BLACK COMMUNITIES SPEAK OUT ABOUT VIOLENCE

Research Report

by
Laurence Tichit
and Mylène Jaccoud

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Report Researchers

Laurence Tichit, Centre international de criminologie comparée (CICC), Université de Montréal, Immigration et Métropoles
Mylène Jaccoud, Centre international de criminologie comparée (CICC), Université de Montréal

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Participating Project Partners

Association jamaïquaine de Montréal, Noël E. Alexander
Black Community Resource Center (BCRC), Sharon Springer, Courtney Sewell
Bureau de la communauté haïtienne de Montréal (BCHM), Fabienne Pierre-Jacques
Communauté noire africaine de Montréal-Canada (CONAM-Canada), Alfred Mandaka
Mouvement jeunesse Montréal-Nord/Café jeunesse multiculturel, Williamson Lamarre
Réseau de communication pour la prévention des actes criminels (RECOPAC), Jean Marie Mousenga

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A Word from the Project Partners

Between “media overload” and reality, the fact remains that black communities, particularly youth, are frequently linked to incidents of violence.

Right through this project, our aim has been to understand the phenomenon of violence in our daily lives by turning the stage over to the actual people affected (youngsters, parents, community workers and institutions). We would like to thank them all for having taken the time to share their experiences with us and help make this initiative possible.

We would also like to thank the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés Culturel for its support throughout this extensive undertaking. We may have started out barely knowing each other, but thanks to the energy and courage of Mme. Sandra Duvers, Advisor for the MICC, our group evolved into what it is today, a closely-knit coalition focused on the well-being of black youth. Mme. Duvers played a key role in coordination. In fact, her organizational skills were nothing short of extraordinary. From focus group follow-up to liaising with our government partners, she was an infallible resource. Her exceptional work and her wonderfully positive approach have made her an exemplary role model for us.

We also like to commend the excellent work of our researchers, Mme. Laurence Tichit and Mme. Mylène Jaccoud. We cannot thank them enough for their commitment and ongoing involvement during this huge participatory endeavor.

We would also like to thank the National Crime Prevention Centre for its financial support, without which, this project would not have been possible.

Finally, we would like to extend a special thank you to everyone who embarked with us on this fascinating and enriching “voyage”.

A Word from the Researchers

This analysis of violence within Montreal’s Black communities and the preparation of the ensuing action plan would not have been possible without the participation of the many adolescents, young adults and parents who took part in our focus groups. We thank you for your presence and for the fruitful exchanges that occurred. This research report is dedicated to all of you. The time you devoted to this study, the trust you so generously granted us and the personal testimonials that you shared with us were a source of much emotion.

We thank all the partner organizations of this project for their hospitality, their involvement and active participation throughout the project, as well as all the participants in the roundtable. We would also like to extend a special thank you to Sandra Duvers for her receptiveness, input and warmth, as well as her professionalism.

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INTRODUCTION

This project was an initiative of six Black community organizations in Montreal concerned with the problem of violence. It was designed to unfold in three consecutive phases: 1) establish a subject overview by conducting focus groups with members of Montreal's Black communities, 2) organize a roundtable discussion with key people involved in the issue, and 3) develop an intervention plan. This report examines each of these phases which were aimed at defining the bases for mobilization and presenting possible strategies to address the issue of violence within the Black communities.

The overview was based on the testimonials of people from these communities. They were invited to talk to us about their experiences in interviews conducted with groups of adolescents, young adults and parents. Research questions (interview guidelines) were formulated during several discussion sessions with the project's partner organizations, as follows: How do people from Montreal's Black communities define their perception and experience of violence? According to what typologies? In what ways are these individuals affected? In what spheres is violence manifested? According to what mechanisms? What does it mean from their point of view? How does it impact their daily lives? What do young people, girls and boys as well as parents think about it? What are the experiences of newcomers, longer-term residents and young people born here? Is it possible to speak of a "communalization" of Montreal's Black communities when talking about violence, that is, a sense of sharing a common experience? If there is, to what extent?

The next step was to determine just what significance the problem of violence held for participants by organizing their interviews into specific themes. This in turn provided a range of individual interpretations and experiences around each topic. This approach essentially replaced the overly generic notion of violence by situating it within more specific social contexts. It also made it possible to broaden the debate and the perspective beyond the singular image of juvenile violence. As focus groups attested, street gangs are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to violence. These same focus groups also pointed out other key issues such as: The occupation of and movement in public areas, racism, integration, public policies and concepts of youth and education.

Regarding the Round Table, it was intended to present the general findings of the research so that they would serve as a catalyst for further mobilization around the issue of violence in the Black Community. Furthermore, the Round Table became a medium to involve other stakeholders while engaging them in a discussion that would allow for comparing and contrasting their experiences.

Finally, the project culminated in a series of analytical sessions and in the drawing up of an intervention plan by the working group affiliated with the researchers.

Chapter I outlines the project's step-by–step research approach, its focus and methodology. The three subsequent chapters cover separately identified analytical topics on the theme of violence: Chapter II – Violence and individuals, Chapter III – Violence and groups, Chapter IV – Violence and institutions. Each chapter presents comments made by focus group participants on the subject as well as researchers' analyses. A summary is also included at the end of each section. Chapter V presents the proposed Intervention plan, followed by the Conclusion and insights gained from the project.

Chapter 1

A project, an approach: the prevention of violence within Black communities

This chapter introduces the core elements of the project which took shape in three stages beginning as a community initiative, proceeding to a research phase and culminating in an intervention plan.

1.1 PROJECT

1.1.1 A community initiative

This project was the initiative of six Black community organizations in Montreal concerned with the problem of violence. They formed a coalition to devise a constructive intervention plan around the issue. An advisor from the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles supervised the project, which was made possible with financial support from the National Strategy for the Prevention of Crime. The work group is currently comprised of organizations from three different Black communities in Montreal.

The Haitian community is represented by the Bureau de la communauté haïtienne de Montréal (BCHM) and the Mouvement jeunesse Montréal-Nord. Established in 1972, the Bureau de la communauté haïtienne de Montréal ensures that members of immigrant communities, primarily of Haitian origin, are not isolated as they adapt and integrate into Québec society. It supports their right to freedom, dignity and well-being. This mandate is carried out through a variety of initiatives including personalized social and community services offered to youth, the elderly and women. Set up in 1977, the Mouvement jeunesse Montréal-Nord or Café-jeunesse multiculturel is designed to attract young people from different cultures between the ages of 13 and 30. It offers Montreal-Nord and neighbouring areas a permanent meeting place for healthy cultural exchange while creating a positive atmosphere for constructive personal growth, integration, and a sense of community.

The Jamaica Association of Montreal and the Black Community Resource Center represent the Black Anglophone community. Since it was founded in 1962, the Jamaica Association of Montreal has been committed to the social, political, economic, educational, and cultural integration of the Jamaican

community and, by extension, all Black communities in Montreal and throughout Quebec. Its mission is to contribute to improve the quality of life for the community it serves. The Black Community Resource Centre, created in 1994, offers services to individuals and to the community, as well as to public and para-public institutions that are developing programs in the areas of health, education, and economic development.

The African community was represented by the organization the Communauté noire africaine de Montréal-Canada (CONAM) and the Réseau de communication pour la prévention des actes criminals (RECOPAC). Founded in 2002, the Communauté noire africaine de Montréal-Canada welcomes and guides immigrants and other visible minorities, helping them to navigate professional and socio-cultural integration in their host society. The Réseau de communication pour la prévention des actes criminels originated in 2002 as a response to the wave of delinquency, violence, and crime affecting Black communities and its mission has been to develop new avenues of intervention.

We joined the team as researchers, working alongside the project's community partners in developing and implementing the three-phases:

1) Complete an overview on the subject of perceived and experienced violence through focus groups with people from Montreal's Black communities;
2) Organize a Round Table with key people concerned about the problem;
3) Establish an intervention plan based on the results.

This report addresses each stage of these phases. Our aim is to define the bases for mobilization and for possible strategies to address the issues of violence within Black communities.

1.1.2 Preamble to the question of violence

When approaching the subject of violence, it is essential to be aware that violence is not "an absolute given". It does not lend itself easily to being defined and quantified once and for all. We could probably agree on a common definition, for example, when violence occurs during periods of major historical and political upheaval, or in cases of "monstrous" individual acts where there is no room for doubt.

However, apart from these extreme contexts, one would have to say that each society has its own type of violence, varying in degree and typology according to accepted or rejected norms and values

at a given time. "*Because violence is defined by its enactment, because it is nothing more than what is experienced as violence within a culture, a group, or a context of interaction*, *it cannot be reduced to an objectively measurable phenomenon* (Dubet, F., 1992[1]). So what can be considered "violent" today might not have been yesterday and vice versa (Chesnais, J.-C., 1981[2]). Rules, laws, and consensus on the subject of violence are also the result of sensitization and awareness, sometimes through forgotten memories, or the sudden appearance of the unspeakable or an unthinkable individual or collective act. In this sense, violence cannot be separated from the values and the representations that it reflects and it connotes i.e., issues of ideological, political, social, even economical and moral power. In addition, violence can assume different shapes and expressions in various social spheres, from overtly visible to more hidden and subtle manifestations.

Violence thus alternates between social, political or moral issues and individual subjectivity, because it is also what a person perceives as such when it occurs to him or her. We act upon this violence and it affects who we are, and also who we are supposed to be, in a dialectic of "Them" and "Us". Individual experiences can then gradually evolve into a collective consciousness of communal experience where social class factors operate. Individuals are singled out with an immigrant "status" (regardless their country of origin or their immigration status). They are also victims in terms of "labelling" due to culture and skin color, or "racial attributes".

This in essence is the focus of the research and of the project overall: to examine how violence is experienced from within, what forms it takes, what typologies exists, what areas it occurs in. These are based on the testimonials and perspectives of people from Montreal's Black communities. It is one way of approaching the theme, that is, looking at the place violence occupies or is given in our daily encounter with "otherness". We recognize that violence is multi-faceted and yet at times it can cut right across the experiences of those affected.

1.1.3 Context and issues

Black populations currently represent the third largest group of visible minorities in Canada, after Chinese and South-Asians[3], and are the largest minority group in Quebec. As the difficulties and issues connected with census-taking based on origin are quite complex, it is preferable to discuss

[1] DUBET, F. (1992). À propos de la violence et des jeunes. *Cultures et conflits*, 6, 7-24.
[2] CHESNAIS, J.-C. (1981). *Histoire de la violence en Occident de 1800 à nos jours.* Paris: R. Laffont.
[3] STATISTIQUE CANADA (2008). *La mosaïque ethnoculturelle du Canada. Recensement de 2006*. Statistique Canada, Ottawa.

demographic tendencies[4]. In Quebec, Black populations are primarily concentrated in Montreal and neighbouring cities. People are mostly of Haitian and Sub-Saharan African origin, as well as Black Anglophone. These 188,100 individuals represent 2.5 % of Quebec's total population[5]. According to historians and demographers that have focused on this subject, such as D.W. Williams[6], "*from the first explorers until the time of slavery*, *from Confederation to today, Blacks have always been a part of the Quebec experience*". And "*while small in number, a distinct Black community has developed over the last century in Montreal*", bringing with it its own ethno-demographic and historical heterogeneity which cannot be reduced to the migration patterns of only one group but of many.

For some years now, the Federal and Provincial governments have continued to establish a legislative framework as well as public consultations and policies intended to safeguard the principles of equality and the respect for diversity. However, statistical studies and research focused on the "racial" question and the social evolution of Black people in Quebec society since the 1970's still point to the same recurring theme, despite differences in sampling and methodology. These populations face greater difficulties than the rest of the population, whether it is due to their acceptance in the workplace, access to housing or living conditions in general (Milan, A., Tran, K., 2004, Torczyner, J.L., 2001[7]).

As for the theme of violence and visible minorities, in terms of Black populations, it has been tackled from various angles such as: institutional racism (Labelle, M., Salée, D., 2001, McAndrew, M., Potvin, M., 1996, Chicha-Pontbriand, M.T., 1989[8]), heinous crimes (Fournier, F., 1992[9]), and the relationships between visible minorities and the police (Chalom, M. 2002, Douyon, E., 1993, Corbo, C., 1992, Bellemare, J., 1988[10]).

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[4] BOXHILL, W.O. (1991). *Méthodes de collecte des données sur les minorités visibles au Canada: examen et commentaires*. Statistique Canada, Ottawa.

[5] STATISTIQUE CANADA (2008), op. cit.

[6] WILLIAMS, D.W. (1998). *Les Noirs à Montréal, 1628-1986. Essai de démographie urbaine*. Montréal: VLB éditeur.

[7] MILAN, A., TRAN, K., (2004). *Les Noirs du Canada: une longue tradition*. Statistique Canada, Ottawa.
TORCZYNER, J.L., SPRINGER, S. et al. (2001). *L'évolution de la communauté noire montréalaise: mutations et défis.* École de service social, Université McGill, Montréal.

[8] LABELLE, M., SALEE, D. (2001). *Incorporation citoyenne et/ou exclusion? La deuxième génération issue de l'immigration haïtienne et jamaïcaine.* Fondation canadienne des relations raciales, Toronto.
MCANDREW, M., POTVIN, M. (1996). *Le racisme au Québec: éléments d'un diagnostic.* Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles, Montréal.
CHICHA-PONTBRIAND, M.T. (1989). *Discrimination systémique. Fondement et méthodologies des programmes d'accès à l'égalité en emploi*. Cowansville: Y. Blais.

[9] FOURNIER, F. (1992). *Violence et racisme au Québec: rapport du Comité d'intervention contre la violence raciste.* Commission des droits de la personne, Montréal.

