

I CAN'T SLEEP AT NIGHT, PRAYING HE RETURNS HOME ALIVE: THE
EXPERIENCES OF BLACK MOTHERS RAISING BLACK SONS
IN THE GREATER TORONTO AREA

by

Ebiboloemi Fuludu Ambekederemo, BSW, York University, 2017

An MRP

presented to Ryerson University

in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Social Work

in the program of

Social Work

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2018

© Ebiboloemi F. Ambekederemo 2018

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION FOR ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF A MRP

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this MRP. This is a true copy of the MRP, including any required final revisions.

I authorize Ryerson University to lend this MRP to other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

I further authorize Ryerson University to reproduce this MRP by photocopying or by other means, in total or in part, at the request of other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

I understand that my MRP may be made electronically available to the public.

ABSTRACT

**I Can't Sleep at Night, Praying He Returns Home Alive: The Experiences of Black Mothers
Raising Black Sons in the Greater Toronto Area**

**Master of Social Work, 2018
Ebiboloemi Fuludu Ambekederemo
Program of Social Work,
Ryerson University**

This is a qualitative narrative study of how self-identified Black mothers raising Black sons in the Greater Toronto area respond to the everyday likelihood that their sons may be killed by the police. The goal of this research is to shed light, create space, and give voice to Black mothers to share their personal experiences of police brutality in the Greater Toronto Area, and some ideas for how to better support these women. Additionally, it is meant to create an understanding that behind every murdered, incarcerated or racially profiled Black male, there is a Black mother suffering in silence. This research is grounded in Critical Race Feminism and Anti-Black Racism.

KEY WORDS: Constant fear, Parental responsibility, Lack of resources in Black communities/criminality, and Powerlessness/systemic change.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I give Jehovah God all the glory, praise, and adoration. It is only by God's grace and endless love that I have been able to come this far to finishing my master's degree. I would also like to say a big thank you to my family and friends for all their support throughout this process.

Special thanks to my supervisor Dr., Jennifer Poole for all her support and guidance throughout this research process and MSW program. Thank you, Jennifer, for all the time you were there to listen to me and help me find solutions especially when facing health challenges. You are simply the best!!!!

I would like to thank all my MSW cohort for such an amazing class. I appreciate every one of you for the love and togetherness we all shared. It was a great pleasure knowing you all.

Finally, I want to say a very big thank you to the participants for their contributions and great interview. You both are highly appreciated.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my late parents who are watching me from above. “Mummy, the girl child made it!! Let it be known in Kiagbodo and to the ends of the Fuludu dynasty that I Ebi, brought home a master’s degree”. Yeah!!!!!!! Mama, I made it!!!!

Most especially, I want to dedicate this MRP to my grandson Osas who has been an inspiration for me to work harder and to becoming a better person each day. You are such a big blessing and God’s gift to my life!!!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Chapter I: INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	8
Chapter 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	16
Chapter 4: METHODOLOGY	21
Chapter 5: RECRUITMENT/DATA COLLECTION	23
Chapter 6: FINDINGS/ ANALYSIS	33
APPENDICES	40
REFERENCE LIST	47

LIST OF APPENDICES

	PAGE
Appendix A – Recruitment Script	40
Appendix B – Counselling Resources	41
Appendix C – Interview Guide Questions	42
Appendix D – Consent Agreement	43
Appendix E- Confirmation of Agreement	44

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“Hands up, don’t shoot!”, has unfortunately become a daily trend in our news and words we have come to hear and know due to police brutality-words carved out of the pains of many protesting and united in the fight for social justice. As hash tag banners of “No justice no peace” fly in our major city streets, they call for attention to be heard. We hear voices of pure grief, outcry over systemic failures and frustration with systemic policies and biased legislatures that perpetuate Anti-Black racism. These systems help to fuel police killings of unarmed Black males without accountability. Nevertheless, as I watch these disturbing videos of indiscriminate police killings on our various media outlets, I begin to wonder if these videos are real or if they are just another movie to watch out for in the cinemas. Behold, before I can wrap my mind around these thoughts, the media sensationalism and bias creeps in, not only to try to undermine the behavior of the unarmed Black male killed by the police, but also to dig into family history looking for incriminating excuses to justify police use of deadly force. Moreover, two minutes of fame is given to the bereaved parents, especially the mother who just lost her son to police brutality to make a statement, after which we will never hear anything from these mothers again until another Black male is shot dead by the police.

Unfortunately, the killings of young Black males in the hands of law enforcement officers have become rampant. Looking at the birth of the Black Lives Matter movement here and in the United States and the recent public clamour for Black lives around the world, it is a reminder that we are still far from having achieved equity in the 21st century (BLM, 2016). According to Human rights watch (2014) the United States has committed human rights violations at the federal, state and local government level regarding the criminal justice system, immigration, and national security. However, ‘America’, which portrays itself as an exemplary place to be

emulated by the rest of the world and a bedrock of progress and civilization, is leaving a lot to be desired (and contested).

Similarly, Canada is not exempted from police use of deadly force, even though Canada has always positioned itself in the global arena to be the home of ‘diversity’ and ‘multiculturalism’, with an emblem of charity, kindness and an open space for all people. Hansen (2017) contested the popular belief that multiculturalism and diversity are well embraced by all Canadians. He argues that Canada has never had anything other than a rhetorical multicultural policy because, if Canada and Canadians had any talent for coping with diversity, then Indigenous people would be well supported and thriving in the Canadian economy (Hansen, 2017). Moreover, there have been many episodes of police brutality and killings in Canada. Although police use of deadly force can be argued to be on a smaller scale in Canada compared to that of the United States, there have been many fights against police misconduct and the use of deadly force right here in Toronto (BLM, 2016).

Looking at the history of police events in the United States, and then living in Toronto as a Black African woman, these experiences are very horrifying and new to me, especially as I am raising a Black son myself. As an African immigrant, Black mother and newcomer to Canada, oppression overwhelms me, and being an African and a Black woman creates barriers that hinder me from making my desired progress in life. In addition, my life chances, impacted by the legacies of slavery and colonization, have all contributed to the marginalization I experience daily in Canada. Sadly, my life as a Black woman has been marked by miseries because of the social structures and systems that are biased against people who look like me, an object of invisibility and oppression. I thought getting away from Africa’s inequalities, lack of responsible leadership, chronic political corruption, social injustices, gender differentials and dichotomies,

hardship, patriarchy and colonial legacies, just to mention a few issues, was going to be the solution to my problems and the liberty I strongly seek as a “girl child”. I had a colonized mindset of wanting to live, think and behave like the colonizers, as that was the norm and trend while growing up in Africa. As Dubois (2013. p 2) points out,

It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness an American, a Negro, two souls, two thoughts, two un-reconciled strivings, and two warring ideals in one dark body whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

Moreover, as a girl of the 80s who watched and experienced pop culture booming with artists like Madonna and Michael Jackson, it was a dream to come to the “Western world” “to get free”, “civilized” and then practice all of what I watched on television. In those days, that was the ‘good life’ and leaving Africa was leaving “primitivity”, cultural hindrances against women and patriarchal control behind for good. Fanon (2008) points out that all colonized people, in whom an inferiority complex has taken root, whose local cultural originality has been committed to the grave, position themselves in relation to the civilizing language. Such as, the metropolis culture and the more the colonized has assimilated the cultural values of the metropolis, the more they would have escaped the bush. Also, the more they reject their Blackness and the bush, the whiter they will become (p.9). However, being away from the situation just described, within European culture, I found myself living and experiencing yet a different type of oppression for the first time. Racism and discrimination, ranging from employment, media, healthcare, and the educational systems all treated me as the other. People who look like me are described as ugly, lazy, not hard working enough, always at the margin of society and it is all ‘our fault’ to be poor and suffering. They do this even when everything I have

socially, economically and politically has been appropriated by the same people and systems who now call me lazy. They do this and expect me to prosper when nothing is left behind for me to hold onto. As Mitchell argued “No race can grow fat...that feeds on the crumbs that fall from the tables of others” (cited in Riphagen, 2008, p. 96).

For years I wondered, and I struggled to understand or digest why there is deservingness and privilege for some, while others are subservient to that power and therefore treated as lesser human beings. Also, at some point I even wondered whether I had a different colour of blood flowing through my veins and whether I am not of the same human race? As Fanon and Philcox (2007, p.18) point out, “The racialized person is a threat, an infection, a symptom of social decline; over determined from without. Dissected under white eyes. I am fixed, and my long antennae picked up the catch phrases strewn over the surface of things”. All I ever wanted was just an opportunity to belong, to be free, a place to realise my African dreams, childhood dreams of wanting to live “good” like the colonizers, a space like every other human being, to be able to walk freely without becoming the object of someone else’s hatred and disdain. These thoughts became a constant inner fight for me and like a dream, it became a wish that I hoped would materialize. As my search for answers continued, every book I read directed me back to the perpetrators of my calamity. Something is deeply wrong I kept telling myself, that if everything I know is being taught by the same systems and people who have oppressed, enslaved and colonised my people then, I am not learning anything new. As I struggled to find a space to fit, to learn and grow, the North American dream of “freedom” and opportunity came to mind as my only hope to be free and be self-realised.

However, seeing all that is happening in relation to police violence and systemic oppression, that dream has become even more elusive. Even though in Europe I experienced

racism, it became a different worry here in Canada as a Black woman raising a Black son. I panic each time I switch on the television, for fear of seeing another indiscriminate killing of an unarmed Black male on the news, as this has sadly become an everyday trend on local and international news media. ‘This only happens in the United States of America’ I kept telling myself for comfort and re-assurance, until it happened here in Toronto and Andrew Loku was killed by the police. As if that was not enough, while there were protests and demonstrations by Black Lives Matter, another Black man called Kwasi Skene-Peters was shot dead by Toronto police (Gillis, 2015). My deepest fears and worries were awakened, especially when I found out that these killings were not new or a singular incident, but something that has been occurring even before the killings of Andrew Loku and Kwasi Skene-Peters.

