker and educator who has an intimate knowledge of the education system, agreed that parents were "not even aware" that there was a "need to guide" their children and "to mediate between the system and the kids". Therefore, he argued, racialized black African immigrant parents and their offspring were often misinformed; they were led to believe "that the kids don't have a choice. [For example] [w]hen they are choosing academic or applied, it's the school's choice".

The shortcomings of the education system, which extended beyond the problem of streaming, was repeatedly discussed by parents and key informants. Parents and key informants noted that the western education system was initially highly respected and trusted by most African parents. This argument is consistent with CEM's postulation that immigrant parents place a great deal of trust in the education system and school personnel. However, educational institutions were unveiled to be sites that did not nurture the intellectual growth of racialized black children. They were seen as demoralizing places that were unsupportive and unresponsive to the educational needs of racialized black students.

[W]hen the kids go to them [guidance counsellor], they say 'you cannot do this'...'Don't apply', 'do this'...'oh it's very difficult'. They never encourage. And the parents believe that what the guidance counsellor is saying is correct. No matter how much parents try to help their children, other people [school personnel] have [control over] them. If they do not get good teachers, if they do not get a supportive principal, your child is a target [of underachieving/institutional racism]. [Amburo]

Counsellors always...tell the kids to go to college to get some kind of trades qualification... There is nothing wrong with college. Except, why aren't you encouraging the kids to go to the highest potential they could go? I found that the majority of the counsellors and teachers are not encouraging the minority kids... many teachers do not really support the kids. And this is where the kids very much become disappointed and kind of let down.
[Daahir]

When some immigrant parents caught on and tried to combat subtle exclusionary school practices, such as differential treatment of racialized black children, they frequently felt helpless due to the imbalance of power that existed. African parents' efforts to intercede between their children and the school system was also hampered by their unfamiliarity with educational institutions. Immigrant parents and their children were often at the mercy of schools and their supporting structures. What key informants and parents came to understand was that racism was deeply-rooted in all schools, systemic exclusion was a widespread institutional problem. That is to say, the education system was not solely flawed at the secondary school level, but the whole education system was defective and in need of repair. Racialized black students were more vulnerable to streaming and dropping out of high school because the elementary schools these students attended did not satisfactorily equip them for the secondary school level. A parent and key informant reflected,

They go to an easy and bad elementary and intermediate school...The kids learn zero. When they graduate...what are those kids to do? Are they going to have a future? ... [I]f the kids' base is not good at the elementary-intermediate level, how will they go to high school? ...When that child enters high school, by grade 10 that child is dizzy. And when they get dizzy they will run away [drop-out]. [Nexteexo]

[O]verall the schools in these [low income] neighbourhoods, the teachers are not motivating the kids to do their best...when they [low income kids] come out of grade 8...they are not ready for high school. There is no preparation in math or English or

science—the major things... they don't have what it takes to be doing well [starting] from grade 9. [Daahir]

Cilmi also thought that teachers and guidance councillors' complacency with the underachievement of low income and racialized black students was a societal problem, not only an educational institutional problem. By blaming the underachievement of racialized black and low income students on their family and community characteristics (e.g. low income, single-parent household), the education system passively perpetuates social and economic inequality. According to Cilmi,

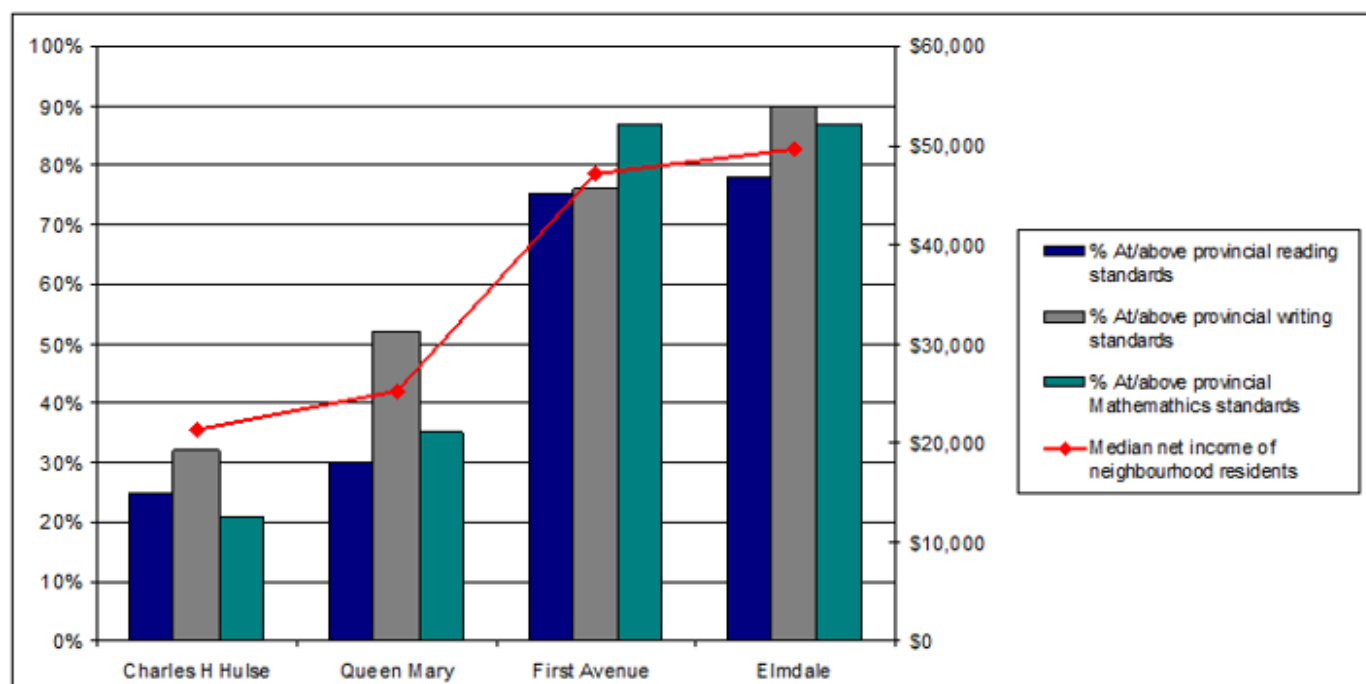
The problem we have is not the system of the school... It is the way the society is structured... Society has accepted and tells you if you are poor you will not reach far in life, stay in your place... It's as if teachers were told, you cannot solve this problem, you can just minimize the problem. They will be told most of these kids come from low income neighbourhoods, immigrant families, they don't speak the language.

Cilmi further argued that the existence of a "strong relationship between where one lives and academic" achievement exposes the unequal structure of society. Through his extensive experience analyzing and attempting to address racialized black immigrant communities' problems, this community leader asserted that "the education system in Canada is not free. It depends on the amount of money people in the neighbourhood input into schools". More specifically, he argued "schools that its population have high incomes...have high academic performance"; whereas students that attended schools in low income areas with a high racialized black and immigrant student population, are set-up to fail. Cilmi's observation is supported by the reviewed literature for this study as well as the segmented assimilation theory and the CEM. Schools in low income neighbourhoods were considered grantors of poor quality education

because they lacked resources, despite the concentration of students with high-needs (e.g. kids with learning difficulties and/or from low income families and communities) at these schools.

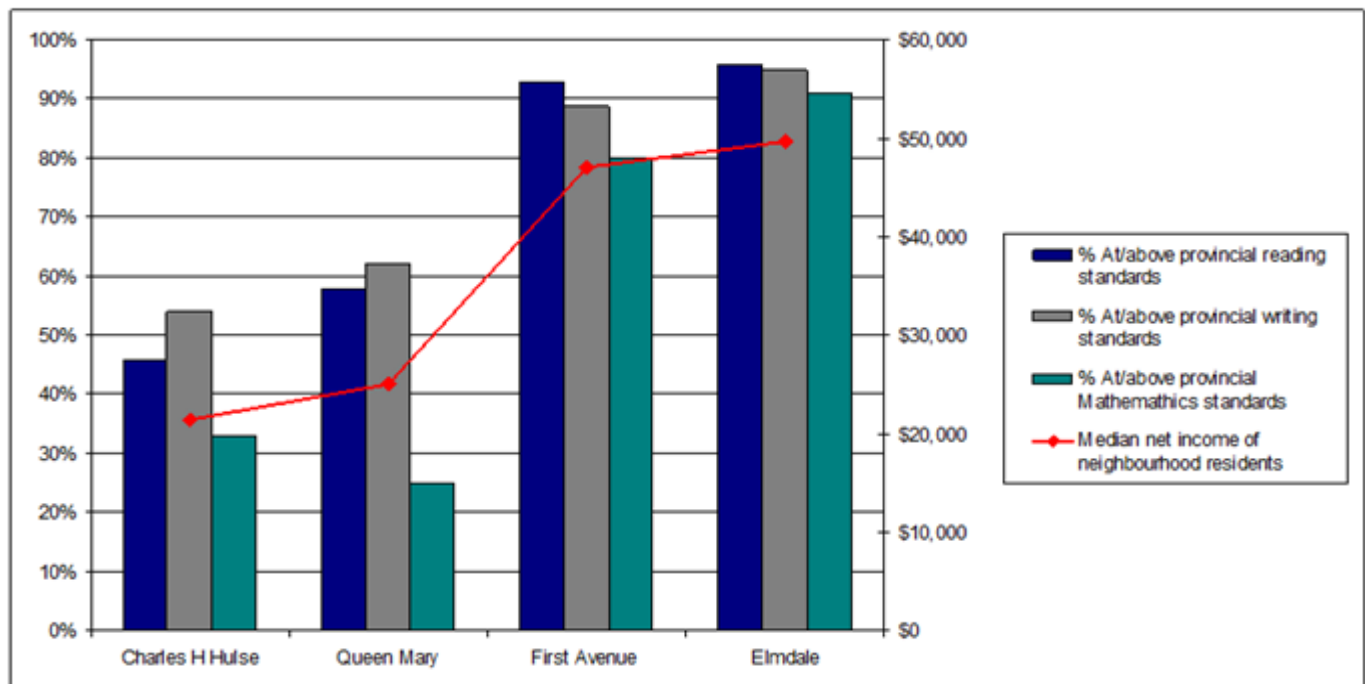
Although the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB), the largest school board in Ottawa, (as well as other school boards in Ottawa) does not make student achievement data broken down by ethno-cultural variables available, the link between geography, socioeconomic status and educational achievement can be indirectly examined using proxy variables in readily available statistics. For illustrative purposes, below, figures 9.1 to 9.4 compare the academic performance of a few low income schools mentioned by key informants in their interviews and schools in higher income neighbourhoods. These statistics, by and large, support the argument of parents and key informants: the aggregate performance of students attending a particular school appears to be positively associated with the average household income of residents living in close proximity to the school under examination. That is, as the median neighbourhood income of a school significantly increases, the standardized test scores of students attending the school increases as well. For example, only 25%, 32% and 21% of primary (grade 3) school children at Charles H Hulse public school met or exceeded provincial reading, writing and mathematics standards, respectively, in the 2011/12 school year (figure 9.1). This school is situated in the low income neighbourhood of Ledbury-Herongate-Ridgemont. Nearly 44% of residents in this neighbourhood were foreign-born (immigrants) and 60% of them were racialized non-white. Most of the residents (about 61%) had a household income of \$50,000 or less and 53% of children younger than 18 lived in poverty. By contrast, in the same school year, the vast majority of grade 3 students at Elmdale public school met or exceeded provincial standards in reading (78%), writing (90%) and mathematics (87%) (Figure 9.1). Elmdale is located in a higher income neighbourhood (Island Park/Wellington Village) where less than 10% of the residents were racialized non-white, 60% of

the residents had a household income of 80,000 or more and no more than 3% of children under the age of 18 lived in a low income household. Although the achievement gap between low income and higher income schools fluctuated from year-to-year and narrowed in the higher grades (grade 6, 9 and 10; see figure 9.2 and 9.3), the general trend remained: schools in higher income areas had higher standardized test scores compared to schools in lower income areas. Similar results were observed in Toronto (e.g. Brown, 2006, 2010). Furthermore, as discussed in previous sections, many low income neighbourhoods have a high concentration of immigrants, and by extension, a high concentration of racialized non-white families—most recent immigrants are racialized non-white. Thus, a colour line and a class line divide high-achieving and low-achieving schools.