[10] CHALOM, M. (2002). Police, violence et ethnies au Québec: éléments de réflexion. *Revue internationale de criminologie et de police technique et scientifique,* Genève, 55, 1.

For some years now in the Montreal context, violence has often crystallized around the "danger" as presented by youth, primarily fostered by the image of street gangs. Regularly, delinquent acts and violence, given the media coverage and attributed to young people in street gangs, remain in the public eye as juvenile criminality. And in an equally recurrent fashion, the "ethnic", indeed, the racial nature of these groups is called into question. However, "*so-called ethnic delinquency is a social symptom that must not be confused with intercultural malaise of which it sometimes only represents a sub-set*" (Douyon, E., 1995[11]). "*From a dynamic perspective of ethnicity, the risk is to gradually slip into ethnicization, indeed racialization of social relationships, given the predominance of ethno-racial characterization. Ethnicization of social relationships is only one aspect of ethnicity, to which it cannot be reduced*. *While ethnicity opens up a card game of possible identities, ethnicization creates the system*" (Tichit, L., 2003[12]). Although this research and Work Group cannot escape the construct of ethnicization, their goal is to examine violence through the stories of individual life experience and emotion, its traces and consequences in daily life. This is where the Work Group of Montreal's Black community organizations comes in, taking the overview of violence that is actually experienced and turning it into a relevant intervention plan. Even though the subject of violence is hardly new, and after decades of studies, it is definitely time to re-examine the situation of the statistics and of both government and community action.

Our research questions were formulated to capture the multidimensional nature of violence: How do people from Montreal's Black communities define their perception and experience of violence? According to what typologies? How are these individuals affected? In what spheres is violence manifested? According to what mechanisms? What does it mean from their point of view? How does it impact their daily lives? What do young people, girls and boys as well as parents think about it? What are the experiences of newcomers, longer-term residents and young people born here? Is it possible to speak of a "communalization" of Montreal's Black communities in this regard, a sense of sharing a common experience and if so, to what extent?

DOUYON, E. (1993). Relations police-minorités ethniques. *Santé mentale au* Québec, 18, 1,179-192.
CORBO, C. (1992). *Une occasion d'avancer: rapport du Groupe de travail du Ministre de la Sécurité publique du Québec sur les relations entre les communautés noires et le Service de police de la Communauté urbaine de Montréal*. Montréal.
BELLEMARE, J. et al. (1988). *Enquête sur les relations entre les corps policiers et les minorités visibles et ethniques.* Commission des droits de la personne, Montréal.
[11] DOUYON, E. (1995). La délinquance ethnique: une relecture. In NORMANDEAU A., DOUYON, E. (dir.). *Justice et communautés culturelles?* Montréal: Méridien, 89-105.
[12] TICHIT, L. (2003). Gangs juvéniles et construits ethniques dans le contexte américain. In JACCOUD, M. (éd.). Le construit de l'ethnicité en criminologie. *Criminologie,* 36, 2, 57-68.

The results of this research show that we cannot reduce violence to an issue of delinquency. We must also look at related factors, from the ways in which adolescent identity is constructed, the influence of role models and trends aimed at a juvenile market and validating violence (*gangsta rap,* video games, and risky activities) as well as from the experiences of Black minorities in Quebec society. Hopefully we can then get past the impasse of both victimization and individual or collective accusations about violence and its effects, and move on to sharing responsibility collectively, and away from mobilizing only in crisis situations when events are serious and "visible".

Thus, we will be looking at violence and juvenile delinquency here, but not strictly at that. Street gangs are just the tip of the violence iceberg, as clearly attested by participants in the focus groups. They also brought up equally fundamental issues such as occupation and circulation in public space, racism, integration, public policies and concepts of youth and education.

1.2 RESEARCH AND INTERVENTION PLAN

1.2.1 Overview

The overview was constructed after listening to people from Montreal's Black communities talk about their experiences and their perceptions of violence during interviews conducted with groups of adolescents, young adults and parents.

The make-up of the sample[13] reflected the demographics of the project's partner organizations and their immediate circles. Participants were not experts on the subject of violence but simply Montrealers who belonged to the Black community. Several sessions took place in each of the three represented communities (Haitian, African, and Black Anglophone). The groups were organized according to age and gender. Also, each community was represented by parallel groups: a group of boys aged 15 to 20, a group of girls aged 15 to 20, a group of young men aged 20 to 30, a group of young women aged 20 to 30, as well as one or two groups of parents[14]. A profile form[15] was distributed to participants in order to establish basic socio-demographic data. A questionnaire outlining the framework of the interviews and intended for the families was also planned, in case we had difficulties reaching them, but it was not used in the end. During the data-collection period which took place between December 2005 and mid-April 2006, eighty people were interviewed, that is:

[13] See Appendix 4, p 106.
[14] In the Haitian community, there was a group of mothers. In the African community a group of fathers and a group of mothers, and in the Black Anglophone community, a group of fathers and mothers.

twenty boys aged 15 to 20, sixteen girls aged 15 to 20, seven young women aged 20 to 30 (the most difficult group to reach), nineteen young men aged 20 to 30, ten mothers and eight fathers.

The people encountered from the Haitian community lived mainly in the neighbourhoods of Rosemount, Villeray, Petite-Patrie and a few in St-Michel. One group, the young men aged 20 to 30, was organized in the Montreal-North district. Participants came from families that had been in Quebec for ten, twenty or thirty years. The young people tended to know each other from activities organized by the partner organizations. One-third of the young adults were students, one-third combined work and study and one-third was employed in the social work, business, food service, or security sectors. Half of them lived in a single-parent family. Finally, the group of parents was primarily mothers.

Individuals interviewed from the Black Anglophone community resided mainly in the neighbourhoods of Côte-des-Neiges and Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. They were originally from Jamaica, Barbados, St-Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago. One group, the boys aged 15 to 20, was mainly from the Jamaican community whose families had been settled in Quebec for a long time. The parental group included mothers and fathers, some of whom knew each other. They were employed in the hospital sector, customer service or in a travel agency, and one of them was unemployed.

People encountered from the African community lived in various Montreal neighbourhoods and outlying areas. There was quite a variety of residential locations observed amongst this group: Downtown, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, Côte-des-Neiges, Jeanne-Mance, Rosemount, Petite-Patrie, Point St Charles, Little Burgundy, Saint-Leonard, Anjou, Saint-Laurent, Dollard-des-Ormeaux and Laval. Also, the participants were mainly of Congolese origin: the remainder were Rwandan, Camerounian, Senegalese, Malian, Nigerian, Angolan, Gabonese and Central-African. They did not necessarily know each other before the sessions. The youngest ones were educated, two worked in a placement agency, and one was in administration. The young adults were students, working in two jobs or in temporary employment in accounting, music or business. Most were living in single-parent families and two of the youngest were in foster homes. Of the two parental focus groups, one was a group of mothers who had been living in Quebec for the past six to eighteen years. They were employed in the hospital sector. One was studying, two were on welfare and one was unemployed. The group of fathers included those living in Quebec for the past seven to twenty years. They had jobs in the field of computer technology, finance, engineering consulting, communications and one person was unemployed. It should be noted that a number of adolescents and young adults were quite new to Quebec, in contrast to many of the adults.

[15] See Appendix 2, p 104..

Given the fundamentally complex nature of violence that we have already pointed out, the group interview guide[16] for the sessions was designed to get participants to define the subject themselves. They were also given the opportunity to direct the discussion and to emphasize the approaches they felt both addressed the theme of violence in Black communities and one that reflected their own priorities and concerns. With the help of open-ended questions, this interview guide was structured around four major themes. It was examined at length by participants. It was developed by using follow-up questions, requests for additional explanations and encouraging people to draw from examples within their own life experience. The goal was to:

- Define violence in terms of typology, frequency and context;
- Discuss experienced events;
- Come up with causes and explanatory factors for violence;
- Evaluate the impact and effects of perceived and experienced violence within Black communities;
- Consider strategies.

The themes were proposed to each group in turn. We observed if there were any areas of convergence, or a crystallization of violence in participants' lives. This convergence could occur during:

- Encounters between peers (including gender relationships);
- Encounters between youth and adults in institutions or other social contexts;
- Encounters between youth and parents;
- Encounters between lovers and couples.

All sessions were recorded and transcribed in their entirety, before proceeding to a content analysis by theme, sub-theme, group by group and finally by cross analysis.

The next step was to determine just what significance the problem of violence was for participants by organizing their interviews in themes in order to reflect their different perceptions and experiences. This approach essentially replaced the common notion of violence by situating it in more specific social contexts. This also made it possible to broaden the debate and perspectives beyond simply juvenile violence.

[16] See Appendix 1, p 103..

1.2.2 Roundtable

A roundtable discussion was also organized as an integral part of the research process. Our aims were to mobilize around the issues of violence in Black communities, expand our group of participants and enrich our approach by comparing the experiences of those invited with those in the documented overview. Other goals included pinpointing the successes, stumbling blocks and actual needs of current projects on the subject of violence, as well as making new proposals, establishing reference points and building supporting arguments for an eventual action plan. This roundtable, entitled *The prevention of violence within Black communities: reactions, suggestions, and action plan,* took place in June 2006 at the Community Resource Centre located in Côte-des-Neiges. It brought together community workers, researchers, institutional advisors, professionals from different sectors and the coordinators of projects involving young people from Black communities.

Once the project was introduced by organisers, the researchers proposed a synthesis of the focus group interviews as a launching pad for debate. A written summary with all relevant facts was distributed. Group workshops ensued, followed by a plenary session to recap the discussions. People were invited to the group workshops based on their field of expertise, while we also tried to balance professional backgrounds. The sessions were not recorded but notes were taken.

In order to reflect the main topics covered in the focus group interviews, the workshops concentrated on three themes:

- Violence and public areas;
- Violence and racism (also a transversal theme);
- Violence and education.

A questionnaire, originally aimed at the focus group participants[17] and then broadened to include experts and professionals, had been distributed beforehand. However few were returned. The workshop discussions were conducted along the same basic framework. That is to:

- See how key individuals, professionals and experts, define and perceive the issues of violence within Black communities in terms of their own experience and note convergences and gaps with focus group participants;

[17] See Appendix 3, p 105.

- Look more closely at initiatives already taken on the subject of violence, trying to extract some general guidelines and action measures, summarizing positive aspects, but also obstacles and limitations;
- Identify with participants what an action plan on this subject should include.

1.2.3 Intervention plan

The intervention plan, another key component of the research process, was developed based on the study results and issues raised in the group interviews, using thematic funnel analysis. We examined themes and issues one-by-one. Then we defined the objectives in positioning statements which also reflected the Work Group's concerns vis-à-vis the problem of violence, in order to arrive at appropriate solutions.

It goes without saying that the comments made during the group interviews are only the reflection of individual perceptions, experiences and their biases. Indeed, emotions were shared about very delicate subjects but this is exactly the prism we wanted to convey here. We wanted to elicit their testimonials, their varying perspectives, different points of contention as well as glean insight on the problem's contexts.

Two of the groups dealt with the subject of violence, elaborating on different themes, but without either group going into more depth than the other. The other groups, on the contrary, focused on one particular point and expanded on it. We could thus observe lines of separation according to gender and age. Issues related to street gangs and relations with police were mostly touched on by the youngest, both boys and girls, but were also discussed in all groups. However adults, more than youth, referred to the broad notion of "delinquency" or "vagrancy " which they situated in a context of conflict with the "State". Ideas related to racism cut across all groups, in as much as it was common to the experience of youth and adults from every community. The same was true of conjugal violence, while conflicts of authority with parents came up as an issue mainly for the groups of girls.

As for pre-existent situations where violence could occur, such as in the family sphere, the street, school, relations with institutions etc, these were not often treated as individual situations on their own. Rather, the participants' explanatory references alternated between these different spheres, adding different levels of inference to them.

This report has been structured to provide a progressive account of the three major lines of discussion that emerged in the group interviews:

- Chapter II: Violence and individuals;
- Chapter III: Violence and groups;
- Chapter IV: Violence and institutions.

Chapter 2

Overview and testimonials: violence and individuals

Using material from the group interviews, this chapter examines violence via the typical typologies it is generally defined and experienced within. In all groups, the definition process was the same. Violence was first placed in an individual and subjective perspective, that is, a person face-to-face with his own violence as well as what he has perceived and experienced.

Questions were then raised as to how violence affects the development of an individual's identity. The idea here was to establish more clearly, how an individual belonging to a "racial" minority and living in a society where White is the dominant norm, and specifically experiences his situation as a "racialized" person is juxtaposed between the identity he claims and the one he is attributed. Such an understanding is called into question by the problem of violence. In other words, the subjective view that the individual has about his ethnicity is constantly affected by the opinions others have of him and of the group to which he belongs. This tension around the issue of the individual and violence, whether his own or that of others, was something all participants could relate to.

2.1 GENERIC TYPOLOGIES

The first classic typology of violence, referred to by all groups, occurs in contexts of human interaction, that is, physical or verbal violence.

2.1.1 Violence as physical or verbal aggression

The physical violence most often mentioned by younger people, regardless of gender, is associated with a sense of "brutality":

> "When I hear the word violence, I think brutality first, brutality, aggression, that kind of thing."[18]

[18] Young woman 20-30 years, African group.