It makes me continuously wonder who will be next? I imagine the worst everyday just as every other Black mother with grown up Black son would feel. The continuous worry has pushed me to the extent of becoming hypervigilant and over protective, which can sometimes become intrusive to grown up children. This of course, is a great burden as the feelings go from fear of the unknown to now feeling angry towards police untouchability as it relates to Black brutality. Yes, for who will not be angry when awake? The hopelessness and impotency amounting from the inability to change the situation, the continuous fear, coupled with me having to remind my son everyday of how to behave or respond to law enforcement when stopped, becomes a toll on life itself and my mental health. I remembered the very first time I had this conversation with my son, he looked at me and said “Mama, please stop worrying. You worry too much, this is Canada we are safe. Moreover, I am a university student and law-abiding citizen who has nothing to do with police”. At that point I froze, tears ran down my eyes and I asked him “Are you not Black? Have you forgotten when we went to the mall at Ottawa and a White man came to you and asked

what was your height? and when you said 6ft.10 he looked up at you and said wow, you are indeed big and tall but please, do not go to steal otherwise you would be easily identified by the police? Do you remember son?” I yelled out with tears. Again, “what do the police see when they see you son? A college student and law-abiding citizen? or a young Black male whose body is stereotypically criminalized, profiled and therefore a suspect of crime? Answer me” I said. Still in tears, I grabbed his hands, I looked into his eyes and I said “Son, first you obey and later explain who you are because I want you back in this house alive”. These and many more are pains that sadly have become an everyday routine for Black mothers. These feelings of stress, sadness, frustration, of not being able to do anything and hopelessness, coupled with constant fear, may lead to depression and other mental health challenges (Clark, Anderson, Clark & Williams, 1999).

Relatedly, it is important to know too that behind every Black male killed is a Black mother, grandmother, a sister, a wife or partner. There is the Auntie, a God mother, friends and cousin who are left without their son, their loved one or family member for life. Therefore, my research question is how do Black mothers live with the possibility that their sons will be killed by the police? The goal of this research is to shed light on how self-identified Black mothers respond to the everyday likelihood that their sons may be shot or killed by the police. It is a way of giving voice to the mothers and their personal experiences of police brutality in the Greater Toronto Area. Moreover, I want to create an understanding as mentioned before, that behind every murdered, wrongfully incarcerated or racially profiled Black male killed or taken into care, there is a Black mother suffering in silence and whose voice should be heard and possible ideas formed on how to better help these mothers

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

After reviewing all the literature that informs this research, there are some re-occurring themes and commonalities in the publications. These include: racism and the illusion of inclusion; over surveillance/ police carding and racial profiling; police excessive use of force and powerlessness as well as Black mothers' fear, silence and resistance. The literature reviewed for this research is all grounded and informed by qualitative studies. A mix of American and Canadian literature was utilized in this review.

Racism and the illusion of inclusion

The historiography of race and racism pre-dates slavery, as North and South American Indigenous peoples as well as those living in places such as China and India all experienced European invasion and pathologization as sub or non-humans (Richards,1997). However, the ostracization and marginalization of Black peoples can be said to be deeply influenced by Slavery and Colonization, practices driven by White Supremacy and constructed Black inferiority. As far back as in the early 18th century, Black communities have been evaluatively construed as 'savages' despite thousands of years of advanced civilization (Richards,1997). Even though many have fought exhaustively for racial justice and equity for Black peoples, racism is still sadly a huge problem worldwide and Toronto is not exempt (Brown, 2008; Clark et al., 1999). These authors recognize the ubiquity of racism, and how it is understood in every language. They define racism as beliefs, attitudes, institutional arrangements, and acts that tend to denigrate individuals or groups because of phenotypic characteristics or ethnic group affiliation (Clark et al., 1999, p. 805-806). Clark et al. (1999) point out evidence of racism in higher education, housing rentals, sales, and employment hiring practices. Unfortunately, it is not

complete to talk about racism without mentioning marginalization, oppression and discrimination (Richards, 1997). In addition, Black people face the intersectionality of oppression in various societal spheres such as, being Black and male, stereotyped, unemployed, poor, disabled and criminalized at the same time. It can be argued that such preconceived notions propagate the police violence and brutality we see today.

Research by Driedger and Halli (2000) examines discrimination as an invisible evil of racism and how we overlook certain aspects of racial discrimination in our society. Oftentimes, we capitalize on tokenistic appointments of visible minorities by understanding it to mean equality but unfortunately, we later see it for what it is; ‘an illusion of inclusion’. Similarly, when there is a race-related debate, we say racism is something of the past and no longer practiced in our society by pointing out a racialized athlete representing Canada, or an immigrant woman on a board of directors, an actor or actress to justify even blatant racial injustices (Driedger & Halli, 2000). Nowadays, racism may be more covert, but many Black folks are often denied opportunities for good and proper education, health care services, housing, and security (Benjamin, 2003). Additionally, when people are denied so much, forced to live in poverty or with a high rate of unemployment, when they are abused and mistreated for a long period of time, they have and will rise up either individually or collectively as a community (BLM, 2016). Like anti-racist educator Paul Kivel argued, “Rather than attacking them for their anger, we need to ask ourselves how many layers of complacency, ignorance, collusion, privilege and misinformation we have put into place for it to take so much outrage to get our attention” (as cited in Carniol, 2000, p. 32).

This white supremacy, criminalization and alienation contributes to Black cynicism and mistrust towards the justice system. People are less likely to cooperate with people who do not

like them and may develop doubts regarding all aspects of the criminal justice system (Melchers, 2013). Similarly, people with such perceptions may negatively respond to law enforcement officers out of mistrust, fear, and past perceived injustices often leading to unnecessary escalation and death. Melchers (2013) points out that, “racial discrimination of Black youths renders them more vulnerable to crime and disorder due to the wedge between their communities and the system which is “supposed to protect them” (p. 21-22). The continuous fight and struggle to belong remains an elusive paradigm. For Black communities in ‘North America’, belonging remains an illusion of inclusion.

Stewart (2002) argues that this is all engineered by political and economic interests, interests that protect white forms of social, educational, professional and financial capital. For this reason, Du Bois argued “The slave went free, stood a brief moment in the sun, then moved back again into slavery” (cited in Brown, 2008, p. 72). A typical example is in government, where Black folks may be hired into menial positions but not given full privileges to hold such positions even if they qualify (Stewart, 2002). According to Galabuzi (2005), “Racial discrimination in employment remains a barrier to access, to secure, full-time employment in well-paying sectors of the economy, further exacerbating the vulnerabilities imposed by globalization.” (p.54).

Over surveillance, police carding and racial profiling

Over the years, Black communities in the greater Toronto area have experienced an alarming degree of police misconduct, surveillance and racial discrimination (Brewer & Hietzeg, 2008). Brewer and Hietzeg (2008) argue that there is a vast and clandestine network of phone and web surveillance systems worldwide, and since 9/11, there has been a dramatic increase in those

systems and in surveillance generally. Governments and police are watching, and given cell phones and cameras, people are watching each other too. However, even before the 9/11 attack, racism was deeply rooted in the fabric of our society. As actor Will Smith (2016) points out, “Racism is not new but now been filmed”. Due to cell phones and video cameras, people can now watch police interactions and use of deadly force on social media and televisions unlike never before and this has been effective when advocating for change and justice.

In response, the state’s aggressive response finds its expression with the introduction of various anti-terror legislations and policies (Gordon, 2006). These are in line with a neo-liberal social order with the police at the front lines of this struggle. The goal is make real the threat of the enemy within while the ‘war on terror’ is waged worldwide. This discourse of identifying and punishing certain members of its population during ‘wartime’ is not new at all (Burma, 2010). Surveillance adds to the construction of a suspect community and internal enemies (Burma, 2010).

Identifying and punishing racialized minorities continues to be reproduced through the enactment of various legislations by policy makers whereby Canadians and internationally born Canadians are put at logger heads with one another. As Burma argues (2010, p. 24) “a critical engagement with the colour of one’s skin becomes a site of fear and suspicion production in Canadian cities during crisis periods. This is an identification strategy that seeks to separate the ally from the enemy”, and create the non-white other (Kozolanka, 2015). These perniciously absurd measures by the government have all lead to serious uncertainty and lack of freedom within Black communities to the point that it is commonly assumed that to be Black is to be criminalized (Novak & Chamlin, 2012). Blacks experience more surveillance and profiling from law enforcement officers for no justifiable cause than the colour of their skin (Ibe, Ochie, &

Obiyan, 2012). Furthermore, such harassment by law enforcement officers is now unfortunately an everyday phenomenon (Ibe, Ochie, & Obiyan, 2012).

Police excessive use of force and minority powerlessness

In addition to the above, Black communities also face the often-excessive use of force during police stops and everyday encounters (Maclellan, 2015). This police violence can sometimes lead to deadly force and another death of an unarmed Black male (Meerai, Abdillahi & Poole, 2016). And yet, such heinous action from the police is often left unquestioned. Worse still is if the brutalised victim in question has a previous criminal record (Lawson, 2013). To better understand the phenomenon of excessive force and powerlessness, and how police untouchability plays out, Lawson (2013) interviewed various participants on their experiences with the police. One of those participants was Mr. Theodore Duke, who was driving to the store with his friends when he was shot and beaten mercilessly by the police (Lawson, 2013). Random citizens passing by who witnessed the brutality had to intervene and stop it. However, while Mr. Theodore Duke was recovering from his injuries and coma, he woke up to see that he was chained to his hospital bed and was informed he was under arrest for attempted murder of a police officer. It then took him over 5 years behind bars to tell his side of the story. He believed justice would be served but instead, the trial was more influenced by the revelation of his past criminal records than the gravity of injuries inflicted on him by the police (Lawson, 2013). As Lawson (2013) argues, the above described incident is not peculiar of Mr. Theodore Duke alone, but a typical example of what Black men are going through in the hands of police and law enforcement officers. Given this, it is not hard to understand why it generates fear and panic within the Black communities, as well as distrust and feelings of powerlessness (Micucci & Gomme, 2005). In the words of Sherene Razack (2005, p. 90), there is a “dialectical relationship

between spaces and bodies, in which some are marked as degenerate and others as bourgeois. Brown and black bodies predominantly inhabit the degenerate spaces”.

