

*A Qualitative Study of the Relationship Between Police and Racialized Male Youth Living in Canadian Social Housing Communities*

This study explored the detrimental relationship between the criminal justice system and marginalized communities, with a focus on racialized youth's contact with police in social housing communities. As I have learned through professional and personal experiences, a stroll through inner-city projects can offer glimpses of the deep structural inequities plaguing certain urban areas and can also shed light on the omnipresence of criminalization in the lives of racialized male youth from social housing communities. These impoverished zones have high crime rates and prevalent gang involvement, and many young males in these communities experience increased police surveillance and interaction on a frequent, day-to-day, basis. My project aimed to give voice to these youth and begin documenting their everyday realities through a qualitative analysis of the artistic music videos they produce. My research question was: *How do young, racialized males living in social housing communities perceive police?* To answer this question, I combined a qualitative analysis of music videos created by young, racialized males from social housing communities with an in-depth review of literature. These music videos are written, performed, filmed, and produced by youth in these communities and are publicly available on social media platforms. Videos regularly feature performers' direct or symbolic references to their relationship with police and more broadly, to their lives in social housing communities. This project relied on Critical Race Theory (CRT) to guide my interpretation of research findings. Specifically, CRT allowed me to explore the influence of systemic racism on policing and conceptualize the intersections between race, space, and policing in social housing communities. I also reviewed sources in sociolegal studies, criminology, and other social sciences, focusing on empirical research exploring the state of gang involvement, criminalization, and policing in impoverished areas in North America. Drawing from this scholarship and CRT, I completed a qualitative analysis of transcripts of selected videos with the software NVivo, beginning with a thematic coding approach and following with a more inductive open coding practice based on youth's own words. In this study, I explore three dominant themes that emerged through my analysis. First, the videos depict how structural conditions and inadequate resources contribute to the disenfranchisement of racialized male youth living in social housing communities. Second, the videos demonstrate how racialized youth's criminalization is fostered by over-policing and surveillance in social housing communities. Third, I argue that the videos exhibit the paradoxical co-existence of despair and resilience amongst youth in social housing communities. To conclude, I discuss what my research findings contribute to existing literature on policing in social housing communities and what they indicate for future research.