But all participants quickly moved on to the theme of verbal violence because "*it's the kind we encounter the most, it's the easiest kind to dish out, the most direct*[19]". *A*lso verbal violence is more abrasive, whether it is used to insult or to "put down" another person:

> "I mean the words that they're using, they call names, like they give the rough words terms for everything from… I've heard apple and banana, coconut, all kind of things, I think it's all violence."[20]

Note right from the start, the significance that is given to speech and communication: we observed it in all groups in discussions on various themes and it could be summed up by this comment:

> "For me it's more about words. I don't know, words really get to me. When I'm talking to someone, speech is sacred to me. I find that with speech you can do a lot of things, you can do a lot of harm. It's a form of violence too, you can get to someone, at least it gets to me a lot. I'm talking to someone, if they respond badly, start shouting, it frustrates me. Speech is a form of violence that frustrates me a lot... because when someone says something to me, I'm the type that analyses - why did he say that to me? Maybe it was something I said wrong but I ask myself why? Was it really worth shouting at me?"[21]

Another idea pretty much agreed upon, was that for violence to even occur, there must be consequences to an act as well as a reaction to the aggression itself. This will vary depending on an individual's feelings, but there is a certain pivotal moment, "a limit", most often described by verbs such as "attack", "hurt" or "injure":

> "I think you react when something hurts, someone says something you don't like, something that wounds you, I think you're going to react... but at what moment is a bit hard to say, because we can harm someone just by laughing and joking. And it'll depend on who's involved, on the person we're hurting, because I can hurt someone and my group will think it's good, just like I can be good to someone and they can not like it at all."[22]

Violence then would be "*any action that can attack another, verbally as much physically*[23]". However, a triggering element isn't sufficient, there has to be a kind of chain reaction to move from aggression to something else, the sense of acceleration where you can't act fast enough. The protagonists then enter into a cycle of violence where verbal violence leads to physical violence:

[19] Young woman 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[20] Young woman 20-30 ans, Black Anglophone group.
[21] Young woman 20-30 ans, African group.
[22] Boy 15-20 years, African group.
[23] Mother, African group.

> "When somebody starts to insult somebody else, the adrenaline starts pumping, the more they go at it, someone's bound to get worked up, and it always ends up in a brawl."[24]

> "It can be while talking, really politely, an exchange, communication. It can happen in the family, first between me and some other family member, in the community, in a group, in society. The exact moment, at the moment we're communicating, violence can occur…It's verbal violence, then it becomes physical."[25]

Thus all participants agreed about placing violence in an interactive verbal context, with a key moment when the exchange "deteriorates" and can lead to physical violence, then perceived as reactionary.

2.1.2 Violence as emotional harm

However**,** beyond the distinction made between physical and verbal violence, it is the latter that was the most loaded for the majority of participants. They felt verbal violence leads to another level of violence called psychological or emotional violence, and illustrated by the term "frustration".

Here, violence is initially perceived as a flaw in communication…

> "I've noticed there are some people who when frustrated, don't know how to express it and the best way is for them to be violent and pass on this frustration to other people."[26]

… but also it turns into a consequence, the effect of someone's act without the consent or acceptance of the other person affected:

Everyone agreed that verbal violence is much more devastating than physical violence because it leaves a long-term scar:

> "Verbal violence is more hurtful, we remember it the most, more than physical violence. With physical violence, you get it all in one shot. It hurts but then you get over it the scar goes away. But emotional violence, psychological violence lasts longer. Even if we forgive, it always comes back. We can forgive but just can't forget the scar is still there, we'll keep playing back what was said, I think that hurts more…It's stamped there; the scar is marked in memory."[27]

[24] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[25] Mother, African group.
[26] Young woman 20-30 years, African group.
[27] Young woman 20-30 years, Haitian group.

This can have many different implications and results, one of which can be damage to an individual's integrity:

> "I'd say that psychological violence is when it gets to us deep down, because self-esteem plays a part in feelings, it affects our psychology… our *mind.*"[28]

> "I think that emotional violence is much more important because it plays a big part, since feelings are what make a person. To be complete, you need stable emotions. And if these emotions have already been affected, it destabilizes you, you lose control. Wherever you go, it'll happen…If someone throws a punch and your emotions are stable, it won't do anything to you. So you've been hit, it's OK, but if right away that punch happens to hit your emotions, you're screwed. Then it becomes a big problem, you need to see psychologists. You need to deal with it, and that can weigh you down, especially psychological violence."[29]

And to the point where it can all lead to a justification of physical violence:

> "Violence is two youth calling each other names. If they don't fight and there's violence with this person doing this and this person doing that, playing games behind the each other's backs, that's no better. Might as well tell them to fight and get it over. At least it's better than sending each other signals for a year, so that one kid's afraid to leave the house because he knows that the other one doesn't like him."[30]

The group of African mothers brought up another aspect of this frustration engendered by verbal violence that is, the loss of freedom:

> "When I hear people talking about violence, it's always gestures and speech that frustrate another person. At a certain point, even if I'm not really affected, I'm frustrated. I've been attacked. I'm frustrated from the moment I sense my integrity has been affected, my freedom, whether it's a matter of expression or behaviour, I've been attacked."[31]

We also have the concept of rejection and non-acceptance brought up especially in the African male groups:

> "Anger, state of mind…frustration. Certainly when we're talking about violence, there's also the sadness, the melancholy, the bad temper, the disappointment, the frustration, it's all there. You have a feeling of rejection, a lack of acceptance… so effectively that it can lead to acts that society deems reprehensible."[32]

[28] Young woman 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[29] Young woman 20-30 years, African group.
[30] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[31] Mother, African group.
[32] Father, African group.

Note that the term “anger”, was only used by two people:

> “Like you know, people when they are in a bad mood, anyone coming in front of your face and stuff... child act up, trying to let out that anger, then that’s the way they are. You know, they get very upset very easy.”[33]

Then one of the most serious consequences is then literally the “individual outburst” and the unpredictability of this kind of response, in situations where experiences have been building up over time and where there is intent to harm on the part of the aggressor. Here we combine the notion of harassment with an escalation in violence:

> “Psychology, it’s not saying piss off once, because I’m frustrated and I’m going to kill you, no. It’s like if everyday you act like an idiot, you do this and that, so OK I’m an idiot, I do some stupid stuff, so what? Some will treat you like an idiot while others will say you’re smart and you’ll work it out. But if you’re told you’re an idiot, at a certain point you believe it. You wind up doubting yourself and what you think, because if everyone tells me I’m an idiot, then I’m the only one who doesn’t think so. Maybe I really am an idiot to think that I’m not. It’s that sort of logic. A kid who’s never had anything, never done anything, never committed a violent act in his life, you can’t say he’s a kid who’s OK, a kid who’s nice, who’s this and that…Because this is a kid who’s just been holding it all in, waiting for the right moment. And too bad for you if you’re the last to upset him. You’re the last one to piss him off so you get to pay for the past ten years.”[34]

> “It’s as if you bottle it up and bottle it up and bottle it up until one day the vase is full. It’s going to overflow. *Anyway* it will overflow one day, that’s it. We can’t say tomorrow, or in two years, but it will overflow one day, and when it does, it’ll overflow…It’s going to hurt, because that’s the first thing *you* felt. Back then you didn’t want to let it out on the spot, but with all that effort holding it in, when you suddenly let it out, it comes out badly and it hurts badly. It wounds and it can even drive a person to committing an act they shouldn’t.”[35]

In the past few years, concerns about this notion of harassment have led to an explosion in scientific research, an increase in practical approaches and in the development of prevention programs and legislation. These mechanisms have been well identified and described, first in an educational context through the work of D. Olweus[36] in 1970’s Scandinavia, under the generic term hazing or school bullying. More recently, the notion of harassment in the work place has entered the mainstream, especially through the writing of M.F. Hirigoyen[37]. We should note however, that although similarities

[33] Boy 15-20 years, Black Anglophone group.
[34] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[35] Young woman 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[36] OLWEUS, D. (1999). *Violences entre élèves, harcèlement et brutalités.* Paris: ESF.
[37] HIRIGOYEN, M.F. (1999). *Le harcèlement moral, la violence perverse au quotidien*. Paris: Syros.

could be established between scientific discourse and the comments made by participants in group interviews, as to the bottling-up of experience, duration, the intent to harm, impact on self-esteem, unequal power relationships, nothing was said about the construction of the victim. A victim in the theories of school bullying (intimidation in school) is someone “different“, isolated or unable to defend himself.

2.1.3 Violence as a gesture or glance

Finally, participants described two other types of violence that are communicated by senses other than speech and touch, which we may not have initially considered.

The first type is the kind that can be triggered by gestures which might seem harmless at first, but which can still have serious consequences when they are perceived as violent. Mainly mothers in the African group brought up situations of this type, but we also encountered these situations in the thematic context of juvenile confrontation.

One of the examples illustrated a misinterpretation of the intent and meaning of a gesture, as told by a mother in the story that follows:

> “There were these demonstrations, a kind of rally and we were involved in the coordination. At a certain point we were contacted and they told us: There are some women having a row. So the main boss sent us to have a look. We got there and yes…indeed! But what actually happened? One woman said: I was just going past and she made fun of me! I said: Excuse me? Well, yes, she did (*imitates with her mouth*). Well, it was awful. And then we saw that facial tic. Every time you glanced at her, without wanting to, she had this tic, all the time. She replied to the other woman: So if you lived with me, you’d think I was always harassing you, because I have a tic, and I don’t even notice when I do it? In essence, gestural violence. Another example, with us as Africans, a mother can tell you a lot just looking at you, sometimes even bad things, just with looks and expressions. It can be connected with the children or the husband, or somebody else, her sister, her older sister, her mother. We talk to each other a lot with gestures and glances.”[38]

Another situation brought up evoked a different intent:

> “It was flagrant, the day of the big Easter parade, there at Notre-Dame Basilica we went in to sit down at the end of the procession. I wanted to get into the pews in the middle of the church because it was Good Friday, the most important Holy Friday, but this man who was there didn’t want to let me go past. I said: Please Mister, I want to go and sit

[38] Mother, African group.

there, I'm with my two children and we just want to go and sit down. He looks at me, gets up in the middle of the church, and goes to sit somewhere else! Aggressive, eh!"[39]

Another situation involved silence and a denial of the other person:

"There's violence everywhere, everywhere. We find violence everywhere, even in the professional world too. Sometimes violence is unspoken and sometimes it's gestural. It can take place in silence too, with a simple gesture. You can attack someone and really acutely at that. I'll give you an example from the professional milieu. Imagine, I work in a lab. I'm putting together a protocol, preparing material for work, an experiment. And someone comes by and just dumps it all in the bin…a simple gesture, but one that's far more aggressive than a punch, or even a spoken word!"[40]

The second type of violence is one that is conveyed by glance and its power is often underestimated. Adults, especially women, brought this up. It was also brought up as well by the younger women and boys:

"I work in a hospital environment and you get looks there too. I bring in a tray to a patient and her son's there because it's intensive care. I get there with my tray, put it down and then I start to take care of the sheets, but the look the son shot me was so violent, it got right to me. I dropped everything and just left. And it was just a look."[41]

"There's the kind of look, the look that can start fights. It all depends what kind, because there are people that don't like even being glanced at, that kind of thing. Just as there are people that get excited very quickly just by a mean look, so just that can start a fight. It's happened a lot."[42]

"It can also be a type of glance, a threatening look that can make a person feel afraid. A threatening look, I don't know how to describe it, but I think it's really visual."[43]

"You can be in the metro, you feel it. I'll give you an example, just a look, and a look says a lot you know. You don't have to wait for the person to say something to understand what's in their head, you get it. A look that says to you, let's say there's a space designated for a so-called handicapped person or a pregnant woman. Just the fact that you sit down, an older man looks at you, just wanting to say get lost, Christ, just give me the seat. He can't say that to you because there are lots of people around, but you see it in his eyes and you see what he means."[44]

[39] Mother, African group.
[40] Mother, African group.
[41] Mother, African group.
[42] Boy 15-20 years, Haitian group.
[43] Boy 15-20 years, African group.
[44] Young woman 20-30 years, Haitian group.

This psychological violence is not only limited to individual interaction nor is it necessarily "visible" at the outset:

> "It's everything that has to do with intimidation, everything that's subliminal, how can I put it? It's all the types of violence that are implied, that we can't necessarily see but that happen just the same."[45]

Thus the majority of participants in all groups concurred that the effects of psychological or emotional violence are far more devastating than those of physical violence. And this was conveyed through the recurring theme of the frustration that was provoked and described in various contexts.

[45] Young man 20-30, Haitian group.

2.1.4 Summary: Generic typologies

- The first typology of violence brought up in all groups centered on the differentiation between physical and verbal violence.

- Physical violence, discussed especially by the youngest participants, as much by boys as girls, was associated with the notion of “brutality”.

- However, verbal violence had the most loaded connotations for the large majority of participants.

- Verbal violence can lead to physical violence, perceived as reactionary, after a key moment or “limit” is reached. Most often this is described by verbs like “attack”, “hurt”, or “injure”.

- Verbal violence leads to another level of violence, alternatively referred to as either psychological or emotional violence by all participants. This was mainly illustrated by the “frustration” that it provokes in attacked individuals. When the attackers cannot communicate their frustration, they resort to violence.

- Everyone agreed that verbal violence is much more devastating than physical violence because it scars long-term and can then serve as a justification for physical violence.

- Verbal violence acts on several levels each with quite a different effect:
  - ✓ Harm inflicted on individual integrity;
  - ✓ Loss of freedom;
  - ✓ Sense of rejection and non-acceptance.

- In a situation where events have been bottled up over time and there is an intent to harm on the aggressor’s part, harassment, threats and intimidation become merged as one. The consequences are:
  - ✓ An escalation in the degree of violence and entry into a cycle of violence;
  - ✓ Unpredictable reactions on the part of the person attacked.