Black mothers fear, silence and resistance

With all the systemic challenges that Black men face just to belong or survive in our society, one should wonder how the mothers of Black men feel. Watson and Hunter (2016) note that the idea of the ‘strong Black woman schema’ is a stereotypical perception that the Black woman needs to show strength and courage in the face of pain. It may indeed promote strength and caretaking, which is also recognized as a central aspect of African womanhood. However more often than not, Black women are forced to internalize their pains and the intersectionality of their oppressions and adversities, often leading to many health-related issues (Watson & Hunter, 2016). Moreover, the pains, fears and hopelessness that Black women face, can be seen in the early socialization of their children on race and discrimination related issues. As Edwards and Few-Demo (2016) points out, Black mothers engage in the ‘racial socialization’ process with their children from Pre-School to enlighten them on the implications of racial differentials and how to cope when they see the police. This practice has become a norm amongst African American mothers who are compelled to negotiate powerlessness and fear on how to protect their children from systemic oppressions and police violence (Edwards & Few-Demo, 2016).

Despite the fear of police violence and indiscriminate killings, it is important to recognise too that the Black woman also faces discrimination and has to navigate racism, sexism and patriarchy herself, coupled with trying to be heard in situations of systemic injustices concerning themselves and their sons. As Pratt-Clarke (2013) points out, “There are also many unwritten and unspoken practices that affect the experiences of African American women, and one of the

critical challenges is learning, unearthing, uncovering, and challenging what is unwritten and unspoken, yet acted upon” (p,101). Pratt-Clarke correlates how various aspects of oppression intersect in educational systems, the legal system, the political system and the criminal justice system, and how these components conjunctively affect interactions with other individuals and groups. Also, within these interpersonal relationships, intersecting identities including race, gender and class become salient and as a result, these identities often influence and determine the levels of respect, power, prominence and authority Black women get (Pratt-Clarke, 2013). Therefore, it is important to privilege the narratives of Black girls and women, so that instances of injustices and oppression can be unearthed, unsilenced, made visible, acknowledged, and recognized (Pratt-Clarke, 2013).

Bailey, Hannays-King, Clarke, Lester and Velasco (2013) do just that, outlining the cognitive process of finding meaning and building resilience after loss of a child to gun violence. Bailey points out that the loss of a child is a traumatic experience that can leave parents in a state of trepidation, whereby they are unable to find meaning in their loss. For Black mothers, who are disproportionately affected by loss through homicide, the process of making meaning remains overlooked. This can cause disruptive psychological trauma and even leave them struggling with several adaptive challenges (Bailey et al., 2013). It would appear that a focus on what Black mothers feel, think and carry with respect to the possibility of losing their Black sons is a pressing issue.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Two theoretical frameworks inform this major research paper; Critical Race Feminism and Anti-Black racism. These theories critically highlight the experiences of Black mothers raising Black sons in the greater Toronto area as they focus specifically on gender and racism. Feminist research positions gender as the categorical center of inquiry and the research process (Hesse-Biber, 2013). It also uses gender as a lens through which to focus on social issues, and it is grounded in the set of theoretical traditions that privilege women's issues, voices and lived experiences. A Feminist theoretical framework can shed light on a specific group of women, such as Black women. It may also embrace many of the tenets of postmodern and poststructuralist critiques as a challenge to the injustices of current society (Olsen, as cited in Creswell, 2013, p.27).

Critical race feminism is a theoretical product of critical race theory. It was developed to address power imbalances and differentials as it relates to the privilege and oppression of Black and racialized women (Wing & Willis, 1999). Critical race theory argues for the eradication of racial subjugation by focusing attention on race and how racism is deeply embedded within the framework of American society, in the U.S legal system, and the ways people think about the law, racial categories and privilege (Parker & Lynn, as cited in Creswell, 2013, p. 30).

Critical race feminism helps me center the words and experiences of Black women and to unearth, unsilenced, make visible, acknowledge, and recognize the experiences of Black mothers who fear the loss of their sons to police violence. Critical race feminism does not only lay bare the workings of patriarchy and racism in subordinating women of colour, but it shows why conventional approaches fail (Wing, 2003). Critical race feminism is important to this research

because it helps to demystify the challenging situations Black mothers experience which are most of the time unproblematized and unprioritized. It is a way of looking into what has been left out in the literature such as the way in which women struggle with their social devaluation and powerlessness within their families or society (Stewart, as cited in Creswell 2013, p.28).

Understanding that each woman is different and not a unified or coherent self is paramount in feminist inquiry. Similarly, Critical Race Feminism decolonizes research and intersectionality, thereby exposing hidden oppressions (Olsen, as cited in Creswell, 2013, p.28).

Critical race feminism helped me decolonize and position myself as a Black woman to collect narratives around raising a Black son in Toronto. The Black mothers I interviewed for this research told me their stories using narrative approach which is in line with Critical Race feminism. Hooks (1989) stresses the need and importance for a girl child or woman to be heard. She points out the generational silence Black women have suffered due to gender binaries and patriarchy, and how these components have prevented women from speaking up to oppression and for themselves. “Certainly, for Black women, our struggle has not been to emerge from silence into speech but to change the nature and direction of our speech, to make a speech that compels listeners, one that is heard” (Hooks, 1989, p.6).

Furthermore, Hooks uses critical race feminism as the foundation to the narratives of her personal experiences while growing up as a girl child. This supports the need for female liberation and feminism on how important it is for women to stand their ground regardless of the circumstances. “For us, true speaking is not solely an expression of creative power, it is an act of resistance, a political gesture that challenges politics of domination that would render us nameless and voiceless” (Hooks, 1989, p.8).

Sherene Razack (1991) points out the correlation between Feminism, law and Anti-Black racism. She talks about ‘man-made’ notions of women and how “in law, the issues that preoccupy women, scales notes, are all issues that emerge out of a male defined version of female sexuality, Abortion, contraception, sexual harassment, pornography, prostitution, rape and incest, are all struggles with our otherness” that is, struggles born out of the condition of being other than male (Razack ,1991, p.441-442). These problems are compounded for racialized women whose struggles and issues are seen and understood through a White lens and male dominated perspective (Razack,1991, p.441). Similarly, in her article on gendering disposability (2016) Razack relates the intersectionality of oppression to the justice system in an incident that concerns an Indigenous woman called Cindy Gladue. A Cree woman who bled to death in a hotel bathtub in Edmonton Alberta, Razack points out how Gladue was dehumanized by the justice system and its colonial practices. Similarly, she draws a correlation between this case and that of Sarah Baartmanns. Both women were racialized and had their body parts displayed publicly during the cases, like inhuman mannequins for inspection. This reveals that race is inextricably linked to publicly sexualized objectification, and how gender, Anti-Black racism and Anti-Indigenous racism further disenfranchise already marginalized women (Razack, 2016).

In addition to Critical Race Feminism, I am using Anti-Black racism, a theoretical framework that specifically pin points and sheds light on the systemic discrimination and racism channeled towards Black peoples. Attributed to Dr. Akua Benjamin, Benjamin (2003) argues that fighting racism as a compound word or as an umbrella term is woefully inadequate to address the kind of discrimination and systemic oppression Black people are facing. Additionally, she points out that even though racism affects all non-white peoples, there was a peculiar kind of discrimination and racism that sadly categorizes only Black people, that needs to

be addressed. Benjamin critically examines Anti-Black racism in her book *The Black Jamaican Criminal* (2003) as she points out the many covert ways of racism towards Black peoples, and how labeling and stereotypical notions about Blackness are fueling Anti- Black Racism in the political, economic and social/ cultural milieus of our society.

Furthermore, Benjamin sheds light on the media, and how media sensationalism and propaganda help to make things worse in terms of how Black males are being perceived, treated and killed in the hands of law enforcement officers. Subsequently, Benjamin argues “that to expose the social blight of racism is to expose the unseen systems of whiteness as dominant and hegemonic. It is also to call attention to the ‘systems of Blackness’ simultaneously and dialectically constituted, which tantamount to individual and systemic forms of Black oppression and powerlessness” (Benjamin, 2003, p.9). Notedly, Benjamin points out the immense powerlessness, marginality and subordination that Black people go through at the institutional level through systemic policies, processes and practices. Anti-Black racism is a theoretical tool that helped me in demasking systemic oppression specifically channeled towards Black males which singles them out for criminalization and further oppression. Anti-Black racism is seen in every aspect of systemic discrimination against Black peoples. It focuses on the various ways in which Black racism intersects in all levels of systemic arrangements and illuminates Black experiences of racism. As Lewis, points out,

It is Blacks who are being shot, it is Black youth that is unemployed in excessive numbers, it is Black students who are being inappropriately streamed in schools, it is Black kids who are disproportionately dropping out, it is housing communities with large concentrations of Black residents where the sense of vulnerability and disadvantage is most acute, it is Black employees, professional and non-professional, on whom the doors of upward equity slam shut. Just as the soothing balm of ‘multiculturalism’ cannot mask racism, so racism cannot mask its primary target (as cited in Meerai, Abdillahi, Poole, 2016, P. 20).