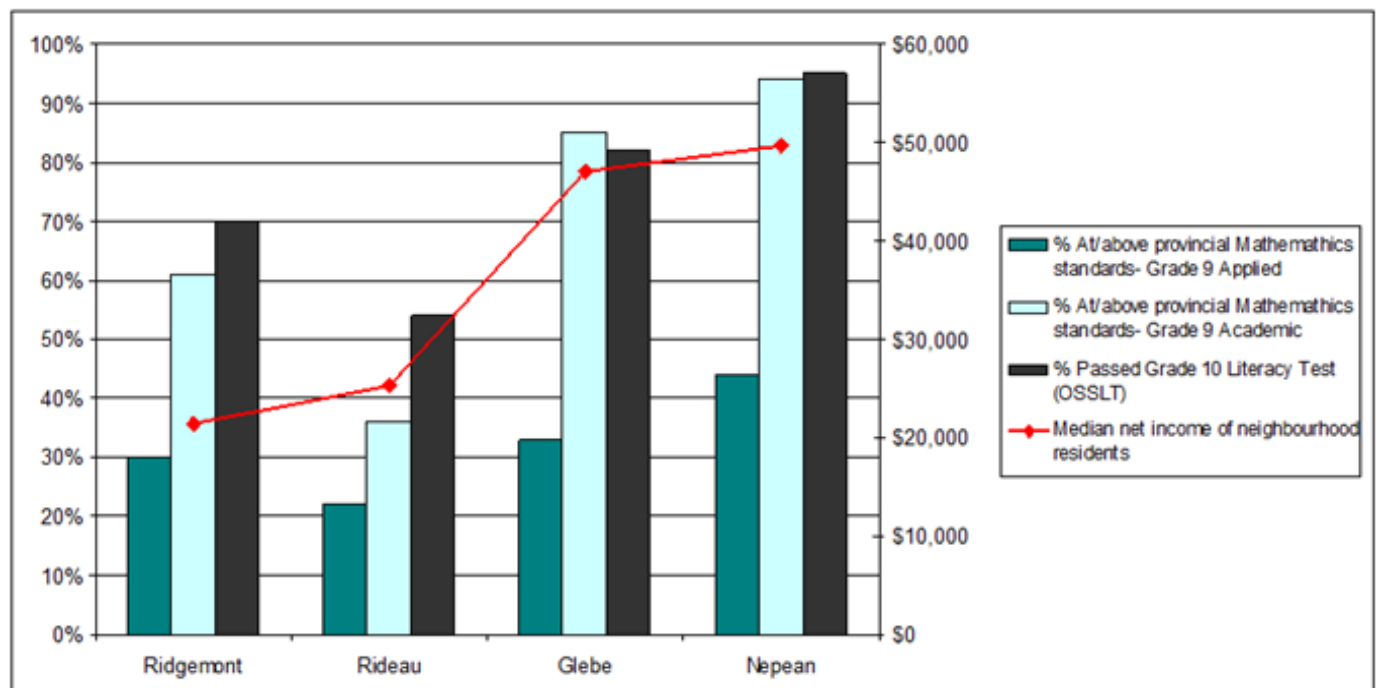
Data Sources (publically available): Ottawa Neighbourhood Study (<http://neighbourhoodstudy.ca/>) & EQAO Student Reports

Figure 9.1: Percentage of grade 3 students that met/surpassed provincial reading, writing and mathematics standards, 2011/12 school year



Data Sources (publically available): Ottawa Neighbourhood Study (<http://neighbourhoodstudy.ca/>) & EQAO Student Reports

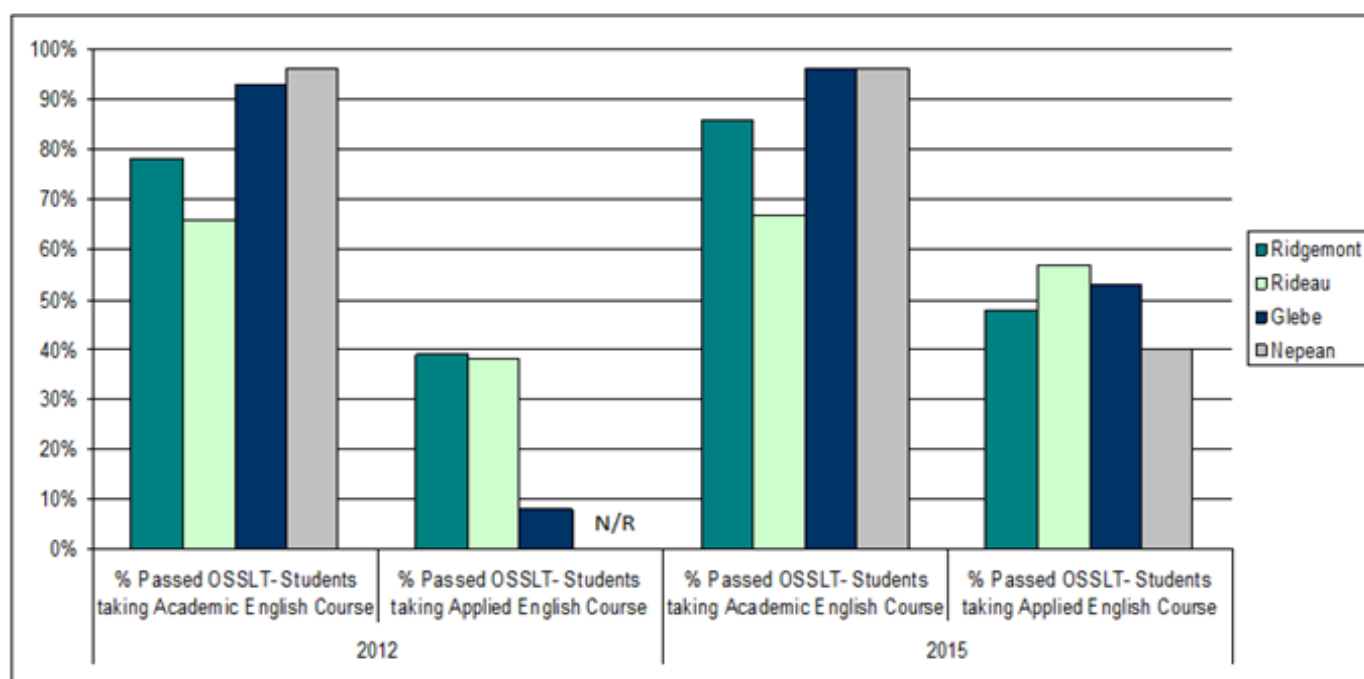
Figure 9.2: Percentage of grade 6 students that met/surpassed provincial reading, writing and mathematics standards, 2011/12 school year



Data Sources (publically available): Ottawa Neighbourhood Study (<http://neighbourhoodstudy.ca/>) & EQAO Student Reports

Figure 9.3: Percentage of grade 9 & 10 students that met/exceed provincial mathematics & literacy standards, 2011/12 school year

Another trend that becomes evident in figures 9.3 and 9.4, is the majority of students that took applied grade 9 math courses did not meet provincial standards for mathematics. Similarly, students enrolled in applied grade 10 English courses did not meet provincial literacy standards. Interestingly, students that took Applied grade 10 English courses at lower income schools (Ridgemont and Rideau) performed better (or about the same) on the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) compared to grade 10 students that were taking Applied English courses at higher income schools (Glebe and Nepean) (figure 9.4).



Data Sources (publically available): Ottawa Neighbourhood Study (<http://neighbourhoodstudy.ca/>) & EQAO Student Reports
 Note: N/R stands for "Not reported"; students too few in number to report.

Figure 9.4: Percentage of grade 10 students that met/exceeded provincial literacy standards by English course type, 2011/12 & 2014/15 school year

These statistics could partly explain parents' apprehension about applied courses. It should be noted however, college was not viewed negatively, it was the route to college—the applied stream—that was not seen in a favourable light. Cilmi explained,

I was one of those people that used to say, if your kids can't take academic, let them go to college [take applied]. That's a good thing; that's when we are talking theoretically. What we have discovered is kids that take the applied stream, the majority of them have been convinced that they cannot handle academic [courses]... We discovered only 10% in the applied stream meet provincial standards... there is a problem with the applied stream and this should be investigated.

Unfortunately, key informants and parents commented that ignorance about the unequal structure of society and the education systems' role in maintaining this structure, has led many racialized black youth, boys in particular, down a negative life path (e.g. trouble with the law). A community police officer, Murid, stated,

[P]arents...have high hopes for their child. They want them to go to school, to finish high school, then [go to] university/college...what sometimes happens is...the child gets frustrated at school because he's performing poorly, and the parent is on his case...thinking that maybe the child is not doing his best...they are doing their best but they're not getting the necessary help. And then what happens is the child ends up...dropping out of school and that leads up to them getting into criminal activities and they end up going to jail.

Parents and key informants argued that poor educational performance and dropping out of school was not the only stream to the “pipeline-to-jail”. They acknowledged that many interconnected factors led Sub-Saharan African immigrant offspring and other racialized black youth to a world of crime and disengagement from society. However, like schools, living in low income neighbourhoods was a singled-out factor. Many low income neighbourhoods, in addition to being linked to poor educational achievement and resource-deprived schools (or what one parent called “bad home schools”), were considered polluted terrains where criminals loitered.

Consistent with participants' narratives, parents and key informants identified a number of negative activities that took place in low income neighbourhoods. They reported,

We don't have a gang, but we have a drug problem [and] prostitut[ion] problem. [Amburo]

There aren't gangs there. There are drugs... In some houses, you see people going in and out, in and out, people that don't live here. [Khalil]

[T]here are areas that are known to be drug houses—everyone kind of knows where they are... You hear of shootings that happen... this summer a young man was shot in the leg.

Two years ago, someone was murdered. These are all people who don't live in the community. [Luqman]

Key informants and parents repeatedly stated that low income neighbourhoods were sites that criminals targeted to carry-out their activities (e.g. selling drugs or taking over homes to sell drugs). What was more worrisome than the mere presents of crime and criminals was the existence of negative peer influences—low income kids pressuring one another to commit minor crimes—and proactive criminals luring neighbourhood children to commit crime to make money quickly. The following was observed:

A lot of times...people that don't live in the neighbourhood come to this neighbourhood to hang out and to mainly try to give wrong opportunities to these kids who are looking for opportunities. [Murid]

They [low income neighbourhood kids] are likely to be caught shoplifting or selling drugs. [Canab]

[Social] housing is not its self the problem, it's the people that are concentrated there... kids go to schools that are failure schools. When the school is a failure, kids that are failures are concentrated there... The people that sell drugs target these kids... The kids are told take this here and they will be given \$100, which they did not see before. [Cilmi]

However, like participants, key informants' and parents' views of different neighbourhoods varied depending on the size of the neighbourhood, the type of residents that lived there, and how safe or crime-free a neighbourhood was perceived to be. A parent commented,

The bigger the neighbourhood, the more problems that would be in that neighbourhood. The smaller the social [housing] neighbourhood, the better. Sometimes neighbourhoods get better when good people move in. And sometimes bad, corrupt people move in, especially in the apartments, and the neighbourhood environment gets bad. You can't go inside some apartments. [Dalmar]

Even though the reputation and image of different low income neighbourhoods fluctuated within the low income population that lived in these neighbourhoods, low income neighbourhoods (and those that resided therein) were consistently viewed negatively by those that lived outside the boundaries of these neighbourhoods. Some low income neighbourhoods were reportedly so infamous that youth residing in these neighbourhoods hid their addresses to avoid being excluded from the labour market. Key informants stated,

[T]here are some serious flaws. Lighting is not that good. Simple beautification, like simple flowers...aren't there...there are dumpsters in front of people's homes. It's just the way it is laid out. It doesn't look pleasant. So, there is a lot of stigma. If you're from the outside looking in, you would never want to live there... when I talk to people about the communities that I worked in the past, everyone is like 'woaw that's a rough neighbourhood'... I've encountered a lot of youth who hid their address when they [we]re applying for jobs. [Luqman]

The general population might have the perception...'I'm not going to hire them'. So, you could end up not having a job and then all of the sudden you have maybe older brothers or people that live in that area that will say 'hey if you can't get a job, there's other ways you could make money', whether it's selling drugs or getting involved with the wrong crowd. [Murid]

The media was, to some extent, blamed for the widespread negative reputation of social housing communities, which were widely known as "Ottawa's ghetto neighbourhood[s]". Luqman argued, if an incident occurs in social housing neighbourhoods, the headlines read, "another shooting in Ottawa's slums or something like that"; whereas an incident that occurs in the suburbs is reported as, "sad incident or bad things happening in good neighbourhoods". The framing of low income people and the places they reside by the media and society reinforces the views that low income families (many of which are racialized non-white) are violent, unmotivated and undesirable people that should be kept separate from society (James, 2012).