- Note that nothing was brought up about the construction of the victim figure, that is, of a person who is “different”, isolated, or who does not know how to defend himself, such as has often been described in theories of school bullying.

- Two other types of violence were discussed: Gestural violence and violence through glances, as well as with the problems of their subjective interpretation.

2.2 INDIVIDUALS

This chapter addresses the individual's relationship with violence and how a human being chooses to handle his own violence. This calls for anthropological, psychoanalytical, even ontological questions around the nature and origins of human violence. These were aspects the young adults and adolescents especially put forward.

2.2.1 Violence as an aspect of human nature

Individual violence, described by the boys, was inevitably linked to mankind in general, in the sense that everyone has a bit of violence in them. Its primary function is defence. This is the "fundamental violence" discussed by J. Bergeret[46]. The pure instinct for self-preservation and survival is an impulse that is neither good nor bad in itself. This is well illustrated by the image evoked of the "sleeping baby" inside each one of us:

> "For me, violence is a baby. It's something dormant in the world and inside everyone. And each person has violence, it's not that some people have it and others don't, everyone has violence in them. You just need something, some point of attack, something that wakes it up. And once it's awake, it's hard to get it back to sleep, like a baby. The baby cries, well it can sleep as long as you want, but once it's awake, it won't sleep long. It's the same thing."[47]

> "It just happens, no one can escape it. Like me, I may be talking but it doesn't mean I'm less violent. It's not because I'm calm. Anyone who's calm and really poised is still no less violent. The other guy there who's always calm, suddenly he jumps on you, and then bam! No one escapes it, not even me. Look, if someone threatens me, I don't wait for him to react. Because with threats I'm not going to wait until he says he's going to do something and does it to figure out hey, he's going to kill me. So I get rid of him first, understand?" Laughter in the group. "It's true, he's right! I have to defend myself."[48]

Then, differences between individuals and their personal ways of managing and expressing violence began to emerge, i.e., "To each his own form of violence":

> "I'm a very calm person, but something I don't take is threats. You threaten me, expect to see me before you even get here, understand? I'll get you right then, or I'll get you two days later, something will happen. But that's my own personal form of violence, for others it's different. Some people will goad you, goad you, goad you, enough to make you cry. Others will tax you every day. Some will beat you up every day. Some will do

[46] BERGERET, J. (1984). *La violence fondamentale. L'inépuisable Œdipe*. Paris: Dunod.
[47] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[48] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.

> lots of things. Like they'll run after your sister even though they know you don't like it. It depends on each person, to each his own violence, everyone expresses it differently."[49]

We don't all behave the same way with our violence, and along with this idea came the added notion that violence results from a lack of reflection:

> "Violence for me is an act that's really voluntary but it happens without thinking about things, so you'll use violence, either physical, psychological, even verbal and that's that. What I mean is that somebody will provoke it, and instead of thinking of a way to handle it, the first thing a person does is attack the other, just hitting back with any means he has. If he has a weapon on him he'll use it, without thinking first. That's why we have more violence, and it's more voluntary. There's a willingness to hurt people, without finding another way."[50]

2.2.2 Violence as incomprehension of self

While violence may be intrinsic to all, the young girls and women developed an observation that was closer to psychological and philosophical analysis. Violence is what I perceive as such, but also "what I cannot decipher with my reason".

Several illustrations were provided such as "the word with a double context":

> "It can be in a simple word, it can be just one word that means a lot of things. But it can be a word with two sides. Take a row with parents, there's verbal violence but it's not really direct, and it's not intended, you could say. Parents will say something to a child, but it's not what they meant to say. She'll say it in anger…it's the anger that's speaking instead of her but deep down what she wants to say to her child is "I love you," something like that, she just wants to say: I'm here for you, I'm just trying to teach you properly so that you'll be able to go far in life and all that. But it's anger that takes over, and talks in her place."[51]

It is anger that can also be turned against the self:

> "But if we're talking about verbal violence, a person can hurt themselves too, because they've said the things they've said, that's why."[52]

Then, there are those states in which "irrational violence" can just erupt:

[49] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[50] Girl 15-20 years, African group.
[51] Young woman 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[52] Girl 15-20 years, African group.

> "For example, there are also people who take drugs and then, once they take drugs they'll do anything, they'll beat up other people... Drugs can make you do anything and kids don't even realize what they're doing in the streets sometimes."[53]

In all cases however, it is definitely something that goes beyond normal:

> "Violence is the opposite of peace, let's put it like that. It's imposing actions that are not wanted, that go beyond what's normal."[54]

Finally, in the group of parents from the Black Anglophone community, a mother captured this notion of violence as just escaping from us, with the phrase: "*Violence, it's the devil*[55]"!

2.2.3 Violence as a question of choice

In contrast to the view we just saw, adolescents and young adults also described violence as an aspect of personality, contingent on the individual:

> "I'd say that it's quite personal, it depends on each person's personality. Because there are some that are quite strong. For example, in school there are kids that will have some questionable acquaintances, but they'll be assertive enough to tell their friend, well I don't want to do what you're doing. I'm your friend, I like you as a friend, but I don't like what you're up to and I don't want to get into it, and they won't. So, depending on whether a child has a strong personality, I think he can get out of it. It's being able to say no when you have to."[56]

Of course once violence is established as being fundamental to human nature, the question of individual responsibility has then to be raised in terms of making choices. This idea was elaborated by the adolescents, no doubt because theirs is the period of life when choices are seen as both possible and indefinite, though definitely determining:

> "It's not easy. When you're adult, 20, 25 years old, you know how to say no to a friend. And if you continue to insist that I get involved with you in what you're doing, I can stop the friendship. But with children, the really young ones, 10, 11, 12, 13 years old, even 15, it's not easy to say to your friend, look this friendship stops here. As for adolescents, they're capable of defining good and bad, deciding and choosing."[57]

[53] Mother, Haitian group.
[54] Young woman 20-30 years, African group.
[55] Mother, Black Anglophone group.
[56] Young woman 20-30 years, African group.
[57] Boy 15-20 years, Haitian group.

We are now faced with the inevitable question of choice when faced with violence, in terms of strength or "weakness" of character and the ability to resist. But we also enter into a debate between individual implications versus social implications. This led to a long exchange between the group of young women aged 20 to 30 years from the Black Anglophone community:

> "Yeah, you can't blame everybody else for the predicament that they're in, it's your life, your responsibility. You can choose to pick up a gun and be violent and you could choose to go the other way... Ultimately, the choice is yours, you can choose not to pick up a gun, you can choose to go to school, you can choose. I mean it's not always going to be easy but nothing in life is easy! Yeah OK, but if your family didn't do anything for you, then forget about them, cut them off and go decent for yourself, I mean like I'm in need of money right now, it doesn't mean I'm going to rob a bank or sell drugs or anything like that. I found a second job, a better paying job and I go back to school and take extra classes. I owe so much money in student loans already but hey! You know what? It's something I need to do!"[58]

Thus, during the course of these debates, adolescents, especially girls and young adults, placed the individual at the centre of violence. And from this perspective, the principal issue then becomes that of individual and/or social responsibility for violence.

[58] Young woman 20-30 years, Black Anglophone group.

2.2.4 Summary: Individuals

- The first perception of violence, expressed especially by boys, is that of violence as inextricably linked to human nature, in which everyone has their own type of violence and its primary function is defence. It's a vital necessity that appears from the first moments of life.

- Then, differences between individuals and their own personal ways of managing and expressing violence emerged as: "To each his own form of violence".

- We don't all behave the same way with our violence, with the added notion that it arises from a lack of reflection.

- If violence is to be found in us all, a further observation was developed, mainly by the girls and women, that was closer to psychological and philosophical analysis. Violence is what I perceive as such, but also that which cannot be deciphered by my reason. Several illustrations were given such as:
  - ✓ The "word with a double sense" that is, what I'm saying is not what I think of you, but an expression of my anger at that moment;
  - ✓ Under the influence of drugs, notably in the case of youth, I'm capable of saying and doing anything;
  - ✓ Violence is something that is beyond me that literally puts me outside myself and can be irrational.

- The adolescents and young adults described violence as a facet of personality, the strength or weakness of "character" and the ability to "resist", inherent in each person.

- Once violence was accepted as fundamental to human beings, the question was then raised as to personal responsibility when faced with it, in terms of life choices, and between individual and social constraints.

2.3 IDENTITY

If violence is an intrinsic part of human nature, it was mainly young adults and fathers that also pointed to violence as a very significant factor in the building of identity.

2.3.1 Violence as a lack of roots

This dimension was brought up by the girls in the African group. They pictured violence as being connected to a lack or a loss of identity and related it to the necessary and redeeming search for one's roots. They understood it as reclaiming the true values, the basic foundation of where one comes from, and reconstructing oneself as an African individual:

> "In my personal case, because I grew up here, was here until I was 12, 13 years old, at that age I started to go off on a rather weird track. I had friends who were into delinquency and all that: we skipped class, we went downtown, hanging about. And luckily for me, I was still quite happy. I went back to Africa, and stayed six years there. And it was a bit like having my brain washed clean. I really changed a lot over there. I learned real values and everything. I became aware. And when I came back here, I came back changed, with a completely different image of life. Which means that now, I would certainly never let myself be influenced by someone. It's completely impossible. And I realize that all that I experienced before that was really too superficial. Now I see what real life is, I know what I want. So I think it's good to have an African education and then come here. If you really respect the values that you learned over there and put them into practice here, it's really good." "Why did you go back? Because your base was there, you went back to find your base. If you don't have a base, I think you're lost. If you don't have respect, you won't have a sense of values in life. You'll need to find yourself every time you take a step. I'm African. I've come here and there are lots of things, but you'll never get it out of my head that I'm African. I'll never forget my values, because those are the values that will make me what I'm going to be tomorrow, what I'll be in my future."[59]

Here, violence derives its meaning from individuals' lack of roots and the loss of identity which many find so vital when searching for their true selves. This phenomenon, discussed by the young women in the African group who were more recent arrivals in Quebec, has often been analyzed from the angle of migratory patterns because it only affects immigrants. H. Malewska-Peyre[60] talks of the psychological fragility of migrants. Their emotional stability can be shaken as they become aware of behavioural differences. Identity strategies may then be put into place, such as defense mechanisms, to counteract a sense of disorientation in one's inner world.

[59] Young woman 20-30 years, African group.
[60] MALEWSKA-PEYRE, H. (1981). *Crise d'identité et déviance chez les jeunes immigrés.* Paris: La documentation française.

One such strategy is the favouring of values and norms of conduct from one's place of origin, a place which is often idealized. In essence, through this discussion, participants in a large city like Montreal, spoke of the rediscovery of authentic values, the essential and respect for the elderly. For example, there is an attempt to not lose oneself in certain aspects that are perceived as superficial.

2.3.2 Violence as an integration issue

Violence as an integration issue was discussed very directly by both the younger and older adults in the African groups. The first explanation was the "fear of rejection":

> "I think that violence has a really major impact on what we become. A simple example, you arrive in a night club, a bar, there's a certain community, but right away you're not going to understand the way they do things. They have their own way of behaving. You don't know them. You come from a different country. Some of their attitudes make me a little apprehensive. But if they took the time to explain things to me, if there was better communication, their way of dancing for example, of having fun, because for me it can seem rather strange. It's as if we're all more or less scared of what's strange, but we can approach it. We can learn about it. So, the consequences I would say are from a lack of communication. We can always interpret the actions of other people as good or bad, in relation to us. It's just fear, because not everything is violence as such, not everything."[61]

Here violence is intertwined with misinterpreted communication and a lack of understanding between cultures:

> "Take just laughing, a group that's laughing. You can think oh yeah maybe they're making fun of me. But no, they're not making fun of you, they're just kidding around. And you can be frustrated because sometimes you'd just like to be with them, because you think they're a good group. But you don't know how to go about it, because no one taught you to loosen up, to say: So hi, how are you? I'm by myself at a table, can I come and sit here? As simple as that. A lot of what you often see is not violence, it's just misinterpretation, miscommunication, simply that. So it's possible that somebody doesn't really understand a context and that's really important. These are the kind of consequences that lead to violence as stupidly as that, because you can't say to people, you're having fun, can I come and sit with you, that easily. And their response is only normal, to either accept or to refuse, because you can't just impose yourself on them. And your attitude, your way of introducing yourself, your way of approaching them, can't be angry, you have to do it with a relaxed approach, hi how are you, and then if it works, so I'm alone in the city. But it also takes a certain openness. If there are outbursts of anger, of violence, it's obvious there will be fights, but it's like learning to be

[61] Young man 20-30 years, African group.

