

Navigating the Pitfalls of the Refugee Dream: Understanding the Integration Issues faced by Somali Canadian Male Youth

by

Basra Arte

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Approval

Name: Basra Arte
Degree: Master of Public Policy
Title: *Navigating the pitfalls of the refugee dream:
Understanding the integration issues faced by Somali
Canadian male youth*
Examining Committee: **Chair:** Nancy Olewiler
Professor, School of Public Policy, SFU

Maureen Maloney
Senior Supervisor
Professor

J. Rhys Kesselman
Supervisor
Professor

Doug McArthur
Internal Examiner
Professor

Date Defended/Approved: December 10, 2015

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Abstract

This capstone explores the integration challenges faced by Somali Canadian male youth in Canada as they have been experiencing issues leading to deviant and/or criminal behavior. Using literature, quantitative data analysis and qualitative semi-structured interviews analyzed via thematic analysis, this study examines how Somali Canadian male youth experience integration into Canadian society and become shaped by political, social and environmental conditions that differ from Somalia. Results from this study reveal that Somali Canadian male youth deviance and criminality is affected by 1) identity issues stemming from culture shock and intersectional discrimination (cultural, religious and racial), 2) lack of parental integration into Canadian society, and 3) post-migration socioeconomic challenges. These findings highlight the need for policy options that support the building of a healthy self-image of Somali Canadian male youth and empower Somali refugee parents to advocate for themselves and their children. This study proposes six policy options (categorized as education, healthcare, and social policy) centered on educational attainment, community and leisure engagement, and support for Somali refugee parents that may reduce deviant and/or criminal behavior in Somali Canadian male youth.

Keywords: culture shock; intersectional discrimination; Somali; youth; deviance; criminality

*This capstone is dedicated to my parents, Deman
Ahmed Waise and Mohamed Arte Moalin, who
overcame the challenges faced by refugees with
courage and resilience.*

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List of Acronyms

DAT	Differential Association Theory
IIGA	Illegal Income Generating Activities
ILP	Immigrant Loans Program
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
PLO	Prescribed learning outcome
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RAT	Routine Activities Theory
SDT	Social Disorganization Theory

Glossary

Antisocial Behavior	A pattern of behavior that is verbally or physically harmful to other people, animals, or property, including behavior that severely violates social expectations for a particular environment.
Illegal Income Generating Activities	Income generated via prohibited activities (i.e. drug dealing and related activities.)
Intersectional Discrimination	Discrimination towards an individual or classification of people because they are a member of two or more minority groups and/or protected classes.
Refugee class immigrants	Individuals in need of protection whose removal to their home country would subject them to danger of torture, risk to their life or a risk of cruel, and unusual treatment or punishment.
Somali Canadian	Canadian Citizens/Landed Immigrants (Permanent Residents) of Somali ethnic origin.
Somali Canadian children	Children of Somali ethnic origin under the age of 18 who are born in Canada to refugee parents.
Somali Canadian male youth	Somali Canadian youth and Somali refugee youth resettled in Canada who are male.
Somali Canadian youth	Somali youth between the ages of 15 and 24 born in Canada to refugee parents.
Somali children	Somali Canadian children and Somali refugee children living in Canada.
Somali Diaspora	Somalis who reside in areas of the world that have traditionally not been inhabited by their ethnic group (i.e. North America, Europe).
Somali parents	Individuals of Somali ethnic origin born in Somalia who are parents to Somali and/or Canadian born children.
Somali refugee children	Children of Somali ethnic origin under the age of 18 who arrive to Canada as refugees.
Somali refugee youth	Somali youth between the ages of 15 and 24 who arrive to Canada as refugees.
Somali youth	Somali Canadian youth and Somali refugee youth.
Terror Tourism	An act carried out by individuals who plan to leave their country of citizenship in pursuit of jihad (holy war) in overseas conflicts (i.e. Somalia, Syria & Iraq.)
Youth	Individuals between the ages of 15 and 24.

Executive Summary

Somali Canadian male youth have been experiencing challenges integrating into Canadian society leading to issues, including the participation in antisocial behavior. In the last decade alone, over 50 Somali male youth have perished in homicides alleged to be in connection with the drug trade.¹ The loss of Somali male youth as a result of their engagement in deviant and criminal activities has devastated the Somali diaspora in Canada. This capstone seeks to understand the reasons that Somali male youth in Canada experience integration issues using literature, brief quantitative data analysis and qualitative semi-structured interviews.

Somali Canadian male youth become shaped by political, social and environmental conditions that differ from Somalia. The majority of Somali male youth are the children of refugees born in Canada or arrive to Canada as refugees. Results from this study reveal that one of the factors affecting Somali Canadian male youth deviance and criminality are the identity issues stemming from intersectionality (intersecting discrimination: racial, cultural and religious) and culture shock. Another factor affecting the participation of Somali Canadian male youth in Canada is the lack of parental integration into Canadian society. The parents of Somali Canadian male youth who arrived to Canada as refugees who do not speak English are unable to navigate the institutions, advocate for themselves or their children.

Due to the refugee status of their families, Somali Canadian male youth are not afforded the same socio-economic conditions as their economic immigrant counterparts and other peers. The involvement of Somali Canadian male youth in illegal income generating activities (IIGA) is exacerbated by their refugee status.² With little research on the factors that lead Somali Canadian male youth to participate in antisocial behaviors, community leaders and policy makers have been pressed to find effective measures to

1 Antonella Artuso. "Probe Murders of Somali-Canadian Men: Parents". Toronto Sun. January 22, 2013.

2 Valerie Fortney "Success stories are possible but Somali Canadians are faced with overcoming racism and trauma first". Calgary Herald. January 11, 2015.

reduce the aforementioned issue.³ The lack of social programming paired with Somali refugee parents' inability to finance extracurricular activities has made Somali male youth the ideal prey for predators looking to lure youth into the criminal lifestyle.⁴

The findings of this research reveal that Somali Canadian male youth deviance and criminality is impacted by 1) identity issues stemming from intersectional discrimination and culture shock, 2) the lack of parental integration into Canadian society, and 3) socioeconomic challenges exacerbated by their family's refugee status. These results highlight the need for policy that empowers Somali refugee parents through English language acquisition in order for them to navigate institutions, and advocate for their family. Furthermore, these results highlight the need for policy that supports the building of a positive self-image of Somali Canadian male youth.

This study outlines six policy options that may reduce deviant and/or criminal behavior in Somali Canadian male youth that are categorized as education, healthcare, and social policy. These policy options were formulated in accordance with the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*. Each policy option was assessed against the criteria of public safety and security, effectiveness, administrative ease, cost and political feasibility. The policies are centered on educational attainment, educational and healthcare support for Somali refugee parents, and community and leisure engagement of Somali Canadian male youth. The options were measured based on their potential to reduce the policy problem and improve the outcomes for Somali Canadian male youth. After assessing and scoring each policy option using the aforementioned criteria, four recommendations were made based on the policy options that received the highest scores.

3 John Pitts. (2012) "Reluctant criminologists: Criminology, ideology and the violent youth gang." Youth and Policy 109.

4 Valerie Fortney "Success stories are possible but Somali Canadians are faced with overcoming racism and trauma first". Calgary Herald. January 11, 2015.

1. Introduction

The escalation of violence between Somali Canadian male youth through their participation in illegal income generating activities in the last decade paired with contemporary phenomena of radicalisation has been a source of immense sorrow and strife for Somali Canadians. This study was carried out in order to uncover the root causes of issues facing Somali Canadian male youth and provide policy options that could address the challenges faced by the Somali diaspora when integrating into Canadian society. Analysis of the qualitative data collected by the researcher indicated that Somali male youth were the primary group facing integration challenges in relation to anti-social behaviours within Canada's Somali diaspora. The quest to gain understanding on this topic is driven by the lack of research on this phenomenon that has had grave societal, public safety and national security impacts for Somali Diasporas in liberal democracies. In a time where gang activity and radicalization amongst Somali Canadian male youth is rampant¹, it is absolutely crucial to gain understanding of the integration barriers faced by Somali Canadians as well as the circumstances that result in Somali Canadian male youth engaging in antisocial behaviors. This study is being explored in the context of Canada because the experiences of Somalis around the western world all differ due to a multitude of variables for which the researcher cannot control. However, the data analysis from this study may be applicable to countries with similar structural components (i.e. other liberal democracies).

Understanding the Somali Canadian perspective in the issues facing the Somali Diaspora is the first step in preventing Somali male youth involvement in antisocial behaviours in Canada. The number of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) recruits from

1 Antonella Artuso. "Probe Murders of Somali-Canadian Men: Parents". Toronto Sun. January 22, 2013.

the Somali diaspora are amongst the highest in North America.² The enforcement mechanisms of law enforcement agencies have been updated in the last year to counteract the recruitment of Canadian citizens into ISIS (also referred to as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) through a series of punitive policy changes under the *Anti-Terrorism Act*.³ The trend is increased punishments for individuals suspected of, or entering into terror tourism as both domestic and international terror attacks continue. Prior to the data collection portion of the study, the researcher theorized that the engagement of Somali male youth in antisocial behaviors was the product of an identity crisis rooted in the experience of cultural shock, and the conflicting cultural expectations between Somali and Canadian society. This identity crisis is unique to refugee class immigrants due to the abrupt nature of their departure from their homeland, which results in challenges when adjusting to the social norms and values of their new country. Refugees integrate into their new country as a result of fleeing a conflict. Thus, they are less mentally prepared for the journey of integration that lies ahead. An example of challenges faced by immigrants is culture shock due to changes in language and cultural customs. For Somali refugees in particular, the aforementioned factors compounded with the emergence of post-traumatic stress stemming from the ongoing Somali war have made adjusting to Canadian life especially challenging.

The goal of this research is to provide a better understanding of the reason that Somali-Canadian youth participate in antisocial behaviors, and explore policy options that may deter their involvement, and support better integration into Canadian society. Specifically, the research objectives of this study are to: (1) provide insight into the challenges facing Somali Canadians integrating into society (2) provide insight into the reasons that Somali Canadian male youth are attracted to deviant and/or criminal activity (3) use information and data collected to explore policy options that may result in better integration of Somali Canadians into society (4) explore policy options that may deter Somali-Canadian male youth from engaging in deviant and/or criminal activity (5) propose a suite of policy recommendations to enhance the: efficiency of integration of Somali refugee class immigrants and better social outcomes for Somali male youth as well as

2 John Horgan. (2009). *Walking away from terrorism: accounts of disengagement from radical and extremist movements*. London: Routledge.

3 *Anti-terrorism Act*, SC 2012, c 51.

the public safety and security of Canadian society. Outlining the circumstances that contribute to integration challenges faced by Somalis in Canada is crucial to combatting the issue of Somali male youth involvement in antisocial behaviors.

2. Background

In 2013, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees ranked Somalia as the third highest refugee source on the globe with approximately 1.1 million Somalis fleeing the country that year. Somalia has been one of Canada's top refugee sources ranking fourth after Sri Lanka, Pakistan and China since the civil war erupted in 1990. According to Statistics Canada, approximately 150,000 ethnic Somalis currently reside in Canada accounting for the largest Somali diaspora outside of Africa. The process of immigration poses challenges for groups when settling into a foreign country due to changes in every facet of life that accompany resettlement.⁴ These challenges become magnified for refugee class immigrants; individuals in need of protection whose removal to their home country would subject them to danger of torture, risk to their life or a risk of cruel and unusual treatment or punishment.⁵ Refugee class immigrants typically experience abrupt migration resulting from an outbreak of war in their country of origin.⁶

Somalis face immense challenges integrating into Canadian society. These challenges have resulted in manifestation of anti-social behaviours carried out primarily by Somali Canadian male youth. The researcher recognizes that other refugees face challenges integrating into Canadian Society but for the purposes of this study, the focus is on Somali refugees. In order to address the issues faced by the Somali Canadian diaspora, it is important to understanding the hurdles faced by Somalis through their own lens. With little data on the issues facing the Somali-Canadian community, Somali male first generation Canadians (children of refugees) and Somali refugee male youth continue to experience the consequences associated with pursuing anti-social behaviors: bringing harm to themselves as well as despair to their families. Within the Somali-Canadian community, no group has suffered more from the negative impacts of resettlement than Somali boys.⁷ For that reason, this study focuses exclusively on Somali male youth.

4 John Horgan. (2009). *Walking away from terrorism: accounts of disengagement from radical and extremist movements*. London: Routledge.

5 Ibid., *Walking away from terrorism*.

6 Ibid., *Walking away from terrorism*.

7 Ibid., *Walking away from terrorism*.

Participation in illegal income generating activities has resulted in a disproportionate number of unsolved Somali male homicide cases compared to the general population.⁸ In the provinces of Ontario and Alberta, there are 50 unsolved homicides of Somali male youth in Ontario & Alberta.⁹ Ironically, most of these deaths are in connection to drug dealing despite the fact that this activity is highly condemned in Islam, and violates Somali principles. The dire need for research that provides insight into the reasons that Somali Canadian male youth and their families face such immense integration challenges served as the motivation for this study. The participants in the study serve as members of institutions that uphold the safety and security of society (military/law enforcement) as well as individuals who encounter integration issues as laid out in the problem statement. They are designated as experts due to their high level of interaction with the Somali community.

8 John Horgan. (2009). *Walking away from terrorism: accounts of disengagement from radical and extremist movements*. London: Routledge.

9 Antonella Artuso. "Probe Murders of Somali-Canadian Men: Parents". *Toronto Sun*. January 22, 2013

3. Policy Problem, Statement & Definitions

Policy Problem: Why do Somali male youth face challenges integrating into Canadian Society?

Problem Statement:

Too many Somali male youth in Canada (Somali refugee youth & Somali Canadian youth) are involved in antisocial behaviors.

Definitions:

Too many:

Somali boys drop out of high school four times higher than the national average.¹⁰

Somalis are approximately 2% of Toronto's population / accounted for 18% of city's shooting deaths in 2012.¹¹

Illegal income generating activities

50 homicides of Somali Youth in Ontario & Alberta in the last decade.¹² Most are alleged to be in connection with the drug trade.¹³

Terror Tourism

2014: Somali man became the first Canadian to be convicted for attempting to join an overseas terrorist group and was sentenced to 10 years in prison.¹⁴

Somali male youth:

Somali Canadian youth and Somali refugee youth who are males between the ages of 15 and 24.

10 Robert. S. Brown, Research Report: The Grade 9 Cohort of Fall 2002: A five-year cohort study, 2002-2007 (Toronto: Toronto District School Board, 2008)

11 House of Commons Debates, 14 June 2013 (Mrs Kirsty Duncan, LPC)
<http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Language=E&Mode=1&DocId=6236469#Int-8083776>

12 Antonella Artuso. "Probe Murders of Somali-Canadian Men: Parents". Toronto Sun. January 22, 2013

13 Ibid., Probe Murders of Somali-Canadian Men.

14 Stuart Bell "Stopping 'Terror Tourism'". National Post. July 25, 2014

4. Methodology

This study is comprised of three components: a literature review, brief quantitative data analysis, and qualitative semi-structured expert interviews analyzed via thematic analysis.