The experiences of the Sub-Saharan African immigrant community and the mainstream's negative attitudes of racialized black immigrants have convinced this community, Cilmi argued, that society "will not voluntarily help you. You have to want to get up and try to move from your position". The next section examines the actions taken by community-based organizations and African immigrant parents to help Sub-Saharan African youth from low socioeconomic backgrounds overcome structural barriers.

Attempting to save our youth: Lessons learned & actions taken on the ground

Parents and key informants shared that Sub-Saharan African immigrants that arrived around the 1990s struggled to adjust to society. In reference to these settlement struggles, NESTEEXO said, "[t]he first wave of immigrants got burnt and they are telling the new immigrants 'do not fall into these pit holes'... [we have] touched fire and felt pain". One of the main themes that emerged from the previous section is that structural racism had a devastating impact on the life outcomes of a significant number of Sub-Saharan African youth, partly because structural racism was under the radar of most African immigrant parents. NESTEEXO exclaimed, "how many

kids died or were killed!". However, this parent found comfort in the fact that things have changed. She attested,

[I]t's not like it was before...families now know to watch their kids, to take them to tutoring, [to] take them to a program...to watch them between their homes and these places. The parents are more aware. They are scared...I used to patrol the neighbourhood and run after my son when he stood with someone. [Nesteexo]

Low income immigrant parents were described to be 'more alert' (and some even paranoid) and knowledgeable about the perils of low income housing, poor quality schooling and structural racism. African immigrant families that lived in social housing communities were better prepared to live in unstable and unpredictable environments. They have learned how to adapt to living in an unequal society. In addition to setting high expectations for their children, these parents realized that they had to "work after their kids, take them to tutoring... [be] involved in the school...go to teachers, [and] motivate their kids", according to Cilmi.

Key informants and parents reported that some Sub-Saharan African parents preferred to move out of low income neighbourhoods as soon as they were able to. They would rather put themselves through financial hardship—spent a higher percentage of their income on housing costs (including mortgage payments) — for the sake of their children than try to mitigate the risks associated with living in a social housing community. A parent who made this choice, disclosed:

The peer pressure was a lot in the neighbourhood we used to live in. I was/am a parent that works. I did not have the time to be with my children 24 hrs a day. I was scared, and this drove me to attempt to get my children out...and move to an area with less adolescents their age that would distract or trouble them...When we moved to this house, our kids always wanted to go back and visit their old neighbourhood. They wanted very much for us to move back to the old neighbourhood... It was hard and a struggle. [Canab]

Buying or renting a house in the suburbs provided children of African immigrants a quiet, isolated environment to focus on their studies. However, many African immigrant children that moved to the suburbs often visited their old low income neighbourhood. Consequently, they were still exposed to negative societal influences and 'social ills' associated with low income neighbourhoods, to the dismay of their parents. Many children of African immigrant parents, who were able to achieve upward socioeconomic and spatial mobility, formed an attachment to their low income neighbourhoods, schools and friends by the time their parents could afford—by securing decent paying and stable jobs—to move to higher income neighbourhoods. Several parents and key informants observed this was a common problem of moving from a low to a high income neighbourhood when children were adolescents. They stated,

[Some parents] bought houses in Evergreen [but] their kids used to come here [to our social housing communities] ...The people troubled themselves financially. At least it was better when they could see their kids [here]. I saw a mother come here and ask if we saw her son. [Nesteexo]

[W]hen they are taken to a higher income neighbourhood, they will come back to the neighbourhood [they moved from]. He will come back to the kids he knew. They want to go to their old school. [Cilmi]

You will see a mother and father say I will move from this low income neighbourhood to the other side of the city...They don't know if the [social] housing they lived in is better. You will see the kid that was moved...in the neighbourhood. [Khalil]

Some Sub-Saharan African immigrant children did not only have a hard time socially adjusting to their new affluent neighbourhood, but they also struggled educationally. Understandably, key informants noted, some Sub-Saharan African children that attended poor performing schools in low income neighbourhoods were not able to keep up with educationally more rigorous schools

in higher income neighbourhoods, especially if they had not met provincial standards at the primary and junior levels. This view might seem counter-intuitive, but prior studies strongly back this position. For instance, Sanbonmatsu, Kling, Duncan and Brooks-Gunn (2006) found that youth of parents with a low socioeconomic status that move from low to higher income neighbourhoods did not have improved educational outcomes. Higher performing schools (in higher income areas) were found to benefit high-ability students (student's that have high educational achievement or a good aptitude to learn) more than low-ability/achieving students (Epple & Romano, 1998). However, low income kids are able to benefit from going to schools in higher income neighbourhoods compared to adolescences (older youth find moving more disruptive) (Chetty, Hendren, & Katz, 2016).

Several parents and key informants realized that it was better for African immigrants to collectively work together to assist their children instead of individually attempting to isolate and protect their own children from the vices of their external world. A pair of fathers affirmed,

Everyone is running after their own affairs...a few people will try to do things, but it has to be the whole community. [Dalmar]

No matter how good an education you teach your son, if the whole neighbourhood sells drugs...it's going to affect him... [You have to] try not to only make your child good, but all the neighbourhood kids... If your child is good, five bad kids could be waiting outside for him. [Yasir]

Parents and key informants spoke about a number of initiatives that took place in social housing communities aimed at improving these neighbourhoods. Some initiatives were initiated by the parents and key informants interviewed.

To decrease crime in the neighbourhood, the interviewees said they or other parents in the neighbourhood met to take stock of crime and 'problem areas'. Some parents even reported

crime and suspicious activities to the police. Sometimes the police responded and other times they were unresponsive. This proactive approach to crime reduction by parents was not without risks. A parent and key informant stated,

We met with the police. We went door-to-door and we told them about the problems that were going on and about suspicious areas. The police told us: 'there is nothing we can do. They are citizens and they are low income. Unless you saw the bad things, we cannot do anything about them'. [Khalil]

At one place, they brought a SWAT team—the one's that break windows. At one bad party house, they broke their windows and they were taken. The drugs were seized. He [an immigrant parent] cleaned up the neighbourhood. His life got threatened. He was scared to get shot while riding his bike. [Nesteexo]

Furthermore, parents also met to organize activities for their youth to keep them busy when they had spare time. Some parents organized weekly religious lecture series and recreation activities for neighbourhood kids. These activities, although some were designed for African immigrants' offspring, were open to all children of immigrants. A parent recalled,

Us parents used to meet...we acknowledged the kids were older, the basketball [court] [wa]s too small and there [we]re outsiders there. We needed another activity. We came up with soccer. We were 5 parents and we planned to meet one weekend to teach the kids soccer...We said, 'whoever is interested in playing soccer, pass the word, [and] let's meet at the soccer field at 4 pm...' When we got there at 4 pm, 40 kids showed up... We brought the initiative, but it was a kids-driven project. [Yasir]

Another male parent, Dalmar, who also got involved in organizing recreational activities for youth, shared a few challenges that parent program organizers encountered. He said a major challenge was keeping these activities going because they depended on volunteers and their limited resources. "All the work" needed to keep these initiatives going, Dalmar stated, "rests on

a few people—they are using their car, their fuel. No one is helping them...We spent 4-5 hours at tournaments...I paid out of my pocket [to feed] the kids that came with me". The few parents that help out get less involved and committed over time; therefore, "[y]ou can't keep it going", Dalmar argued. In most cases, it was difficult for one or two parents to sustain an initiative, particularly when an initiative became too time consuming and financially cumbersome.

Nonetheless, Amburo was able to establish a stable and regular educational program in her low income neighbourhood. Over several years, she was even able to grow the program and introduce new place-based services. This feat took much effort, youth buy-in, time, dedication, resourcefulness and collaboration to accomplish. The program—a homework club—was started by this parent out of necessity—to keep an eye on her kids and provide them academic support. Less than 10 children attended the homework club when it started at Amburo's residence in 2007. Nevertheless, the number of youth attending the homework club quickly grew to over 70 in several months. Initially, the homework club provided educational assistance to students in grades 7 to grade 10. Not long before opening, youth in grades 11 and 12 were provided academic support. More recently, academic support has been extended to children in elementary school.

When the homework club started, it did not have much resources and support. Amburo recalled,

[N]obody gives you support. The kids come from school [and] they don't have homework...I didn't have a printer. I didn't have ink. I didn't have a computer. I didn't have anything...I did fundraising...to buy a laptop. And then another fundraiser for a printer, photocop[ier] and scanner. And then I went to [the] Somali Centre...I said I have a lot of children and I'm looking for someone to help me. He said I can help you with the ink...I got a partnership with... [a] Community Health Centre about 3 years ago...They

gave me computers. Also, Ottawa Community Housing gave me the space... [and] in 2014, gave me the internet and a phone... Ottawa food Bank gives us some food.

After a few years of running the homework club as the homework club coordinator, Amburo was able to form a number of partnerships with ethnic and mainstream institutions to meet the growing needs of youth in the neighbourhood, and to more generally build the capacity of her community. She was able to secure a larger space to run the program and get necessary resources, such as snacks, computers/lap tops, internet access, and a phone through non-profit organizations and her own fundraising efforts. A partnership with the University of Ottawa gave the homework club access to more volunteer tutors. The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) also provided some financial and in-kind support to the program. Moreover, the OCDSB, along with other local school boards, allowed this homework club coordinator to run two accredited international language (Somali and Arabic) courses in the community. Neighbourhood youth were able to get high school credits by taking a course in their community.

Moreover, Amburo started two other community initiatives: a summer day camp and an after school recreational program (after-school basketball at a nearby school). She became not only a homework club coordinator, but also a tutor, mentor, coach, and counsellor. All of this was done on a volunteer basis for many years. The recreational activities were supported by the OCDSB (they provided access to a school gym) and a City of Ottawa counsellor (the counsellor provided assistance with things like transportation to outings). Amburo, for her voluntary work that helped improve the lives of children from her low income neighbourhood, was awarded a couple of community awards. This recognition from the larger (mainstream) society and this parent's fundraising campaigns (which included engagement with the local media) attracted much needed funding to the program. A private donor, impressed with the well-attended

homework club after a visit, decided to provide the homework club with three years of funding. This funding was to provide educational support to children in grades 1 to 6. Financial support was offered by the OCDSB to the homework club for students in grades 7 to 12.

While it was great to get funding for the grade 1 to 6 educational assistance program, Amburo admitted it came at a cost. This parent prepared all the necessary documentation for the funding to be approved, however, since the donor donated the money for the homework club through United Way, United Way decided to give the money for the program to a Community Health Centre in close proximity to the homework club. From what the parent understood, this was done in the name of accountability. Amburo explained,

The donor came to me and he said he likes the program and he said he would like to help me for three years, guarantee[d]. But [he said] I need [to know] that the school board never helped you [for] grade 1 to grade 6. The School Board wrote me a letter saying the program funding is for grade 7 to grade 12. He said get a letter from Ottawa Community Housing saying that they have given you this space. The OCH gave it to me. Get a letter from Somali Centre and give it to me. He approved the money. Everything, [including] the budget... When the money [from the donor] arrived, they gave it to... [a] Community Health Centre. They told me you're a person, we cannot give you the money.