In other words, Anti- Black racism is a form of oppression and discrimination visited on Black/African individuals in all aspects of their lives.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY/ RESEARCH DESIGN

My research methodology is a qualitative narrative study. This is a better fit with my theoretical orientation (Critical Race Feminism/Anti-Black Racism). It also privileges the stories of Black women raising sons in a particular context. Narrative is “a specific type of qualitative design in which narrative is understood as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected” (Czarniawka, 2004, p. 17). The procedures for implementing this research may consist of working with one or two individuals, gathering data through collecting their stories, reporting individual experiences, and chronologically ordering the meaning of those experiences. In other words, it is a procedure of analysing stories told (Creswell et al., 2007, p.67). A narrative tells a short or extended story about something significant or relates a life story from its inception (Chase, as cited in Kisber, 2010, p.62) It is a distinctive way of thinking and understanding what is unique and embodied, that is, it integrates the physical and psychological dimensions of knowing. Narrative brings the previously silenced stories from the margins to the centre and the questions and issues that arose because of the incident (Bruner, as cited in Kisber, 2010, p.62). Relatedly, narrative might be the phenomenon being studied, such as a narrative of illness, or it might be the method used in a study, such as the procedures of analyzing stories told as it begins with the experiences as expressed in lived and told stories of individuals (Creswell, 2018, p.67). According to Clendenin (as cited in Creswell 2018, p.68) “the focus of narrative inquiry is not only valorizing individuals experience, but is also an exploration of social, cultural, familial, linguistic, and institutional narratives within which individual’s experiences were, and are constituted, shaped, expressed and enacted.” By so doing, I seek to shed light on how do Black mothers live with the possibility that their sons will be killed by the police

Recruitment/ data collection

The Recruitment and data collection process was conducted by using an oral recruitment script for word of mouth approach, which indicated the desired participants for this study. People who identify themselves as ‘a woman, a Black mother and raising a Black son’ were interviewed. Snow ball sampling was used and people in my social network such as friends, family members, neighbours and colleagues helped to share my script and help look for participants. During my telephone pre-screening, I asked questions to be sure that a participant meet these requirements before proceeding. The recruitment was done in Black community centers, churches, public spaces and social gatherings for Black women. A phone line in the School of Social Work was used to make calls about my research and respond to inquiries. Data was collected by conducting audio-recorded individual interviews with two participants. I also took written notes of their narratives throughout the interview process. I did not collect names of participants. Telephone numbers, email addresses were used as a means of communication with participants. Full consent was obtained from participants prior to beginning the official interview and research information was kept in a confidential password protected file/USB. All participants were given a number/pseudonym for the final report and throughout the duration of the study. Participant confidentiality is of paramount importance in this project therefore, all identities are protected and safe guarded.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS/ FINDINGS

This chapter examines the direct responses of Black mothers raising Black sons in the greater Toronto area. Two Black mothers who identified as women were interviewed and their names have been removed for reasons of confidentiality. To protect their identity, they were then assigned pseudonyms. The interviews were conducted individually on different dates, locations, and over a period of three weeks in the greater Toronto area. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. This is a form of analysis whereby the researcher analyses what is spoken or written during data collection (Riessman, as cited in Creswell, 2013, p.181). Moreover, after reading through the transcripts several times to familiarise myself, I then organized the data by creating a file naming system since data generated by qualitative methods are voluminous (Agar, as cited in Creswell, 2013, p.182).

I identified key quotes, common ideas and related patterns that were then combined into themes. Additionally, after identifying codes and then assigning the codes to units of text and recordings, I proceeded by weaving the different stories together. Both women were between the ages of 47- 56 years old respectively but had different educational backgrounds and came from different schools of thought. Participant one has a high school diploma and was born, raised and lives in a predominantly Black Toronto neighborhood. She is a Black mother raising three young adult sons with two daughters, and a ‘typical Torontonians’ who claims to know the ‘ins and outs of the city’. She is an urban woman and motivational speaker with life experiences on ‘addictions and mental health’ related issues. Participant two is a mother raising an only child (young adult son). She has a college diploma and immigrated with her family from the Caribbean to Canada at an early age. She lives in the suburbs of Toronto with her family and son. The narratives shared by both participants obviously are a small sample that allow me to explore the

fear and experiences of Black mothers raising Black sons in the greater Toronto area. These notions do not in any way express a general or collective opinion, or experiences of the thousands of Black mothers who have lost their sons to police use of deadly force, or those who fear that their sons may be next. Below are the common themes that stood out in my interviews with the two mothers.

Theme 1: Constant fear

Living in constant fear is a major commonality in both interviews as both participants said it is a constant struggle for them as Black mothers to deal with the fear of their sons may be next. Although both mothers expressed their fears in different ways and through different perspectives, one thing was clear and that was the fact that they fear the call someday that their son has being killed by the police either because of a mistaken identity or just for walking while Black or walking at the wrong place at the wrong time. To set the context for my research question on the phenomena of fear and the experiences of Black mothers towards Police brutality, I asked both participant this: Can you tell me what has life been like for you as a mother following all the recent police killings of unarmed Black men in Canada?

PARTICIPANT 1:

Hmmmm this is so stressful for a parent as they get killed for nothing or sometimes for something but unnecessary stress on us as parents because, every time my son leaves that door, I tell him walk safe. ask him where he is going. If you tell me you're going to a friend's house, I ask him to call me when he gets there. You know so I know you reach there. Or if you decide to leave there, let me know where you are so I will know you're at the other end of the city now. and so, I can always account for your whereabouts so when I get that phone call that your son did this, I can be able to say no he didn't because my son is here. I just have to know if not I would drive myself crazy. Why do I have to look for you? Listen son, just call me hmmm laughing, I don't have to give you an answer. Just call me. Because I did not want to project that fear unto him. (Participant 1, 37-44)

Participant one's response is reflective of the fear she feels when her son leaves the house every day. She went further to tell me that due to her fear, when her son was between the ages of 12-13 years old, he wanted to braid his hair but decided he should have a "church boy" cut instead due to the stereotypical notions associated with such hair styles, and how this too can attract police suspicion. This further depicts that, not only are young Black males been profiled for the colour of their skin and then criminalised, their bodies and the way they dress or carry themselves have to be dictated by an acceptable social norm. Moreover, parents must continuously check on with their young adult sons to see how they dress before leaving the house.

Hmmm my son wanted to have braids when he was 12-13years old. There is no reason he shouldn't be allowed to have braids if his hair is clean, and he keeps himself well clean. But I didn't want him to have the braids because of the perception of it. At least during my raising, I have been thought that, a man having a braided hair means you're not working, you are a street hood, you are this and you are that. So, I was more concerned about how he would be perceived ammmm hummmm whether by employers or police men or what have you. But you're going to have a church boy cut you know. And for me I'm thinking I am protecting him from the chance of something to happen to him and this took a long time. When I said I know when you're 15,16,17, or 18 you can stand firm and defend yourself. But I don't want you at 12 or 13 with some Police officer brothering you and you are like what? She laughed... you know I wanted to know that also you were able to speak strongly for yourself despite your hair style. You know, but at 12 I was afraid of him getting braids and looking like everybody else. you know, with the hoody and the pants down the waist was a big fear for me. (Participant 1,23-43).

While participant one's fear is mostly based within the context of skin colour, looks and whereabouts of her son, participant two sees a generational problem, structural implications and parental responsibility as some of the causes of police use of deadly force. For example, when asked the same question on how life have been for her with the recent killings of unarmed Black males by law enforcement officers, this was her reply.

Unfortunately, I don't like what I see, I don't know where it's going and I don't like what it has become. I don't like the escalation of it. It's almost like them against us. And when I say us, I mean our boys and girls. If it's not us the middle class, it's the other. It's the new and younger generation or the one next and beyond are the ones I really worry about. (Participant 2, 7-10).

She went further to elaborate more on her feelings of fear concerning Police use of deadly force by saying

I fear always, always, always, always, always... Ooh my God Always. My prayer is for him to make it home at the end of the day. I always think of mistaken Identity as they say we all look alike. Police can be looking for Tom and end up seeing my son. Mistaken identity is a huge fear for me. There are all Black people and they look the same and in the same place. Or been at the wrong place at the wrong time. It could be any body's child just the same way it can be my child. (Participant 2, 65-69).

To focus on the phenomenon of fear, I re-framed the question by asking both participants, 'Do you fear for the life of your son or have you in anyway thought that could be your son'?

Participant two replied;

Yes. Everyday. Especially with his line of work. He is a security [guard] and because he does security, my prayer every day is let him make it home. You may have a bullet prove vest, you may carry handcuffs, but remember you're just one man and you can't stop a bullet and you can't stop a mob. So, at the end of the day, I don't care what you do, just make it home alive. Don't you dear let me get a phone call because I will wake you up and kill you again myself jejejejeje laughing, so just make it home by any means possible and necessary. (Participant2, 71-76).

According to participant one;

Hmmmmmm enhhh it could be my son, my cousin, it could be my brother in-law, it could be my brother or uncle because I have a large family here and that makes me wonder what area is it in? Call my brother in Vaughn, call my sister too to make sure her kids are okay. Hmmmm sometimes I have to call all my family and I have done this over the years. Especially when it's in a general area. I wish I can relate this to you, I don't remember the story, but it happened to my cousin ammmmmmm one of her son some 10 years ago so it's not fresh. But It's something to do with the police, he was held for something he has nothing to do about. because he is just Black. Hmmmm (jejejejeje laughing) anyways, my son is a hard-working man. Almost he works 6days a week. He has a very good heart and the old ladies in the building all loves him, and people of all

race and colour love him, and I still worry when he steps outside the door especially when it's dark and he is just walking to the store and I say hey, do you really have to go out to get that now? I would rather have you stay here with me and go get bread in the morning because it's safer with the day light. Enh again, that is the fear and still trying not to project it unto him and he looks at me and says, why can I not go down to get bread? You know, yelling... I'm 23years old why can't I go get bread. Yeah you know, because I'm afraid of you being at the wrong place at the wrong time. Every day, every day I fear for the life of my son. I have more fear of say my son going to seven eleven at 11pm at night because the neighbourhood store is not open than I do with him working at his place of work with machineries, drums, fire, heavy mental and everything else than him working to the store scares me more than him working in that heavy mental place. (Participant 1, 58-80).