4.1. Literature Review

This study aims to better understand the connection between culture-shock, integration and antisocial behaviors amongst Somali Canadian male youth. Information will be collated through online search engines, such as Taylor and Francis, JSTOR, Academic Search Premiere, EBSCO, Canadian Public Policy Collection, and Google. Research will also be supported by books/articles attained through the university library.

4.2. Quantitative Data

Information detailing the number of Somalis in Canada was collected via Statistics Canada for the sole purpose of assessing the population of Somalis in Canada (demographics, number of migrants per year, gender).

4.3. Qualitative Data

This portion of the study consisted of individual expert interviews. The participants comprised of professionals with extensive knowledge of the Somali diaspora in Canada employed in fields such as law enforcement, military and community organizations. The interviews lasted between 45-60 minutes and took place in person or over the telephone. The participants were granted confidentiality and received a numerical pseudonym. Oral and written consent was given by the participants to the researcher. The interview schedule comprised of 10 questions that aimed to capture the participant's perspective on the following policy problem/question:

Why do Somali male youth in Canada face challenges integrating into Canadian Society?

The interview questions are listed in Appendix A. As aforementioned, this study aims to provide insight into the cultural conditions that have contributed to the lack of integration into Canadian society in order to understand the reasons that Somali Canadian male youth engage in negative behaviors. Notwithstanding the literature review – which outlines the variables contributing to Somali participation in antisocial behaviors in the western world – the value-added portion of my study will be through the individual interviews with experts on integration and law enforcement in the lower mainland.

4.3.1. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis

The qualitative data analysis methodology used in this study was thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is the most common form of analysis in qualitative research as a categorizing strategy for qualitative data. It was most effective in this particular study because it emphasizes pinpointing, examining, and recording themes and/or patterns within data. Theme is defined as a pattern across data sets, in this case transcripts that are important to the description of a phenomenon and are associated to a specific research question. NVivo software was used to process the transcripts and measure the frequency of words used allowing the researcher to find specific themes within the responses to interview questions. The results are derived from a mixture of reviewing the data collected holistically and sorting commonly used words into categories. This data analytic strategy was used to help the researcher move the analysis from a broad reading of the data towards discovering patterns and developing themes outlined in the results section of the paper and then to form policy recommendations.

The participants in the study included individuals serving as members of military and law enforcement as well as individuals who encounter integration issues as laid out in the problem statement. They were deemed experts due to their high levels of interaction with the Somali community and extensive knowledge of issues faced by Somali Canadians. The participants were granted confidentiality and given pseudonyms in the

form of numbers in order to conceal their identities. The researcher had hoped to carry out this portion of the study in the form of two separate focus groups with Somali male youth and Somali elders. However, due to the high risk nature of the subject matter, the researcher focused on individual expert interviews in order to preserve the safety and security of all participants involved in the study.

5. Literature Review

5.1. Understanding the Concept “Refugee”

Canada officially adopted multiculturalism as its policy of immigration in 1970, subsequently opening its doors to migrants from around the globe including refugees.¹⁵ Since that time, Canada has offered protection to individuals seeking peace in Canada on the basis that they are facing persecution in their home country of residency, and individuals facing persecution if they return to their native country.¹⁶ Inspired by the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, the revamped immigration policy replaced its racist predecessor that favored European centered immigration particularly from western nations such as the United Kingdom and France.¹⁷ The concept “refugee” has become a centerpiece of Canadian immigration policy serving as one of the two classes under which foreign individuals looking to come to Canada must apply.¹⁸ The 1951 *Refugee Convention* defines the term as someone who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country."¹⁹ The refined 1967 *Protocol* defines a refugee as a person who is outside their country of nationality or habitual residence, has a well-founded fear of persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, and is unable or unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution.²⁰

15 John W Berry. (2013) "Research on multiculturalism in Canada." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 37, no. 6.

16 Citizenship and Immigration Canada: *The Refugee System in Canada*. (2014). Retrieved from the Government of Canada, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/canada.asp>

17 John W Berry. (2013) "Research on multiculturalism in Canada." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 37, no. 6.

18 *Ibid.*, *The Refugee System within Canada*.

19 United Nations, *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1951.

20 United Nations, *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (New York Protocol)*, 1967.

Refugees selected for resettlement in Canada typically flee their countries as a result of unimaginable hardships and often live in refugee camps for years before their departure.²¹ According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), there are approximately 15.4 million refugees worldwide.²² Of the 100,000 refugees resettled into countries by various resettlement programs yearly, Canada takes in 1 out of 10 of these claimants.²³ When seeking refugee status to or in Canada, the process run by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) allows individuals to make refugee claims within Canada when arriving by land, sea or air.²⁴ Claims filed outside of Canada can be made if an individual is sponsored by the government or a private group/non-governmental organization (NGO). In both cases, the IRB decides if an individual is classified as a Convention refugee: a person with a fear of persecution based on race, religion, political ideology, nationality and/or membership in a marginalized group (women, sexual minorities), or a person in need of protection, and a person who faces torture, risk to their life, risk of cruel and unusual treatment/punishment if they return to their country of origin.²⁵

Canada's allocation of financial resources to refugee populations domestically and internationally is considered an act of humanitarianism.²⁶ Economic immigration differs from refugee migration in the sense that the latter immigration is not intended to mutually benefit both parties. As refugees come to the country under hostile circumstances, they lack the economic means to settle into their host nation.²⁷ Refugees are not technically considered immigrants because they have left their home state forcefully and are thus granted permanent residency and eventual citizenship as an act of compassion under the tradition of humanitarian action.²⁸ This stems from the fact that refugee class immigrants

21 Citizenship and Immigration Canada: The Refugee System in Canada. (2014). Retrieved from the Government of Canada, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/canada.asp>

22 Ibid., The Refugee System within Canada.

23 Ibid., The Refugee System within Canada.

24 Ibid., The Refugee System within Canada

25 Ibid., The Refugee System within Canada.

26 Ibid., The Refugee System within Canada.

27 Ibid., The Refugee System within Canada.

28 Ibid., The Refugee System within Canada.

are distinguishable from economic class immigrants in two ways: their economic means to immigrate and their economic means to integrate into Canadian society. As such, they are afforded rights under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (CCRF) and may be able to access services such as basic healthcare and education whether or not they are granted citizenship.²⁹ The logic behind the extension of CCRF to refugees is based on the principles guiding the tradition of humanitarian action that recognize the vulnerability of refugees. While Canada is one of the top destinations for refugees³⁰, it is also committed to preventing circumstances that lead to refugee influxes in regions of conflict.³¹ As a member of the UN, Canada has aided emerging democracies in conflict resolution strategies and financial aid in order to prevent the circumstances that create refugee populations through the United Nations Refugee Agency.³² Upon arrival, refugee claimants are provided with financial support as well as immediate and essential services under the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) for one year.³³ The monthly income support figure provided to refugees is based on provincial social assistance rates providing only the minimum amount required to cover basic costs of living.³⁴

5.2. Contemporary Challenges

5.2.1. Somali Male Youth Participation in Illegal Income Generating Activities (IIGA)

Canadian-born children from immigrant families and foreign born children represent 20% of Canadians under the age of 18.³⁵ This figure is expected to reach 25%

29 Citizenship and Immigration Canada: The Refugee System in Canada. (2014). Retrieved from the Government of Canada, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/canada.asp>

30 Ibid., The Refugee System within Canada.

31 Ibid., The Refugee System within Canada.

32 Citizenship and Immigration Canada: Help within Canada (Refugees). (2012). Retrieved from the Government of Canada website, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/refugees/help.asp>

33 Ibid., Help within Canada.

34 Ibid., Help within Canada.

35 Hieu Van Ngo, Avery Calhoun, Catherine Worthington, Tim Pynch, and David Este. (2010) "The unravelling of identities and belonging: Criminal gang involvement of youth from immigrant families." *Journal of International Migration and Integration*

by next year.³⁶ The high figures of Somali male youth who are struggling to integrate into Canadian society has presented a challenge to municipal and provincial governments.³⁷ The involvement of Somali refugee children in IIGAs across Canada has resulted in a barrage of gun violence, gang recruitment and homicides inside and outside of the community.³⁸ The first six months of 2015 saw the City of Surrey, British Columbia, plagued with gun violence allegedly tied to Somali males.³⁹ During this time period, the city had experienced 23 shootings in a two month time span.⁴⁰ According to the RCMP, the shootings may have been the result of a turf war between rival Somali and South Asian gangs.⁴¹ The Province of Alberta has experienced similar conditions fuelled by the drug trade resulting in over 20 unsolved homicides of Somali males, primarily youth, in the last decade alone.⁴² This disturbing trend is mirrored in eastern Canada with Somali youth in Ontario with a similar figure of homicides putting the total number across Canada to over 50 cases.⁴³

With little research on the issue, community leaders are pressed to find effective measures to respond to the gang violence coming from Somali males.⁴⁴ According to Amos Kambere, the Executive Director of the Umoja Operation Compassion Society of BC, the issues stem from a lack of youth programs for refugee arrivals.⁴⁵ As refugee children, Somali youth are not afforded the same conditions as their economic immigrant

36 Hieu Van Ngo, Avery Calhoun, Catherine Worthington, Tim Pynch, and David Este. (2010) "The unravelling of identities and belonging: Criminal gang involvement of youth from immigrant families." *Journal of International Migration and Integration*

37 The Early Edition "Surrey gang shootings show Somali youth need better support". CBC News. Apr 30, 2015

38 Antonella Artuso. "Probe Murders of Somali-Canadian Men: Parents". *Toronto Sun*. January 22, 2013.

39 The Early Edition "Surrey gang shootings show Somali youth need better support". CBC News. Apr 30, 2015

40 Ibid., Surrey gang shootings.

41 Ibid., Surrey gang shootings.

42 Antonella Artuso. "Probe Murders of Somali-Canadian Men: Parents". *Toronto Sun*. January 22, 2013.

43 Ibid., Probe Murders of Somali-Canadian Men.

44 John Pitts. (2012) "Reluctant criminologists: Criminology, ideology and the violent youth gang." *Youth and Policy* 109.

45 The Early Edition "Surrey gang shootings show Somali youth need better support". CBC News. Apr 30, 2015

counterparts and other peers. For Somali refugee youth, the factors that result in involvement of IIGAs are exacerbated by their refugee status.⁴⁶ The desire to acquire material possessions due to low socio-economic status, the desire to assert power and control over one's life, and the lack of leadership and self-confidence are some of the drivers leading youth into gangs.⁴⁷ The lack of social programming paired with Somali refugee parents' inability to finance extracurricular activities has made Somali male youth the ideal prey for predators looking to lure youth into the criminal lifestyle.⁴⁸

5.2.2. Somali Radicalization in the Western World

In October 2008, a 27-year-old Somali male who grew up in North America carried out a terrorist attack targeting the United Nations Development Program and the presidential palace in Somalia.⁴⁹ The attack was coordinated by Al Shabaab, an extremist organization that has been successful in recruiting Somalis from Europe and North America.⁵⁰ Most of these recruits grew up in a western democracy and shared similar immigration experiences.⁵¹ This particular attack resulted in 30 deaths including UN aid workers.⁵² This incident was one of the first in a series of terror tourism departures in the state of Minneapolis where it is estimated that over 18 Somali adolescent boys and young men, who had resettled as refugees in the USA had left their homes.⁵³ In many of these cases, the "push" factors were centred on community and family challenges that stemmed

46 Valerie Fortney "Success stories are possible but Somali Canadians are faced with overcoming racism and trauma first". Calgary Herald. January 11, 2015

47 Ibid., Success stories are possible.

48 Ibid., Success stories are possible.

49 Stevan Wein, John Horgan, Cheryl Robertson, Sana Loue, Amin Mohamed and Sahra Noor. (2009). "Community and Family Approaches to Combating the Radicalization and Recruitment of Somali-American Youth and Young Adults: A Psychosocial Perspective." Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict.

50 Ibid., Community and Family Approaches to Combating the Radicalization and Recruitment of Somali-American Youth.

51 Ibid., Community and Family Approaches to Combating the Radicalization and Recruitment of Somali-American Youth.

52 Ibid., Community and Family Approaches to Combating the Radicalization and Recruitment of Somali-American Youth.

53 Ibid., Community and Family Approaches to Combating the Radicalization and Recruitment of Somali-American Youth.

from a lack of integration. The experience of exposure to war and forced migration prior to coming to the North America have resulted in a natural disconnect between Somalis and their new country due to uncertainty surrounding their condition of migration.⁵⁴ Somalis fleeing the civil war could not predict the extent of deterioration of their homeland. Many expected to return to Somalia after the civil war ended, not realizing the war would span more than two decades.⁵⁵

The consensus among terrorism scholars is that exposure to trauma is not in and of itself a prominent risk factor for involvement in terror tourism.⁵⁶ However, these factors do have an adverse impact upon community cohesion and family support.⁵⁷ Exposure to trauma contributes to problems in refugee youth, including behavioral, educational, health, and criminal problems. As a result, this may put some at a higher risk of radicalization and recruitment. With regard to post traumatic stress, the experience of Somali refugees' are similar to groups that have fled war in their countries and resettled.⁵⁸ Somali refugees are exposed to many of the same war related traumas and losses as other refugees.⁵⁹ After escaping with their lives, many Somali Canadian refugees lived in refugee camps (spread across Ethiopia and Kenya) or transit communities for years where their children received little to no schooling.⁶⁰ During the migration process, the impact of inadequate schooling on youth and their parents left them vulnerable to radical ideologies.⁶¹ The Somali male youth who are radicalized may not have experienced traumatic exposure because they

54 Stevan Wein, John Horgan, Cheryl Robertson, Sana Loue, Amin Mohamed and Sahra Noor. (2009). "Community and Family Approaches to Combating the Radicalization and Recruitment of Somali-American Youth and Young Adults: A Psychosocial Perspective." *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*.

55 Linda L. Halcón, Cheryl L. Robertson, Kay Savik, David R. Johnson, Marline A. Spring, James N. Butcher, Joseph J. Westermeyer, and James M. Jaranson. (2004) "Trauma and coping in Somali and Oromo refugee youth." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 35, no. 1.

56 Ibid., Trauma and coping in Somali and Oromo refugee youth

57 Ibid., Trauma and coping in Somali and Oromo refugee youth.

58 Ibid., Trauma and coping in Somali and Oromo refugee youth.

59 Ibid., Trauma and coping in Somali and Oromo refugee youth.

60 Stevan Wein, John Horgan, Cheryl Robertson, Sana Loue, Amin Mohamed and Sahra Noor. (2009). "Community and Family Approaches to Combating the Radicalization and Recruitment of Somali-American Youth and Young Adults: A Psychosocial Perspective." *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*.