The funding arrangement put the homework club under the authority of the CHC—the homework club was now a program run out of that centre. Although a founder, director and coordinator of the homework club, Amburo became a part-time contract employee of the CHC (a position she ended up losing). Also, a few homework club tutors got paid around minimum wage for the few hours they worked during the week at the homework club. Amburo was not ecstatic with the arrangement (a mainstream institution taking over a locally-developed and run program) but accepted it out of consideration for the children and youth that attended the homework club. Under the new

arrangement, the homework club hours got reduced; educational assistance was no longer offered on Fridays. Also, Friday gym night got cancelled. The spaces offered for these activities were no longer available. Amburo was not happy about this because she, being flexible, offered assistance to kids who worked on projects on Fridays (and sometimes on the weekends). Also, 'Friday night basketball' was popular among the boys that attended the homework club. This recreational activity was used to motivate boys to finish their homework. These changes partially demonstrate that mainstream institutions possibly do not fully understand how to work with these youths, they do not take a strength-based approach (look at and build on communities strengths), and they do not take to consideration marginalized youth's preferences.

Furthermore, Amburo related that the CHC "want[ed] to hire registered teachers. The teachers that were troubled by [these] children during the whole day". She exclaimed, "Do you think children will learn from them [teachers]? No!". The success of homework clubs, parents and key informants thought, hinged on having caring and compassionate individuals who had the patience and desire to improve the educational performance of marginalized children and youth that got left behind by education system. The homework club coordinator offered more than tutoring and mentoring services. For instance, Amburo said she was concerned about the well-being and success of the neighbourhood children, and as such, she tried to help the children in any way she could. This homework club coordinator let youth know about employment opportunities and she provided summer employment (if able to get funding), job references, and volunteer opportunities (which helped youth complete required volunteer hours to graduate from high school). Khalil, who had experience being a tutor at a neighbourhood homework club, further illustrates the important role homework clubs can play when they have dedicated and caring tutors. He shared,

A boy that lives in the neighbourhood was brought to me. He is in the 8th grade. Other kids have books on algebra, trigonometry and they are studying that. I said they are in grade 8...you don't learn what they learn? He said no, the teacher only teaches me this... [He was] stuck on addition and subtraction...I started teaching him with the other kids using their textbooks...I gave him questions, he worked on them. I tested him, he got a good score. I called his mom and told her to go to school and tell them my son will learn what his classmates learn. If they say he will not, tell them to test him. He was. He started to learn with his class. [Khalil]

The homework club, according to this narrative, functioned as a buffer and an informal check of the education system. Instead of being detached, judgemental, and unconcerned, this Sub-Saharan African tutor (who was not a parent) set high expectations and had high hopes for the students that sought his assistance. He was of the opinion that "some of the kids are neglected by teachers" and the school system was quick to label children that go through a "hyperactive-stage" a "slow learner". This key informants' teaching philosophy was the following: "Kids are very bright. If they didn't learn in grade 1, 2, 5 and you start teaching them algebra in grade 7, they will understand it and catch up". This perspective was not seen to be shared by teachers and other members of the mainstream that promoted independent thinking and learning and had no patience for improper behaviour and unmotivated children. If a child falls behind in the education system, parents and key informants argued, school's do not care nor do they task themselves with getting struggling or failing students caught up. Schools are more inclined to push marginalized students out by not meeting their needs.

Returning back to Amburo's experience, the problem with the CHC's wish to hire individuals that looked 'good on paper' (e.g. had desirable qualifications and credentials) is many knowledgeable and caring tutors would be overlooked and deem not to be qualified for a job that they have already been doing and they were good at. This sounds ironic. Many Sub-Saharan

African immigrants have been deprived of jobs because their foreign acquired credentials were not acknowledged, and/or they did not have Canadian experience. In her role as a homework club coordinator, Amburo felt disempowered because she was now questionable to the organization that she was an independent partner with. To make things worse, this organization did not continually engage residents or establish any stable programs in the low income neighbourhood the homework club was located in although the neighbourhood was in its catchment area. The community decided to help themselves when no assistance was given. The homework club coordinator would have liked to see the creation of a community association in her neighbourhood or the establishment of a community house (which existed in other social housing communities) to run the homework club out of five days a week, independently.

Racialized black immigrant youth living in the west-end of Ottawa had more community-based/placed-based supports available to them, according to key informants. Luqman, a key informant interviewed in this study, worked at the Pinecrest Queensway Community Health Centre (PQCHC) for nearly 10 years as a youth worker and community development coordinator. He listed numerous programs that were offered in low income communities at community houses and at PQCHC in the west-end of the city. These programs included, homework clubs, girls-only programs (e.g. United Sisters; leadership training, and "chatting circle"), ethno-cultural programs (e.g. Somali Youth Support Project (SYSP)), and programs that targeted hard to reach youth. Through tailored programs and services, the PQCHC helped low income families to become active participants in their communities and to engage with the wider mainstream society. PQCHC was able to effectively engage low income immigrant communities because it hired a diverse and multicultural staff, it formed partnership with individuals, families and communities, and it worked collaboratively with diverse groups (i.e. parental support

groups) and organizations. The experience of Luqman highlighted the importance of hiring and working with a diverse workforce. He relayed,

I was able to speak Somali and [I] have a basic understanding of Arabic...that really helped me out in my role as a community development coordinator...It was really good to connect and speak their language. I found that it was a bridge often times. Connecting with parents who had a certain expectation of what they wanted their children to do and their children who were completely Canadian in terms of their language. [Luqman]

Unfortunately, though, many programs geared towards recent immigrants and their children (including programs facilitating intergenerational dialogue and understanding) were short-term due to lack of funding. Luqman reported,

All the community houses have core youth programming...it's six hours a week, which I don't think is enough to fully engage them [youth]...[F]unding is very hard to get; it was gappy. So, we would get two-years of great funding and then one year of nothing at all. So, you set expectations, you do some great work, but you are not able to continue it because of no funding.

Inconsistent and insufficient program funding was a major challenge in the social service sector. This was unfortunate given that many low income immigrant families and their children needed long-term support. Becoming a part of mainstream society was a long and intergenerational process, particularly for immigrants that arrived in Canada with little financial, ethnic and social capital.

Key informants mentioned that there were other city-wide collaborative initiatives that provided support and programming for low income youth. One way around funding constraints was coalition-building—partnerships between non-profit organizations (NGOs), governmental organizations and various communities. An example of a collaborative program was Youth

Futures, which was discussed by participants. The Ottawa Police Services (OPS) also ran a city-wide summer program for 'at-risk' low income youth. Murid, as a Community Police Officer, spoke about this summer program.

One of the programs we have is called YIPI, that's Youth In Policing Initiative... [through YIPI,] what we wanted was to reach out specifically to low income housing areas or areas that have challenges. The idea is to attract kids from these neighbourhoods and have them work in different sections in the service. Every year we hire about 120 [youth] through this program. [Murid]

The OPS also supported recreational initiatives started by African youth that grew up in the city. For example, Luqman shared,

A group of friends and I started this basketball league to connect with kids. The whole purpose was to...play basketball and...to make sure that kids were getting together from different areas in a positive environment...It [the league] built stronger bridges between the communities...One of our quickest partners w[as] the Ottawa police and they were our most stable funder, which was great because we always had money to run.

Funding the league and occasionally playing basketball with low income youth was a great way for police officers to positively interact with marginalized youth. Interestingly, while parents thought recreation activities for youth were good, they viewed programs that provided youth employment opportunities more favourably. NESTEEXO asserted,

[T]hose in high school, activities will not do anything for them. They need work because what forces them into drugs is money...But if you get a job, you are going to get money. They will cool down. They will get experience, they will get tired.

Overall, parents and key informants thought younger cohorts of second generation Sub-Saharan African youth are doing a lot better than previous cohorts. However, as mentioned

previously, Sub-Saharan African females were reported to have fared better than their male counterparts across different cohorts of youth raised in Canada. Murid's view was,

When you look at girls, I do think they are doing much better... [than boys], in terms of education, in terms of occupying very important positions with in local, provincial and federal governments. When you look at boys, they are also doing good, but we do have some challenges where some of them fell through the cracks... [because] of not having that initial good support.

Youth, and males in particular, were reported to be doing better educationally in recent years. This is largely due to parents being more educated about the socioeconomic structure of society and the availability of more supports for marginalized youth. In addition to protecting youth from their harsh physical environments, African immigrant parents realized there is a need to build the confidence of youth in their community and to make them aware of the obstacles that could inhibit their social mobility. Kids that do well, Daahir stated, are those that "know that they do matter, and that [think] I can make something out of myself... [They are told] you are somebody, you will be somebody... [although] people are not expecting you to do this well". Canab similarly stated, the ones who are educated "really tried hard and their parents really helped them. They are good children that listened to their parents' advice". There was a consensus among the parents and key informants regarding the importance of good intergenerational relationships. Youth that did well educationally were reported to have better relationships with their parents than those that were disengaged from the education system and got involved in criminal activities. A key informant and parent argued,

[R]arely do we see educated kids disrespect their parents [or] have [a] bad culture. Perhaps they are far away from religion, but they are more connected to their parents.

The more kids go to jail, fail academically, the further they get from their mother and father. [Cilmi]

The problem with these teenagers is...they are not listening to us parents...If their friend is bad, they will end up going to bad places... They listen to what their friends say. If you tell them all day this individual is a lowlife, stop hang out with them, they will not stop associating with them. [Dalmar]

While the type of identity youth formed was important to immigrant parents (they preferred that their children adopted their culture and values), what was more important was that youth had a high level of respect for their parents and they were obedient. It is important for immigrant offspring to develop a similar ethno-cultural identity as their parents or that they abided by their parents' cultural expectations. This makes it easier for immigrant parents to transfer their optimistic views to their children and provide them guidance to navigate around roadblocks to their social mobility. Having different worldviews and cultures puts a distance between immigrant parents and their children, especially in environments where parents' immigrant cultures are different from other non-immigrant cultures youth are exposed to in Western societies (Kwak, 2003). Canab expressed,

We brought our kids to Canada and we want them to be as we were...at the same time, we want them to be like the people we live with...This is a big struggle for the youth: to be Canadian, learn Canadian languages, culture and protect [preserve] ours...In grade 12, there is something called prom. We don't allow our kids to go. The kids run away from us and hide [what they do] because this is not our culture. There are girlfriend/boyfriend. This is not our culture. Some youth run away from home. There is the rule parents must always be obeyed. In our culture, a child shouldn't disrespect/disobey their parents. Parents are always right.

In accordance with participants' narratives, parents thought that Sub-Saharan African youth formed various identities, as one parent put it, "sometimes they become black American. Then some become Somali. Then some maybe Muslim. Then some become Canadian". That was not necessarily problematic, so long as children of immigrants could be guided by their parents to focus on their futures. A few of the parents recognized that some African immigrant offspring's identities and behaviours changed once they entered university. When youth became young adults (finished high school/entered university), many of them asserted their independence. This new-found freedom had a negative impact on some immigrant offspring's educational achievements and life trajectories, according to a few parents.