> a better interpreter, to not take for granted that that's just the way it is. It could be the opposite, sometimes a yes can hide a no, sometimes you don't know."[62]

Then, more precisely, there is the whole issue around the difficulty of integration itself, which in turn calls attention to acceptance in Q□ebecois society and to the tensions experienced because of differences:

> "Violence… It's like in the country we're in now, for the Black community that is. There's a way we see things and it's not the same. Sorry to say this, they're the Whites, we're Black. We're coming here and integrating in this country where you are, but as you try to integrate yourself, sometimes people here aren't very friendly. But instead of asking questions or even imitating how they behave, you just impose your own way of doing things. And so now you're reproached for it, because of the fact that you see things as a Black person. I think that this can give rise to anger. It can outrage you, seeing as no one seems to listen to you. But the best attitude would be to not listen and just follow what is going down in the country itself. As for being Black, you always have trouble, wherever you are. Even in Africa, as a Black there are always rows between us. Whites aren't even around. But coming back to here, it's another stage that you have to go through entirely and the most difficult part is integrating."[63]

He continued with this train of thought, establishing a connection between the difficulty in integrating and the allure of juvenile delinquency:

> "You see there are young people who were born and grew up here. From the age of 12, 15 years, a kid may have friends that have guns or whatever and you're just what we could call, trapped... You choose to go straight, but there are kids in street gangs right where you are or in the community or in the neighborhood where you are. There are lots of young people like that, living like that, living on drugs, experiencing bad things. And there you are and you don't know how to get out of it, or you don't have any close friends to tell you that in the neighborhood you're in, you'll end up like the others. You just think it's normal. You've come from Africa, you haven't had the time to find a house for yourself, You haven't been able to work or buy a car. But you are in danger living with these people and these people won't allow you to live normally, just because you think you're normal. And you're not normal, you hang around with people who sell drugs, who are into those kind of things. But I can also say that for us, as Blacks in the Black community, we often have difficulty integrating."[64]

Thus, on the other side of the identity coin, one can resort to delinquency. Delinquency is perceived "*as an outlet, an easy way to regain value, a compensation strategy and source of a different self image.… Lacking recognition from family and as strangers in their host society, they seek kinship. Deprived of a personal identity, young people construct a collective identity for themselves*" (Chalom,

[62] Young man 20-30 years, African group.
[63] Young man 20-30 years, African group.
[64] Young man 20-30 years, African group.

M., 1993[65]). Adolescence per se is a time of crisis, the period of life involving the search for identity, sometimes even rebellion, and a time when one tests the solidity of parental and social models. Note however that this is not the only path, but one of several taken by young people within these communities.

2.3.3 Violence as a lack of role models

Continuing along the lines of what has just been said, the lack of recognition of successful role models in Black communities was mentioned in a number of instances, especially by parental groups:

> "When you immigrate with your children, they know you had a certain social position back home and that for political reasons, you decided to leave because your life was threatened. You come to live in Canada, saying that you're going to provide new opportunities to your family. You find yourself here, unemployed, your children lose out completely. Some have left a privileged social status behind, they come here and now their father doesn't have a cent and is on welfare. So young people want things. I'd say it's even a form of revenge sometimes. I have studied here, all my children were born here. The eldest is 28 years old, but I know from people close to me, that there are children who were born here and ended up in violent situations, because at certain points their parents had also lost control. They were caught up in other worries besides looking after their children. That's where the problem lies. I think that one of the factors that could decrease violence in the African community, in the Black community, would be to first show ourselves, to show our children, that Black people can succeed in the Quebec milieu. You don't see African role models, Black people, who are succeeding. On television, aside from actors, I don't know if you know any other Blacks that are shown on television. Every time we talk about a Black on television, it's a Black person that just stabbed a child, or attacked some people in Côte-Vertu, situations like that. But there are eminent Black professors here, whether it's in medicine, or in other sectors, and they're not being shown on television."[66]

This raises the issue of invisibility and the lack of recognition for Black people's accomplishments in Quebec society and the difficulty in even attaining that success within their own communities.

[65] CHALOM, M. (1993), op.cit.
[66] Father, African group.

2.3.4 Summary: Identity

- Young adults and fathers essentially emphasized the role of violence as an important issue in the building of identity.

- One aspect brought up by the girls in the African group was that violence was linked to a lack or loss of identity and with the necessary and redeeming search for roots. They considered it a part of finding their real values, the base, the foundation of where they came from, in order to reconstruct oneself as an African person.

- Violence as an integration issue was brought up by the young adults and adults of the African groups and was explored along several lines:
  - ✓ A fear of rejection tied in with misinterpretation in communication and lack of understanding between cultures;
  - ✓ The difficulty of integration, highlighting the notion of acceptance within Quebec society and the tensions experienced when coming up against differences;
  - ✓ The allure of delinquency given this difficulty in integrating, in order to rebuild oneself through a collective identity.

- The invisibility and absence of valorization by people from Black communities as models for success within Quebec society was mostly noted by parental groups.

2.4 EVERYDAY RACISM

The idea of violence being connected to racism cut across all age groups in all three communities. To varying degrees, it is an experience lived through at least once in the personal histories of the large majority of participants. At the very least, it remains within the realm of possibility that one can experience violence as a result of racism. In addition, race-based violence is more difficult to spot because it appears in so many situations. It can turn up in different sectors of society, at school, between students or with teachers, at work, with the police, in public space, in shops, at an information counter, in the street, etc.

It should be noted that all groups shared examples of relational “incidents” and racism taken from daily life. An analysis per se of systemic or institutional racism was not what was first brought up by participants. Rather, racism was introduced in connection with specific points being made, such as administrative problems linked to immigration or around the issue of employment. And though the core of these experiences could be connected to prejudices and stereotyping, their operating mechanisms are far more complex than might first appear.

2.4.1 Violence as reactions to otherness

One aspect of violence is tied up with a negative response to “otherness”, experienced in an individual manner and expressed in various interactional contexts.

The first interactional context occurs during conflicts, where although patterns may vary, the end result is that one is constantly reminded of one’s difference. “Otherness” is supported by unspoken prejudices and stereotypes. These exact terms however, were never used as such by participants.

The following anecdote about a housing problem in a university residence was provided by a young African woman. It involved a young blind female student from Benin. She had encountered difficulties with her roommates who “dropped rags everywhere, smoked and left everything a mess”, which made her fall a number of times. She then asked a friend to take pictures and they both went to the Director to request a room change:

> “The director wasn’t the least bit concerned and told the girl: I don’t care, in any case you’ve left Africa, you’re here now, that’s the way it is here. Just live with it, that’s how we live here. She said this to the girl and the girl was blind. When this girl told me about it, I was very upset, telling myself, it isn’t possible! But she was very strong, because if

> it had been me, I would have been defeated right away, so I salute her courage. She told the woman: I know my rights, things aren't going to continue like this. I'm going to social service and tell them about my problem. And they ended up giving her new housing."[67]

The initial banality of the conflict becomes a constant reminder of "strangeness," and then shifts into "racialization":

> "And I said to myself, I wasn't ashamed, I've never been ashamed to say, well yes it's because she was African. Because it's obvious that if she hadn't been African, they would have given her a flat, fixed her problem. It's because she's African. Yes but why? Well, because she said to the girl: You've come from Africa and when you come here that's the way it is, it's your problem. So, if I hadn't come from Africa, you would have fixed my problem then? It's because I'm from Africa? But I don't care, even if some people have the idea that in African people sleep in trees, I don't care. I paid to come here and I want to live under good conditions. Even somebody who isn't blind can't live in conditions like that, so fix her problem. Why are you sending her off? Because she's Black? That's a form of violence too."[68]

This mechanism is experienced and learned very early on, such as in confrontations children have in school:

> "I think that racism really exists in the direction of White toward Black. Not Black toward White. I remember when I was very little in school, in the corridor, it was always: Nigger! And I had to respond quickly, to make it clear from the start, for it not to happen again."[69]

The second interactional context occurs in situations where violence can suddenly turn into racism when it's not expected, often in public areas:

> "I went to the bus stop and there was a lady there. She was speaking in English and moving around, back and forth around me, speaking English. I thought she wanted to ask for some information and I turned around and asked her: Can I help you Madame? And the woman replied, looking at me and sizing me up: Go home!"[70]

One of the consequences of this can be violence as a response to violence:

[67] Young woman 20-30 years, African group.
[68] Young woman 20-30 years, African group.
[69] Young woman 20-30 years, African group.
[70] Mother, African group.

> "If I hit, it turns into violence. You say to me: Nigger. So I slap you. You've said: Nigger. But if I slap you I become…" "We respond to violence with violence. That's the problem. It's not the solution."[71]

Another consequence is a certain "fatalism" or a "conditioning" to racism. When asked about the frequency of this type of event in the lives of the participants, comments like the following illustrate the mechanism well:

> "If we said there's no racism, we'd be hypocrites. Because I always refer to the way things are and racism's a normal part of it all, that's it. It has many forms. I don't know what point to address it from, it's a fact, it exists. That's the way it is and you live with it."[72]

> "I haven't been here long, and personally I haven't been called Nigger yet." "Not yet, but you're aware it's going to happen!" Laughs. "Maybe it'll never happen, you could be lucky too!" Laughs. "Well put on your armour now, because it's going to happen!"[73]

> "I certainly have lots of examples of this, I don't know if there are people that haven't experienced it, but we do experience it quite a lot. In the professional milieu, in the street to an extent, and that's really relational aggression, in the heart of society."[74]

Only the young women aged 20 to 30 from the African group, spoke of a sense of improvement:

> "You have to admit that things have changed a lot. Personally I find that there's been a certain amount of change, certain progress. We have more and more cultural communities in Montreal and people have become aware that there are other people besides Quebecois. It's starting to change. True there are still people who are racist, but it's changing."[75]

2.4.2 Violence as categorization

All groups mentioned another aspect of violence related to racism, which occurs in the form of categorization and differentiation from group to group, in other words, between "Them" and "Us".

This was expressed as a feeling of marginalization and non-conformity:

[71] Young woman 20-30 years, African group.
[72] Young woman 20-30 years, African group.
[73] Young woman 20-30 years, African group.
[74] Mother, African group.
[75] Young woman 20-30 years, African group.

> "Talking about state of mind for example, it means that we're living permanently in situations that constantly call for reactions, brutal ones. And these reactions can be explained by a number of factors, the fact that you're frustrated, the fact that you can't reach your goals, which means you can develop certain attitudes, as a compensation… In talking about violence, you're saying you're a little outside the norm, that is, somewhat marginal, that you're not the way society wants you to be. It's a bit like that, the fact of living with violence, from being violent oneself, seeing as we're somewhat categorized…"[76]

On top of all the historical and collective weight of colonization and slavery, this marginalization can also lead to a feeling of inferiority when faced with White superiority, whether it's being acted on with conscious or unconscious attitudes of supremacy:

> "There's behavior that another person can exhibit, that's totally aggressive. And which for example here as Blacks in a country of Whites, we take as given, experience along with them as Whites. So, the White demonstrates behavior that's clearly violent towards the Black, based on Blacks vis-à-vis Whites. Somewhere there's this little cultural crumb, because we're used to having the White as superior. Not us here and now, but in the past. So, when you see a superior, you need to behave, right? But when you're with an inferior, not necessarily, OK? It used to be like that. Now, it's clearly displayed, you're nothing to me, OK. I can do whatever I want with you…Racism is maybe, can I say natural? I don't know. It's complicated. At least it's sort of natural with you. When you're White, you're strong, you're big, you're attractive, intelligent, but when you're Black, you're poor."[77]

But a discrepancy was also pointed out between official positions on tolerance toward others and attitudes perceived as hypocritical:

> "Being racist for me is major violence, absolutely. Because I happen to think all men are equal. The UN's promoting it every day in front of every nation, men are equal. And how can one say that some men are inferior, why others are superior? When there are articles stating that we're all equal. And why do we say things like that? And especially when you arrive in this country, in the West, you're arriving and they're telling you it's freedom, it's everything, it's liberal. So, when you see there's racism, it really upsets you a lot. It's a form of violence for me too."[78]

One of ways this categorization plays out and affects younger people is in the geographical division of the city:

> "It's happened to us, we've gone to check out girls, but it's been in a White neighborhood. And we'd just entered the neighborhood and it was really something else. Some Whites came out and asked us: What are you doing here? You don't live

[76] Father, African group.
[77] Mother, African group.
[78] Young woman 20-30 years, African group.

here! I felt really weird. Then the girl said let's walk faster so we can avoid this. Racism also makes people more violent, but then I think we can't just let it go."[79]

Another form can be the denial of competency, as illustrated by this incident within the professional sphere:

"I'm in a hospital environment, I'm a nurse. I'm Black, and beside me at the reception desk is a clerk, but she's Quebecoise. Somebody approaches, but she can't ask me for information, she goes straight to the Quebecoise, even though I'm the one who will provide the information. When she asks, the other woman tells her: But I'm the clerk, she's the nurse, the one in charge who can give you the information. And the woman says: Excuse me? At that point, I don't answer. I move away. For me, it's racism because I am…I am a little…I am a Black woman and she can't ask me for information, she has to turn to the other person because she's a Quebecoise. Well yes, that's a form of racism too."[80]

"I'm a nurse too. When it's time to wash them: No, no, no, they don't want the Black, not the Black! When it's time to eat: We want to eat, we want to eat! But it's the same Black woman you didn't want for the other thing…Don't touch me!"[81]

Yet another interpretation can be denial of a person, as in this example, "*Is there no one here*?":

"During the elections, I was working in a polling station as an information clerk. I was the first in and then a lady arrived and asked: Is there no one here? I was reminded of Molière: Is there no one here? So I looked at the woman and said: Madame, what did you just say? She repeated: But what's going on? Has no one arrived? I said: Madame, what did you just say? She repeated the same thing a third time. I said: OK, I'm here, aren't I a person? She said: Oh! And then she realized: But that's not what I meant. I said: Yes, but that's what I understood."[82]

Note that in the prolonged psychological violence just described here, what is especially important for individuals, much more than systemic racism, is what some participants called "soft racism," racism that isn't necessarily directly expressed, but more hidden:

"Soft racism is why I say racism exists here in Quebec and there's a lot of it, hidden, but a lot of it."[83]

Researchers refer to the notion of "contemporary neo-racism"[84]. The concept of race is no longer acceptable, especially in the biological sense. This has been aptly demonstrated by science, even

[79] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[80] Mother, African group.
[81] Mother, African group.
[82] Mother, African group.
[83] Mother, African group.

after having used it itself for a long time. As well, in the ideological sense it is unacceptable given the atrocities committed in its name and given the long history of colonialism. However, it is still evident that "*the racial fact has a very real existence as a social fact*" (Icart, J.C., 2001)[85]. It is then sometimes combined with other factors such as gender and/or social circumstances. However, when direct affirmation of racism becomes socially unacceptable "*it moves on to the field of cultural difference and can then manifest itself through indirect actions, implicit, unadmitted, shameful*[86]". Cultural difference has been approached for a number of years through educational policies on awareness and anti-racist education.