Theme 2: Parental responsibility

Both participants were at a consensus that the way we raise our sons as Black women has a part to play in responding to the Police use of deadly force towards Black unarmed men. When asked if there is something or a piece of advice they need other mothers facing similar situation to know or any message of resistance on how to cope with police brutality, participant one said the following.

Ammmmm unhhhh, one, always get involve in your kid's life, be interested in what they do and where they go. The law says they are grown men and women when they're 16 to 18years old (jejejejeje laughing out loud) not in my house. Jejeje not in my house. Hmmmm, we are the parents period. So, parent your children. This is not me saying it in a judgemental way because everybody has their way they have lived through and to me there is no hand book that says this is how to parent, but I would say be involved in your community, be aware of what is going on in your community, know all your children's friend's because I do believe we have the power to control who our children involves themselves with. If they are in school, you know okay they are in school but when at home take full responsibility as parent (Participant 1, 186-194).

They have been children who come to my house and I have had to walk them out and ask them not to come back never again because I can see the lack of respect and their behaviour. Now, this again is not just being black and walking down the street, it can help if we educate our child to be good and productive law abiding human beings. unhhhh teach them how to speak with Police officers when they encounter them or are been confronted. teach them about how not to put themselves in situations that can lead to worst situations, to be smart, to follow their guts and women should talk to other women

if they do not know. Don't wait till your kids are 17 years old when it's harder to control them before you start controlling them. If you find that you are having a difficult parenting experience, talk to your brother, talk to your sister for example, other black mothers, friends, other parents and community members (Participant1, 195-204)

For example, I and a friend use to go around my community with a baseball bat and walking round backyards and when we see Black kids who are supposed to be in school all sitting ideal in their own thing, we use to drive them away and also let them know we are watching. It takes a village to raise a child. I also have taken my kids when they were 4,6,8,10-year-old to go visit police stations and speak with the police because I do not want them to believe they need to fear or run away from the police. All cops are not bad. I wanted them to know that and to understand that the police is here to serve and protect us. Teach your children to be Black and proud, but not in a way that I am better than you, is just that this is who I am and I can stand by that and also learn to pick your battles. Teach them to be careful on who they acquit themselves with, if you are a person of faith, you can also go on that direction to make your kids better people in the society. Involve them in community programs. I also do understand that on your way to the community program you can get shot (jejejejejeje laughing) however, we have to educate them at home on how to avoid problems (Participant1, 205-217).

To this same question, participant 2 explained:

Me personally, I don't really worry much about my own because at this age I feel like I have raised him differently in the sense that he was not allowed to run around or allowed to do what he wanted to do. He did what he was told to do, and he was guided, and he was in programs. But a lot of people don't have that. They have a lot of time on their hand and that get them into a lot of trouble (Participant 2, 12-15)

I tell him not to be afraid of the police. Don't fear. He has never been approached by the police. When he was younger I took him to the police station, so he could meet them and get used to them to break that generational fear and when he sees them at the street he does not run from them, but he says hello how are you and introduces himself. They always gave him a hug. now that he is grown, he has never had a negative confrontation with the police and that re-assures me a bit and I'm happy for that you know (Participant 2, 96-102)

You cannot expect teachers at school, the daycare. workers and the television set to mind your child. It is your responsibility to do it. If you don't put in the work, who is going to? It is not the teachers job to do that. It is your job as a parent to pull your kids back when they are going the wrong route. If you cannot pull them back, then seek help. There are so much resources we have that most mothers are not aware of and so don't use them. But there is help, a lot of help but we got to use it. We got to seek it, we can't keep all our problems to ourselves alone, we have to make it. known to be able to seek help. It is mum's responsibility otherwise we get what we give (Participant 2, 145-157)

These responses were very clearly pointing to Black mothers to educate, support and parent their sons in particular ways. In the discussion chapter, I raise questions about whose responsibility it is to protect Black men.

Theme 3: Lack of resources in Black communities & criminality

Both participants stated that the lack of available resources in Black communities is a part of the problem. Participant one argued that, the lack of basic resources, stereotypes, and media sensationalism of the poverty in Black communities and the later criminalization of Blackness, are all causes of Police brutality. She went further to explain that, there is an already deeply rooted and existing perception of Black males being criminals and that is what the police sees each time they meet a Black male and then act on those pre-conceived notions without giving them the benefit of doubt. Similarly, participant two agreed on the lack of resources in Black communities, and she linked this to criminality. She also argued that police use of deadly force on Black unarmed males is due to the criminal acts and records of these Black males and not because Police wanted to kill an innocent person. Additionally, participant two expressed concern around a lack of parental care, discipline, and education of Black children as one of the major causes of Police brutality. In a nut shell, both participants have mixed emotions on how the lack of resources in Black neighbourhoods contribute to crime and later to police use of deadly force. Nonetheless, both women agreed there is a lack of resources and attributed this lack as one of the contributing factors to Police use of deadly force. After participant two said police brutality was due to Black young men committing crimes, I was compelled to reframe my question to be sure I understood what she meant.

EBI: So just to tap a little into what you said. Are you saying... maybe some of the boys who fall prey to police use of deadly force is because they decided to take the wrong path? (Ebi, 16-18).

Hmmmm either they took the wrong path, or they did not have the guidance to go through the right path. Most of their parents comes from outside of the country and so they are raised differently, most raised their children differently from here. All our kids do not have programs apart from basketball and hanging out in a community center. They don't go to well-structured program because most of them do not have money (Participant 2: 19-23).

When they don't have something going on, like been in school sport teams or extracurricular programs, they then hang around in groups. And when you see a group of young Black men hanging around doing nothing tangible it becomes problematic. Due to the lack of eligible programmes and resources for our lower income families, our kids don't have many opportunities as the upper class do by putting them in programs, so they do not have ideal time in their hands and thereby helping them stay out of trouble. An ideal mind is the devils workshop, right? So, when you don't have something constructive to do, you steal, you plan, you plot, where I'm I going to make money? How I'm I going to make money? I need food to eat, I need clothes to wear, I want to go out with my friends, I want to have a good time, but I don't have money, my parents don't have any money. So as a group we are going to think of how we are going to make money. How are we going to get some money? That's how crime starts. How are we going to get money to do what we want to do? (Participant 2, 27-40)

EBI: So, to you it's about Black young male committing crime or something that makes the police go after them? (Ebi, 47).

Yes, they commit something that attracts attention to the police. We are a visible minority and therefore anything we do stands out. When we do good it's always silent and never elevated, appreciated, or put on the front page of newspapers to say ooh my God, look at what they did and how amazing it is. It is always look at what they did how disappointing it is because they do not expect anything good or see any good in us to be praised for. It must be the 2% of people like us to elevate ourselves to say you stand out differently. Police don't want anything to do with you and me. We are on the opposite side of what they are looking for (Participant 2,49-55).

On the topic of lack of resources and programs, participant one had a fair amount to share, noting the role that poverty and education play in targeting Black families:

If as a Black woman I'm having a hard time feeding my children and I'm doing everything I can, I'm going to food banks, I'm not eating but making sure my children

gets to eat and I have one egg to split because I'm on mother's allowance (welfare) and I'm trying to feed my children and they might go to school that day without a proper breakfast and the teacher ask what's wrong and they say I'm hungry, before you know it I have Children's Aid at my house. Then they want to take my children. That is not right or helping to fix the problem, that is judging. So, until the perspective of how Black and Brown peoples are being treated in general is shifted, nothing is gonna change. We have to look at the root source of the problem. Is everybody on welfare or on drug? No. If I'm a single mother raising 4 Black men and if I go get a job and I make \$400 that week and welfare wants \$200 out of it, I'm not getting up. I'm stuck in that same circle all the time. The remainder goes to my rent, grocery and my children maintenance, or I have to skip grocery to buy other things needed for the kids. Things like this needs to change...there is just so many little things that needs to be changed to help changed the perception of Black male in our society and how there are treated (Participant 1, 146-163).

Poverty is a part of the stereotype Blacks are facing and a cause to police brutality. Media way of portraying Black male is also a factor as the consequences of poverty leads to undermining Black males. For example, on TV there say a Black man gets shot and immediately they start digging into his criminal records and when it is a white person nothing about his history is mentioned. Ooh they show his picture in school of graduation and they don't show his last 4 to 5 years while his been trying to buy guns on line and strategizing on how to kill innocent people. When it's a Black kid, they show the worst picture and paint him to lesser than an animal. While disrespecting the grieving parents whose child had just being killed. All this have to stop. The negative portrayal has to change for example, they need to change that in the education system. When I was in school I learned about slavery, but I wasn't told all the horrific about Slavery. I was told Canada was a place when the Slaves got here, and they were okay, and it is being portrayed as heaven on earth for all people to come live in and that is not true. I also do not dislike White people, like I told my own children and many other Black people, when Harriet Tubman was helping people, White people were helping her. When Martin Luther king marched, White people marched with him. So maybe if it was not for them, maybe you and I will not be here. Again, it is not about blame, it is about open conversation and being honest and fixing what is not correct and right. starting with the educational system, and welfare system. Tell me the real history. Don't tell me about thanks given because you slaughtered the Indians. own it and then we can change ('emotional) (Participant1, 164-182)

Theme 4: Powerlessness/systemic change

Powerlessness towards police brutality was also a common theme both participants shared.