Until high school you can push them, but the day he enters university you cannot do anything about him...he will say I'm a grown person now, I don't want to be treated like before. [Dalmar]

There are children that are guided and when they graduate from high school they go outside and join a bad crowd. [Nesteexo]

This was an intriguing point raised by parents. Parents thought that they could assist their children (those that needed assistance) by encouraging them, providing advice, closely monitoring them, setting strict guidelines and by enrolling or encouraging them to go to after-school educational assistance programs. In other words, parents could guide, motivate and assist their children to complete high school and enter a post-secondary institution. However, parents said that they could not make their kids stay there and complete their post-secondary program of study. Speaking from experience, a male father asserted,

At university, there is two groups: a group that studies and are straight and are good and a group that is lost and gets a hold of a little money [loans]. They wander around and

when they come home at night say they were at the university. When they do final exams, they get zero [they fail]. What were they doing with their time? The parents find out after the fact. [Dalmar]

Interviews with key informants and parents disclosed that Sub-Saharan African immigrant children are incorporating into society at different paces and to varying degrees: some youth are on the road to upward social mobility (via pursuing/completing post-secondary education), others seem to be parked in their parents' drive way (i.e. they don't seem to be moving above their parent's station in life), and some youth have become alienated from society (e.g. have become criminals and/or incarcerated). These trends are consistent with the segmented assimilation theory. Conversely, parents' and key informants' narratives contradicted a premise of the CEM model. Trusting educational institutions did not benefit Sub-Saharan immigrant offspring. On the contrary, Sub-Saharan African immigrant parents' lack of knowledge about structural and institutional barriers and their trust of mainstream institutions negatively impacted the life trajectories of many youth from this community, according to participants, key informants and parents. Through experiential knowledge, a change in parenting styles, cultural capital, and the development of social capital, Sub-Saharan African immigrant parents and their communities have become better equipped to assist their children in navigating the compulsory education system and negative societal contexts.

10. Challenging structural barriers at the individual & micro-level: A viable solution for racialized black immigrant offspring to achieve social mobility?

Situating the study

Over the last few decades, the literature on the new second generation—children of post-1960 non-European immigrants—has proliferated. In the late 1980s to early 1990s, American researchers were quick to study the process by which children of non-European immigrants incorporated into the mainstream school system and how they adapted to their various seemingly incompatible neighbourhood, home, peer and school environments (Gans, 1992; Gibson, 1988; Gibson & Ogbu, 1991; Matute-Bianchi, 1986; Ogbu, 1987; Phelan et al., 1991; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Rumbaut & Ima, 1988; Suárez-Orozco, 1989; Waters, 1990). These researchers' documentation of non-European immigrant offspring's adaptation and incorporation experiences challenged conventional wisdom and the dominant theory (assimilation theory) in immigration research. More precisely, three enduring societal trends were disrupted. The first was that minoritized students consistently had lower educational achievement rates compared to children of the mainstream racialized white population. Second, children from low socioeconomic backgrounds performed poorly in school compared to children from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. The third trend pertained to how previous (European) immigrant groups incorporated (i.e. through the process of assimilation) into American society. The long held believe was that the rejection of an immigrant ethnic culture and the adoption of the culture and values of the racialized white mainstream led to incorporation into society, and over time social mobility (Gordon, 1964; Perlmann & Waldinger, 1997).

The study of non-European immigrant offspring found that some racialized non-white immigrant offspring had higher educational achievement rates than racialized white children from middle and higher income classes, while others did worse (Matute-Bianchi, 1986). More intriguingly, some non-European immigrant offspring that outperformed their cohorts were from a low socioeconomic class (Rumbaut & Ima, 1988). The questions that preoccupied the research agenda of the literature on non-European immigrant offspring at the time of its emergence were: why are some racialized non-white children of immigrants able to incorporate into Eurocentric mainstream institutions and other children of racialized non-white parents are not? What factors could account for the high educational performance of a significant proportion of racialized non-white immigrant offspring?

One of the first theoretical frameworks that attempted to address these questions was the Cultural Ecological Model (CEM) (Ogbu, 1983, 1987, 1991). The CEM primarily explained differences between minoritized groups—voluntary and involuntary minorities— (e.g. comparisons between African immigrant offspring and African American children). While several empirical studies provide support to main arguments of this theory (e.g. immigrants and immigrant offspring of non-European descent attain higher educational levels than castelike minorities) (Kao and Tienda, 1995; Matute-Bianchi, 1986; Rong & Brown, 2001, 2002; Waters, 1994), this framework (and other existing theories advanced prior to the 1990s—e.g. assimilation theory) does not account for differences between children of immigrants. Hence, the segmented assimilation theory was formulated to describe the reasons why children of immigrants incorporated into different segments of the American society (Portes & Zhou, 1993). Put simply, the segmented assimilation theory argues that children of immigrants follow three paths to incorporate into society: assimilation into the mainstream middle class, incorporation into their

parents' ethnocultural group and assimilation into marginalized non-immigrant groups (Ibid). Immigrant offspring's incorporation into these groups and their ability to achieve upward social mobility hinges on their parents' immigration experience. More specifically, the theory argues that children of immigrants' social and economic outcomes are largely determined by the amount of human, financial, ethnic, social and cultural capital their parents possess. The amount of capital immigrant parents have determines the social environments immigrant offspring grow up in—i.e. where they live, where they go to school, who their peers are, and the type of support they have at home (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). The main tenets of the segmented assimilation theory have been widely supported (Alba & Waters, 2011; Baum & Flores, 2011; Farley & Alba, 2002; Gans, 1992; Haller et al., 2011; Kasinitz et al., 2008; Portes, 1996; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Portes et al., 2009; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

Although the CEM and the segmented assimilation theory have different scopes and slightly different focuses in terms of the phenomenon they are explaining, a few of the main premises of the two theories agree. For example, they both recognize the existence of structural and systemic barriers (i.e. racial inequality and racism); the importance of social contexts; the power of an immigrant ethos, cultural orientation and immigrant optimism; and the instrumental value of a strong belief in education. Furthermore, although these theories are context-bound (very much based on the structure of the American society—i.e. the existence of a racialized black underclass), Canadian empirical immigration research supports the core arguments of these theories (e.g. Abada, Hou, & Ram, 2008; Aydemir & Sweetman, 2006; Boyd, 2002; Finnie & Mueller, 2009; Hum & Simpson, 2007; Kucera, 2008; Reitz et al., 2011; Sweetman & Dicks, 1999; Thiessen, 2009). Where both theories and empirical evidence is not clear is regarding the experiences and incorporation patterns of children of racialized black immigrants that are able to

overcome structural barriers and are able to incorporate into mainstream institutions (e.g. the education system)—racialized non-white youth that do not fit established and widely studied patterns. These theories also do not fully explain differences between individuals belonging to the same ethno-cultural immigrant communities.

The segmented assimilation theory, and variants of this theory (e.g. Gans's (1992) second-generation decline thesis), argues that racialized black immigrants will likely experience downward assimilation into the racialized black underclass due to the fact that this group has a low socioeconomic status, they experience racism and they are at-risk of adopting the oppositional cultures of non-immigrant marginalized peers whom they go to school with and live in close proximity to in low income neighbourhoods (Portes & Zhou, 1993). Conversely, the CEM posits that racialized black immigrant offspring could have higher educational attainment rates than racialized black children of non-immigrant parents due to their more positive immigrant ethos and cultural orientations (Waters, 1994). Both arguments have found support in the empirical research (e.g. Kao & Tienda, 1998; Portes, 1996; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). In fact, even one study could support both of these arguments. What I mean by this is that some studies found that racialized black immigrant offspring had higher educational attainment rates than African Americans, but lower educational levels than the racialized white mainstream and other children of non-white immigrants (e.g. Rong & Brown, 2001). In other words, children of racialized black immigrants seem to fare poorly in schools compared to children of other non-white immigrants and the mainstream, but they perform better than castelike minorities.

Canadian research found slightly different results. Since there is no large racialized black non-immigrant underclass in Canada, the outcomes of the racialized white mainstream (as well as other racialized non-white children of immigrants) are commonly used as benchmarks to gage

the degree to which immigrant offspring of African-descent are faring in the Canadian society, and in particular the education system. According to immigration research, children of racialized non-white immigrants—including children of African and Afro-Caribbean immigrants—in aggregate, were reported to be faring well in the education system (e.g. Boyd, 2002; Finnie & Mueller, 2009; Reitz et al., 2011; Simmons & Plaza, 1998). However, in the field of education, children of racialized black immigrants have consistently been found to be underachieving compared to their cohorts (e.g. Brathwaite & James, 1996; Brown, 2006, 2010, Dei et. al., 1997). The bulk of extant Canadian research on racialized black immigrant offspring (some of which has just been mentioned) examines the reasons why a disproportionate number of racialized black immigrant children are underachieving, particularly those living in Toronto. This preoccupation with identifying explanatory variables of racialized black children of immigrants' school failure further fuels the stereotypes that racialized black students are underachievers and not smart. There is limited research (e.g. Berns-McGown, 2013, Codjoe, 2007; James, 2010) that examines the incorporation experiences of racialized black immigrant offspring that are graduating from high school and are pursuing higher education. This research makes a contribution to this small research area that sits at the intersection between education, sociology and immigration literature. This study is important not only because it seeks to further enrich scant research on racialized black immigrant children's successful adaptation to mainstream society and its institutions, but it also attempts to inform and/or clarify theoretical propositions on the incorporation processes of children of racialized black offspring that aspire to incorporate into mainstream institutions and achieve social mobility.

Through the lens of 'educationally successful' Sub-Saharan African immigrant offspring living in Ottawa, this qualitative narrative research aimed to examine the process by which this

group of racialized black children of immigrants incorporated into the education system and their various social environments. The primary research questions that guided this study were: how do Sub-Saharan African immigrant offspring overcome structural, geographic and institutional barriers to higher educational attainment and social mobility? More precisely, what individual, community and micro-level factors (e.g. ‘community-level forces’) are conducive to the educational achievement of 1.5 and second generation Sub-Saharan African immigrants? And how did the different sociocultural contexts Sub-Saharan African offspring grow up in shape their views of society, aspirations and identity formations?

Overcoming structural, institutional & geographic barriers to educational attainment & socioeconomic mobility

Racialized black immigrant youth’s, parents’ and key informants’ narratives revealed that the process of adapting to multiple conflicting social contexts and overcoming geographic barriers and exclusionary practices of mainstream institutions is complex, gendered, and nonlinear (e.g. Feliciano, 2012; Feliciano, & Rumbaut, 2005; Zhou, 1997). Sub-Saharan African immigrant offspring had different incorporation experiences although most of them had similar outcomes (i.e. graduated from high school and pursuing post-secondary education) and challenges. Challenges participants encountered in the various environments they were raised in are first reviewed before an overview is provided of individual and community responses to these challenges.

Given the low socioeconomic background of Sub-Saharan African immigrants (largely as a consequence of exclusion from the labour market) (Social Planning Council of Ottawa, 2008), one challenge many of the participants encountered was living in low income neighbourhoods. Despite the absence of a racialized black underclass, there are many disadvantages and risks

associated with impoverished and low income neighbourhoods, such as exposure to crime, drugs, violence, and negative social influences (i.e. presence of bad role models) (Bernéche, Shaw, Serge, Monfort, & O'Neill, 1997; Marcuse, 1997; James, 2012; Silver, 2011). Prior studies found that children of racialized non-white immigrants growing up in these contexts were vulnerable to developing poor behaviors (i.e. criminal and delinquent behavior), negative attitudes (i.e. oppositional identities) and performing poorly in school (Duncan, 1994; Ensminger et al., 1996; Loeber & Wikstrom, 1993; Ogbu, 1991). Accordingly, negative neighbourhood contexts could have direct effects on marginalized youth. This study found that neighbourhoods with different average household incomes (i.e. low versus middleclass neighbourhoods) and cultures impacted Sub-Saharan African immigrant youth's lives differently. Therefore, neighbourhood contexts did not necessarily have a uniform impact on these youth's outcomes. The participants' experiences living in a low income neighbourhood was linked to their gender. Sub-Saharan African male youth living in low income neighbourhoods were more 'at-risk' of being directly exposed to negative neighbourhood contexts, and thus potentially more susceptible to experiencing downward assimilation compared to females. Female participants reported they were not permitted to hang out in the neighbourhood for cultural reasons (i.e. it was worse for a girl to become deviant than a boy). The dynamics in higher income neighbourhoods differed from low income neighbourhoods. Participants that lived in both low and higher income neighbourhoods found that higher income neighbourhoods, in comparison to low income neighbourhoods, were quiet and non-social places. Both males and females living in higher income neighbourhoods felt isolated and confined to their homes.