61 Ibid., Community and Family Approaches to Combating the Radicalization and Recruitment of Somali-American Youth

were either born outside of Somali or arrived to their host nation at a young age.⁶² However, the memories of war are highly prevalent among their parents' generation.⁶³

5.3. Integration Struggles

5.3.1. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Somali Diasporas across the Western world suffer in the areas of education, health and mental health. The first generation of resettled Somalis are confronted with a multitude of challenges stemming from the failure to address the issues facing the community.⁶⁴ The lack of research into the Somali Canadian Diaspora is mitigated by Somali studies in the United States as the nation's refugee population share the same pre-arrival experiences as their Canadian counterparts. A survey conducted in the Twin Cities (United States) found that 37 percent of Somali women and 25 percent of Somali men had been tortured. The torture survivors reported significantly more symptoms of PTSD, physical and psychological problems than Somali refugees who did not experience torture.⁶⁵ Nearly half of Somali mothers in this study were torture survivors. More than a quarter of mothers had no formal education and 70 percent were single parents.⁶⁶ This relates to another "push" factor concerning the process of migration unique to refugee class immigrants. The majority of Somali refugees residing in the western world arrived without funds and services dedicated to them.⁶⁷ While Canada has a well-regarded health and social system

62 Stevan Wein, John Horgan, Cheryl Robertson, Sana Loue, Amin Mohamed and Sahra Noor. (2009). "Community and Family Approaches to Combating the Radicalization and Recruitment of Somali-American Youth and Young Adults: A Psychosocial Perspective." *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*.

63 James M. Jaranson, James Butcher, Linda Halcon, David Robert Johnson, Cheryl Robertson, Kay Savik, Marline Spring, and Joseph Westermeyer. (2004) "Somali and Oromo refugees: correlates of torture and trauma history." *American journal of public health* 94, no. 4.

64 John Horgan. (2009). *Walking away from terrorism: accounts of disengagement from radical and extremist movements*. London: Routledge.

65 Cheryl Lee Robertson, Linda Halcon, Kay Savik, David Johnson, Marline Spring, James Butcher, Joseph Westermeyer, and James Jaranson. (2006) "Somali and Oromo refugee women: trauma and associated factors." *Journal of advanced nursing* 56, no. 6.

66 Ibid., Somali and Oromo refugee women: trauma and associated factors.

67 Ibid., Somali and Oromo refugee women: trauma and associated factors.

to address refugee needs, the influx of a massive number of refugees through secondary migration overwhelmed governmental and non-governmental services during the 1990's.⁶⁸

5.3.2. Post-Immigration Cultural Changes

The dynamic between parents and their children varies across different cultures.⁶⁹ The parent-child relationship structure in the Somali culture is no exception.⁷⁰ Integrating into a system where vast differences exist, including the fact that children are considered autonomous adults at the age of 18, poses immense challenges to the Somali diaspora.⁷¹ In the Somali culture, parents are able to exercise authority over their children far into adulthood.⁷² As a child never stops being the child of their parent, the transition into adulthood for Somalis begins when an individual gets married, thus giving them the ability to start their own family and inherit adult responsibilities.⁷³ This element of Somali cultures differs greatly from Western culture where age is the determinant of adulthood that grants individuals legal autonomy. Unlike the Western culture, Somali culture allows parents to heavily influence major life decisions of their children ranging from career pursuits to the person they marry.⁷⁴ Further differences between Somali parenting styles and those of the Western World relate to acceptable forms of child discipline.⁷⁵ When integrating into Canada, these cultural differences are problematic for Somali children and their parents for a multitude of reasons.

With regard to discipline, Somali children learn that there are indeed limits to the amount of power parents can exercise over them in the West.⁷⁶ This exchange results in

68 Cheryl Lee Robertson, Linda Halcon, Kay Savik, David Johnson, Marline Spring, James Butcher, Joseph Westermeyer, and James Jaranson. (2006) "Somali and Oromo refugee women: trauma and associated factors." *Journal of advanced nursing* 56, no. 6.

69 Anthony Olden. (1999) "Somali refugees in London: oral culture in a western information environment." *Libri* 49, no. 4.

70 *Ibid.*, Somali refugees in London: oral culture in a western information environment.

71 *Ibid.*, Somali refugees in London: oral culture in a western information environment.

72 *Ibid.*, Somali refugees in London: oral culture in a western information environment.

73 *Ibid.*, Somali refugees in London: oral culture in a western information environment.

74 *Ibid.*, Somali refugees in London: oral culture in a western information environment.

75 *Ibid.*, Somali refugees in London: oral culture in a western information environment.

76 *Ibid.*, Somali refugees in London: oral culture in a western information environment.

a power struggle in the household that can leave Somali children feeling resentment towards their parents for practicing disciplinary actions that violate western norms.⁷⁷ This resentment paired with the challenges that accompany being a visible minority in a foreign country are a catalyst for many of the issues faced by Somali Canadian youth.⁷⁸ For many Somali youth, trying to walk the tight rope between adhering to Somali customs while navigating Canadian norms becomes a great source of interpersonal distress.⁷⁹ A case where a Somali man who was a recent immigrant was taken in for questioning by the police for beating his son highlights the dangers of cultural disconnects to immigrants when they are not adequately integrated into society. According to the report, the Somali parent formed a statement along the lines of "this is my child, and I need to give him anything that would make him a proper child [...] what is the [fuss] all about?"⁸⁰ This case demonstrates the plight of Somali parents whose abrupt arrival into their host countries do not allow for the socialization required to understand the laws of the host country.⁸¹ This has produced a situation where Somali parents are using tools that violate the Canadian norms their children are socialized to oppose.⁸² Children typically avoid reporting household violence out of a mixture of fear and respect for their parents, allowing violence to serve as the primary form of discipline in Somali households.⁸³

The differences in dynamic between Somali and western culture becomes especially problematic when Somali children are dealing with non-parental and/or familial authority figures.⁸⁴ Children who are exposed to violence as a means of correcting anti-social behavior in the household become accustomed to the use of fear as a method of

77 Anthony Olden. (1999) "Somali refugees in London: oral culture in a western information environment." Libri 49, no. 4.

78 Nimo Bokore. (2013). "Suffering in silence: a Canadian-Somali case study." Journal of Social Work Practice 27, no. 1.

79 Ibid., Suffering in silence: a Canadian-Somali case study.

80 Anthony Olden. (1999) "Somali refugees in London: oral culture in a western information environment." Libri 49, no. 4: p 219

81 Nimo Bokore. (2013). "Suffering in silence: a Canadian-Somali case study." Journal of Social Work Practice 27, no. 1.

82 Ibid., Suffering in silence: a Canadian-Somali case study.

83 Ibid., Suffering in silence: a Canadian-Somali case study.

84 Joseph Rasmussen. (2011) "Education for Somali Students in London: Challenges and Strategies." Macalester Abroad: Research and Writing from Off-campus Study 3, no. 1.

deterrence.⁸⁵ In Canadian society, children are protected from violence by laws as well as cultural attitudes that do not tolerate child abuse in any environment.⁸⁶ As such, children who come from cultures where they are socialized to respond to the fear of violence as opposed to positive reinforcement may experience challenges obeying authority figures.⁸⁷ If the only encouragement for children to behave stems from the fear of experiencing culturally accepted violence at the hands of their parents despite the laws of the new land, society as a whole suffers.⁸⁸ Children from these cultures learn violence as a means of communication from loved ones and the lack of physical violence within the western culture as weakness, thus presenting them with the opportunity to misbehave, escaping what they fear most – physical abuse.⁸⁹

85 Joseph Rasmussen. (2011) "Education for Somali Students in London: Challenges and Strategies." *Macalester Abroad: Research and Writing from Off-campus Study* 3, no. 1.

86 Nimo Bokore. (2013). "Suffering in silence: a Canadian-Somali case study." *Journal of Social Work Practice* 27, no. .1

87 *Ibid.*, Suffering in silence: a Canadian-Somali case study.

88 *Ibid.*, Suffering in silence: a Canadian-Somali case study.

89 *Ibid.*, Suffering in silence: a Canadian-Somali case study.

6. Analysis of Findings

The material in this section is informed by data collected from sources outlined in the methodology.

6.1. Issues faced by Somali refugees when settling into Canada

6.1.1. Health & Healthcare Access

6.1.1.1 *Mental Health & Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*

Somali refugees have been seen warfare for the last 22 years, so the possibility of significant psychological damage should not come as a surprise for anyone.- Participant 7

The silent phenomenon of PTSD has cast a dark shadow on the Somali refugee integration process into Canada and other host nations alike. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental illness which stems from the exposure to trauma involving death or the threat of death, serious injury, and/or sexual violence.⁹⁰ According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, a traumatic event is defined as an experience that is “very frightening, overwhelming and causes a lot of distress”⁹¹. Events that cause mental trauma and emotional anguish are often unexpected leaving many people feeling that they were powerless to stop or change the event.⁹² In the case of warfare, the element of powerlessness is embedded into the design. Examples of Traumatic events include crimes, natural disasters, accidents, war or civil conflict, and/or other threats to life. It could be an event or situation that an individual experiences or something that happens to

90 Canadian Mental Health Association. “Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.”
https://www.cmha.ca/mental_health/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/

91 Ibid., Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

92 Ibid., Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

others, including family members and other loved ones.⁹³ Without exception, refugees are exposed to at least one, if not all of these conditions throughout their journey.

PTSD causes intrusive symptoms such as re-experiencing the traumatic event in the form of flashbacks and nightmares.⁹⁴ Sufferers of PTSD often avoid things that remind them of the event and may lash out in the months or years following the event.⁹⁵ The process of escaping warfare is physically and emotionally taxing for parents and children resulting in the likelihood of PTSD development. Upon arrival, refugees are often in poor physical and mental health due to conditions endured when evacuating their country of origin and throughout the course of the journey to safety.⁹⁶ Whether arriving by land, air or sea, refugees are often malnourished, emotionally exhausted, and traumatized by the conditions witnessed and/or experienced.⁹⁷ Due to the stigma of mental health in the Somali culture, the diagnosis of issues sparked by or linked to depression often goes untreated.⁹⁸ As PTSD occurs amongst individuals who have personally fought in war, have experienced warfare in wars, or have gone through traumatic experiences as a result of a war, symptoms such as depression and feelings of emotional detachment from others are likely to develop amongst Somali refugees.

Individual refugees are often dealing with undiagnosed mental health issues such as PTSD, depression or others. Those who are diagnosed may not seek help because, of a lack of time, stigma or inaccessibility to mental health services.- Participant 8

In the Somali culture, the topic of mental health brings about immense stigma for reasons similar to those that exist within Canadian society.⁹⁹ Mistaking mental health issues for a lack of gratitude also contributes to the silent epidemic of PTSD in the Somali

93 Canadian Mental Health Association. "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder."
https://www.cmha.ca/mental_health/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/

94 Ibid., Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

95 Naomi Breslau Howard D. Chilcoat, Ronald C. Kessler, and Glenn C. Davis. (2014) "Previous exposure to trauma and PTSD effects of subsequent trauma: results from the Detroit Area Survey of Trauma." American Journal of Psychiatry.

96 Participant data

97 Participant data

98 Participant data

99 Participant data

community as the culture is built on being thankful for all aspects of life at any given time.¹⁰⁰ In Islam, the dominant religion amongst Somalis, the prayer ritual requires prayers lasting five minutes, five times per day for the sole purpose of expressing gratitude.¹⁰¹ Many Somalis are unable to reconcile their feelings of depression when settling into their host country due to a lack of awareness of the disease.¹⁰² Furthermore, Somalis often assume that they should be happy that they have escaped war, linking their depressive symptoms to a lack of gratitude as opposed to mental illness.¹⁰³ Though religious and spiritual rituals beyond traditional western medicine have scientifically proven significant health benefits, there are cases that require psychological and medical intervention outside of the traditional framework.

In sum, the lack of awareness amongst Somali refugees of the condition of PTSD and the services and interventions available to combat mental illness, in addition to the stigma of having a mental health issue results in its debilitating symptoms being undiagnosed or invisible for months or even years. Without treatment or awareness, PTSD can result in feelings of anxiety.¹⁰⁴ Integration is especially challenging for Somali refugees who feel unsafe around authority figures due to the corrupt conditions in their home country, and also experience social anxiety.¹⁰⁵ The experience of social anxiety is prevalent amongst Somali refugees resulting in the desire to limit their social interaction with 'safe' individuals who are mainly Somalis or other Muslims. Though the formation of ethnic enclaves is common in all immigrant groups, it is harmful to refugees who require more exposure to society in order to gain awareness about matters pertaining to health. The formation of ethnic enclaves can also be more damaging to refugee migrants than economic immigrants as the latter are engaged in the workforce by definition, thus having more access to information. The phenomenon of untreated social anxiety is more

100 Participant data

101 Participant data

102 Participant data

103 Participant data

104 Canadian Mental Health Association. "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder."
https://www.cmha.ca/mental_health/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/

105 Participant data

prevalent amongst adults due to the socialization of children through the education system.¹⁰⁶

Individuals experiencing PTSD experience a multitude of challenges such as being easily startled, difficulties concentrating, insomnia and/or irritability.¹⁰⁷ Another common PTSD symptom experienced by refugees is anxiety surrounding future events which manifests through the feeling that something terrible is about to happen even though they are no longer in their country of origin.¹⁰⁸ Many sufferers experience emotional detachment, disconnection from their body or thoughts, and/or have a hard time feeling emotions.¹⁰⁹ These symptoms contribute to a breakdown of relationships within refugee families, creating additional stress to parents and children.¹¹⁰

Treating PTSD within refugee populations, including Somalis, is of the utmost importance as it is a contributing factor to the systemic challenges Somali Canadian male youth are facing in Canadian society for reasons that are obvious when assessing the impacts of the disorder. Untreated PTSD also results in a change of thoughts and mood related to the traumatic event.¹¹¹ When the Somali parents are suffering from PTSD, they are less likely to address the issues within their own family – including the deviance of their sons.¹¹² Simply put, Somali parents suffering from PTSD experience bouts of depression which causes them to emotionally disconnect from their families.¹¹³ Somali children experiencing PTSD often lash out at authority figures due to their inability to cope with their hardships.¹¹⁴ Some people suffering from PTSD use drugs and alcohol to cope

106 Participant data

107 Naomi Breslau Howard D. Chilcoat, Ronald C. Kessler, and Glenn C. Davis. (2014)
"Previous exposure to trauma and PTSD effects of subsequent trauma: results from the Detroit Area Survey of Trauma." American Journal of Psychiatry.