2.4.3 Violence as reversal of stigma

As a result, this kind of perceived and experiential racism can lead to various responses and strategies.

The first is when individual violence (in response to violence) is translated into collective action. Returning to the example previous where an information request was addressed to the hospital clerk, one African woman reacted. She warned about the risk of "spiteful" reverse racism:

> "You could say we're still growing. We're going to show them what we're capable of. And I think it's already started. (…) How do I see it? My God, look at the reaction of Mrs. X, the person there needed that information. Now Mrs. X is the nurse in charge, on duty. Her reaction to the action of this woman asking for information from the clerk instead of her, didn't help, she doesn't provide any more information. And this is a sick person here…except I'm so upset inside, I don't see her as a sick person anymore."[87]

The same could be said of the example from the polling booth:

> "We worked all day and she didn't look up at me once, the whole time we spent there. So then I told the supervisor, in front of her: You know what she said to me? She saw me in the room and said: Is there anyone here? Like that, just to annoy her, I wanted to annoy her. I think that with the Black person, if you're not careful, racism will be very

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[84] ANTONIUS, R. (2002). Un racisme « respectable ». In RENAUD et al., *Les relations ethniques en question. Ce qui a changé depuis le 11 septembre 2001.* Montréal: PUM.
BALIBAR, E. (1988). Y a-t-il un néo-racisme? In *Race, nation, classe. Les identités ambiguës.* Paris: La Découverte.

[85] ICART, J.C. (2001). *Perspectives historiques sur le racisme au Québec.* Conseil des relations interculturelles, Montréal.

[86] ICART, J.C. (2001), op. cit.

[87] Mother, African group.

> strong. In a little while, if we, ourselves, don't straighten things out it'll be racism, spiteful, vengeful."[88]

A second strategy, mentioned by a group of female adolescents stems from the connection made between violence and Black people:

> "Well I've felt it, I've seen it, I worked for a while at Wal-Mart, and I had a Black colleague who was at the cash. A man was going through and he started to get a bit irritated. Then you see his wife saying: Careful, he's a Black, in two seconds we're going to get a punch in the face, and all. And there were some, and one of things the lady evidently said: Listen, anyway he's Black person. If he was White, I'm sure she would never have said that, she wouldn't expect a White guy to throw a punch."[89]

At this point, the adolescents brought up two strategies. The first is the reversal of stigma described by the sociologist E. Goffman[90]. They discussed the Sloche Company, which had printed the disturbing image of a Black spider with dreadlocks on candy packages and then had to remove them from the market following complaints in the courts. They all denounced this imagery, which they perceived associated Black people with aggression.

Then they described how young people, street gangs and Black people are all lumped together into the same group:

> "I find that it really creates a very aggressive image of the Black man. It certainly doesn't help us, doesn't help us in various environments or in the work milieu. And especially, not that much with young people but mostly with adults, you sense that there's a fear there. You know, when there's a group of Black people together…"[91]

A few minutes later, another discussion ensued about Black people being violent, as a statement of fact:

> "I think it's a bit stupid, because we're all the same color, why so much hate? I don't know. It's always the same thing, I can't really think of a solution to it, because there's always someone who wants to be above you, now you want to be above them." "Is this particular to the community?" "Think it's particular to the community, because I'm going to tell you personally, and it's a very personal opinion, I think that it's in the Black man's nature to be more aggressive than the White man. At worst, it may be a matter of education. Actually, when I lived in Montreal, I had two roommates, and they were White girls. And they were arguing for two and a half hours, two and a half hours. Now personally, I know that if they had been Black women, it would have taken ten minutes

[88] Mother, African group.
[89] Girl 15-20 years, African group.
[90] GOFFMAN, E. (1975). *Stigmate. Les usages sociaux des handicaps*. Paris: Ed. de Minuit.
[91] Girl 15-20 years, African group.

> and they'd have jumped on each other. If it's two Black women, they won't spend two hours there bickering, that's for sure, and especially not men. They won't spend two and half hours like that without…I think that if they had been Black, they would have hit each other before. They wouldn't have spent two and a half hours bickering. That's really my personal opinion."[92]

Throughout the entire session, these young women maintained an equivocal stance in regards to being part of their community, alternating between reversal of stigma and distancing themselves as in ("I'm not like them").

They then explained how out of the need to protect themselves, they would play both sides, depending on the ethnic group of the people they were interacting with:

> "If I've been accepted by Whites as such, it's because I've had their attitude."[93]

> "The double game, I do that kind of thing too. On one hand, when I'm with Quebecois, I talk a bit like them, with their accent, we talk about things more openly, and when I'm with Black people, it changes."[94]

Thus, whether you call it soft racism or indirect racism, it must be noted that its effects are considered significant in Black communities in the context of violence. Frustration was initially used to describe the fallout from perceived and experienced violence. We now move to a second quite similar element, which is considered above all, that is the demand for respect:

> "When you're Black, you have to make a lot of effort, OK. Because if you don't get respect, you don't have a chance of, how can I say it, being part of, really integrating into society."[95]

A large-scale investigation into ethnic diversity in Canada completed in 2003 by Statistics Canada[96] attests to this malaise: "*Visible minorities were more likely than others to affirm at least sometimes that they felt uncomfortable or out of place in Canada because of their ethnic origins, their culture, their race, the color of their skin, their language, their accent or religion... In total, 24% of all visible minorities in Canada, or 638,000 people, indicated that* "*always*", "*most of the time*", *or* "*sometimes*" *felt uncomfortable or out of place because of their ethno-cultural characteristics. About three times as*

[92] Girl 15-20 years, African group.
[93] Girl 15-20 years, African group.
[94] Girl 15-20 years, African group.
[95] Mother, Haitian group.
[96] STATISTIQUE CANADA (2003). *Enquête sur la diversité ethnique: portrait d'une société multiculturelle*. Statistique Canada, Ottawa.

many people that were not part of a visible minority felt ill at ease, that is only 8% of the population (1.5 million people)".

At this juncture, it is a matter of differentiating between specific terminologies and mechanisms in ideological racism, discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes, but at the risk of minimizing racism. The most recent definitions provided by the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles are the following[97]:

- Racism has several facets. We can define it as the totality of ideas, attitudes and acts aimed at demeaning people of ethno-cultural minorities, in a social, economic, and political sense, thus preventing them from participating fully in society;

- Prejudices are preconceived opinions based on stereotypes. They are judgments, usually unfavorable, made by one individual towards another whom he does not know, attributing characteristics to that person that are attached to the group he belongs to;

- Discrimination is a distinction, exclusion or preference based on grounds outlawed by the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms that has the effect of destroying or compromising the exercise or these rights and freedoms. These grounds are: "race", color, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, marital status, age except as indicated by law, religion, political beliefs, language, ethnic or national origin, social condition, handicap or the means used to offset the handicap. Discrimination can be expressed as much through exclusion as through harassment or inequitable treatment.

Racism could also be analyzed according to different generations. However the examples that came out of our group interviews describe life experiences common to most of the participants. Participants spoke about racism experienced in daily life, about living with derogatory remarks, about constant reminders of strangeness in situations of relational conflict, about denial of professional status or of the individual himself. As a result, this phenomenon tends to feed on itself by fostering a stance of permanent alertness, even paranoia, wherein each gesture or attitude can be interpreted as an indication of racism.

[97] MINISTERE DE L'IMMIGRATION ET DES COMMUNAUTES CULTURELLES (2006). *Vers une politique gouvernementale de lutte contre le racisme et la discrimination*. Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles, Montréal.

2.4.4 Summary: Everyday racism

- Violence linked to racism was an experience common to both genders and to all age groups in all three communities. The majority of participants have experienced it in varying degrees, or felt they were likely to experience at least once in their lifetime.

- Racism is difficult to address because it appears in different situations. It can turn up in various sectors of society, at school among students or with teachers, at work, with police, in public areas, in shops, at an information counter, in the street, at a bus stop, etc.

- Approaching systemic or institutional racism from an analytical perspective was not what was first brought up by participants. Rather, all the groups tended to describe social incidents where “daily racism” or “soft racism” had permeated their life.

- Only the young women aged 20 to 30 from the African group mentioned that they sensed improvement.

- One of the issues of everyday racism is how the negative term “otherness” can be expressed in different social contexts. For example, they experienced otherness:
  - ✓ In everyday life, where ordinary conflict is transformed into a constant reminder of otherness or strangeness, and then into racialization;
  - ✓ In the sudden appearance of racism when you least expect it, often in the public sphere.

- Another aspect of violence, one that is related to racism was described both by the adults and by the adolescents. That is, racism occurs when you are categorized or when a group differentiation is made between “Them” and “Us”. This is experienced as:
  - ✓ A feeling of marginalization and non-conformity;
  - ✓ A feeling of inferiority when faced with White “superiority,” that is often expressed through conscious or unconscious attitudes of supremacy.

- The consequences of violence connected to racism are:
  - ✓ For youth: a geographic division of the city mentally, with neighbourhoods where you don’t go from fear of being badly treated;
  - ✓ For adults: It is a denial of professional status or rejection;

- ✓ A questioning of the gap between official statements about openness toward others and the attitudes that are seen as hypocritical.

- Response strategies are then set in motion, such as:
  - ✓ Fatalism and a certain “conditioning” to racism;
  - ✓ Use of violence against violence;
  - ✓ Risk of inverse racism;
  - ✓ Turning the stigma against oneself;
  - ✓ Distancing oneself from one’s own community;
  - ✓ A strategy of play-acting, based on whom one is with.

- We could counter that it is simply a matter of differentiating between terminologies and mechanisms at work in ideological racism, discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes but by doing so, we run the risk of minimizing racism. Racism could also be analyzed according to different generations. However, our group interviews describe life experiences common to most of the participants. It is racism as experienced in daily life, through derogatory remarks, a constant reminder of strangeness in situations of relational conflict, a denial of professional status or of the individual himself. As a result, this phenomenon tends to feed on itself by fostering a stance of permanent alert, even paranoia, in which each gesture or attitude can be interpreted as a racial indicator.

- Whether you call it “soft racism’’ or “indirect racism,” its effects are considered significant in Black communities within the context of violence. Where a sense of frustration was used initially to describe the fallout from perceived and experienced violence, Black communities are now demanding respect.

Chapter 3

Overview and testimonials: violence and groups

This chapter presents an analysis of juvenile violence that occurs in groups, based on two dimensions that were explored during interviews. The first aspect is related to adolescent socialization in peer groups and the second aspect deals with the subject of street gangs.

3.1 PEER GROUPS

Here violence lies at the very foundation of adolescent socialization because in adolescence, the group plays a paramount role. It was mostly adolescents and young adults that discussed this theme and only one group of parents.

3.1.1 Violence as initiation

Violence serves as a transition from one age to another, a rite of passage as such. It occurs amongst youth, especially boys. It is code-based and follows an age pyramid:

> "You could say there's a certain kind of violence associated with each age group. Physical violence is more typical of adolescents. Like tribes in Africa, it's something they turn to around 15 when it's their birthday. They'll do initiations, things like that, but it's also violent things just to say they've become men. It's sort of the same here. It's the adolescents who are subjected to a kind of initiation, a pre-adolescence, in a physical sense."[98]

The main driver behind this violence is getting respect or showing one's power to others and growing up by moving on to the status of young adolescent:

> "Always defending who you are, or to show that I'm better than the other one, it's often like that."[99]

[98] Young woman 20-30, Haitian group.
[99] Girl 15-20, African group.

This brings to mind G. Mauger's[100] work on the virility factor in adolescent socialization and that there is a certain "normalization" of juvenile violence, depending on the criteria and socio-cultural contexts prevalent in different eras. It brings to mind the familiar adage "Youth must have its day".

3.1.2 Violence as influence

Participants then went on to challenge this initial idea of normative juvenile violence by addressing another more anomic type of violence[101]. Taking the central notion of the "circle" and its potentially negative influence on the behavior of youth, explanations were looked at in terms of supposed risk factors existing in several areas.

The first area, family and education, was a recurring theme:

> "First of all there's an educational component in this that counts too, the education of children in their families, in their own family circle."[102]

The second area relates to a broader societal definition of "circle" was expanded to include the living environment as a whole, with its hierarchy of violence within certain city neighborhoods:

> "And largely his circle, really his circle. Just to take an example, in Montreal neighborhoods like Rivière-des-Prairies, we can agree there won't be the same kind violence there as in Westmount. So it's really the milieu that has a big influence on how youth behave. The milieu where they live and where there really is more violence. It's much wider of course, there are friends, but it's the neighborhood itself that's their actual circle, affecting how they react and determining their habits."[103]

The boys went so far as developing the idea of a more "pathological" violence, based on the idea of "contamination". This in effect normalizes violence to a degree:

> "If our circle is contaminated, we risk being contaminated if we're not strong. If we haven't taken the right vaccine It's contamination. I'm talking about contamination,

[100] MAUGER, G. (1983). Les loubards. *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociale*s, 50, novembre, 49-67.
[101] Émile Durkheim, l9th century French sociologist, used the term "anomie" in his book on the causes of suicide to describe a condition or malaise in individuals, characterized by an absence of or a decrease in standards and values and a feeling of alienation. According to him, the retreat from values (ethical, religious etc.) led to a destruction or reduction of the social order: with a lack of laws it was no longer possible to guarantee social cohesion. Even though Durkheim's theories have been criticized, anomie is still used to describe a state of society characterized by a disintegration in norms governing human behaviour and assuring social order, or more generally, as individual or social unease.
DURKHEIM, E. (1967). *Le suicide. Étude de sociologie.* Paris: PUF, 2e édition, (1ère ed. 1897).
[102] Girl 15-20 years, African group.
[103] Girl 15-20 years, African group.