Neighbourhood effects were also indirect (Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, Klebanov & Sealand, 1993; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Youth could develop a negative perspective of society

in poor urban schools in their catchment area or be influenced by other peers negatively influenced by their context. Most of the participants attended their home schools, which were populated by low income students from multicultural backgrounds. Participants that lived in a low socioeconomic household inside a low income neighbourhood and went to a low income school were found to be at-risk of underachieving (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Nevertheless, multicultural schools in lower and higher income areas were considered more inclusive than racialized white schools in higher income areas. Participants reported they could fit in better at demographically diverse schools. Higher income schools were reported to have a school culture that promoted high aspirations and expectations, whereas lower income schools were described to have a lenient school culture that promoted low aspirations and achievement. Notwithstanding differences in school cultures, participants' narratives revealed that low and higher income schools did not meet racialized black students' educational needs. Furthermore, regardless of the location of the school (in a higher or lower income area), participants had to contend with the exclusionary practices of school personnel and negative stereotypes. Racialized black students were assumed to be not smart and racialized black males were additionally stereotyped as trouble-makers. Most of the participants also experienced different forms of exclusion (e.g. differential treatment and being ignored by teachers) at all mainstream schools, regardless of the schools' demographic profile and school culture. This goes to show that Sub-Saharan African immigrant offspring did not successfully complete their compulsory education due to the absence of racism. Racism, as many theorists argued, is pervasive and an enduring part of the Canadian education system (Brathwaite & James, 1996; Codjoe, 2001; Dei et. al., 1997; Zine, 2007). So, if students are structurally and institutionally set up to fail (i.e. they live in relatively unsafe low income neighbourhoods and have access to schools that don't meet their needs), what individual,

family and community level factors allow them to overcome these barriers to their educational achievement and social mobility?

Safeguards against negative neighbourhood effects

Participants' narratives suggest that the effects of neighbourhoods on the life trajectories of racialized black youth is mediated by the demographics of a neighbourhood (e.g. residents' socioeconomic status and racial/ethno-cultural backgrounds and the residents' social ties to one another), parental factors (e.g. parenting styles—e.g. guidance and supervision provided) and personal characteristics (e.g. gender, personality, cultural orientation and personal views and outlooks). At the individual level, participants who were homebodies (i.e. introverts, not peer-oriented) and/or were steadfast when it came to their convictions and goals (i.e. they internalized their parents' conservative cultures, values, and/or positive views of educational attainment) were not impacted by negative neighbourhood contexts because they were not directly exposed to negative aspects of their neighbourhood (e.g. they did not hang out in their neighbourhood or associate with individuals engaged in deviant/criminal activities). As briefly mentioned above, gender also mediated the effects of neighbourhood contexts. Females were more guarded than males. However, participants, parents and key informants reported that immigrant parents have adjusted their parenting (e.g. they became more protective of both males and females) after discovering the negative impacts that low income neighbourhoods and lack of supervision could have on their children, especially males that were entertainment-seekers. While all the participants adopted some or all of their parents' views (e.g. they valued higher educational achievement and ethno-cultural retention) and they recognized the evils associated with a life of crime and associating with negative peer groups, entertainment-seekers (e.g. participants that 'played ball in the hood' and/or were peer-oriented) required community-level

supervision (e.g. African immigrant mothers sitting at the basketball courts ensuring that their youth do not associate with the wrong crowd).

Strict parenting styles, close supervision and limiting freedom of youth somewhat shields immigrant offspring from negative neighbourhood contexts. What is also necessary are community-based initiatives, especially for those that need to be watched outside the home to ensure they were following their parents' guidelines. Place-based supports and community-building activities were essential to support the efforts of immigrant parents. This view is strongly supported by previous studies (Rumbaut & Ima, 1988; Zhou & Bankston, 1994; Zhou & Kim, 2006), which reported that immigrant offspring from poor and non-poor Asian communities benefited from close ethnic ties and group supervision. Some of the participants greatly benefited from immigrant parents' community initiatives, such as establishing a place of worship, organizing recreation activities and creating homework clubs. However, community initiatives were constrained by the limited and inconsistent resources available for these types of crucial initiatives.

Community-level formal and informal institutions that supervise and monitor the behavior of residents are crucial; they deter racialized black youth from engaging in deviant behaviours and developing oppositional identities (negative views about society and education) (Jencks & Mayer, 1990; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Roestenburg & Oliphant, 2012; Wong, 2008). According to social disorganization theory, the community's ability to establish social order is dependent on the development of residential stability, "shared values of mutual trust, safety, the willingness to intervene for the common good, and supportive childrearing" practices (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000, p. 326). Moreover, the presence of faith-based organizations, community centres and organization or institution-based supports was associated

with increased informal social order in low income neighbourhoods (Chaves & Tsitsos 2001; Roestenburg & Oliphant, 2012; Wong, 2008). Cole, England and Rugg (2000) reported that lack of organized activities, as well as employment opportunities, for youth during extend school breaks, such as summer holidays, resulted in increased deviant activity in social housing communities.

Even though some low income neighbourhoods were generally safe, many immigrant families desired to move out of social housing communities according to participants. This could be due to the negative stigma that is associated with all low income neighbourhoods (e.g. they are thought to be crime-ridden). This research found that higher income neighbourhoods provided Sub-Saharan African immigrants' children and youth a safer and less disruptive social environment to grow up in. However, some offspring of African immigrants that moved into higher income neighbourhoods found it difficult to adapt to these neighbourhoods because they formed an attachment to their low income neighbourhoods and friends. More specifically, these youths found it difficult to switch from living in a neighbourhood that had a strong sense of community and was vibrant to a neighbourhood that was isolating. Nonetheless, some of the participants preferred living in safer and quieter high income neighbourhoods. Entertainment-seekers would benefit from this environment if it is one they grew up in starting from their childhood.

Acquiring an education at mainstream institutions

As discussed pervious, the literature on the schooling experiences of racialized black youth makes it clear that mainstream institutions are covertly hostile institutions that do not support the educational attainment of racialized black students. Based on the mounting evidence available to support this claim, some theorists (e.g. Dei & Kempf, 2013) have concluded that

mainstream institutions are unlikely to change; therefore, racialized black students are better served by alternative schools (e.g. Afrocentric/African-centred schools). Similarly, some private schools (e.g. religious schools) have also been found to provide better learning contexts for marginalized youth (Zine, 2007). The problem with these solutions to address marginalization and the educational underachievement of marginalized youth is that alternative schools are small in number and private schools are not funded in Ontario. Consequently, it is important to understand how marginalized youth, such as racialized black immigrant youth, living in Ontario can successfully navigate through the mainstream education system.

Many of the individual, family and community factors that protect Sub-Saharan African immigrant children against geographic barriers assist them in surviving and even possibly thriving in mainstream institutions. According to study participants, the type of educational supports Sub-Saharan African immigrant parents provided to their children were: close supervision and monitoring (especially of those that were entertainment-seekers and were not studious) and discipline through strict parenting (e.g. no partying, dating, no wandering or socializing too much with peers, etc.). Additionally, parents set high expectations for their children, provided their children all the financial support they could afford to give them, they instilled in them an optimistic view of society and they taught their children the importance of hard work and acquiring higher education. Prior studies found non-European immigrant offspring whose parents closely monitored their educational progress, used resource-seeking strategies (looking for resources outside their community), limited non-educational activities, had strict parenting styles and established firm boundaries between the child and negative peer influences had higher educational attainment rates (Jarrett, 1997; Portes & Fernandez-Kelly, 2008). Most immigrant parents, regardless of their socioeconomic status, could utilize these

types of supports—considered cultural and social capital—to assist their children (Ogbu, 1991; Portes, 1996; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Zhou, 1997).

Furthermore, community-based supports were also found to be effective mechanisms to deter marginalized youth from disengaging from mainstream society and its institutions, such as the education system (Rowen & Gosine, 2006). Availability and access to community-based supports was positively associated with higher educational outcomes (Ibid). Immigrant parents that have limited human and financial capital, and therefore could not provide educational assistance to their children, rely heavily on the support from mainstream community-based organizations. Portes & Fernandez-Kelly (2008) and Wong (2008) found that community-based programs run by non-profit organizations to assist disadvantaged students played an important role in providing educational supports to marginalized children of immigrants. For instance, community-based organizations were able to provide marginalized immigrant offspring with social capital. They provided youth from racialized non-white immigrant families unfamiliar with mainstream institutions essential information (i.e. how to apply to postsecondary institutions, what college life was like, and what skills were necessary to gain employment) required to navigate mainstream institutions (Wong, 2008). Similarly, Rowen & Gosine (2006) reported that community-based programs improved the educational achievement and life changes of children of racialized non-white minorities living in low income communities in Canada. Rowen & Gosine (2006) examined a community-based youth centered program, Pathways to Education, developed by the Regent Park Community Health Centre to curtail the alarming dropout rates of racialized non-white students living in Regent Park, a low socioeconomic

community in Toronto.¹² The program provided academic support (i.e. tutoring in core high school subjects), social support (i.e. mentoring program), financial support (i.e. scholarships) and advocacy support (i.e. student-parent support workers help build healthy relationships between students, parents and the wider school community) to marginalized groups. Rowen & Gosine (2006) reported that this program increased school attendance and helped program participants to accumulate high school credits. Participants that enrolled in the Pathways program in Ottawa also reported to have benefited from this program.

The participants' educational experiences revealed one negative aspect about community-based supports. While Pathways and homework clubs were instrumental in assisting some of the participants to graduate from high school and gain entrance into a postsecondary institution, participants that required a lot of support in high school and had little or no support at the post-secondary level, had the most difficulty adjusting to postsecondary studies. The participants that were able to adjust well to university-level studies were participants that described themselves as being smart, gifted and/or independent learners. Participants that considered themselves studious and/or independent learners' smooth transition into university seemed to be tied to the type of program they enrolled in. These participants reported to have the drive and work ethic to complete a university program, but they needed to find a program that matched their skills, abilities, and interests. What the participants PSE transition experience and outcomes suggests is for participants to do well at the PSE level they need educational support that the elementary school level, not the high school level. Also, participants have to develop good studying habits and learn to become independent learners. Too much dependence on homework clubs and

¹² In the mid-90s, the high school dropout rate for racialized students residing in the Regent Park community was 56% (Rowen & Gosine, 2006).

educational programs at the high school level seemed to handicap participants at the PSE level. What this means is that grassroots or micro level (e.g. individual, family, community, and neighbourhood) efforts to address structural barriers that obstruct the educational achievement of racialized black youth are somewhat effective. Community-based educational supports assist in addressing the education gap between racialized black students and other racialized white and non-white students. However, these program supports need to be expanded (offered in more low income neighbourhoods), offered earlier in a student's life (preferably at the elementary school level), and they need to be well-funded (e.g. provided core government funding).

In the discussion above, identity and culture are implicitly discussed. The following section more explicitly explores the relationship between identity, culture and educational outcomes.

Identity, culture & socioeconomic outcomes

Identity and culture are central in dominant models (e.g. segmented assimilation and CEM) of the incorporation patterns of non-European immigrant children. Often, empirical studies in the literature on the children of non-European immigrants, homogenizes racialized black people—either they are all categorized under the racial label black, the pan-ethnic/national label African/(Afro-)Caribbean, or under ethno-cultural labels (e.g. Nigerian, Jamaican, Haitian and Somali) and some studies recognize hyphenated identities (e.g. Abada & Tenkorang, 2009; Rumbaut, 1994; Waters, 1994). This study found that (social) identity is a very complex concept that, often, cannot be reduced to one or two hyphenated or non-hyphenated labels. Furthermore, the dominant theory in the second generation literature, the segmented assimilation theory, and other theories examining the educational experiences or life trajectories of racialized black youth from low income backgrounds (Gans, 1992; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ibrahim,

1999; Waters, 1994), simplify the experiences and identity formation process of racialized black youth. These studies have dichotomized ethnic and racial identities, especially for male youth, and its relationship to education. For instance, in studying the experiences and identity formation of children of West Indian and Caribbean immigrants living in New York, Waters (1994, 2009) found that low income racialized black immigrant children, particularly male adolescents, are likely to develop a racialized black identity, which was oppositional in nature. They developed an oppositional black identity because they were viewed as black by society, they encountered racism and hostility and they were exposed to black American peer/youth culture in their inner-city neighbourhood and schools. Children of Afro-Caribbean immigrants that adopted a black racial identity had a negative view of society, education and social mobility (Waters, 2009). That is to say, they did not adopt their parent's optimistic outlook of society or think that social mobility could be achieved through schooling. In contrast, Waters (2009) found that children of Afro-Caribbeans who had educated parents of a higher socioeconomic status and that went to schools other than inner-city schools populated with poor, racialized black kids (e.g. suburban school, Catholic school or magnet schools), developed an ethnic identity. These youths did not have an affinity or a positive opinion of poor black Americans. They believed that racism could be overcome, and social mobility could be achieved through hard work and perseverance (Waters, 2009).