108 Participant data

109 Canadian Mental Health Association. "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder."
https://www.cmha.ca/mental_health/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/

110 Ibid., Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

111 Ibid., Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

112 Participant data

113 Participant data

114 Participant data

with their symptoms.¹¹⁵ Although those coping mechanisms are forbidden in Islam, Somali Canadians (like their non-Somali counterparts) have been known to engage in drug use recreationally while some also use drugs and alcohol to cope with the emotional issues that stem from PTSD.¹¹⁶ However, the culturally illicit nature of drug and alcohol use results in the activities being done in secret (hidden mostly from adults and conservative peers within all age groups). Recent refugee arrivals to Canada from Somalia have seen warfare for over two decades, thus the possibility of significant psychological damage should be expected.¹¹⁷ The keys to addressing and combatting the silent phenomenon of PTSD amongst Somali Canadian refugees are 1. Anticipating PTSD amongst new arrivals, 2. Spreading awareness of PTSD and its symptoms to individuals and families in their native language upon settling, and 3. Providing the relevant interventions (counselling and/or medical treatment). Challenges in removing the stigma of mental health and the element of shame within the Somali community will be best mitigated through education and awareness.¹¹⁸

6.1.1.2 Language as a Barrier to Healthcare

Assimilation is often challenging for Somali refugees due to the stark contrasts between Somali culture and the Western culture/tradition as a whole. Accessing resources is also a challenge due to the language barrier and differences in cultural contexts. - Participant 2

Language is undoubtedly the key that opens the door to every culture, and is consequently the largest barrier faced by Somali refugees when accessing basic healthcare services. While the experience of language barriers is not limited to refugee class immigrants, economic immigrants have more financial means to access language services (i.e. tutoring centers) when experiencing language difficulties in domains including healthcare. Health care institutions do not consider language accessibility to be the responsibility of doctors and expect interpretation services to be arranged for patients

115 Canadian Mental Health Association. "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder."

116 Participant data

117 Participant data

118 Participant data

when required.¹¹⁹ Errors in translation or comprehension of the diagnosis and/or treatment may have catastrophic impacts on the lives of all non-English or French speaking migrants. Language barriers adversely impact subsequent appointments and instructions associated with treatment because instructions are mainly in English or French. In some cases, the lack of translation services results in the delay of critical treatment.¹²⁰

The vast majority of refugees from Somalia do not speak English or French as a primary language unless they have spent an extended amount of time in Djibouti; a nation of ethnic Somalis whose primary languages are Somali, Arabic and French. Learning a new language is more challenging for adults than for children who, depending on their age, are able to learn languages faster. The rate of language exposure experienced by refugees that are children is higher because they are required to enroll in school until the minimum age of 15 or grade 10. Canadian schools are required to provide English Second Language services to children, allowing them to integrate faster into their communities and into Canadian society as a whole.

Upon gaining access to a general health care provider, many refugees are unable to communicate their needs and concerns with healthcare professionals without translation services.¹²¹ When experiencing these challenges, refugees often turn to family and community members. Disclosing personal information about healthcare outside of the medical practitioner is widely recognized as a strictly confidential practice in every medical domain. Somali refugees without access to language services forcibly waive their confidentiality whether employing the use of a professional translator or family member. Disclosing health issues to family members is highly controversial due to the stigma within Somali culture, which can lead to undiagnosed, and thus untreated mental and physical health issues.

The most effective alternative in alleviating the language barrier between refugee patients and healthcare professionals is professional translation.¹²² The failure to provide

119 Marie McKeary and Bruce Newbold. (2010) "Barriers to care: The challenges for Canadian refugees and their health care providers." *Journal of Refugee Studies*, feq038.

120 Ibid., Barriers to care: The challenges for Canadian refugees and their health care providers.

121 Participant data

122 Ibid., Barriers to care: The challenges for Canadian refugees and their health care providers.

these essential services is costly to healthcare system because it prolongs the process of healthcare treatment for refugees who need care but cannot communicate the areas that require immediate attention. Unless health issues are addressed and prevented before they worsen, a higher cost to the patient and the system results as emergency intervention is highly likely. Without language translation, Doctors visits with English second language (ESL) patients may require additional time due to accommodation of cultural interpretation. More importantly, ensuring that information is accessible and treatment is understandable is a priority that is often overlooked when dealing with ESL patients.

6.1.2. Culture Shock and Intersectionality

Somali refugees face issues from two points of view. First, they face the outsider feeling of being new-comers, this feeling may be exacerbated by religious, racial, cultural, and linguistic differences from the host country. Second, members of the host community may have pre-existing notions of "refugee" or "Somali" and project those ideas onto individual people who are Somali refugees. - Participant 8

Intersectionality is the study of intersections between forms or systems of oppression, domination or discrimination.¹²³ Outside of the general culture shock experienced by Somali refugees that come to North America, the reality of dealing with intersections between forms of oppression, namely racism and Islamophobia, is an additional burden to face upon settlement.¹²⁴ Before delving into the intersectional forms of oppression Somalis experience, it is important to outline the concept of culture shock that results from migration.

Refugees have a shared experience of culture shock due to an abrupt shift in their environment. The differences between their home country and country of settlement are exacerbated by the pace at which the migration takes place. These differences are magnified when refugees do not speak the language of their new country. Most Somali refugees do not speak English as a primary language. The main exposure to the language

123 Sheila Thomas. (2004) "Intersectionality, the Double Bind of Race and Gender: An Interview with Kimberle Crenshaw." Perspectives Magazine.

124 Participant data

comes in the form of media and pop culture. When settling into Canada, adopting the language as well as the cultural norms and values that accompany it are challenging. For Somalis in particular, this feeling is intensified by cultural, racial, religious and linguistic differences from the host country.¹²⁵

6.1.2.1 The Concept of “Black Male” in North America versus Africa

Somali males in particular often run into many obstacles along the way because they are labelled as “Black”, a concept that varies across different regions. In North America, the concept of “Black” is tied to the label of African American.¹²⁶ African Americans are an ethnic group of Americans (citizens or residents of the United States).¹²⁷ The term includes only those individuals who are descended from enslaved Africans. Migrants from African, Caribbean, Central American, and South American nations and their descendants may or may not also self-identify with the term.¹²⁸ As the majority of Somalis in North America arrived as the result of the civil war that erupted in 1990, most self-identify as African. African-American history begins in the 16th century, with Africans kidnapped and forced into slavery in Spanish America.¹²⁹

In the 17th century, African slaves were taken to English colonies in North America making the continent their home land for a time period equal to or longer than European settlers.¹³⁰ After the founding of the United States, black people continued to be enslaved, with four million denied freedom from bondage prior to the Civil War.¹³¹ Rooted in the belief that Europeans were collectively superior to other ethnicities, the same conviction that informed imperialism and colonialism, the United States Constitution declared Blacks to

125 Participant data

126 Stephen D. Behrendt, David Richardson, and David Eltis. (1999). "WEB Du Bois Institute for African and African-American Research, Harvard University. Based on" records for 27,233 voyages that set out to obtain slaves for the Americas". Stephen Behrendt "Transatlantic Slave Trade." *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience.*

127 Ibid., Transatlantic Slave Trade.

128 Ibid., Transatlantic Slave Trade.

129 Ibid., Transatlantic Slave Trade.

130 Ibid., Transatlantic Slave Trade.

131 Ibid., Transatlantic Slave Trade.

be 3/5th human.¹³² Outlining the history of inhumane and unjust treatment of African-Americans, as well as their long lineage in North America, is relevant in outlining the North American concept of “Black”. The population of Afro Canadians who share a similar extended lineage in Canada (centuries) was the result of slaves from the U.S. seeking freedom.¹³³

While Canada did not have slavery, discrimination and institutional oppression towards Afro Canadians similar to that of the U.S. does occur. The legally sanctioned treatment of Afro Canadians and other visible minorities as second-class citizens existed as a societal and legal norm until the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's.¹³⁴ Following this time period, Canada began to change policies towards minorities, declaring Multiculturalism the official policy of immigration in 1970.¹³⁵ Though policies have changed in Canada and the U.S. in support of civil rights, societal and institutional racism persists.

Intersectionality: Somali Experience of Islamophobia & Racism

The stigma attached to being a black male, has had a crippling effect on Somali male youth. They are targeted by police, which has led to high incarceration rates among Somali male youth. - Participant 2

In North America, the label “Black” often comes with negative stereotypes and stigma rooted in racism and racial domination.¹³⁶ Individuals labelled as “Black” fall under the categorization of visible minority in Canada. As aforementioned, Afro-Canadians, individuals who settled in Canada as a result of the United States brutal legacy of slavery, are subjected to a similar degree of racism experienced by their African American

132 Stephen D. Behrendt, David Richardson, and David Eltis. (1999). "WEB Du Bois Institute for African and African-American Research, Harvard University. Based on" records for 27,233 voyages that set out to obtain slaves for the Americas". Stephen Behrendt "Transatlantic Slave Trade." *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience.*

133 Larry Gara. *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad.* University Press of Kentucky, 2013.

134 Will Kymlicka. (2010) "The rise and fall of multiculturalism? New debates on inclusion and accommodation in diverse societies." *International social science journal* 61, no. 199.

135 Ibid., "The rise and fall of multiculturalism? New debates on inclusion and accommodation in diverse societies."

136 Matthew Desmond and Mustafa Emirbayer. (2009) "What is racial domination?." *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 6, no. 02.

counterparts. The experience of racism towards Afro-Canadians and African Americans perpetuated onto black migrants despite the fact that their cultures, values and norms differ. The ignorance that fosters racism is culpable for the inability for individuals and systems that carry out racism to distinguish between groups of individuals and instead focus on the color of their skin. The perpetuation of the negative stereotypes rooted in the North American concept of blackness is extremely problematic for Somalis as it feeds into the identity crisis experienced by youth. Though not all of the elements attributed to the concept of blackness in North America are negative, the harmful stereotypes give rise to additional barriers to the process of integration that are not faced by non-black refugees and migrants are omitted from.

Another obstacle that Somali youth face, is their faith. Not only are they black, but they are also majority Muslim. In a space, and time where islamophobia, and racism are still permeating through the western world, this only causes more difficulties for Somali Males who are attempting to settle in Canada and the US.- Participant 2

As a result of rising Islamophobia in the Western world, Somalis are subject to bigotry in addition to the experience of societal racism that stems from their “blackness”.¹³⁷ The labels that accompany the concept of “Black” and Muslim in western society create severe identity issues amongst Somali Canadian male youth. The values of Somali youth who grow up in Islamic households are parallel to other Canadian Muslims of all ethnicities.¹³⁸ In order to understand the challenges facing Somali male youth, the concept of religion and race must be recognized as entirely separate, and the oppression that Somalis face as intersectional. The values and expectations within Islam collide with the concept of “black” for the simple fact that religion is a concept of values that inform culture and race is not. Apart from the Nation of Islam, a religious group from the United States that gained exposure during the civil rights era, the vast majority of Afro-Canadians and African Americans are non-Muslims. Thus, the cultural norms and values that govern Islam that are applicable to Somalis are not shared by the majority of Blacks in North America.¹³⁹ This logic is perhaps the most challenging to grasp due to society’s tendency

137 Participant data

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to label and categorize groups based on the concept of race. This results in the North American concept of “Blackness” becoming applicable to all who fit the label based on aesthetics, erasing the features of different groups that make them unique.¹⁴⁰ Simply put, an individual’s race does not govern their norms and values where an individual’s faith does.

Before allocating funding to solve a problem, the problem and its root causes need to be identified and researched. In 2010, the Alberta government allocated \$1.9 million dollars of funding aimed at reducing the rising number of Somali male youth dying in drug-trade violence.¹⁴¹ Hassan Ali, a prominent community leader in Alberta believed that youth turned to drug trafficking as a result of several factors such as employment and educational barriers, and a lack of knowledge about the system, culture and language.¹⁴² Ali also added that “there is racism”.¹⁴³ Ali, who served as the president of the Somali-Canadian Cultural Society of Edmonton in 2010 commented on the systemic racism experienced by Somalis as “...a factor we might sometimes overlook or deny”.¹⁴⁴ He added that “there is a race factor in terms of employment and education opportunities.”¹⁴⁵ Somali males often begin to self-subscribe to the labels placed on them by society (institutions, authority figures, peers) that is based on the North American concept of “Black” which differs heavily from the Somali concept of blackness.

Employing the label of “Black” on Somalis as an all-encompassing characteristic erases the Islamic factor and further perpetuates the identity crisis Somali Canadian male youth experience. Recognizing that Somalis are governed by Islamic values results in drawing more accurate conclusions when diagnosing issues within the community as a whole. Cultural norms in Canadian society such as drinking alcohol, and activities such as

140 Participant data

141 Dean Bennett. (May 11, 2010). “Alberta to spend \$1.9M to help Somali youth resist drug trade.” The Star.

142 Ibid., Alberta to spend \$1.9M to help Somali youth resist drug trade.

143 Ibid., Alberta to spend \$1.9M to help Somali youth resist drug trade.

144 Ibid., Alberta to spend \$1.9M to help Somali youth resist drug trade.

145 Ibid., Alberta to spend \$1.9M to help Somali youth resist drug trade.

“partying” are forbidden in Somali culture, a culture governed by Islamic values.¹⁴⁶ Parents of Somali Canadian male youth expect them to reject activities forbidden by Somali and Islamic tradition activities. The expectation to disengage from social activities that are considered a part of the youth experience in the western world is the primary source of tension between parents and children.¹⁴⁷ Somali Canadian male youth often engage in common activities as their non-Somali counterparts in secret in order to avoid shame and punishment from their parents and the community as a whole.¹⁴⁸

Some Somali youth do indeed feel disconnected from Canadian society. They live in households that have stark contrasts with the rest of Canadian Society. Their homes are “strict” in that there are clear roles to be had by children, and behavioral expectations. When these lines are crossed there are serious consequences. However, Somali youth want to feel as though they can behave like other children, and so they continue to cross these boundaries.- Participant 2

In Somali culture, parental approval and family acceptance is a vital part of emotional survival for children.¹⁴⁹ When a child disobeys a parent, they are often shunned by family members until the behavior in question is changed to the desired outcome of the parent which is believed to be in the best interest of the child. The culture of disowning a child for deviant behavior exists as a staple of Somali society in Canada and abroad. Thus, children often feel that the safest option is often secrecy and denial of an activity or behavior. In a manner that differs far from the norms of traditional western values that encourage openness between parents and children, secrecy is viewed as a form of respect and the socially acceptable alternative to the outward and open defiance of engaging and/or continuing to participate in deviant behavior.¹⁵⁰ As many Somali refugee parents that do not speak English and rely on their children for translation, keeping parents unaware is a task that does not require much effort.¹⁵¹ This poses challenges for parents

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as their children serve as the primary translators for their parents allowing discretion when communicating vital information (i.e. between parents and teachers).¹⁵²

The language barrier between Somali refugees and Canadian society has created an unequal power structure that places socialized children above their parents.¹⁵³ Somali refugee parents do not expect this advantage to be abused by their children requiring translation services. As elder respect is the foundation of Somali culture, children are trusted to uphold their values out of respect for their parents with the ultimate aim being self-respect. Parents who do not speak English are relying on their children to communicate the extent of their negative behavior.¹⁵⁴ When children are given the responsibility of translating their own deviant behavior, they are given the opportunity to miscommunicate the message received by authority figures to their parents.¹⁵⁵ The level of communication of issues is at the complete discretion of the child who acts as the primary gatekeeper between their parents and Canadian society.¹⁵⁶ In cases where children are falling behind in school or are engaging in deviant behavior, the child acts as a translator between their parents and the authority figure in question. Needless to say, messages can easily become lost in translation intentionally or unintentionally.¹⁵⁷ For this reason, learning to speak one or both of the primary languages must be a priority for parents in order to help their families better integrate into Canadian society.