> because it's a spiral, you get into it. It's a way of doing things, everybody has to do it that way: it's like a style at a given time."[104]

> "For me violence starts with psychology... Given you've been psychologically damaged, the fact you're not hanging out with good people, you'll hang out with people who are just as damaged as you, so it's not good. It's like putting rotten apples together, it leads to trouble and that's bad."[105]

3.1.3 Violence as disturbance

Some adults brought up another aspect of juvenile violence that occurs in groups. It is generally called "disturbance" but it is also referred to as incivility:

> "I see it as the way young people act towards each other, in the street especially. I'm used to seeing young people and even when they're playing in the street there's violence. Sometimes it's also in the words they're using, there's violence in their speech. And then there are times too when young people don't respect others. For example, they'll do anything, say anything, especially in the bus. When I encounter young people some really don't respect others. They'll say and repeat anything. It bothers me when I see young people behaving like that in the street. They're playing together and they're bothering others. It disturbs me. It's not normal. In the metro too they kick up a fuss, lots of noise. It bothers me the way they act in the metro too."[106]

This concept of misbehaviour, illustrated by the broken window theory in Q. Wilson et G.L. Kelling[107] and analyzed by S. Roché[108], is based on the idea that a climate of insecurity arises in connection with everyday disorder. These "acts of petty delinquency" such as the physical vandalism of the environment are a result. For example, when a window is broken in an area, everyone in close proximity risks the same fate unless the window is quickly replaced. According to this theory, rowdiness triggers more disorder, delinquency or more offences. The window theory has been strongly criticized because it has encouraged the installation and reinforcement of "zero tolerance" control policies.

However, participants were less concerned with the specific facts of environmental disturbance and more interested in discussing the idea of "disturbance" itself, caused by groups of youth hanging around in the metro or in the street or about the kind of "images" this confers on Black communities.

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[104] Young man 20-30 years, African group.
[105] Young man 20-30 years, African group.
[106] Mother, Haitian group.
[107] WILSON, Q., KELLING, G.L. (1982). Broken Windows: The Police and Neighbourhood Safety*. The Atlantic Monthly,* March, 29-38.
[108] ROCHE, S. (1996). *La société incivile.* Paris: Seuil.

The first image relate to education. Juvenile misbehaviour evokes a certain regret and nostalgia for the "education of the past":

> "It disturbs me because of the education I received. I didn't do that in the street, that's why it bothers me."[109]

The generational differences became apparent when discussing increased visibility that these young people now have and its association with Black people.

Previously, we were only dealing with the dimension of youth. Now we come to the community and its status as a whole:

> "Sometimes it bothers me, because when I see a Black guy or a Black girl for example, it bothers me because when it's Black people acting up, you notice. With other nationalities, there's less impact than when it's Blacks. I don't know why but there's a problem, because sometimes when Blacks act in a certain way, it's easier for people to say: Well that's a Black, or, OK, see what I mean? If it's another nationality, the person doesn't pay attention to that, but when it's a Black, it stands out most."[110]

This example was also taken up by a woman in the young African group:

> "Shouting for example, there are two or three people talking and everyone in the metro has to hear the story. There has to be something lacking in a person's personality, something irrational I'd even say."[111]

> "The Black community, they're all the same! You need to get it into someone's head and make them understand that no, they don't see you that way. This is something we have to be concerned about. There are some who do take everyone and put them all in that same bag. Because if you have them shouting like that in the street, everyone's going to say, it's the Africans!"[112]

There's nothing new about juvenile violence in groups. Past societies have provided outlets for youth where violence was tolerated: we could cite traditional pranks, chivarees, carnivals or other rites of passage[113]. At the same time, there has always been a paradoxical injunction on youth, where each

[109] Mother, Haitian group.
[110] Mother, Haitian group.
[111] Young woman 20-30 years, African group.
[112] Young woman 20-30 years, African group.
[113] FELLOUS, M. (2001). *À la recherche de nouveaux rites: rites de passage et modernité avancée*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
REY-FLAUD, H. (1985). *Le charivari. Les rituels fondamentaux de la sexualité*. Paris: Payot.
VAN GENNEP, A. (1981). *Les rites de passage. Étude systématique des rites*. Paris: A. -J. Picard.
CRUBELLIER, M. (1979). *L'enfance et la jeunesse dans la société française, 1800-1950*. Paris: A. Colin.

successive generation condemns their outbursts as “excessive” and “disruptive”, while remembering its own youth with nostalgia.

However, things are quite different today, in a context where the concept of youth itself is not as clear. It is opportune then to ask ourselves: What it is to be young today? What is one’s status? How does one learn to grow up? What are the norms of expression and acceptance for adolescents? Within what framework and to what degree will their acting up be tolerated here in Montreal?

3.1.4 Summary: Peer groups

- Violence, primarily and most frequently brought up by adolescents and young adults, and by just one group of parents, is seen as being connected to adolescent socialization.

- Juvenile violence functions as a transition from one age to another, like a rite of passage. It occurs between youth, mostly boys, and is code-based.

- The principal driver behind this violence is to gain respect to display one's strength to others and ascend to the status of young adolescence. It emphasizes the virility component in juvenile violence and there is a certain "normalization" of it, relative to the criteria and socio-cultural contexts of different eras.

- Participants in the group interviews initially questioned this normalized juvenile violence by discussing supposed risk factors and the negative influence of the "circle" on the behaviour of youth. This covered several areas:
  - ✓ Familial and educational circles;
  - ✓ Social circles that encompass the living environment of youth along with a hierarchy of violence of certain city neighbourhoods. The circle of friends, also the more pathological concept of violence, was associated with the idea of contamination and a certain normalization of violence.

- Adults mentioned a final dimension of this group violence. That is one of "disturbances" or what we could call "incivility":
  - ✓ This occurs during school years and conjured a certain regret and nostalgia for the "education of the past";
  - ✓ Incivility is seen differently according to one's generation. Regardless the concern addressed was that the increased visibility of youth was negatively associated with Black people.

- Juvenile violence in groups is nothing new. Past societies provided outlets for their youth where violence was tolerated. All the same, there is a paradoxical injunction on youth. Each generation condemns adolescent outbursts as "excessive" and "disruptive" while they remember their own adolescence with nostalgia.

- In a context where the concept of youth itself is not as clear, things are quite different today. It is opportune then to ask ourselves: What it is to be young today? What is one's status? How does one learn to grow up? What are the norms of expression and acceptance for adolescents? Within what framework and degree will their acting up be tolerated here in Montreal?

3.2 STREET GANGS

With the image of street gangs, we move to another level of violence and disturbance. This involves complex problems such as, the status of youth, identity and social issues, delinquency and deviance, as well as societal reactions: "*We have to keep in mind that the subject of street gangs is hardly neutral*, *they are a conduit of socially, ideologically, politically, and scientifically-loaded stakes, one of which it seems, is awareness on the subject of street gangs, depending on who has the power of speech, media attention toward certain facts, the socio-historical position of minorities in a given context and the social representation of youth as presenting a certain danger*" (Tichit, L., 2003[114]).

Street gangs were a major topic in the interviews on violence. They concerned each member in all groups. Although their reactions varied according to residential neighborhood, individual history, age, and gender. Also, whenever young people used the term "street gang", adults, and more specifically those in the Haitian community, referred to a broader notion of "delinquency" and "vagrancy". Adults conceptualized street gangs within a system of conflict with the "state". Members of the African community spoke more of a new phenomenon of protection and defense against groups that already exist. But all participants agreed on the stigmatizing effects that street gangs have on Black communities.

3.2.1 Violence as variant of gang type

One of the first difficulties encountered with the subject of street gangs, is the use of the generic term "gang". The term embodies quite different realities, different identity, perspectives and behaviours for different groups. For example, adolescents make the distinction quite clearly between what you would call street gangs and gangs of friends:

> "There are always street gangs hanging around, then there are gangs in school, just friends that want to be together. It's not the same thing. They're quite different gangs, there are gangs of friends who are usually phoning each other after school. There are athletic gangs that do a lot of sports. Then there are gangs that you see often hanging around a lot, who don't do their homework. Some you see them hanging out and all. You say immediately, yeah, they could be in a street gang. And then others are just gangs of friends that are there just talking. Sometimes they can be bugging each other and it goes badly. Sometimes there's fighting but it gets settled right away. With street gangs when this happens, they fight right off. It'll finish directly with violence, if there's a weapon, it'll be settled with that."[115]

[114] TICHIT, L. (2003), op. cit.
[115] Girl 15-20 years, African group.

> "Your crew is just the boys you go out with."[116]

In our context, we are ultimately referring to the issue of criminalized gangs. For adolescents the difference was not so much in terms of criminality and delinquent acts as such, but rather in terms of the violence itself.

The boys especially situated the violence in an historical context of society, presenting it as a form of "tradition":

> "First there were the Jews and Babylonians, after that it was Hitler and then others. It's always been like that. At one point it was the Blues, the Whites, then the Blacks, now the world is all mixed together."[117]

> "I think that violence is like a tradition, because for me, before Jesus Christ, in the time of Jesus Christ, that's when violence started. That's what I see. It's always existed, like a tradition."[118]

But soon after, they noted with a certain nostalgia that there has been a generational transition from the street skirmishes of past decades:

> "Well for one thing, in your time it wasn't like it is now. They didn't fight for, I don't know, they fought, but they didn't fight like now, totally crazed." "I think he means gangs now fight over nothing." "I can't even remember which gang it used to be… les Bélanger. These days when you're walking in the bus, they'll fight you right there. Before that, my uncle told me that when he'd be going to a party for example in the other's turf, he'd have to call the other gang to get permission to go into the neighbourhood. Now it's not like that. They see you there, you're dead."[119]

> "I think it's really changed, we're all about twenty here. And I think we're from a different era, a different generation. With us, it was really one-to-one. Now when you look, the generation of 14 year-olds…They'll be twenty-to-one!" "And those kids there, they're not like before: they're much more fucked up."[120]

Note however, that no one seemed to know why or how any of this started in the Montreal context. In addition, young people did not have any historical knowledge about the conflicts splitting apart the various gangs:

[116] Boy 15-20 years, Black Anglophone group.
[117] Young man, 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[118] Young man, 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[119] Young man, 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[120] Young man, 20-30 years, Haitian group.

> "Well in the beginning they were school groups, after that they rallied together with other schools to go and fight or do stuff against other schools and it got worse, like that. But after that who knows what happened."[121]

> "There are some that decide to be red, there are some that decide to be blue, that's because there's a story." "Explain." "I don't know the story. It goes way back. It comes from the States."[122]

All young participants in all groups agreed that the situation is both expanding and deteriorating.

They first commented on the seriousness of the acts being committed:

> "It used to be a twenty-minute battle. Today it's not even a battle, he gets out his weapon and its game over. Violence, young people are doing things that are way too serious." "In Montreal they'll kill someone, and people are victims for nothing. Like the street gangs, they do that." "Before, it wasn't like that, today it's quite high up, tough guys. Now, as soon as somebody's dressed in a particular color, something like that, they fight over colors, that's it. For territory too. A battle, well now there's a fight just because somebody looked at you funny." "It's really rough now. Now it's much more violent, I agree with that. Yes, now they'll fight over anything. It's not just fighting, it's murder. Before there were knives, not even knives, chains, stuff like that, now it's big weapons."[123]

They see this situation arising from increased access to sophisticated firearms, the appearance of new drugs and the corresponding escalation in violence as a result:

> "Before, firearms weren't abused as much, now it's too much." "Well exactly, it's because of all that, territories, trafficking, weapon trafficking, narcotic trafficking…" "The new drugs too, now. They try and control everything, you see. But now it'll be just about anything. Anything that will bring in money." "No, you don't have to bring in money, when you say anything, it's not just about money, it can be you stepped on my feet, oh I'm going to wipe you out, yo." "Every year it goes up instead of going down."[124]

Street gangs are seen as part of a social phenomenon that is on the rise:

> "It's something very trendy now, it's always been like that for a while in Montreal, but now it's not just Montreal, it's everywhere."[125]

This expansion was seen as a consequence of maintaining a taboo on violence, not wanting to recognize and address it early enough, and also because of slow institutional response:

[121] Young man, 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[122] Young man, 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[123] Young man, 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[124] Young man, 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[125] Young man, 20-30 years, Haitian group.