While Waters' research (1994, 2009) and those with similar findings (e.g. Rong & Brown, 2001), show that racialized black people are not a monolithic group, this research shows that racialized black youths' identities are more heterogeneous and complex than the three or four identities (e.g. ethnic/pan-ethnic, racial, national only, or hyphenated) that are identified in this literature (e.g. Rumbaut, 1994). Children of Sub-Saharan African immigrants interviewed in

this study formed a diverse array of identities that were fluid, relational, context-bound and transitional. Their self-identification and ascribed identities did not always match the way they presented themselves to the world. Furthermore, some of the participants constantly altered their behaviour and the way they spoke depending on their social context and who they were speaking to. A number of Canadian studies have also noted the heterogeneity and fluidity of racialized black youths' identities (e.g. Kelly, 1998; Berns-McGown, 2013). With regards to their ascribed black identities, participants had different understandings of and opinions of a racialized black identity, which is consistent with Kelly's (1998) findings. Some of the participants vehemently rejected a black racial label (which was often associated with black African American culture), some were indifferent about the label (they did not mind that people in society labelled them black; they had a fictive scientific (biological) view of race—it's a skin colour), and a few adopted a racial identity. Those that adopted a racial black identity did so for one or several reasons: a) they felt an affinity for African Americans because they adopted/consumed aspects of black popular culture and/or they experienced racism, b) they were seen as black by the mainstream, and c) they adopted a black identity for political reasons (i.e. wanted to challenge stereotypes and the exclusion of black people).

Although how an individual is identified or racialized has implications for their experiences living in a racialized society (e.g. Lewis, 2003), this study did not find a clear link between participants' chosen identities and their educational outcomes. The educational attainment (as well as social mobility) and identity formation processes might be independent, simultaneously occurring, dynamic processes that are intimately connected to social contexts and social relations. Again, the American literature on children of non-European immigrants assumes that racialized black children that are from low socioeconomic backgrounds that experience

exclusion, that live in low income neighbourhoods and that go to resource deprived schools located in poor neighbourhoods, are likely to develop an oppositional racial identity and perform poorly in school (Ogbu, 1991; Portes and Zhou, 1993). This literature associates adopting a racialized black identity or acting black with low educational achievement and a deviant life trajectory. However, none of the participants in this study had an oppositional identity, not even those that identified as black. Therefore, a black racial identity is not always oppositional nor does 'becoming black' necessarily entail, as Ibrahim (1999) suggested, consuming rap and hip-hop culture, playing basketball and speaking Black stylized English. During adolescence, the participants' identities were in fluctuation and greatly influenced by their social contexts and those within it. Participants did not necessarily need to adopt the same ethnic or national identities as their parents. What was important was factors such as participants' positive relations with their parents, their value of higher educational attainment, their willingness to abide by their parents' conservative cultures as opposed to a liberal western culture (at least within the home environment), and that participants received the necessary educational and social supports they required. For some participants, their education influenced the identities they formed as young adults. For example, Samuel was able to acquire cultural and social capital at university through his social science degree and participation in mainstream student clubs and associations. Through these activities, he was able to enter mainstreams social circles. The relationship between identity (chosen) or self-identification and socioeconomic outcomes (e.g. educational outcomes) is most likely mediated by other variables (e.g. peer groups, culture, etc.).

Re-examining our understanding of marginalized immigrant offspring's path to upward mobility

This study supports a number of central arguments of both the segmented assimilation theory and the CEM. Although this is the case, the experiences of Sub-Saharan African immigrant offspring are not fully explained by the existing models of the incorporation patterns of racialized non-white children of immigrants. Consistent with these frameworks, this study found that racialized black children of immigrants, and more generally marginalized youth, have to look for support in their micro environments to overcome a number of structural, institutional, social and geographic barriers that impede their incorporation into mainstream society and its institutions, namely the education system. Often, many studies on racialized non-white immigrant offspring do not examine individual level factors. In a study that looks at underachievement, it might make sense to stay clear of examining individual factors that lead to underachievement to avoid the pitfall of blaming victims of structural racism (or a victim of circumstances) for their failure. However, when examining educational success, I think it is important to recognize individual strength and agency. Some of the participants were able to excel in school and able to avoid the traps of low income neighbourhoods because of their individual attitudes and behaviours: they were studious and/or smart, goal-oriented, they set high expectations for themselves, they were independent learners, and they did not have many friends or if they did they were like-minded. This finding indicates that some racialized black youth are not greatly impacted by structural and institutional barriers. A reason for this could be that racial exclusion operates under the radar most of the time (e.g. dog-whistle politics) because there are equality laws in place that forbid overt expressions of racism. Furthermore, low income neighbourhoods in Canada are not considered to be as deterministic as American ghettos (at this

point anyway); some are in fact considered pleasant and vibrant communities (Silver, 2011). Therefore, it is possible for racialized black immigrant offspring to overcome structural, spatial and institutional barriers, for example, if they are not exposed to negative neighbourhood contexts and peer influences, they have a positive outlook, they focus mainly on their academic life and they do not need much help from others. However, it should be noted there were a few participants that were studious and motivated to do well, but they required social and educational supports. In these cases, overcoming barriers only through personal effort was a struggle.

At the family (i.e. parental) level of analysis, this research agrees with the findings of extant research. Immigrant parents played a central role in the educational success of most Sub-Saharan African immigrants that took part in this study. In fact, participants, key informants and parents argued children that grew up at the same time immigrant parents were new to the country were the ones that fell through the cracks (i.e. dropped out of school, are living a deviant life style). Research has found that immigrant parent's lack of proficiency in the dominant language, unfamiliarity with societal institutions (e.g. schools), and limited human, social and ethnic capital were linked to immigrant offspring's low educational achievement (Coll et al., 2002; Valdes, 1996). The children of African immigrants that arrived as children with their parents or were born in Canada in the late 80s early 90s—the date after which the majority of Canada's Sub-Saharan African population arrived in Canada (Milan & Tran 2004)—were referred to as 'the experimental generation'. Study participants argued that Sub-Saharan immigrant parents were able to provide more guidance and support to their younger children once they learned how the society functioned through the process of raising their older children and by observing how some kids in their community 'derailed'.

This finding illustrates that it is difficult to capture the evolving incorporation patterns and experiences of immigrant families that are in the process of incorporating into society. Immigrants adapt to their environment and exercise agency over time once they figure out their new society. For this reason, useful theoretical concepts (or ideal types), such as Ogbu's distinction between voluntary immigrants and non-immigrant minorities, need to be revisited. One of the distinctions that Ogbu makes is that immigrants are more trusting of mainstream institutions than non-immigrant minorities. Trusting mainstream institutions is supposedly a good thing (since trust can forge positive relationships with school personnel). However, parents and key informants argued that Sub-Saharan African immigrant parents' trust in the education system led to the poor performance of a significant number of their youth. This suggests that racialized black immigrants are better equipped to assist their youth once they adopt some of the views (e.g. structural racism exists) of non-immigrant minorities. It is particularly important that racialized black immigrant parents discover that mainstream educational institutions do not prepare racialized black youth well for their future. They also need to learn outside-of-school educational and social support are necessary for most youth to succeed in the education system. This finding further suggests that there is a transitional period between being a voluntary immigrant and becoming/being a non-voluntary minority—this is possibly a golden period for racialized black immigrant families. In this state of consciousness, racialized black immigrant parents are aware of the inequalities and barriers that exist in society, but they are still optimistic that their children can overcome societal barriers through hard work and higher educational attainment (their expectations for their children remains high, albeit slightly levelled).

At the community level, this study found that the experiences of participants, as racialized black immigrant families, are similar to both racialized black immigrant offspring

living in the United States and other marginalized immigrant groups—e.g. Afro-Caribbean immigrant children and low income Asian immigrant offspring (e.g. Rumbaut & Ima, 1988; Waters, 1994). Racialized black immigrant offspring that grow up in low income neighbourhoods are theorized to be at-risk of adopting the oppositional cultures of marginalized non-immigrant groups, namely black underclass culture. However, children of racialized non-white immigrants that strive to achieve social mobility are theorized to adopt their parents' views and ethnic cultures. Participants' families, like the racialized black immigrant groups studied by MacLeod (1987) and Waters (2009), distinguished themselves from castelike/non-immigrant families they lived among in low income neighbourhoods and those they were exposed to in the media. Participants' outlooks (e.g. belief in equal opportunity and that social mobility can be achieved through determination and hard work) more closely resembled those of the mainstream because they adopted their parents' optimistic worldviews.

Moreover, the results reveal that close community ties between non-European immigrant families that are confined to low income neighbourhoods (as a result of limited financial capital) were beneficial. Close community ties, Sub-Saharan African parents and youth participants confirmed, reinforced immigrant parents' ethnocultural norms and expectations—norms and expectations that were strong determinants of high educational attainment and associated benefits (Zhou, 1997; Zhou & Kim, 2006). Similarly, Zhou and Bankston (1994) found that children of non-European immigrants excelled (i.e. educationally) in an environment where “the social world of the family is restricted to the closed and highly interconnected circles of the ethnic group. What is considered bad or good is clearly specified and closely monitored by these networks. The community is watchful and ever-vigilant” (p. 831). Although the segmented assimilation theory emphasizes the importance of social (and cultural) capital generally, the

theory places much emphasis on capital that immigrants possess at the time of immigration and during the initial stage of the settlement process (e.g. first several of years). What this theory does not take into consideration is the long-term experiences (and capital accumulation) of non-European immigrant families and how their experiences impact their children differently. This research suggests that children of immigrants from the same family but are born years apart (e.g. 10 years) could have quite different experiences. Furthermore, the findings show that the segmented assimilation and CEM theories need to take into consideration the role of community-based organizations. These theories place too much emphasis on the extensity and intensity of immigrant communities' networks and on immigrant communities' abilities to organize themselves, but they do not look at the role of community-based organizations. When the interests of NGOs and community-based organizations merge with the interests of motivated low income immigrant communities (interest convergence), more supportive communities can be built for marginalized youth in low income neighbourhoods. Consequently, low income neighbourhoods could be more nurturing and supportive environments (e.g. availability of community-based programs and social networks) to live within for low income youth and their working class immigrant families compared to isolating higher income neighbourhoods they struggle financially to be a part of.

In closing, theorizing about racialized black immigrant offspring's paths to social mobility is complex. Racialized black immigrant offspring follow divergent and winding roads. Dominant theories about the experiences of children of non-European immigrants provide important insights to understand the experiences of Sub-Saharan African immigrant offspring. However, these theories simplify the process by which racialized non-white immigrants, and more specifically racialized black immigrant offspring, incorporate into society and they

discount within group difference and agency exercised by marginalized youth, their families and their communities. This study found that a number of interconnected individual, parental and community factors can assist racialized black immigrant offspring to overcome structural and institutional barriers to social mobility (via educational achievement). Furthermore, this study suggests that racialized black children of immigrants' incorporation experiences are informed by their genders and personalities. For instance, the educational and life outcomes of female participants and participants who were not peer-oriented or social, were mainly influenced by individual and family level characteristics, while other participants' educational outcomes and trajectories were closely tied to a number of closely interwoven factors—e.g. social contexts, acculturation strategies, parental relations, parental support and expectations, parents' behaviour and guidance, and community-based supports.

The following concluding chapter provides a brief overview of the findings, implications of this study, and important research questions that can be explored in future studies.