6.1.3. Education

The educational journey of refugee children and their parents is often littered with challenges that are exclusive to their migrant classification, impeding on their ability to socialize and learn affectively.¹⁵⁸ Refugee children have often overcome great obstacles

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158 Joel Windle and Jenny Miller. (2012) "Approaches to teaching low literacy refugee-background students."

and hardship that is embedded into their psyche long after migration.¹⁵⁹ Before refugee children arrive in a host country and begin schooling, they are often exposed to severe trauma. Trauma may be hidden or may manifest through physical, emotional and/or cognitive behaviors.¹⁶⁰ In some instances PTSD, a delayed onset of the symptoms of trauma and grief, may occur in response to reminders of traumatic events.¹⁶¹ Despite these challenges, refugee children are embedded with strengths, abilities, and unique qualities to share with their peers and share similar hopes of prospering in their new home country.

6.1.3.1 Refugee Children versus Economic Immigrant Children

Before delving into the specific issues facing Somali children, it is important to address the unique needs and challenges of all refugee children because adversity impedes the integration process and impacts a child's future experiences.¹⁶² The children of economic immigrants are afforded luxuries that refugee children lack by definition. Often times, the personal business of economic immigrants is handled before leaving the home country whereas the personal business of refugees is left dishevelled and unsettled.¹⁶³ The education of economic immigrant children usually continues uninterrupted whereas the refugee child's education is postponed and/or interrupted due to the conflict in their home country and/or a stay in a refugee camp.

Economic immigrants have the discretion to prepare for their families challenging transition into a new country.¹⁶⁴ However, refugees face those challenges in addition to added barriers, difficulties, confusion that manifest as the result of their abrupt arrival.¹⁶⁵ Often times, children from economic immigrant families come from family units that are

159 Joel Windle and Jenny Miller. (2012) "Approaches to teaching low literacy refugee-background students."

160 British Columbia Teachers Federation. (2009) "Students from Refugee Backgrounds - Education"

161 Ibid., Students from Refugee Backgrounds.

162 Joel Windle and Jenny Miller. (2012) "Approaches to teaching low literacy refugee-background students."

163 Ibid., Approaches to teaching low literacy refugee-background students.

164 Ibid., Approaches to teaching low literacy refugee-background students.

165 Ibid., Approaches to teaching low literacy refugee-background students.

relatively intact, and their requirements to meet basic survival needs are met. In the case of refugee children, there is often an experience of loss and trauma resulting in psychological impacts as a result of perished family members including one or more parents or siblings and/or personal property.¹⁶⁶ Even in cases where entire families are intact, basic requirements for survival such as food, housing, and healthcare may be urgently needed. Perhaps the greatest discrepancy between the two classes of immigrants lies in the reality that returning home is a personal choice for economic immigrants whereas returning home is not an option for refugees unless the war or crisis has calmed or ended.¹⁶⁷ In spite of the unique challenges refugee children face, resiliency of children and youth to survive traumatic experiences should not be miscalculated. Instead, acknowledging the circumstances and potential outcomes that emerge as a result of these challenges should be used to inform policies that will better support refugee children in attaining or even surpassing prescribed learning outcomes (PLOs).

6.1.3.2 Age Placement System

Immigration system has to change age placement. A child that has never been to school [who is] put into grade 5 will struggle and their struggles lead them to drop out.- Participant 7

A factor that contributes to the inability for refugee children to attain success in their academic journey is the policy of age placement. Age placement is the dominant system of educational enrollment in the world varying slightly from region to region.¹⁶⁸ For refugee children who are adjusting to a new culture, language and education system, this policy may set them up for failure. Education is cited as one of the key determinants of future success for children with countless studies indicating a positive relationship between level of academic achievement and the ability to attend university and/or attain employment.¹⁶⁹ This section aims to highlight that in addition to age, the factors impacting

166 British Columbia Teachers Federation. (2009) "Students from Refugee Backgrounds - Education"

167 Ibid., British Columbia Teachers Federation. (2009) "Students from Refugee Backgrounds - Education"

168 School Act, RSBC 1996, c 412.

169 Virginia P. Collier and Wayne P. Thomas. (1989) "How quickly can immigrants become proficient in school English." Journal of educational issues of language minority students 5, no. 1.

refugee children that distinguish them from their economic immigrant peers must be considered if their journey is to be met with a higher likelihood of success.

When refugee children are placed into the education system they experience academic, social and interpersonal challenges.¹⁷⁰ Some of these children who enter school later in their academic life due to differences in language and curriculum in their country of origin may not be as successful as the acquisition of academic language takes more time.¹⁷¹ The compounding factor of academic absence due to the migration progress exacerbates the academic challenges refugee children experience.¹⁷² Unlike their economic immigrant counterparts who face similar challenges with integrating into the school system and society as a whole, refugees experience additional barriers that must be mitigated.

Children arriving to Canada as refugees with their family typically settle in low income areas within metropolitan cities due to their socio-economic status.¹⁷³ As a result, the vulnerable population of refugee children often attend schools that are underfunded.¹⁷⁴ Without proper funding, educators face challenges addressing the specific needs of their students due to the lower availability of spending per student.¹⁷⁵ A lack of funding means inadequate support for educators who require additional resources to those afforded by the school budget in order to address the needs of refugee children.¹⁷⁶ The issue of age placement exacerbates these conditions because refugee children have likely missed months or years of school.

170 Joel Windle and Jenny Miller. (2012) "Approaches to teaching low literacy refugee-background students."

171 Kenji Hakuta. (2000) "How long does it take English learners to attain proficiency."

172 Joel Windle and Jenny Miller. (2012) "Approaches to teaching low literacy refugee-background students."

173 Thomas S. Carter, and John Osborne. (2009) "Housing and neighbourhood challenges of refugee resettlement in declining inner city neighbourhoods: A Winnipeg case study." *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 7, no. 3.

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Placing a refugee child into a foreign education system under the aforementioned conditions should be met with the expectancy of failure. The fact that some refugee children are thriving despite these conditions that their non-refugee peers do not face is miraculous. According to data on immigrant education, age appropriate conversational levels take between one to two years, and five to seven years for academic language to be strong.¹⁷⁷ Thus, the placement of any child, let alone a refugee, who has missed months or a year of schooling into the education system without an assessment of their education level based on age defeats logic. Children who are exposed to such conditions are unlikely to meet the PLO's set out by the education system. This results in self-esteem issues, academic failure, deviance, and quite possibly, the pursuit of illegal income generating activities. This grim trajectory is a reality for refugee children, including Somali, who are placed into the education system – children that are already struggling to come to terms with the insurmountable challenges that accompany the integration process.

6.1.4. Social & Economic Challenges

Though multiculturalism is an integral part of Canada's identity, socio-economic forces require the adoption of Canadian values and norms by refugees that differ from Somali culture.

6.1.4.1 Family Size & Structure

Harmonizing the discrepancies between the Canadian and Somali culture is especially challenging for Somali families because the core values that dictate daily life in Somalia are dismantled. A major element of culture shock for Somalis results from the societal shift that requires mothers, who may have had four or more children, to enter the workforce.¹⁷⁸ For the most part, Somali culture operates under the guise of patriarchal standards that have evaporated from Canadian society.¹⁷⁹ The Somali culture assigns

177 English as a Second Language Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association. (2010)
"Understanding ESL Learners: Distinguishing between Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)"

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women the role of being a homemaker who relies solely on her spouse or children to support the household.

A key distinction between Canadian and Somali culture lies in the belief that wealth is measured by the number of children within a family versus the variable of income.¹⁸⁰ This is not to discount the awareness of economic prosperity amongst the Somali community as a whole but rather, to explain the prominence of large families. Somali cultural norms and values placed on the legacy and lineage support the expansion of families until the mother is no longer able to bare children.¹⁸¹ In Somali culture, the element of family expansion supersedes the factor of economics considered by Westerners.¹⁸² While neither of these values are superior to one another, Somali parents often fail to take into consideration the drastic changes in circumstances in Canada that shape the nuclear family structure of traditional westerners.

6.1.4.2 Socio-economic Challenges

When Somali refugee families come to Canada, the process of settling requires economic support from the government. The support provided by the government is short term and minimal, leaving non-governmental organizations and community networks to pick up the slack. Refugee claimants are provided with one year of financial support in addition to essential services under the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP).¹⁸³ Monthly income support provided to refugees is based on the standard provincial social assistance rate, affording the minimum support required to cover basic costs of living.¹⁸⁴ Families face further challenges in providing care for their unit because extended health care benefits such as dental care are not included. In their denial of extended health care services to refugees (also denied to the majority of Canadians), these programs fail to recognize the concept “refugee”.

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183 Citizenship and Immigration Canada: Help within Canada (Refugees). (2012). Retrieved from the Government of Canada website, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/refugees/help.asp>

184 Ibid., The Refugee System within Canada

Unlike their economic immigrant counterparts, refugees are not working upon settlement. Furthermore, the physical, mental and emotional conditions facing economic immigrants and refugees differ drastically with the latter experiencing PTSD in combination with physical ailments.¹⁸⁵ For Somali refugees, these barriers to employment are exacerbated by the challenges that accompany the process of integration. Somali mothers often experience the brunt of the socio-economic issues as the main providers of emotional and physical survival of the child. In an economy that requires both parents to work, economic pressure for women to conform to Canadian norms results in the breakdown of the traditional Somali culture in the household.¹⁸⁶

Though women in Canada continue to fight for equal access to work and rights in the workplace, most families are stripped of the choice to keep a parent at home due to the high cost of living. Due to economic reasons, many families are finding themselves without the choice of having a stay at home parent. In addition to the cultural differences that shape the Somali family unit, the economic challenges faced by newcomers almost always requires refugee women to seek employment shortly after arrival. Refugees are distinguishable from economic class immigrants in two ways: their economic means to immigrate, and their economic means to integrate. Somali refugee family units have high rates of single parents, typically women, as a direct result of the migration process. The trauma experienced during war paired with the pressures of migration and integration put extreme amounts of stress on marriages.¹⁸⁷ In many cases, women flee with their children in hopes of being reunited with their spouses.¹⁸⁸ However, the long period of separation and inability to communicate while apart has led to the dissolution of many marriages.¹⁸⁹ Somali refugees who are single mothers are left reliant on social support.¹⁹⁰ Many are unable to seek employment due to their inability to speak English and health issues

185 British Columbia Teachers Federation. (2009) "Students from Refugee Backgrounds - Education" Retrieved from Government of BC Website: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/esl/refugees_teachers_guide.pdf

186 Participant data

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including those stemming from PTSD.¹⁹¹ In most cases, Somali refugees who are single working mothers rely on social support to supplement their income due to the high volume of young children in the household.¹⁹²

6.1.4.3 Immigration Loan Repayment

The Immigration Loans Program (ILP) helps government-assisted and privately sponsored members of the *Convention on Refugees Abroad and Country of Asylum*.¹⁹³ The ILP covers the travel documents as well as the costs of medical examinations abroad, transportation and processing of refugees.¹⁹⁴ Refugees are not technically considered immigrants because they have left their home state forcefully. This makes their socio-economic conditions different from their economic immigrant counterparts who are responsible for the costs covered by the ILP. Circumstances differ because the extension of Charter rights to refugees is based on the principles guiding the tradition of humanitarian action recognizing the vulnerability of refugees. Refugee citizenship is granted as an act of compassion under the tradition of humanitarian action.

The ILP is a loan Somali refugees struggle to repay.¹⁹⁵ The costs attributed to the transportation and processing of refugees that is charged to families can amount to tens of thousands of dollars that families do not have and are unable to acquire. The ILP is a source of stress for Somali refugees who are struggling to integrate for a multitude of reasons. Inability to find employment after settlement due to primarily educational and language deficiencies makes the ILP a cost that refugee families cannot afford.¹⁹⁶ With their ILP loan acquiring interest yearly despite their socio-economic conditions, their debt steadily increases, creating a financial burden that hinders the possibility of economic

191 Participant data

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¹⁹³ Citizenship and Immigration Canada: Financial Assistance – Refugees: Immigrant Loan Repayment Program. Retrieved from the Government of Canada, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/resettle-assist.asp>

194 Ibid., Financial Assistance – Refugees: Immigrant Loan Repayment Program.

195 Participant data

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prosperity.¹⁹⁷ Like most Canadian families, refugee families prioritize the needs of their children such as food and shelter. Refugees are completely reliant on the Refugee Assistance Program which covers the bare necessities of daily life in Canada.¹⁹⁸ This reality leaves ILP repayment as a financial stressor that goes unpaid for years until refugees are able to secure employment that allows them to allocate resources to debt repayment.¹⁹⁹

6.1.4.4 Single Parenthood & Somali Motherhood

[Somali] single moms raise children in two cultures, deal with emotional issues, [and] divorce. Only a strong woman can handle that. - Participant 7

Somali refugees who are single mothers arrive with psychological and emotional issues stemming from divorce and/or separation from a spouse during the escape from war.²⁰⁰ This adversely impacts the emotional health of children who are left with mothers who are unable to advocate for their children in a society that requires parents to be the main advocate for their child.²⁰¹ In the Somali culture, children are able to rely on adult family members, non-familial elders and the community as a whole to advocate for their interests.²⁰² As the elder refugees, including parents, are not aware of the language, rules and regulations in Canada, the task of child advocacy becomes impossible.²⁰³ For parents, it is challenging to decipher the differences between responsibilities back home and in Canada. Managing financial responsibilities, home duties, learning the school system, all while adapting to a new country is a task that single Somali mothers must do on their own.²⁰⁴

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Somali single parents face multiple barriers in aiding their children with their integration into the school system.²⁰⁵ School age children from refugee households are left to figure out the education system without support from home (i.e. checking homework, reading before bed with parents) afforded to their peers.²⁰⁶ These conditions are intensified when coming from a single family household, sometimes resulting in lower academic performance and low self-confidence.²⁰⁷ Although children of refugees tend to adapt to their school environment, single parents are unable to attend parent-teacher meetings and/or participate in extracurricular duties as a result of the stresses faced in all facets of daily life.²⁰⁸ When children are misbehaving, a symptom of PTSD and general stresses associated with the concept of 'refugee', single parents are often times completely unaware of the situation.