Participant one expressed her deep feelings of powerlessness on how to tackle Police use of deadly force, and no matter what we do or no matter how we try to educate our boys concerning

the police, things will always remain the same. She stressed the importance of police accountability and systemic changes as a solution towards police use of deadly force. “No matter how we raise our children, with good manners, respectful, you know, all that means nothing if somebody has a gun pointed at you because you look like someone or somebody else you know” (Participant 1, 51-53)

There’s nothing I can do to cope. How do I cope with the fact that my child might die tonight and not come home? I can’t cope with that. it is a constant stress, it’s a constant worry You know. I don’t believe there is a way to cope with that as it’s a constant feeling of powerlessness and then some people fall to other things to help them cope. Like falling into addictions and stuff to help them cope. You see, that is not coping. So there’s is no way to cope with this. The only way to cope is to change the system so that people don’t have to cope with this anymore and to educate, create open conversation and dialog not accusatory allegation towards people but an open conversation on how it all started 500 years ago and how to slowly change that with open dialogue, and with people, without blame, just about resolution (Participant 1, 121-133).

Participant two stated that she feels disgusted, hurt and betrayed with the way Black unarmed males are killed and Police untouchability even when all evidence shows Police culpability. She further went on to say for things to change in Black communities, it must come from the top of government affairs and there must be systemic representation of Black peoples in policy making.

I am disgusted, hurt, and betrayed. I feel betrayed as a person, for my people, and as a mother because that could be my son you know. So, it is absolutely hurtful, no woman should go through it. I don’t care whether they are Black, White, Chinese or whatever, it makes no difference as no mother should go through losing their child to the police. To me, that is somebody’s child. When you watch it you just close your eyes and turn your eyes away as you do not want to believe it is happening (Participant 2, 58-63).

Well, I don’t want to sound pessimistic as there is not much to be done. We can talk and complain until our faces turn blue and nothing will come out of it. Until we put the actions to get results, we will remain where we are. Groups like Black Lives Matter, talk a good game, yell a good game, they scream a good game, but there is nothing behind the

talk. There is a march, but there is no formal committee, no formal place, no formal action, no formal schedule about what we gonna do, how we gonna do it, why we gonna do it, and why we are doing it? It is just a group. Unfortunately, we need a group of that nature but in politics because change comes from the top. It cannot, and never come from the bottom but always from the top and if we don't have people in politics, we need more of us in politics who would advocate to be our voice. We do not have a solid voice as Black people. All we have is voice to complain and complains don't change things except actions (Participant2, 103-117).

I think the problem is not us at the bottom but needing someone at the top to advocate for us. Someone who see's and hear our cries and says, yes, I got you. I am here at the table speaking for you, speaking on behalf of you all and fighting to help you out. By helping you, I am helping me. We need more of Black representation in politics, because without that we are dead in the water. We just talk and complain, and nothing changes. And we can talk a good game you know. (Participant 2, 118-123).

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

These interviews/findings represent just a peek into what the experiences of Black mothers are like. The women I interviewed spoke to 1. Constant fear, 2. Parental Responsibility 3. Lack of Resources and 4. Powerlessness and the need for change. All compound their experience as mothers raising Black sons and facing the possibility of police brutality.

My research was limited considering I only had two participants. More time and participants are needed to get a more robust view of the experiences of Black mothers raising Black sons in the Greater Toronto Area. What I found is not a conclusive consensus of all Black women's fear and perceptions. As a Black mother raising a Black son too in Toronto, I found myself in between both participants and working with a different lens. Most of the narratives were very contradictory to my stance on police use of deadly force against unarmed Black men. Moreover, I noticed that the participants did not fully understand how social structures, and systemic construction of Blackness affects every fabric of being Black. Given the privilege of my education, I can see that the interview, and the opinions of both participants were influenced by different discourses and paradigms such as gender, mothering, whiteness, colonialism, victim blaming, ableism, status, and class to name just a few factors.

Gender was a dominant factor in both interviews with participants, as they were both single mothers raising Black sons all by themselves. Listening to the stories of both women, you can see they have been struggling and playing both 'father and mother roles' in trying to educate their sons on how to deal with law enforcement officers. Black fathers who are by nature required to support their women in the upbringing of their children are also systematically and intersectionally oppressed. Fathers are either over represented in the criminal justice system and

in jail, or have left home in search of their own lives. However, as (Kane, 2004) argues, "...when fathers are involved in their children's lives, there's always a significant difference in the way the child turns out" (p.2).

The issue of whiteness was evident in participant two's narratives. As Dubois (2013, p. 4-5) points out, "Africans have had at least two life altering experience in life. The moment you realized you are black and the moment when you realized that was a problem". She sees police brutality as a problem caused by Black people and that it is their fault that they are being killed by the Police. According to Agel (as cited in Mullaly 2010, p.85) "The oppressed person is led to believe either that he or she is not oppressed or that there are good reasons for his or her oppression". However, while I will not totally discard the fact that there are incidents where police use of deadly force and killings may be criminally related, there have also been occasions where police were called to respond to a Black man in mental distress and he ended up dead (Meerai et al., 2016). Similarly, young Black men die every other day in United States and in Canada due to mistaken identity, carding, racial profiling just to say the least and even our girls are not exempt from police use of deadly force. As Mullaly (2010, p. 162) points out; "if the stigma is fully internalized by the enslaved, the enslavement then becomes to be perceived as natural and therefore acceptable".

Apart from victim blaming, there is also the issue of status and class when participant two said "The Police is not after us the middle class, but the others". She tries to distinguish herself and to create an impression that she is different from other Black people. According to Westermann (as cited in Fanon, 2008, p. 9).

The feelings of inferiority by blacks are especially evident in the educated black men who are constantly trying to overcome it. The methods used, Westermann adds, are often

naïve: the wearing of European clothes, whether rags or the most up-to-date style, using European furniture and European forms of social intercourse; adorning the native language with European expressions, using bombastic phrases in speaking or writing a European language, all these contribute to a feeling of equality with the European and his achievements.

For me, this is the ongoing work of colonialism, which seeks to make ‘white’ and right its victims. According to Fanon, et al. (2007)

Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it. His work of devaluing pre-colonial history takes on a dialectical significance today. When we consider the efforts made to carry out the cultural estrangement so characteristic of the colonial epoch, we realize that nothing has been left to chance and that the total result looked for by colonial domination was indeed to convince the natives that colonialism came to lighten their darkness. The effect consciously sought by colonialism was to drive into the natives' heads the idea that if the settlers were to leave; they would at once fall back into barbarism, degradation, and bestiality.

Consequently, both mothers showed unrest and fear surrounding police brutality and the likelihood of losing a son to police use of deadly force. In both mothers’ narratives, the phenomenon of fear, powerlessness, internalized pain, hypervigilant and constant stress is quite strong. Both mothers disclosed that there is no coping mechanism strong enough to keep them from worrying about the safety of their sons, as long as police killings continues. Research by Lazarus and Folkman (as cited in Bailey et al., 2013. p. 338) argues that;

In response to a stressful situation such as racism, a person’s inner promptings interplay with the environment to mediate their cognitive processes to form a cognitive appraisal. Since no two people are the same, their sensitivity, degree of vulnerability, interpretations and cognitive appraisal of the stressful event differ.

Additionally, (Williams & Morris, 2000. p. 243) points out multiple ways by which racism can affect mental health such as institutional discrimination which can restrict socioeconomic mobility and lead to racial differences in socioeconomic status and exposure to poor living conditions that can adversely affect mental health. Similarly, both authors point out

that racial discrimination is a source of stress that can adversely affect mental health, and the acceptance of ‘inferiority’ by some racialized group members can lead to impaired psychological functioning (Williams & Morris, 2000. p. 243). Fear, racism and mental health are all connected for Black mothers and those in the Black communities.

Given these findings, one must ask what does this all mean for social workers and for me as a mother? For me as a Black mother raising a Black son, living in constant fear and hopelessness is not something I would even wish for an enemy. It takes away the joy and expectation to see your son or children grow to old age. The constant panic is a gradual death sentence as a mother, because it makes you feel like you are already grieving the death of a child just to say the least. Each day of fear, panic and hearing that another unarmed Black male was killed by the police, is like saying who is next? “Get ready for it may be your turn anytime”. Understanding that even if a Black male is well parented, educated and financially stable or famous, it is not a guarantee, or does it serve as a bullet proof vest to protect him from death, racial profiling, or to be criminalized and incarcerated. Knowing this makes the feelings even worse because you keep reminding yourself as a mother that everything you have done to educate your son is worthless as long as his skin colour remains Black.

Sadly, being Black means he could be killed at any time, by anyone who is racially backed by systemic policies and legislatures to be superior beings and therefore, sees contact with a Black person as wrong and Black bodies as criminal. Unfortunately, most of these killings are instigated for just being Black and walking as a human being. According to Ta-Nehisi Coates (as cited in W. McIvor & M. McIvor 2016, p.165) “In America it is traditional to destroy the Black body, it is heritage”. For me, this is a very big challenge whereby I cannot retreat or surrender as I need to contribute towards changing this situation and narrative. Even though

racism and specifically Anti-Black racism is a generational practice embedded in hate and white supremacy, it is a burden that needs to be continually contested and challenged.

Therefore, moving forward after this research paper, I do humbly plan to open an organization that can foster systemic changes and help to tackle problems facing Black mothers and their children, especially in areas of mental health and education. It is not just a singular problem to be tackled by me alone, but a communal prerogative that needs communal effort because, the death of one Black person affects all Black peoples. Also, it is important to know that Black men and boys with family support systems are not more valuable because they left family members and friends behind to grieve them. Black death is a collective grief because what affects one affects all. We don't always grieve for someone because we birthed them, but because of the social, emotional or community attachment you have for that person in question. Mullings (2010, p.167) describes grief and loss as an everyday phenomenon for Black foster mothers for instance. Agency staff encourage intimate interactions but these exacerbate the feelings of grief and loss for foster mothers while caring for children and after they leave the foster home. Mullings (2010, p.167) also argues that, foster parents have to deal with grief in many guises. Such as the grief of the parents whose child they are caring for, the grief of the child in their care, their own grief upon losing a child to reunification, other placements, or adoption. In other words, grief is the outcome of a broken emotional attachment resulting in pains and loss which does not necessarily have to be biological in nature to be felt deeply. Consequentially, it is important as social workers that we always remember that, we are being put in a situation where we are mirroring other people. Therefore, we need to look deeper and capture the complexities and how issues intersect because marginalization and racism is everywhere. Having this understanding in mind, issues of Anti-Black racism should be

structurally prioritized because, when we leave micro aggressions, prejudice and stereotypes unchallenged, it gives people with power permission to discriminate more.