11. Conclusion

Nations of immigrants, like Canada, are at a crossroad. We live in a Canadian society full of paradoxes and this is not a sustainable state to be in. How we (or Canadians who control the narrative about Canadian identity) present ourselves has to be consistent with reality. Meaning, as we continue to diversify, we are compelled to live up to our ideals and be a more just and egalitarian society. Canada is only imagined to be a nation that is diverse, tolerant, accepting and equal. Diverse in the demographic sense we certainly are in certain parts of the country and tolerant we might appear to be outwardly (as ‘polite Canadians’), but accepting and equal is something that we cannot claim to be at the present moment (most certainly not considering the state in which many Indigenous and marginalized people live). The elimination of racist immigration policies has made Canada’s largest metropolitan cities more diverse. Canada’s official response to managing diversity was the enactment of multiculturalism and equality legislation within a bilingual framework. This approach aimed to preserve the culture and privileged position of racialized white English and French-speakers while allowing non-European immigrants to maintain their cultures in the private sphere (Haque, 2012; Li, 2003b). In other words, immigrants were expected to assimilate into the dominant English or French culture within mainstream institutional contexts, but they were free to preserve and practice their cultures in their ethnic spaces (e.g. ethnic enclaves) and institutions. Interestingly, although American and Canadian populations defer (i.e. presence/absence of a large racialized non-white underclass), and their immigrant incorporation policies also defer (e.g. multiculturalism versus melting pot/assimilation policy), mounting empirical evidence suggests that non-European immigrants settling in both countries have experienced similar challenges and have incorporated into these societies in similar patterns (e.g. Alba & Foner, 2015; Reitz et al., 2011).

The vast majority of voluntary immigrants arrive to nations of immigrants with high hopes, an optimistic outlook, and a desire to achieve social mobility; nonetheless, not all immigrant families have been able to realise their dreams. Given North America's colonial and racist past, many non-European immigrants have been excluded from these societies due to their ethno-cultural difference from the mainstream and their inability to become bicultural—assimilate into mainstream culture in the public/institutional realm and remain 'ethnic' elsewhere (Bauder & Cameron, 2002; Wallis, Sunseri & Galabuzi, 2010). Exclusion from the labour market has led many immigrants with a sizable and concentrated population to pool their collective resources (ethnic capital) and develop ethnic enclaves. Other voluntary immigrants, such as African immigrants, with a relatively short history in Canada (and thus with no existing social networks) and with limited financial capital (due to the unequal distribution of power and wealth globally), have been forced to settle in economically and socially marginalized communities with poor non-immigrants.

Predictably, research found that most immigrant parents who were able to secure professional jobs or who belonged to a strong ethnic community possessing ethnic capital have enabled their offspring to incorporate into mainstream institutions and to achieve high educational levels (Abada et al., 2009; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Conversely, the offspring of many immigrant parents who joined the low or working-class—most of which are from impoverished and/or conflict-ridden regions—have fallen victim to structural, systemic and geographic barriers to educational achievement and intergenerational mobility (Zhou, 1997).

What can be concluded from existing research is nations of immigrants, such as Canada, often fail to provide marginalized individuals lacking capital (particularly financial capital)

sufficient support and resources to fully participate in society. Canada, similar to the United States, has in place a structure that is increasing inequality between individuals at the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy (the majority of whom are racialized non-white) and individuals at the top of the socioeconomic ladder (mostly racialized white folks), and poorly regulated global and local capitalist economies are exacerbating this income disparity. This predicament, I believe, threatens the stability, cohesion, and moral authority of these nations; and this will be more so the case if societal structures become more deterministic. The intent of this study was not to look at the negative impact structural barriers have on marginalized youth or the process of downward assimilation—these topics have been widely studied. We know (from reviewing extant studies) many racialized non-white youth, particularly racialized black males, have been pushed out of schools and into negative life courses, opening the door for the formation of a new racialized non-white underclass in Canada (further cementing our similarity with our southern neighbour we love to criticize and distance ourselves from).

Standing at this crossroad (where we possibly see racial tensions and the formation of an underclass in the horizon), what we do not have is a good grasp of how socioeconomically marginalized racialized non-white individuals can achieve social mobility. Put differently, we need to understand questions such as: how can poor racialized black individuals (one of the most marginalized groups in society) overcome structural barriers? Can social mobility be achieved by the marginalized on a significant scale through individual and community agency? Many studies examine social structures' (e.g. racisms) impact on individuals (e.g. how social structures determine one's place in society) and the reasons why marginalized youth become deviant. From this angle, the stories of those who overcome structural barriers are overlooked and obscured, although these voices help us understand our current predicament and how we (i.e. those of us

who are interested in social change) can proceed in our quest to make society more equitable through multiple avenues at the grassroots/community level.

Although the findings of this qualitative research are not generalizable (due to the nature of the study and the sample size), this study provides insight into the lives of a small group of racialized black immigrant offspring that have overcome some structural barriers and are striving to achieve social mobility. A number of significant lessons (e.g. with regards to the process of incorporating into the mainstream and Eurocentric institutions) can be drawn from the experiences of Sub-Saharan African immigrant offspring, parents and key informants interviewed in this study.

This study exposed the strength, determination, adaptability and agency exercised by members of a recent and fairly large racialized black immigrant community. The majority of prevailing studies compare second generation immigrants from different ethno-cultural groups. This type of comparison creates or feeds existing stereotypes, such as Asian children of immigrants are overachievers and children of Mexican and racialized black immigrants are underachievers. These findings have become social facts, and this is problematic. The participants' narratives reveal that immigrant communities and individuals learn from their experiences and they change overtime as they become accustomed to living in their new social contexts. Furthermore, in existing studies, the incorporation and adaptation process of offspring from different ethno-cultural backgrounds but with similar characteristics (e.g. poor Asian immigrant offspring compared to poor children of African immigrants) are often understudied. If the findings of this study are compared to prior studies that examined the incorporation process of educationally successful children of Asian immigrants from a low socioeconomic background (e.g. Portes & MacLeod, 1996; Rumbaut & Ima, 1988), what could be extrapolated is that

racialized non-white immigrant children from low socioeconomic backgrounds have similar challenges, thus the process that they incorporate into mainstream society is similar.

Participants' narratives revealed that the road to upward mobility (through higher educational attainment) is complex. The participants identified a number of significant community forces and individual factors that enabled them, as marginalized racialized black immigrant offspring, to navigate around spatial, institutional and structural barriers. According to the participants' narratives, the community forces that could protect and assist children of marginalized immigrants to overcome barriers were: high parental expectations; a strong community and parental belief that social mobility can be achieved through higher education; strict parenting; parental and community supervision and monitoring; respectful intergenerational relations; and community development (i.e. establishing organizations and activities to assist youth—e.g. homework clubs, recreation activities and establishment of religious or ethnic community spaces to congregate). At the individual level, factors that facilitated the educational achievement of participants included: respect for authority; compliance with parents' conservative culture, expectations and guidance; high aspirations; a positive/optimistic view of society (i.e. having views that are in line with their parents—e.g. society is equal and social mobility can be achieved through hard work and education); a willingness to stay away from deviant peer groups; effective study habits; and a desire and motivation to complete higher education.

Moreover, this research found that the path to upward mobility for racialized black immigrant offspring could be differentiated by gender and personality traits. The participants' narratives revealed that males and those that are more social or peer-oriented (entertainment-seekers) need a lot more guidance and assistance from their parents and community to finish

their education and achieve social mobility than participants that were academic-oriented and homebodies or not too social. What this means is that not all of the participants needed the same type of assistance and support. Researchers need to show, and educators need to recognize, that racialized black immigrant offspring from marginalized backgrounds are not a monolithic group—they are not all social, part of a clique, and disinterested in learning; some are self-starters, studious, smart, introverts and independent. However, although some of the participants had the skills (e.g. good study habits, self-discipline, focus, and high aspirations) to do well in school (including at the PSE level), a proportion of these participants still needed support as children of immigrant parents—offspring of parents that were not familiar with the education system and the structure of society. This underlines the importance of making socio-economic supports available to this group starting at a young age to assist them in their pursuits.

A particularly insightful element of this study is that it captures the experiences of an immigrant group in transition, much like the larger society. Many of the youth participants, parents and key informants spoke about what they learned about society and how they have adapted to society based on their lived experiences. In essence, the narratives described a process of becoming racialized non-white and non-immigrant and the transiting from a voluntary immigrant to a non-immigrant minority. If in fact this is what is happening, more research has to be conducted to examine this phenomenon. More precisely, future research could gauge the changing level of optimism (or the leveling of aspirations and expectations) that exists in Sub-Saharan African communities. Immigrant optimism and high aspiration are perhaps the strongest determinants that allow immigrant offspring to overcome societal barriers and to excel academically compared to children of the mainstream or racialized non-white non-immigrant parents (Kao & Tienda, 1995; McLeod, 1987; Waters, 2009). We need to better understand how

the perspectives and outlooks of Sub-Saharan Africans (the newest racialized black group to immigrate to Canada) compare to Afro-Caribbeans, African Canadians, and even racialized black immigrant groups in the United States. Furthermore, the labour market and economic outcomes of Sub-Saharan African (and more broadly racialized black and non-white) immigrant offspring needs to be monitored by researchers. Economic exclusion (and therefore dependence on the state) is one of the leading factors that has killed the dreams and hopes of many African Americans and has led to the rise of racialized black ghettos in the United States (Gans, 1992; Wilson, 1996). Therefore, it is in the Canadian nation's interest that the hard work and determination of racialized black youth and their communities—most of whom have worked twice as hard to achieve the same outcomes as members of the mainstream—are rewarded. We have to keep in mind that the next generation (e.g. third generation Sub-Saharan African Canadians) will use their predecessors as a frame of comparison not their parents' generation or their cousins in a third world country; and if they do not fare well (i.e. achieve a middle class status) with a degree in hand, we might have to start engaging more directly with issues, such as race relations, racial tensions, racial inequality and how to deal with riots in racialized ghettos, that many Americans address on a daily basis.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol: Interviews with radicalized black children of Sub-Saharan African immigrants

General guiding questions

1) Current status

To start, can you tell me a little about yourself?

- What activities are you currently engaged in (i.e. going to school, working)?
- What is your current educational level (highest level of education)?
- What are your goals and aspirations?

2) Experiences growing up in Canada

Can you tell me about your experiences growing up in Canada?

- How was your family life? What were your parents expectations for you?
- What was it like to grow-up in the neighbourhood(s) you lived in?
- Did you encounter any forms of discrimination/racism or exclusions?

3) Education

Can you describe your schooling experiences in Canada (Ottawa)?

- i) What role did your parents/family play in your schooling/education?
- ii) Can you describe the schools you went to and your relationships/encounters with school personnel and students?
- iii) What type of educational supports did you have available to you?

4) Identity

How would you describe yourself? / How do you see yourself? / How do you self-identify?

- i) What social (e.g. ethnic, cultural, religious) groups do you have a sense of belonging to?

ii) Do you adhere to a particular religion? / Are you part of a religious community?

- How does your religion shape you? / What role does your religious beliefs play in your life?

iii) What is your perception of Canada (Canadian society)?

- What is your sense of belonging to Canada?

[Thank the participant for their time and for participating in the study.]

Appendix B

Interview Protocol: Interviews with key informants & parents

General guiding questions

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself?
2. What are some of the challenges children of Sub-Saharan African immigrants encounter while attempting to become full participants of Canadian society?
3. What impact do you think neighbourhood contexts and other social contexts youth grow-up in have on the life trajectories of Sub-Saharan African immigrant offspring (and more generally racialized black youth)?
4. Can you describe/discuss the educational and schooling experiences of children of Sub-Saharan African immigrants?
5. What types of program, financial, educational and social supports are available to low income racialized black, and in particular second generation Sub-Saharan African children and youth?
 - a) What services and/or programs are available to marginalized African immigrant offspring living in low income communities to help them incorporate into society?
6. What types of identities do you think second-generation racialized black/African immigrant offspring are forming? Or how do you think children of Sub-Saharan African immigrants self-identify?

[Thank the participant for their time and for participating in the study.]