The combination of interpersonal and family stress, and language barriers results in the failure of parents addressing the shortcomings of their children. Children facing school related challenges understand that their parents are unable to understand or communicate with authority figures (i.e. teachers) forcing them to act as translators of vital information. Whether or not this information is properly communicated is at the complete discretion of the children. Placing the responsibility of adults onto children is an unjust reality that many Somali children face as a result of their privilege of learning the language before their parents.

Somali mothers are often times powerless to intervene in the downward spiral of their children unless armed with the tools to navigate society and advocate for their children.²⁰⁹ The opportunity to fall between the cracks academically and socially speaking is increased when coming from a single parent household. Somali mothers who are refugees are often struggling to keep their families together and neglect their own mental health. Once their children become socialized, the economic and social deficiencies of their household are met with perseverance or hostility. Feelings of inadequacy due to the

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societal and peer pressure to have material objects is a shared experience amongst most Somali children who are newcomers to Canada.²¹⁰

Somali mothers who are refugees have often sacrificed education to marry for economic reasons.²¹¹ Somali children who require additional support are unable to receive it from home unless they are aided by an older sibling or English speaking community member. Academically speaking, children with educated parents, as well as those who receive support from home are better able to meet PLO outcomes.²¹² In cases where Somali refugee children have educated parents, they are not educated in Canada thus making their academic outcomes the same as refugee children whose parents are uneducated.²¹³ Without the tools to navigate the education system and advocate for their children, Somali mothers are left unaware of their child's academic health until it is too late. Somali culture permits boys to be unsupervised unlike the girls who are under the strict supervision of parents. Negative forces often replace empowerment tools such as education when academic achievement is poor.²¹⁴

6.1.4.5 Deviance & Criminality

Somali parents who are unable to integrate or embrace Canadian culture because of ethnic, cultural and political reasons face barriers when parenting their children who are socialized in Canada.²¹⁵ For all parents, the absence of supervision in the academic journey of children leaves the doors open to toxic forces that replace empowerment tools such as education when educational achievement is low. Without the resources, support and awareness of Canadian culture, Somali parents are left unable to address the issues facing their children both inside and outside of the home in a method that is culturally appropriate. The failure of Somali parents to adequately address deviance in the school

210 British Columbia Teachers Federation. (2009) "Students from Refugee Backgrounds - Education" Retrieved from Government of BC Website: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/esl/refugees_teachers_guide.pdf

211 Participant data

212 Joel Windle and Jenny Miller. (2012) "Approaches to teaching low literacy refugee-background students."

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system and outside has had a profoundly negative impact on Somali children, especially boys.²¹⁶ Somali children who do not perform well in school are prey for predators who are looking to involve youth in illegal activities and exploit their weaknesses. Due to the lack of supervision afforded to boys in the Somali culture, children are able to exploit the ignorance of their parents to enable them to engage in deviant behavior without interruption until they come into contact with the criminal justice system.²¹⁷

When the deviance of Somali male youth reaches the point of criminal behavior, it becomes extremely challenging to alter their trajectory due to the same deficiencies that allowed their behaviors to manifest initially.²¹⁸ Parents are unable to advocate for their children or themselves due to their inability to speak English.²¹⁹ Once their children come into contact with the criminal justice system, Somali parents are unable to advocate for their children in the same ways that they were unable to do so in the education system for the same reasons.²²⁰ Culturally speaking, the element of shame associated with having a child labelled deviant and/or criminal leads Somali parents to be in denial of their child's involvement.²²¹ In the end, children suffer the most as their parents are unable to effectively discipline them or provide the support required to overcome behavioral challenges.²²²

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7. Theory Application to Issues Facing Somali Canadian Male Youth

The following section focuses on child and youth specific challenges facing Somali Canadians. The term "Somali children" refers to the first generation of Somali Canadians who are the descendants of refugee parents, and refugee children living in Canada. Children and youth are the most impressionable groups during the immigration and integration process.²²³ This section fuses sociological theory rooted in criminology into the data collected from participants of this study regarding the experiences of Somali refugee youth. This section employs Differential Association Theory (DAT), Social Disorganization Theory (SDT) and Routine Activities Theory (RAT) to provide insights into the challenges facing Somali male youth. The DAT states that individuals learn the values, attitudes, techniques and motives for behaviors including deviance through interaction with others and society.²²⁴ The SDT asserts that crime is the result of unfavorable conditions within certain communities and attributes deviant and criminal behavior to ecological factors.²²⁵ The RAT is based on the assumption that a crime can be committed by anyone that has the opportunity.²²⁶

Self-esteem is deeply affected when already vulnerable communities, such as refugee communities are subjected to compounding factors such as racism, and xenophobia. This harbors resentment within these communities as well, and can lead to serious security risks. - Participant 7

223 Participant data

224 Ross L. Matsueta.(2001) "Differential association theory." Encyclopedia of criminology and deviant behavior 1.

225 Charis E. Kubrin and Ronald Weitzer. (2003) "New directions in social disorganization theory." Journal of research in crime and delinquency 40, no. 4.

226 D. Wayne Osgood, Janet K. Wilson, Patrick M. O'malley, Jerald G. Bachman, and Lloyd D. Johnston. (1996) "Routine activities and individual deviant behavior." American Sociological Review.

7.1. Role of Criminal Theory in Deconstructing the Criminal Justice System (CJS)

The capitalistic forces that operate in western society via corporations, mass media and consumerism has resulted in the construction of societal goals focused on attaining material wealth. One of the key societal institutions that determines an individual's ability to attain high skilled labor and an income that will allow for the acquisition of benefits is education.²²⁷ Students who drop out are more likely than graduates to participate in illegal income generating activities in order to generate income.²²⁸ Societal pressure to attain material wealth paired with economic pressures to conform to the cultural goals has left many youth to fall victim to negative influences who reject the institutionalized means of achieving financial status.²²⁹ Criminological theory provides explanations and insights into the phenomena of crime in society. Many individuals experience the revolving door of the CJS due the inability to understand the patterns and circumstances that lead to their habitual offending. Theories such as the Differential Association Theory (DAT), Routine Activities Theory (RAT) and Social Disorganization Theory (SDT) are used in this study to deconstruct the issues that are specific to Somali refugee youth due to the incorporation of social, economic and political causes of deviance.

7.1.1. Differential Association Theory & the “Black Male” Label

The labelling of Somali refugee youth as “Black” in the North American context is factually incorrect and problematic. The values attributed to the concept of “blackness” are diametrically opposed to the Islamic values that govern Somali culture.²³⁰ The global exploitation of African American culture is evident as modes of entertainment such as musical genres created and dominated by African Americans, in addition to other facets,

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are global sensations.²³¹ The admiration of African American culture throughout the world has resulted in cultural appropriation and exploitation that goes relatively unchecked by societal institutions.²³² The beliefs tied to the concept of “black male” rooted in slavery as being barbaric, ignorant, violent and primitive were designed to perpetuate fear amongst whites in America. Evidence that this concept still governs American society is revealed in the systematic targeting of black males by police as well as their unparalleled incarceration rates in comparison to the general population.²³³

In Canada, Somali Refugee youth who are labelled by society as “black” adopt the values attributed to the foreign concept as a form of social acceptance. Conditions are similar for other ethnic groups labelled black in North America.²³⁴ The factor that distinguishes Somalis from other non-Muslim blacks is religion. During the process of socialization, Somali parents reject the North American concept of “black” for two reasons: religious values, and the fear of negative connotations associated with the label.²³⁵ This implies that many Somalis parents accept the “black” concept as reality failing to realize that it is based on skin color, and therefore also applies to them. From the perspective of the Somali refugee parent who lived in Somalia, the idea of being labelled as an African American by society is unfathomable.²³⁶ In fact, some Somali parents develop similar fears of “blacks” during the socialization process as a result of societal forces that push the negative connotations associated with blackness in the mass media.²³⁷ For this reason, the resulting impact of socialization that leads refugee children (namely males) to conform to negative values associated with the concept of “black” is a primary source of tension between Somali parents and their children.²³⁸

231 Komanduri S. Murty,, Julian B. Roebuck, and Jimmy D. McCamey Jr. (2014) "Race and Class Exploitation: A Study of Black Male Student Athletes (BSAs) On White Campuses." Race, Gender & Class 21.

232 Ibid., Race and Class Exploitation.

233 Ibid., Race and Class Exploitation.

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Before exploring the Differential Association Theory in relation to Somali refugee children and the North American concept of “black”, it is important to highlight that the negative stereotypes of values informing the concept were not constructed by African Americans. These stereotypes and values associated with the North American concept of “black” are informed by ignorance and hatred, and reflects views that are rooted in white supremacy, racial domination and racism dating back to slavery.²³⁹ The negative stereotypes and assumptions tied to the North American concept of blackness are factually incorrect and equally as harmful to African Americans as a whole.²⁴⁰

The theory of Differential Association proposes that through interaction with others and society, individuals learn the values, attitudes, techniques and motives for behaviors, including deviance.²⁴¹ The concept of “black male” is constructed on the belief that black men are violent and primitive by nature – and are more likely to engage in criminal behavior as a result. The “black male” concept has evolved to include the negative stereotypes attributed to African American hip-hop culture.²⁴² The musical genre of hip hop, which was created by African Americans and has dominated the global music industry, fuels the contemporary concept of “black male” – a concept that is governed by the same intrinsically racist values it was built upon. Hip-hop and its subcategory rap is a creative expression of the oppression and struggle faced by African Americans in history and modern times. The emergence of hip-hop culture in the 1980’s, a movement stemming from the Civil Rights Era, in the United States was met with backlash by the government and organizations who condemned the depiction of gang culture, violence, misogyny and disrespect of authority.²⁴³ Ironically, all of the conditions portrayed in hip-

239 Matthew Desmond and Mustafa Emirbayer. (2009) "What is racial domination?." Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race 6, no. 02.

240 Ibid., What is racial domination?

241 Ross L. Matsueda.(2001) "Differential association theory." Encyclopedia of criminology and deviant behavior 1.

242 Ibid., Differential association theory.

243 Komanduri S. Murty,, Julian B. Roebuck, and Jimmy D. McCamey Jr. (2014) "Race and Class Exploitation: A Study of Black Male Student Athletes (BSAs) On White Campuses." Race, Gender & Class 21.

hop and rap are a reflection of the realities faced by African Americans from the systemic oppression carried out by the same institutions who are condemning the craft.²⁴⁴

As Somali males are labelled “black males”, they are often treated by peers and institutions according to the values attributed to the label.²⁴⁵ Though some of the stereotypes attributed to the concept of being a “black male” are positive²⁴⁶, stereotypes as a whole are rooted in ignorance making them especially harmful to new-comers searching for an identity.²⁴⁷ During the process of integration, immigrants seek acceptance from society in order to transition into institutions.²⁴⁸ Somali males are labelled as black males, inheriting the stereotypes that accompany the concept. For Somali male youth who are searching for an identity and acceptance by society, the benefit of this label stems from the popularity of African American culture and social acceptance from peers.²⁴⁹ However, adopting the fictional concept of the “black male” as portrayed in the mass media as gangsters and drug dealers has had profound consequences for Somali male youth and their families.

The labelling Somali male youth as “black male” in society, and within individuals has contributed immensely to their rates of participation in IIGA. Though the concept of “black male” is a social construct that is not representative of the majority of African American males and violates Islamic principles, the DAT explains that beliefs tied to identity informs behavior.²⁵⁰ Somali refugee youth criminality is initiated by the challenges that accompany their integration and poverty however, it is fueled by the glorification of

244 Ibid., Race and Class Exploitation.

245 Participant data

246 Komanduri S. Murty,, Julian B. Roebuck, and Jimmy D. McCamey Jr. (2014) "Race and Class Exploitation: A Study of Black Male Student Athletes (BSAs) On White Campuses." Race, Gender & Class 21.

247 Participant data

248 Participant data

249 Participant data

250 Ross L. Matsueda.(2001) "Differential association theory." Encyclopedia of criminology and deviant behavior 1.

society's label of black men as gangsters and criminals.²⁵¹ Somali male youth who choose to conform to the concept are violating their Somali and Islamic values. Yet they conform to the societal label of "black male" despite the fact that Islamic values prohibit the behaviors depicted in hip-hop such as engaging in partying, consuming drugs and alcohol, and premarital sex.²⁵² Once these behaviors are discovered, it often creates rifts between parents and the community that are challenging to restore.²⁵³ For this reason, Somali male youth do not communicate their interpersonal challenges to parents out of fear of bringing shame to their family and being shunned by their parents.²⁵⁴

Somali refugee children are subjected to societal concepts that are discriminatory and defamatory by design. When experiencing educational deficiencies, poverty and a lack of support within the home, children are more likely to respond to the societal forces that give them validation.²⁵⁵ The sensationalism of hip-hop and its affiliation with the concept of "black male" makes the identity a socially acceptable label for Somali male youth when they are lacking a true sense of self.²⁵⁶ The creation of a dual identity is a common experience for Somali refugee youth who are labelled "black" outside of the home but adhere to the Somali culture within the home. Somali refugee parents are unaware of the conditions facing their children because their identities are well formed before coming to Canada. The different circumstances facing Somali refugee children who are pushed to interact with society versus parents who can control their level of exposure is a source of tension, and constant misunderstandings.²⁵⁷

Somali Canadian male youth who are struggling with integration challenges are prey for predators looking to recruit individuals into the drug trade.²⁵⁸ The Differential

251 Komanduri S. Murty,, Julian B. Roebuck, and Jimmy D. McCamey Jr. (2014) "Race and Class Exploitation: A Study of Black Male Student Athletes (BSAs) On White Campuses." Race, Gender & Class 21.

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Association theory predicts that an individual will choose the criminal path when the balance of definitions for participating in criminal behavior exceeds those for law-abiding.²⁵⁹ Somali refugee children are often facing poverty and family issues that hinder their ability to achieve academic success which obliterates their self-confidence. Children who are low achievers face stigma from peers and educators, impacting their ability to form healthy social connections. The DAT outlines that the earlier an individual comes under the influence of those of high status within a group, the more likely the individual is to mimic their behavior.²⁶⁰ The DAT explains that individuals are motivated by the need for money and social gain.²⁶¹ When an individual is unable to acquire money or social gains through institutionally acceptable means and comes into contact with bad influences who have access, they will adopt the same lifestyle.²⁶² As such, Somali male youth who are performing poorly in school that come into contact with negative forces that have high social status and wealth face immense pressure to attain the same circumstances despite their values.²⁶³

The DAT does not deny that there are practical motives for crime theft fuelled by hunger.²⁶⁴ However, the theory asserts that the desire to meet ones needs can be met in various ways, including institutionally acceptable ones such as finding employment and saving to acquire material possessions. The theory highlights that an individual's direction of motives and drives is learned from definitions of the laws and policies as favorable or unfavorable. According to DAT, a Somali male who adopts that concept of "black male" and mimics the messages in rap music views the prohibition of the drug trade as unfavorable. This results from glorification of material wealth and rap artists who participated in IIGA as a means to attain money and social status. In essence, these Somali male youth learn that society favors "black males" who participate in IIGA's despite

259 Ross L. Matsueda.(2001) "Differential association theory." Encyclopedia of criminology and deviant behavior 1.

260 Ibid., Differential association theory.

261 Ibid., Differential association theory.

262 Ibid., Differential association theory.

263 Participant Data

264 Ross L. Matsueda.(2001) "Differential association theory." Encyclopedia of criminology and deviant behavior 1.

the fact that it is illegal – signalling a form of acceptance from consumers who are typically their peers. The DAT states that criminal behavior is learned through interaction with others persons in a process of communication.²⁶⁵ The push to adopt the “black male” concept and adhere to the images glamorized by mass media act as a principal part of the learning of criminal behavior. The DAT states that behavior is learned and reinforced within intimate personal groups.²⁶⁶ This means that as “black males”, Somali male youth who adopt the concept learns criminal behavior from individuals of all creeds who embrace the gangster lifestyle, living out the socially constructed concept in the real world.