The findings suggest Social workers should really push for more after school programs for Black youths, more employment opportunities for both youths and parents, and various activities that occupy and educate. Similarly, social workers need to push for policy change in education, the criminal justice system, employment and in areas of society whereby Blacks are treated unequally. Black mothers with sons going through situations of powerlessness and impotency related to the safety of their sons in the hands of law enforcement officers should be provided the avenues and necessary resources to cope with racism related stress and mental distress caused by fear. Moreover, the research shows police training is woefully inadequate. As social workers, we must and should not wait for more people to die. As Pierce argues, that “one must not look for the gross and obvious. The subtle, cumulative mini-assault is the substance of today’s racism” (as cited in Solórzano et al., 2000 p, 60).

In addition, a lens informed by Critical Race feminism and Anti- Black racism shows us that Black mothers are forced to dissimulate their pains and fear to justify the strong Black woman schema, and that they are taught by whiteness to blame themselves. Moreover, any attempt for them to show anger is a chance to be labelled the angry Black woman. Given this, the life of the Black woman is a trajectory marked by constant struggle of worry and silence even at the point of powerlessness towards police killings of unarmed Black men. As Lorde (1981) contends, “My response to racism is anger, I have lived with that anger, beneath that anger, on top of that anger, ignoring that anger, feeding upon that anger, learning to use that anger before it laid my visions to waste for most of my life”. Critical Race Feminism teaches us that Black women should no longer be quiet or feel guilty by speaking up to injustice. “Guilt is another

name for impotence, for defensiveness, destructive of communication, it becomes a device to protect ignorance and the continuation of things the way they are. the ultimate protection for changelessness” (Lorde, 1981, pg.7). Additionally, ABR teaches us to look at the foundational causes that perpetuate police use of deadly force on Black youths. Colonialism, capitalism, class, white supremacy all play a role in the poverty, the lack of resources, the criminalization, surveillance and racism. Pain and everyday fear is real in the lives of Black mothers raising sons and to be silent is not the solution.

Most especially, we all need to feel that we belong, that we are included, we can contribute, we can be recognized for who we are, we can enjoy our families and neighbors, and we know that we and our children are safe and treated fairly and equally in institutions (Cassin, et al., 2007, p 37). Conclusively, as social workers, let’s not forget that the change we seek is in our hands and the ability to use it depends on us and how we define our practice. We should not relent on our efforts in difficult situations. We must remember that, “As uncomfortable as it may sound if we are not part of the solution, we are part of the problem; there is no comfortable middle ground where one can be neutral in any of the multiple continua of being oppressed versus privileged” (Sakamoto, et al., 2005 p,448).

APPENDIX A.

Oral Script for Word of Mouth Recruitment.

Hello,

My name is Ebiboloemi F Ambekederemo (Ebi). I am a graduate student at Ryerson University in the School of Social work. I am conducting a research study as a partial requirement for my Master of Social Work degree and Dr. Jennifer Poole will be my supervisor throughout this study.

The research is entitled, “I can’t sleep at night, praying he returns home alive: The experience of Black mothers raising Black sons in Greater Toronto Area” and it will explore the feelings and experiences of Black mothers raising a black son in Toronto Canada and the reaction towards police brutality, coupled with the possibility and fear of their son could be next. I am specifically seeking participants who identify as a woman, Black and a mother with a Black son.

If this is you and you agree to volunteer, you will be asked to do a one on one interview with me which may last for 2hours. In appreciation of your time and support, you will receive reimbursement for the cost of your transportation and a light lunch will be provided during interview. This research has been reviewed by Ryerson University Research Ethics Board.

If you are interested in more information about this study or would like to volunteer, please do kindly give me your email information or call me at 416 xxx-xxxx.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ebiboloemi F Ambekederemo

BSW, MSW candidate.

Ryerson University

APPENDIX B

LIST OF COUNSELLING AGENCIES IN TORONTO

Family Service Toronto

Counselling and educational programs for those seeking support in dealing with relationships and family problems, parenting, depression, anxiety, job loss, separation, divorce and new relationships, sexual abuse and childhood trauma, life transitions and many more.

Address: Multiple Locations

Distress Centre

Phone: (416) 595-9230

Women's Health in Women's Hands Community Health Centre

Offer short term counselling services in a feminist, woman-centered approach to racialized women from the African, Black, Caribbean, Latin American and South Asian communities

Address: 2 Carlton St Suite 500, Toronto, ON M5B 1J3

Phone: (416) 593-7655

Across Boundaries

Provides a holistic approach to mental health that addresses the body-mind and spirit for racialized communities.

Address: 51 Clarkson Avenue, Toronto, ON M6E 2T5

Phone: (416) 787-3007

Christian counselling services:

2 Carlton St 1009, Toronto, ON M5B1J3

Telephone: 416-489-3350

Fax: 416-489-3351

Email: icci@on.aibn.com

APPENDIX C

Interview Guide/ Questions

- (1) What piqued your interest in this study?
- (2) Do you feel comfortable talking about how you feel as a mother raising a Black son in Canada?
- (3) What has life been like for you as a mother following all the recent police killings of unarmed Black men in Canada and the U.S?
- (4) What do you feel when you see or watch videos of unarmed Black men being killed by the police?
- (5) Have you in anyway thought that could be your son?
- (6) Do you fear for the life of your son?
- (7) How do you cope with the fear that your son may be next?
- (8) How has this situation affected you?
- (9) Please tell me your daily feelings about this and in what ways do you cope?
- (10) What helps you most? Least?
- (11) What do you think can be done to put an end to police brutality and the killings of unarmed Black males?
- (12) Is there something you need other mothers facing similar situation to know? For example, any message of resistance on how to cope with police brutality and killings of unarmed Black male by the police?
- (13) Is there anything else I should know?

APPENDIX D.



Ryerson University

Consent Agreement

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Please read this consent form so that you understand what your participation will involve. Before you consent to participate, please ask any questions to be sure you understand what your participation will involve.

STUDY TITLE: “I can’t sleep at night, praying he returns home alive: The experience of Black mothers raising Black sons in Greater Toronto Area”

INVESTIGATORS: This research study is being conducted by Ebiboloemi Fuludu Ambekederemo and supervised by Dr. Jennifer Poole, the director of the Master of Social Work program at Ryerson University.

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH PURPOSE:

My name is Ebiboloemi F Ambekederemo. I am currently completing my Master of Social Work degree at Ryerson University and would like to invite you to participate in my research study. The title of my research study is “I can’t sleep at night, praying he returns home alive: The experience of Black mothers raising Black sons in Greater Toronto Area”.

This study is meant to shed light on how self-identified Black mothers respond to the likelihood that their Black sons may be killed by the police. I would like to center your story and experiences. As a graduate student, this study is being conducted as a partial completion of my degree requirement and I will like you to know I am supervised by Dr. Jennifer Poole who is the director of Master of Social Work program at Ryerson University.

WHAT YOU WOULD BE ASKED TO DO:

During the interview, you will be asked certain questions about how you live with the likelihood that your son may be killed by the police. I will ask what has life been like for you following recent police killings of unarmed Black men in Canada? I will ask you tell me about yourself, your son and any fears or other feelings you have related to police brutality. I will ask you to explain how you live with these feelings, how you cope and what helps you get through each day. I will ask if you have suggestions for how you can be better supported. The interview will be audio recorded but no one except me will hear the recording. Recordings will help me better understand but they will be destroyed after I transcribe them. The interview could be up to 2 hours in a location that is private and safe. Please be informed that this is a voluntary study and may withdraw up to two weeks after the interview is complete.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS:

Due to the time this research may potentially take from your personal schedule, I do understand and recognize that the relationship may not be fully reciprocal. However, taking part in this study is a way of shedding light on Black mothers' experiences of parenting their sons with respect to police brutality. I do believe this research will help to open a new and different discussion on the killings of unarmed Black males by the police and further deliberation on the best ways forward.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL RISKS TO YOU AS A PARTICIPANT:

I understand that there are risks in participating in this research. Feelings of anxiety and discomfort may happen during the interview. It may be hard to discuss the experience of being a mother of a Black son at risk for police brutality. Participants may be emotional or need to stop and take breaks during the process or leave the interview altogether. Throughout the interview process, participants have the right to decline any question they feel uncomfortable and may withdraw from the study up to two weeks after the interview. If this occurs, all information and data will be deleted immediately.

If participants are upset, I will have a referral list of counselling services including Family Service Association available at the interview. In participating, there is also a risk to identity, so all audio files will be kept in a password protected USB/file and destroyed following transcription. In the written report, all names, organizations and other identifiers will be removed. Participants will also have a chance to review their transcripts once they have been anonymized, so they can feel more comfortable.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

All transcripts and data collected during the process of this interview will be confidentially secured until the research study is complete in October 2018. After that it will all be destroyed.

However, confidentiality could be breached if there is founded concerns about child abuse or neglect, self-harm or threat of harm to others and any legal risk that demands my duty to report.

INCENTIVES FOR/COSTS TO PARTICIPATION:

A light lunch will be provided when we meet for the interview and I will reimburse up to ten dollars of your travel to and from the interview location.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL:

This study is completely voluntary, you can choose whether to be in this study or not and you may withdraw if you wish at any given time. If there is any question you are not comfortable to answer, you may skip it or simply let me know and I will reframe or change it totally. You may stop participation at any time and you will still be given the incentives and reimbursements described above. If you choose to stop participating, you may also choose to not have your data included in the study and after your withdrawal, all your information and data collected will be completely disposed of. Your withdrawal from this study will not in any way influence future relations with Ryerson University, its affiliates, the primary researcher Ebiboloemi F Ambekederemo or the supervisor Dr Jennifer Poole.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY: If you have any questions about the research now, please ask. If you have questions later about the research, you may contact.