7.1.2. Social Disorganization Theory (SDT) & Socio-economic Conditions

The Social Disorganization Theory is effective in deconstructing the causes of Somali refugee children participation in IIGA and other deviant behaviors because it takes into account several variables attributed to the concept “refugee”. Somali refugees who arrive in Canada tend to settle in population dense areas due to the higher levels of government resources, transit and other benefits associated with urban life.²⁶⁷ Population dense cities also have higher crime rates than suburban and rural areas as a result of several barriers including higher poverty rates, increased interactions between individuals of all income levels and higher costs of living. The theory of Social Disorganization asserts that crime is the result of unfavorable conditions within certain communities.²⁶⁸ In metropolis cities, the discrepancies between incomes are reflected in contrasting lifestyles lived in high and low income neighborhoods. The SDT states that there are ecological factors that lead to high rates of crime in these low income communities.²⁶⁹ Refugee

265 Gerben Bruinsma. (2014) "Differential Association Theory." In Encyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice, pp. 1065-1075. Springer New York.

266 Ibid., Differential association theory.

267 Participant data

268 Charis E. Kubrin and Ronald Weitzer. (2003) "New directions in social disorganization theory." Journal of research in crime and delinquency 40, no. 4.

269 Ibid., New directions in social disorganization theory.

families are often living in subsidized housing located in low income neighborhoods within metropolis cities.²⁷⁰

According to the Social Disorganization theory, ecological factors are linked to elevated levels of "high school dropouts, unemployment, deteriorating infrastructures, and single-parent homes"²⁷¹. These conditions and their consequences are evident in the Somali community. Somali refugee youth often grow up in underfunded neighborhoods that do not have the resources required to support them academically or facilities that host extracurricular activities. Somali youth who are not of working age rely entirely on their parents to provide them with resources to pursue recreational and other positive outlets.²⁷² Somali parents are often unable to support their children in these avenues as a result of the socio-economic realities that accompany their refugee status. These circumstances are exacerbated for Somali refugee children who come from single parent households putting positive extracurricular activities such as sports and recreation out of reach. Low income neighborhoods have higher crime rates making them an unsafe environment²⁷³ for Somali refugee youth to frequent without attracting negative social forces.²⁷⁴ Without the means to keep their children out of the streets where they are vulnerable to criminal predators, Somali refugee youth fall victim to the external forces pushing them to deviate from their cultural values and participate in deviant and/or criminal behaviors.²⁷⁵

After the process of escaping war to a country deemed safe and coping with the culture shock, Somali refugee parents are often unaware of the negative forces in their new country.²⁷⁶ In the Somali culture, boys are granted social autonomy at a young age

270 Participant data

271 Larry Gaines and Roger Miller. (2013) *Criminal justice in action: The core*. Cengage Learning.

272 Participant data

273 Siu Kwong Wong. (2012) "Youth crime and family disruption in Canadian municipalities: An adaptation of Shaw and McKay's social disorganization theory." *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice* 40, no. 2.

274 Participant data

275 Participant data

276 Participant data

resulting in less supervision than their female counterparts.²⁷⁷ This has produced the higher levels of deviant behaviors amongst Somali male youth. Refugee parents are often unaware of the immense dangers associated with leaving youth unsupervised in Canadian society.²⁷⁸ For Somali refugee children, these dangers are magnified by their socio-economic condition paired with the identity crisis that emerges during the integration process. The SDT theory directly links crime rates to neighborhood ecological characteristics²⁷⁹ meaning that a Somali refugee child who lives in a low income neighborhood is more likely to engage in criminal behavior than one who lives in an affluent neighborhood. The theory highlights that an individual's residential location is a considerable factor in determining the probability of involvement in illegal income generating activities.²⁸⁰ Social Disorganization Theory suggests that youth who live in low income neighborhoods participate in a subculture of delinquency.²⁸¹ For Somali refugee children living in these areas, the subculture is evident through individuals participating in IIGA that have acquired material wealth via methods glamorized by pop culture.

Drug dealing, amongst other illicit activities, is more transparent in low income areas and functions as a part of a subculture that approves of delinquency as a means to escape cyclical poverty.²⁸² The SDT suggests that Somali refugee youth who live in these communities acquire criminality in this social and cultural setting as a socially acceptable form of gaining status and wealth.²⁸³ Applying the theory of Social Disorganization to Somali male youth participation in IIGA explains that residential location is a significant factor contributing to criminal behavior. In essence, a Somali male youth labelled as a

277 Participant data

278 Participant data

279 Siu Kwong Wong. (2012) "Youth crime and family disruption in Canadian municipalities: An adaptation of Shaw and McKay's social disorganization theory." *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice* 40, no. 2.

280 Charis E. Kubrin and Ronald Weitzer. (2003) "New directions in social disorganization theory." *Journal of research in crime and delinquency* 40, no. 4.

281 Ibid., *New directions in social disorganization theory*.

282 Siu Kwong Wong. (2012) "Youth crime and family disruption in Canadian municipalities: An adaptation of Shaw and McKay's social disorganization theory." *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice* 40, no. 2.

283 Charis E. Kubrin and Ronald Weitzer. (2003) "New directions in social disorganization theory." *Journal of research in crime and delinquency* 40, no. 4.

“black male” who lives in an affluent neighborhood that has access to extracurricular activities is less likely to participate in IIGA.²⁸⁴ This highlights the notion that an individual’s physical characteristics in addition to their residential location is a determinant of criminality and deviance.²⁸⁵ Therefore, when settling Somali refugees into Canada, their residential location is a better indicator of Somali male youth deviance than the social labels that accompany their physical characteristics.²⁸⁶

7.1.3. Routine Activities Theory (RAT) & Somali Culture of Male Autonomy

The Routine Activities Theory is valuable in explaining the participation of Somali male youth in IIGA and other deviant behaviors when taking into account Somali cultural norms that give males social autonomy. Though the RAT discounts ecological factors, and social factors, it provides a macro level view on deviance that is useful in deconstructing the opportunity premise associated with crime.²⁸⁷ The theory focuses on the offender’s behavior, the decisions that lead one to commit a crime at a particular time and specific crime events.²⁸⁸ The RAT operates on the assumption that a crime can be committed by anyone that has the opportunity.²⁸⁹ The theory attributes the outcome of former youth deviants committing less crime as they age to the reduced opportunity – as opposed to personality change.²⁹⁰ As individuals age, they tend to conform to societal and institutional norms such as working, marriage and other habitual behaviors, thus closing the window of opportunity to commit a crime.²⁹¹ The more occupied an individual is with institutionally

284 Charis E. Kubrin and Ronald Weitzer. (2003) "New directions in social disorganization theory." *Journal of research in crime and delinquency* 40, no. 4.

285 Siu Kwong Wong. (2012) "Youth crime and family disruption in Canadian municipalities: An adaptation of Shaw and McKay’s social disorganization theory." *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice* 40, no. 2.

286 *Ibid.*, Youth crime and family disruption in Canadian municipalities.

287 D. Wayne Osgood, Janet K. Wilson, Patrick M. O’malley, Jerald G. Bachman, and Lloyd D. Johnston. (1996) "Routine activities and individual deviant behavior." *American Sociological Review*.

288 *Ibid.*, Routine activities and individual deviant behavior.

289 *Ibid.*, Routine activities and individual deviant behavior.

290 *Ibid.*, Routine activities and individual deviant behavior.

291 *Ibid.*, Routine activities and individual deviant behavior.

acceptable forms of work or socialization, the less likely they are to engage in criminal behavior due to the time consumed by their responsibilities.²⁹² For the simple fact is that most children do not have these responsibilities and have more “free” hours in the day, they are more prone to engaging in deviant behavior.²⁹³ Youth who are not occupied with tasks and/or responsibilities are more prone to engaging in deviance as this time period is especially challenging socially and educationally.²⁹⁴ This suggests that a best practice in reducing youth deviance is engaging them with positive extracurricular activities during their free time.

[Somali] parents do not understand that recreation will help them [Somali male youth] integrate better into Canadian society – rec helps them build social interactions, soccer helps build healthy relationships, health wise [and spend] time beneficial ways. - Participant 7

Somali Canadian male youth are prone to engaging in deviant and criminal behavior as a result of the issues stemming from their failed integration into Canadian society.²⁹⁵ Somali refugee parents often lack the financial resources to enroll children in extracurricular activities.²⁹⁶ Somali males are more vulnerable to criminality and deviance because parents fail to put the same social constraints onto their sons as they have on their daughters. Routine Activity Theory states that in order for a crime to be committed, three specific criteria are required: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and finally, the absence of a capable guardian.²⁹⁷ The social autonomy granted to Somali males paired with the lack of supervision from parents who are occupied with the integration process presents the perfect opportunity for youth to commit a crime. The general lifestyle of an individual plays an important role in the application of the Routine Activity Theory. The theory suggests that the more one is exposed to criminal behavior in their everyday

292 D. Wayne Osgood, Janet K. Wilson, Patrick M. O'malley, Jerald G. Bachman, and Lloyd D. Johnston. (1996) "Routine activities and individual deviant behavior." American Sociological Review.

293 Ibid., Routine activities and individual deviant behavior.

294 Ibid., Routine activities and individual deviant behavior.

295 Participant data

296 Participant data

297 D. Wayne Osgood, Janet K. Wilson, Patrick M. O'malley, Jerald G. Bachman, and Lloyd D. Johnston. (1996) "Routine activities and individual deviant behavior." American Sociological Review.

lifestyle, the higher the likelihood that a person will commit criminal activity.²⁹⁸ Somali refugee youth who are living in low income areas are susceptible to criminal elements due to the higher rates of crime in those areas.²⁹⁹ Often times, Somali male youth who engage in IIGA are not performing well academically and form social ties with individuals who are in the same predicament.³⁰⁰ Two of the three key variables, motivated offender and suitable target³⁰¹, are typically fulfilled through low socio-economic status and individuals/property that are targeted to acquire wealth.

The solution to crime and deviance that emerges with the Routine Activity Theory comes through the reduction or elimination of one of the three factors: a motivated offender, a suitable target, or the absence of a capable guardian.³⁰² Somali refugee youth who commit crimes are often living in conditions of poverty and learn the suitable targets through negative social connections.³⁰³ Therefore, the option of increasing supervision during “free” hours of the day is the most viable option for preventing criminality and deviance amongst Somali male youth.³⁰⁴ Increasing supervision through enrollment in afterschool programs decreases the ability and opportunity of youth to commit crime.³⁰⁵ Outside of the time spent at school and at home, the hours left to engage in criminal behavior shrinks.³⁰⁶ Furthermore, the participation in extracurricular activities promotes building of positive and healthy relationships. Historically, attempts to encourage youth to

298 D. Wayne Osgood, Janet K. Wilson, Patrick M. O'malley, Jerald G. Bachman, and Lloyd D. Johnston. (1996) "Routine activities and individual deviant behavior." *American Sociological Review*.

299 Participant data

300 Participant data

301 D. Wayne Osgood, Janet K. Wilson, Patrick M. O'malley, Jerald G. Bachman, and Lloyd D. Johnston. (1996) "Routine activities and individual deviant behavior." *American Sociological Review*.

302 Ibid., *Routine activities and individual deviant behavior*.

303 Participant data

304 Participant data

305 D. Wayne Osgood, Janet K. Wilson, Patrick M. O'malley, Jerald G. Bachman, and Lloyd D. Johnston. (1996) "Routine activities and individual deviant behavior." *American Sociological Review*.

306 Ibid., *Routine activities and individual deviant behavior*.

stay home during prime criminal hours have included creating a curfew for everyone under the age of 18 in neighborhoods that were rampant with crime.

The option of creating and/or enrolling Somali refugee children in after school programs is beneficial on the personal and community level. After school programs such as sports and youth clubs act as a safe haven which allows children to express aggression creatively and physically.³⁰⁷ These programs give youth the opportunity to occupy their time with positive activities during the peak criminal hours (after school - night). More importantly, these activities are attended by suitable guardians who have the ability to serve as mentors and are role models for children who are struggling to integrate into Canadian society and cannot rely on their parents for support.

³⁰⁷ Participant data

8. Policy Options, Matrix & Evaluation

This study aims to provide policy options and make recommendations that address aspects of the following policy question:

How can the Canadian Government address the challenges Somali male youth face when integrating into Canadian Society?

Policy aimed at addressing the policy issue by providing refugee class immigrants of Somali decent with additional support or a revision of the current supports received when integrating into Canadian society must operate within the framework of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Government policy aimed at reducing the amount of Somali Canadian male youth engaging in deviant and/or criminal activity by improving the adult Somali refugee class immigrant's access to educational programs, health care and social support would ideally include other refugee groups arriving to Canada, adhering to the principle of equity. Though these policy recommendations are focused on Somali refugees, further research may show that extending these policy recommendations to other refugee groups may result in similar positive outcomes. This study focuses on two societal objectives: (1) public safety/security and (2) effectiveness. The three government management objectives outlined in this section are (1) administrative ease, (2) cost, and (3) political feasibility.

8.1. Societal Objectives

8.1.1. Public Safety and Security

The term public safety refers to the welfare and protection of the public. This is generally expressed as a governmental responsibility. Public safety increases through prevention and protection carried out by public safety divisions such as law enforcement and community outreach programs. The term security is defined as the state of being free from danger allowing individuals and communities to function without fear of violence and intimidation.

Relevant Criteria

- I.* Does the policy reduce the number of Somali Refugee children & Somali Canadian male youth engaging in deviant and/or criminal activity?
- II.* Does the policy increase the safety and security of the general public?

8.1.2. Effectiveness

The term effectiveness is defined as the degree to which something is successful in producing a desired outcome.³⁰⁸ Measuring the level of success of a policy put in place to reduce the number of Somali Canadian male youth engaging in deviant and/or criminal activity functions as a core government management objective because it determines whether to continue or eliminate a policy. It is important to note that measuring the efficacy of policy options is difficult because Somali refugees and Somali Canadians cannot be forced to participate in activities even if they are mandatory. However, opening the door to Somali refugees and Somali Canadians to participate in programs that may reduce the anti-social behaviors of Somali Canadian male youth is crucial.

Relevant Criteria

- I.* To what extent does this policy result in better integration of Somali refugees and Somali Canadians into Canadian society (measured via performance in educational institutions (i.e. high school completion rates) / encounter rates with the criminal justice system *variable not measurable unless individual is categorized as Somali versus Black*)
- II.* To what extent will this policy impact the number of Somali Canadian male youth engaging in deviant and/or criminal behavior?

308 Keith G. Provan and Patrick Kenis. (2008) "Modes of network governance: Structure, management, and effectiveness." *Journal of public administration research and theory* 18, no. 2.

8.2. Government Management Objectives

8.2.1. Administrative Ease

Administrative ease measures the level of effort required to implement the policy recommendation.

Relevant Criteria

- I.* Is there an existing/similar model by which the policy recommendation can be implemented?
- II.* How difficult is it to implement?

8.2.2. Cost

The term cost in this report is defined as the allowed or provided amount of money required to implement and sustain the policy. The relevant criteria best outline the concept of cost.

Relevant Criteria

- I.* Does the estimated total cost of the policy remain within budgetary limits outlined by relevant stakeholders?
- II.* Will the estimated long-term costs of the policy exceed budgetary limits?

8.2.3. Political Feasibility

The following relevant criteria best outlines this concepts.

Relevant Criteria

- I.* Is the current political environment accepting of this policy?
- II.* To what extent will this policy provide an advantage/leverage to opposing political parties?

8.3. Policy Options

The following policy options were formulated with attention to Section 27 of the 1982 *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* which recognizes Multiculturalism as a Canadian value.³⁰⁹ The *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* of 1988 provided a legislative framework that supported the implementation of multicultural programs and policies within organizations and institutions.³¹⁰ The Act aims to preserve and enhance multiculturalism in Canada. The notion of formulating policy to address the issue of deviant and criminal behavior in Somali male youth, and help Somali refugees integrate into Canada is supported by Section 3.1(c) and Section 3.1(j) of the 1988 *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* which states:

It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Government of Canada to:

Section 3 (1) (c) promote the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society and assist them in the elimination of any barrier to that participation

Section 3 (1) (j) advance multiculturalism throughout Canada in harmony with the national commitment to the official languages of Canada.

- Canadian Multiculturalism Act (R.S.C., 1988, c. 31)

8.3.1. Education Policy

8.3.1.1 Option 1:

Somali refugee children 8+, or grades 4+ (intermediate level) must be enrolled in English intensive programs instead of the current system of age placement.

309 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Part I of the Constitution Act, 1982, being Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (UK), 1982, c 11.

310 Jean Leonard Elliott and Augie Fleras, "Immigration and the Ethnic Mosaic," in *Race and Ethnic Relations in Canada*, ed. Peter S. Li (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1990), 65.

Refugee children who enter the school system later in their academic life may not be as successful as the acquisition of academic language takes time.³¹¹ Younger children under the age of 8, or under grade 3 (primary level) are able to learn languages faster than their intermediate counterparts.³¹² A study on ESL students highlighted that everyday language takes one to two years for development while academic language took five to seven years to become strong.³¹³ Thus, enrolling refugee children categorized as primary students in full time school is beneficial to the integration process. Upon the completion of English language certifications (similar model as adult ESL programs), refugee children categorized as intermediate must undergo an assessment to determine their academic level. In the event that the intermediate child is not at the grade level pertaining to their age, they should be enrolled in a learning center until periodic evaluations determine the child to be near the appropriate grade level.

8.3.1.2 Option 2:

Mandatory English program enrollment (level 1) for Somali refugee adults – completed within negotiable & flexible time frame – possible tax/benefit incentivized.

In cases where refugee children are falling behind in school or are engaging in deviant behavior, the child often acts as a translator between their parents and the authority figure in question. The consequences of refugee parent's not learning English have far outweighed the costs of providing funding for ESL programs for adults. These programs are currently optional however, many of the consequences faced by parents, children and greater society have emerged as a result of the failure to learn in English during the initial years of arrival. Learning English is a time sensitive factor as the likelihood of male youth deviance going unnoticed in Somali families' increases when the parent cannot understand the external forces (i.e. educational institutions, law enforcement and associated institutions, mass media, neighbors etc.) that interact with their children on a daily basis. On a policy level, Somali refugee language acquisition must be a priority in

311 English as a Second Language Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association. (2010)
"Understanding ESL Learners: Distinguishing between Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)"

312 Ibid., Understanding ESL Learners.

313 Ibid., Understanding ESL Learners.

order to help families better integrate into Canadian society, and alleviate the challenges faced by Somali male youth.

8.3.2. Health Care Policy

8.3.2.1 Option 3

Health assessment include psychological testing for PTSD.

Recent refugee arrivals to Canada from Somalia have experienced long periods of warfare and refugee camps, thus the possibility of significant psychological damage should be expected. The keys to addressing and combatting the silent phenomenon of PTSD amongst Somali Canadian refugees are 1. Anticipating PTSD amongst new arrivals, 2. Spreading awareness to individuals and families in their native language upon settling, 3. Providing the relevant interventions (counselling, medical treatment). Challenges in removing the stigma of mental health and element of shame within the Somali community will be best mitigated through education and awareness.

8.3.3. Social Policy

Refugees are not technically considered immigrants because they have left their home state forcefully. The extension of Charter rights to refugees is based on the principles guiding the tradition of humanitarian action recognizing vulnerability of refugees. Therefore, their citizenship is granted as an act of compassion under the tradition of humanitarian action. Their socio-economic circumstances differ immensely from economic immigrants upon arrival and throughout their integration into Canadian society.

8.3.3.1 Option 4

Employ Somali translators in cities with high Somali populations to interact with the education system and healthcare sector (coordinated through Citizenship and Immigration Canada).

8.3.3.2 Option 5

Provide refugee class immigrants (of Somali descent) with funding to attend parenting courses (coordinated through Citizenship and Immigration Canada) to aid in transitioning into Canadian society.

8.3.3.3 Option 6

Waive enrollment & participation fees in public recreation centers and provide funding for children of Somali refugees to participate in private extracurricular activities.

8.4. Policy Options Matrix

The following policy options are weighed based on their potential to reduce the policy problem.

Table 1. Policy Options

High = Objective met = 3 Med = Trade Offs Exist = 2 Low = Objective Not Met = 1

Policy Option	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
Criteria	Refugee Children < 8 years old / < grade 4 strictly enrolled in English intensive program	Mandatory English program enrollment (level 1) for Somali refugee adults	Health assessment include psychological testing for PTSD.	Employ Somali translators in cities with high Somali populations to interact with education & healthcare systems	Provide refugee class immigrants (of Somali descent) with funding to attend parenting courses	Waive enrollment & participation fees in public recreation centers/provide funding for children of Somali refugees to participate in private extracurricular activities
Safety & Security	2	2	2	2	2	3
Effectiveness	3	3	2	3	2	3
Administrative Ease	3	3	1	2	2	3
Cost	3	2	3	2	2	2
Political Feasibility	2	2	2	2	1	2
Total /15	14	12	10	11	9	13

8.4.1. Policy Evaluation

Preventing the challenges a Somali will face when coming from such a fundamentally different society cannot truly be done. Alleviating it however can be done most successfully by education. - Participant 3

The policy of age placement has created immense challenges for Somali refugee children. Adopting policy option 1: refugee children less than 8 years old / < grade 4 strictly enrolled in English intensive program, will allow for Somali refugee children to fully participate in their academic experience by having English language proficiency before entering the formal education system. Once Somali refugee children over the age of 8 / grade 4+ learn English, the challenges associated with a failure to understand academic language decrease exponentially.

Somali parents come here with the same concept and mental setting that were handling their affairs with in Somalia... That is the problem. Therefore the remedy to that is to make the parents understand that they have an obligation to facilitate the Somali youth into the Canadian society. Without their help, it will not happen. - Participant 1

Empowering Somali refugee parents to advocate for themselves and their children is the key to reducing deviant and/or criminal behavior in Somali Canadian male youth. This aim will be reached by adopting policy option 2: mandatory English enrollment programs for Somali refugee adults.

Seeking treatment [for depression] may not be their first option as the requirements for survival overtake the necessity to seek treatment. - Participant 7

Addressing the silent phenomenon of PTSD amongst Somali refugees is a matter of urgency. Parents and children with untreated PTSD are dealing with depression and emotional issues that manifest through health issues and interpersonal challenges that impede the integration process. Adopting policy option 3: Refugee health assessment include psychological testing for PTSD, will allow Somali refugees to confront their mental health challenges, and allow them to better integrate into their new lives in Canada.

Having the proper tools in place for Somali refugees when coming into contact with the education system and the healthcare system via policy option 4: employing Somali translators in cities with high Somali populations) will allow for early interventions when Somali male youth encounter issues and help Somali refugees better navigate Canadian institutions.

[Somali] culture is to give orders – Canadian system is to communicate. It is a complex issue. How are we teach parents critical thinking, not to give orders, and how to explain? Make them understand – not give orders. Orders break the relationship between the parent and child. - Participant 7

Somali refugee parents face insurmountable challenges prior to their arrival in Canada. Once migrated, they face culture shock, socio-economic issues and social challenges in addition to issues stemming from fleeing war. Policy option 5: Provide Somali refugee parents with funding to attend parenting courses will allow parents to understand the Canadian institutional norms and values, and help them and their children transition into their new life in Canada.

If you do not engage, the kids will be disconnected and find a way out... become a part of antisocial behaviors. Connection is engagement. Youth are full of energy, if you do not engage they will find bad connections. Jobs, resources, internship programs. If those are not in place, where will they end up? They will be on the streets – who is there – bad people - Participant 1

Providing the children Somali refugee youth with access productive outlets such as leisure and sports is imperative to reducing deviant and/or criminal behavior in Somali Canadian male youth. Adopting policy option 6: Waiving the enrollment and participation fees in public recreation centers, and providing funding for children of Somali refugees to participate in private extracurricular activities, will allow Somali male youth to engage in positive activities during the free hours of their day that their families are often unable to afford.

9. Policy Recommendations

The following recommendations are ranked based on their evaluation score. Adopting these policy options would best address the three causes of Somali youth deviance and criminality: 1) identity issues stemming from culture shock and intersectional discrimination (cultural, religious and racial), 2) lack of parental integration into Canadian society, and 3) post-migration socioeconomic challenges.

9.1. Recommendation #1

Adopt policy option 1 requiring refugee children less than 8 years old / greater than grade 4 to be strictly enrolled in an English intensive program prior to entering the K-12 school system. This policy ensures that Somali refugee children will be able to fully participate in their academic experience by having English language proficiency prior to entering the formal education system. Once Somali children who arrive in Canada as refugees over the age of 8 / grade 4+ learn English, the challenges associated with grasping the academic language decrease.

9.2. Recommendation #2

The findings of this study highlighted the need for policy options that support the building of a healthy self-image of Somali Canadian male youth. Adopting policy option 6 eliminates the primary barrier to Somali male youth participation in positive activities by waiving public recreation centre enrollment and participation fees, and providing funding for children of Somali refugees to participate in private extracurricular activities. Engaging Somali male youth in sports and recreation will allow them to create their own identity by building their confidence instead of accepting the negative traits tied to the “black male” concept that is imposed on them by society.

9.3. Recommendation #3

Adopt policy option 2 requiring mandatory English enrollment programs for Somali refugee adults. This policy allows Somali refugee parents to acquire the language skills required to advocate for themselves, their children and navigate institutions without relying on translators. This option removes the burden of translation from Somali Canadian children and youth who are often required to translate in stressful and unethical circumstances.

9.4. Recommendation #4

Adopt policy option 4 requiring cities with high populations of Somalis to employ Somali translators will help Somali refugees better navigate Canadian institutions. Somali refugees must have access to translators when coming into contact with institutions such as the healthcare, education and criminal justice system. This policy allow for early interventions when Somali male youth encounter issues in their academic journey or with law enforcement. Furthermore, Somali refugees will be better able to navigate the healthcare system, seek treatment for health issues and communicate their concerns with a Somali translator who can advocate for them until they gain English speaking and writing proficiency.

10. Conclusion

The results of this study indicated that Somali Canadian male youth face a multitude of challenges integrating into Canadian society. These challenges have resulted in the high levels of participation in deviant and criminal behavior. The findings of this study revealed that deviance and criminality in Somali male youth is the result of identity issues stemming from culture shock and intersectional discrimination, a lack of parental integration into Canadian society, and post-migration socioeconomic challenges. The challenges presented to Somali male youth when forming their identities stem from racial and cultural racism within Canadian society. Furthermore, the lack of parental integration into Canadian society, and post-migration socioeconomic challenges serve as obstacles to Somali Canadian male youth integrating into society and present obstacles that Somali male youth cannot overcome on their own. Somali Canadian male youth become shaped by political, social and environmental conditions that differ from Somalia including the concept of “blackness” in North America associated with negative stereotypes. The findings of this study brought attention to the need for policy options that empower Somali refugee parents to advocate for themselves and their children as well as policies that support the building of a healthy self-image of Somali Canadian male youth. The six policy options centered on community and leisure engagement, educational attainment, and educational and health support for Somali refugee parents provide hope for the Somali diaspora in Canada in tackling the issue of deviant and criminal behavior in Somali Canadian male youth.

11. Further Research

The policy recommendations in this study are focused on Somali refugees, however, further research may show that extending these policy recommendations to other refugee groups may result in similar positive outcomes. Furthermore, research comparing the academic outcomes of Canadian born Somali children and youth versus Somali refugee children and youth may provide insight into the issue of Somali male youth deviance and criminality in Canadian society.

12. Limitations

For the purposes of this study, the number of homicides of Somali male youth and the low high school completion rates of Somali youth were used as variables to define the problem statement. Data limitations exist when trying to pinpoint the exact number of Somali boys involved in deviant and/or criminal behavior. The number of Somalis that are involved in the Criminal Justice System cannot be distinguished within statistics due to their categorization as “black”. National figures regarding graduation rates of Somalis due to the categorization of Somalis as “African” or “Black”. Data measuring the graduation rate of Somalis were limited to school districts that measured Somalis as a distinct variable.

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Appendix.

Interview Questions

1. How long have you been working in your field?
2. What were the reasons that you pursued this career?
3. What issues do you believe Somali refugees face when settling into Canada?
4. How have you experienced these issues impacting the Somali community and Canadian society?
5. How do you think integration plays a role in the issues faced by Somali youth/refugee youth?
6. How do you think the government can prevent/alleviate these challenges?
7. What changes would you make to the current immigration system to respond to the challenges you've seen refugee families – including Somalis, experience?
8. Do you think Somali youth feel disconnected from Canadian society?
9. How do you think Somali youth can build a stronger connection with Canadian society?
10. Do you have anything that you want to add to the discussion?