PRIMARY RESEARCHER:

Ebiboloemi Fuludu Ambekederemo

BSW, MSW Candidate

Fuludu.ambekederemo@ryerson.ca

SUPERVISOR:

Dr Jennifer Poole. MSW, PhD

Graduate Program Director & Associate Professor;
School of Social Work,
Faculty of Community Services
Ryerson University
Ph: [\(416\) 979-5000](tel:4169795000) (6253)



**“I can’t sleep at night, praying he returns home alive: The experience
of Black mothers raising Black sons in Greater Toronto Area”**

CONFIRMATION OF AGREEMENT:

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this agreement and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study. Your signature also indicates that you agree to participate in the study and have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You have been given a copy of this agreement.

You have been told that by signing this consent agreement you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

Name of Participant (please print)

Signature of Participant

Date

I agree to be audio recorded for the purposes of this study. I understand how these recordings will be stored and destroyed

Signature of Participant

Date

REFERENCES

- Bailey, A., Hannays-King, C., Clarke, J., Lester, E., & Velasco, D. (2013). Black mothers' cognitive process of finding meaning and building resilience after loss of a child to gun violence. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 43(2), 336-354. doi:10.1093/bjsw/bct027
- Benjamin, L. A. (2003). *The Black/Jamaican criminal: The making of ideology* (Order No. NQ91873). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses A&I; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (305258209). Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.lib.ryerson.ca/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ryerson.ca/docview/305258209?accountid=13631>
- BLK. (2016) Black Lives Matter Movement. Demands. Retrieved from <https://blacklivesmatter.ca/demands>.
- Brewer, R., & Heitzeg, N. (2008). The racialization of crime and punishment: Criminal justice, color-blind racism, and the political economy of the prison industrial complex. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 51(5), 625-644.
- Burman, J. (2010). Suspects in the city: Browning the 'not-quite' Canadian citizen. *Cultural studies*, 24(2), 200-213.
- Butler-Kisber, L. (2010). *Qualitative inquiry*. SAGE Publications. Thousand Oaks California.
- Carniol, B. (2000). *Case critical: Challenging social services in Canada* (4th ed.) Between the Lines. Location.
- Cassin, A. M., Krawchenko, T., Vanderplaat, M. M. L. (2007). *Racism and discrimination in Canada: Laws, policies and practices* Atlantic Metropolis Centre. Canadian Heritage. Multiculturalism and Human Rights Program.
- Clark, R., Anderson, N. B., Clark, V. R., & Williams, D. R. (1999). Racism as a stressor for African Americans: A biopsychosocial model. *American Psychologist*, 54(10), 805-816. 10.1037/0003-066X.54.10.805
- Creswell, J. W., Hanson, W. E., Clark Plano, V. L., & Morales, A. (2007). Qualitative research designs: Selection and implementation. *The counseling psychologist*, 35(2), 236-264.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (Third ed.) SAGE Publications. Los Angeles
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (Fourth ed.) SAGE. Thousand Oaks, CA
- Czarniawska, B. (2004). *Introducing Qualitative Methods: Narratives in social science*

- Driedger, L., & Halli, S. S. (2000). *Race and racism: Canada's challenge* Published for Carleton University by McGill-Queen's University Press. Canada.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (2013). *Black Reconstruction in America: Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880*. Transaction Publishers. New York: Russell
- Edwards, A. L., & Few-Demo, A. L. (2016). African American maternal power and the racial socialization of preschool children. *Sex Roles*, 75(1), 56-70. doi:10.1007/s11199-016-0633-y
- Fanon, F., & Philcox, R. (2007). *The Wretched of the Earth: Frantz Fanon; Translated from the French by Richard Philcox; with Commentary by Jean-Paul Sartre and Homi K. Bhabha*. Recording for Blind & Dyslexic.
<http://home.ku.edu.tr/~mbaker/CSHS503/FrantzFanon.pdf>
- Fanon, F. (2008). Black skin, white masks. *Trans. Richard Philcox. New York: Grove*. Retrieved From <https://books-google.ca.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/books?hl=en&lr=&id=m5ysTujFqbgC&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=black+skin+white+mask&ots=HbMW29m94M&sig=x4FGEIuELaC1Y2GnXx3HuLAG5oo#v=onepage&q=black%20skin%20white%20mask&f=false>
- Galabuzzi, G. (2005). Factors affecting the social economic status of Canadian immigrants in the new millennium. *Canadian Issues*, 53-57
- Gillis, W. (2015). How many black men have been killed by Toronto police? We can't know. The Toronto Star. Retrieved from <https://www.thestar.com/news/crime/2015/08/16/howmany-black-men-have-been-killed-by-police-we-cant-know.html>
- Gordon, T. (2006). *Cops, Crime and Capitalism: The law and Older Agenda in Canada*. Black Point, Nova scotia: Fernwood Publishing.
- Hansen, R. (2017). Why both the left and the right are wrong: Immigration and multiculturalism in Canada. *PS, Political Science & Politics*, 50(3), 712.
doi:10.1017/S1049096517000476
- Hesse-Biber, S. N. (Ed.). (2013). *Feminist research practice: A primer*. Sage Publications. Thousand Oaks California.
- Hooks, B. (1989). *Talking back: Thinking feminist, thinking Black*. Toronto: Between the Lines.
- Human right watch (2014). Criminal Justice. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/united-states/criminal-justice>

- Ibe, P., Ochie, C., & Obiyan, E. (2012). Racial misuse of criminal profiling by law Enforcement: Intentions and implications. *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies*, 6(2), 177- 195.
- Kozolanka, k. (2015). The march to militarism in Canada: Domesticating the global enemy in the post- 9/11, Neo-liberal Nation. *Global Media Journal*, 31-51
- Lawson, T. F. (2013, Spring). Powerless against police brutality: a felon's story. *St. Thomas Law Review*, 25(2), 218+. Retrieved from http://link.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.ryerson.ca/apps/doc/A334709549/AONE?u=rpu_main&sid=AONE&xid=23151a7b
- Lorde, A. (1981). "The Uses of Anger" CUNY Academic Works. <https://academicworks.cuny.edu/wsqr/509>
- Maclellan, L. (2015). Toronto Police controversy: What is 'carding' and is it legal? Yahoo News. Retrieved from <https://ca.news.yahoo.com/blogs/dailybrew/toronto-police-controversy--what-is--carding--and-is-it-legal-192840113.html>
- McIvor, D. W., & McIvor, D. M. (2016). *Mourning in America: race and the politics of loss*. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ryerson.ca>
- Meerai, S., Abdillahi, I., & Poole, J. (2016). An introduction to anti-Black Sanism. *Intersectionality's: A Global Journal of Social Work Analysis, Research, Polity, and Practice*, 5(3), 18-35.
- Melchers, R, F. (2013). Melchers, R., & Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Community, Contract and Aboriginal Policing Services Directorate. Research and Evaluation Branch. *Inequality before the law: The Canadian experience of "racial profiling"*
- Micucci, A., & Gomme, I. (2005). American police and subcultural support for the use of excessive force. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 33(5), 487-500.
- Mullaly, B. (2010). *Challenging Oppression and Confronting Privilege: A Critical Social Work Approach*. (2nd ed., p85, 162-164). Oxford University Press.
- Mullings, D. V. (2010). Temporary Mothering: Grieving the Loss of Foster Children When They Leave. *Journal of the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement*, 1(2).
- Novak, K., & Chamlin, M. (2012). Racial threat, suspicion, and police behavior: The impact of race and place in traffic enforcement. *Crime & Delinquency*, 58(2), 275-300.
- Pratt-Clarke, M. (2013). A radical reconstruction of resistance strategies: Black girls and black

- women reclaiming our power using transdisciplinary applied social justice©, Ma'at, and rites of passage. *Journal of African American Studies*, 17(1), 99-114. doi:10.1007/s12111-012-9221-6
- Razack, N. (2005). "Bodies on the move": Spatialized locations, identities, and nationality in international work. *Social Justice*, 32(4), 87-104. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.lib.ryerson.ca/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ryerson.ca/docview/231910741?accountid=13631>
- Razack, S. (1991). Speaking for ourselves: Feminist jurisprudence and minority women. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, 4(2), 440.
- Razack, S. H. (2016). Gendering disposability. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, 28(2), 285-307. doi:10.3138/cjwl.28.2.285
- Richards, G. (1997). *Race, racism, and psychology: Towards a reflexive history*. Routledge: London.
- Riphagen, L. (2008). Marginalization of African-Americans in the social sphere of US society. *The Interdisciplinary Journal of International Studies*, 5.
- Sakamoto, I., & Pitner, R. O. (2005). Use of critical consciousness in anti-oppressive social work practice: Disentangling power dynamics at personal and structural levels. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 35(4), 435-452. doi:10.1093/bjsw/bch190
- Smith, W. (2016). CNN Interview. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JB_3nQpKRyA
- Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2000). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate: The experiences of African American college students. *Journal of Negro Education*, 60-73
- Stewart, F. (2002). Horizontal Inequalities: A Neglected Dimension of Development. Working paper Number 81, Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford. www3.qeh.ox.ac.uk/pdf/qehwp/qehwps81.pdf.
- Watson, N. N., & Hunter, C. D. (2016). "I had to be strong": Tensions in the strong black woman schema. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 42(5), 424-452. doi:10.1177/0095798415597093
- Williams, D., & Williams-Morris, R. (2000). Racism and mental health: The African American experience. *Ethnicity & Health*, 5(3-4), 243-243. doi:10.1080/713667453
- Wing, A. K., & Willis, C. A. (1999). From theory to praxis: Black women, gangs, and critical race feminism. *La Raza Law Journal*, 11(1), 1-15.