> "I think violence has always been around, we just used to hear about it less. It's a question of taboo, we were careful not to talk about it in case it got around. But these days they can see that it's taking up too much space and they have no choice but to talk about it, inform people. Young people are holding conferences because they can see it's escalating. They've got no option. I think they're right in the end because we hid it too long and now it's overtaken us. It's almost like we didn't see it coming. That's when they realized that it had gotten worse, and they couldn't just let it continue. It had to stop. It's good they're doing this but they're doing it too late. I think they could have done something sooner. Because if there are young people in the street, there's a reason. Something has made it all overflow."[126]

There was also the recognition that there is a shift in violence. Once confined for a long time to a private space but now street gangs and violence expresses itself in the public sphere:

> "In the past, it was more about family violence, parents and children, now it's more children going at other children in the streets. The parent-child stuff is still around, but it's more in the street that you find it, it's always there that you see all the problems."[127]

> "It's everywhere, everywhere, it's not just a question of the street, it's everywhere. Just the fact that in certain areas there are lots of young people under pressure all the time, for good or bad reasons. It's normal for it to be talked about. If there's violence in a milieu like the street, there's violence everywhere. A young person who experiences it at home, like any type of violence, will go out and repeat it in the street. Fact is, it's not just in the street. It's in the street because it comes from somewhere else also. They carry it along with them. We each bring our own part of violence outside with us, that's what creates it."[128]

In fact, it was situated both in the Montreal context and as a "phenomenon" that is part of a much larger social problem:

> "For us, in a place like Montreal-North too, where the majority of the population is young, if you look at the statistics for a place like here with more young people, a neighbourhood where they're all in the street, it's fairly normal that there's more violence in the streets statistically speaking, but it doesn't mean that violence comes more from the streets."[129]

> "Anyway, I think that it's not the street gangs themselves, it's a question of society, I could say it's their fault but not their fault at the same time, because if society doesn't help them, doesn't give them a hand, they can't do very much."[130]

[126] Young woman 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[127] Young woman 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[128] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[129] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[130] Young woman 20-30 years, Haitian group.

3.2.2 Violence as the desire to belong to a dominant norm

J.M. Hagedorn[131] developed the descriptive model currently accepted of a concentric configuration of street gangs, with a hard core at its centre, comprising a small number of young adults. These can sometimes be strongly criminalized groups, operating like a small company, with a pyramid system based on age or, according to developments noted in the past few years, a network system of different cells. When talking about the activities of these groups, young people in fact use the term "work". Each group has its own specific history as well as place within the delinquent milieu of Montreal. These groups have evolved around alliances and enmities, experiencing the formation and dissolution of sub-groups.

Then comes a wider circle of "associate members". On the periphery are the "sympathizers" or the *wannabes.* There is a "but" at the heart of the whole problem of street gangs, in the sense that they exert a very strong identity-related allure for youth, notably from minorities, because their strength lies in channeling confused frustration into a certain success and power. Here, the potent lever used is the Afro-American sub-culture, the "struggle" of resistance, and the history of opposition between the East and the West in North America, i.e. the renowned *Crips* and *Bloods* (the Blues and the Reds). Their classic struggle reproduced and redefined by youth, Montreal-style. This imagery is strongly supported by the cultural industry and the fashion trends that it promotes. We now begin to address problem of juvenile identity, both individual and collective, that feeling of belonging that comes with being in a group with a territory.

Street gangs have also called attention to the "racial condition" of certain youth and the problems that young people from visible minorities still experience in the territory of Montreal. Essentially these gangs have had the effect of "*transposing the* "*identity crisis*" *affecting a certain group of young people lacking affirmation, to a societal scale*" (Perreault, M., Bibeau, G., 2003[132]). In certain instances, their life experience has constantly been fed by a communal consciousness rooted in an experience of devaluation, racism, and frustration when faced with the dominant consumer society, with "*recourse to various identity strategies, amongst which are delinquency and belonging to gangs*" (Chalom, M., 1993[133]).

[131] HAGEDORN, J.M. (1998). Gang Violence in the Postindustrial Era. In TONRY, M., MOORE, M.H. (eds.). *Youth Violence*. IL, Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 365-420.
[132] PERREAULT, M., BIBEAU, G. (2003). *La gang: une chimère à apprivoiser: marginalité et transnationalité chez les jeunes québécois d'origine afro-antillaise.* Montréal: Boréal.
[133] CHALOM, M., KOUSIK, J. (dir.) (1993). *Violence et déviance à Montréal*. Montréal: Liber..

The main issue brought up during group interviews was the existing confusion about "who's who" and "who does what" when it comes to the actual youth in street gangs. It then becomes a question of individual choice whether street gangs hold an attraction and whether or not one follows a delinquent path with the real gangs. The large majority of young people establish their identity simply by adhering to adolescent culture and by following "trends". Between the two there is what we could call cliques, that is, groups of youth that are prone to small-scale delinquency, strongly integrative and locked into a certain violent determinism. The recurring terms used by young people in the discussion groups to describe clique attraction were the desire to be "popular" to be "in the game", to be "chill" or to be "tough":

> "A young guy's just arrived in a neighbourhood, he doesn't really know it, see? He sees these people all doing the same thing, fighting to prove themselves, stealing, selling drugs, smoking, drinking. It's just to prove that they're *chill*, see? They're *chill*, they're with it. So in his head he's thinking, OK, if I want to be *chill*, if I want to be hot, I'm going to do the same thing, see? But then, to be *chill*, you have to prove it. Most of the kids, whether it's Montreal-North or any neighbourhood where they're violent, they want to be a part of the clique, but you have to prove you're a tough guy. So right away he sees, well, OK, I want to be with these guys, I want to be hot, I want to, you know…" "I want to be popular." "That's it. So then what's he going to do, he's going to start fighting, stealing, punching, displaying some kind of violence so others will notice." "To have friends, to hang out, you have to prove yourself. If you want to be tough and you live in a tough neighbourhood, you need to prove that you're a tough guy. Most of the time, that's the way it goes."[134]

> "Bad influences, it's more like you can be somebody who's calm, doesn't have problems with anyone but then you see others and it's oh they're so cool, well why don't I go and join them? But then they tell you, well if you want to join us, you need to do this and that. So even though a person is laid back, didn't have problems, now they want to join the others, so they have to submit to their influence, all to be a part of their group. Either to make friends, or just for the heck of it, like that. Maybe they have problems at home or at school, but instead of confronting their problems, they try to escape them. That means a kid's going to join other people. He's going to get stuck in his problems, and without knowing it, he's only going to make the problems worse."[135]

Cliques are a way of getting yourself noticed and recognized by the group, on the principle that there is strength in numbers:

> "It's rather difficult to be violent all on your own. You can't be all by your lonesome and just start attacking people. Certainly having a lot of people around you and all, it's definitely strength in numbers, as they say. So you're sure going to try and find other people to go along with you."[136]

[134] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[135] Girl 15-20 years, African group.
[136] Young woman 20-30 years, African group.

Another issue brought up was the social determinism of violence, in the sense of pressure exerted on the marginalized individual:

> "But there are cases too, young people who don't have the choice of being violent or not and I'll explain to you why. Because if you live in a neighborhood, you say OK, I'm going to be an example, you know, somebody who goes to school, goes to work, who's straight up, follows the law. Fact is you live in a neighborhood that's so violent, each time you go out everyone says you're a snob, that you don't fight. You're a coward, if you like, yeah you're a coward. You never fight anyone and people upset you that you're not doing anything. So one day or another, you're going to end up being fed up and wanting to defend yourself. You're definitely not going to spend your whole life being treated like a fag you know, they're going to call you all kinds of names. They're going to hit you. Like it or not, you're going to end up defending yourself, understand? And usually, that's how it starts. You defend yourself once, you're going to want to defend yourself twice. You're going to want to defend yourself four times, five times, until it ends up being a duty. You know, you defend yourself once, twice, three times then…after that you've become one of them, bam!"[137]

The reasons brought up for joining cliques were a poor education or lack of one, bad influences that some young people don't know how to resist, the lack of love or more individual reasons like the attraction of violence itself or the pleasure it brings, the search for power, money or imitation:

> " It's a shame, because a little brother who's only 8 or 9 years old, sees his big brother who's already in gangs; that little kid's idol is his brother and he wants to imitate him. Then what happens? Just like his big brother, who he wants to impress, the little brother tries tp prove himself, to to both his brg brother and the gangs. And that puts him on the wrong path. "[138]

But what also came up often in the discussions was the search for respect, through violence:

> "It's never just one thing: it's the money, the power, the respect, these are the three things that come up most often."[139]

> "But little kids, to get the respect from a bigger one, they're going to do the same."[140]

> "It's also style, some have already committed a lot of crimes and you can see there are people that respect them. He's committed so many crimes that you notice him, OK him there…and you move out of the way. You don't have to kill someone to say: well now I feel respected by everyone because I killed someone."[141]

[137] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[138] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[139] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[140] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[141] Girl 15-20 years, African group.

There's also getting caught up into the endless cycle of fear and protection:

> "People are scared, so they'll say: I'm afraid, but they aren't afraid of other people so they'll look out for me, that kind of thing. Then there are people who are all alone and scared and they figure if they are with them they're not going to be scared. They're big, they're strong, and all that. To get in with them though, you need to steal. You need to attack people. A person starts out doing it just to feel safer, but it ends up creating violence, because everyone he attacks now decides they don't want to be attacked so they go out and create another gang, and on it goes."[142]

So somewhat in spite of oneself, the individual is "carried along" into the gang scenario, by the very fact that he lives and resides in a certain part of the city. This connection is symbolized by wearing a bandana, usually red or blue, a sign of belonging to a particular group and city neighborhood:

> "The young people there, they don't have to wear bandanas. But there are some that say because I live here I have to wear this bandana, because it represents my neighborhood, understand? But without being in the actual gang itself. Maybe later they'll form a little group of their own. Nothing forces a kid to wear a bandana. Either you wear your neighbourhood bandana or you don't, that's your option." "There's no pressure, but when you go to school and you see your friends…" "The only pressure there is fashion!" "They don't have to." "But on some level they do have to." "They decide to themselves because that's what young people are like you know, it's the feeling of belonging." "To be in the game!"[143]

One of the consequences of belonging to a gang is putting oneself in danger, especially for the younger ones, who are unaware of the violence lurking behind the image and style:

> "They'll wear the bandana anyway, but even with the bandana, it's dangerous you know. Some guy will see you with the bandana and think you're a real gangster, a real Crips. He'll shoot you, wipe you out, for no reason whereas you could have stayed neutral. Either you're the real thing, you wear a bandana, you represent it, I understand that. But if you're a B, stay neutral! I can think, he can think, we can think. But a kid of 13, 14, certainly when he sees everybody wearing a red bandana in his class he'll do it, even if he doesn't know why, doesn't know why he is wearing it. He tells himself he's wearing the red bandana because he represents the North. But one day when he starts thinking about it he's going to ask himself what he was doing before, what did it do for him, what was the point of it?"[144]

> "But it's also that there are lots of young people who want to prove themselves. They give themselves a style but they spend more time giving themselves an image rather than justifying the image itself. They don't have a problem with that. Oh I belong to this or that gang, I'm like this, I'm tough. But when it comes to proving it, they can't do

[142] Girl 15-20 years, African group.
[143] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[144] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.

> it unless there are nine, ten, or four of them. Sometimes I even ask them: OK you're here, but why are you here? Why are you red? Oh because I live in the North. Why are you blue? Oh because I'm a guy from St-Michel. Why? Oh that's the way it is. Well no, it doesn't bother me what you're like or who you are. Just tell me why you're doing this? If you're not capable of justifying why you're prepared to get shot, then get shot, understand? But don't come and tell me: Oh I'm this, I'm that."[145]

3.2.3 Violence as territorialization

Another important consequence of cliques and gangs is the de facto "territorialization" of young people, which in effect limits their movement around the city:

> "Well, fear too, you can live in the Saint-Michel district and have a girlfriend that lives in Henri-Bourassa or Montreal-North, and you can't go visit your girl. You get there and they'll ask you lots of questions, about where you live and all, they're all hot heads." "So you don't go?" "I go there when I want. They ask me questions and I'll answer back sometimes, when I feel like it." "You're quite threatening!" Laughs. "You're not obvious." "That's it, I'm not obvious, I'm under the radar, I do what I like."[146]

> "Now it's at a point, like my big sister lives in the North, she moved. She likes blue and she wears the blue bandana, except some girls came to tell her it was dangerous. Before she wore blue but now she wears it less because she lives in a neighborhood, the opposite color. So it's got to the point that we can't even dress the way we want. We dress how we want, yo. We can't walk around, we can dress the way we want, but you have to be careful what neighbourhood you set foot in now."[147]

Even without a bandana on your head, youth can be accosted by groups asking them where they are from and what they are doing in the neighborhood:

> "When you leave a neighborhood, OK you may know somebody there, but you can't go see him freely if he's in the other gang because you're the one that's going to have problems. They'll consider you a traitor. It can be dangerous for you too." "Exactly, so you don't get mixed up in all that, you say OK well, I won't say anything. I'm taking care of myself."[148]

> "Let's say you're wearing a color, let's say red, we go to that area…They see you wearing red. They're going to go up to you and start something just because you're wearing red, so that's why."[149]

Thus, this strong identification with neighbourhoods follows young people like a label:

[145] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[146] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[147] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[148] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.

> "For example I arrive in Montreal-North with my family. Can I live there without my adolescent kids being more or less in street gangs, or around them, or despite that because I live there, do I have to be red? If you've just arrived and you move there right away, there's no problem. It's if you've already lived in other neighbourhoods and you were seen there living with others. That's when it can get dangerous. You're in a neighbourhood. You can't go to another one because you come from there and they're major enemies."[150]

> "Now everybody, everybody stays inside because you don't even need to be in a gang. The moment you say you're from another area, you're going to have problems. You don't even need to be in a gang really. In their heads you actually are. They're all in different gangs, everyone is in one."[151]

The majority of young people affirmed that they felt safe nevertheless in their own living environment because they know people and are used to their neighbourhoods, but they were also conscious that something could always happen, as indicated by this adolescent:

> "Even the system with the colors, sometimes kids like it, but I'm just used to it. Even the street gang people, it doesn't bother me, I'm never scared of them. Just sometimes at night you have to be careful, because you never know: you could only be walking by and something goes bad, you can get stray bullets."[152]

> "Different types of neighborhoods have different types of crime… more conscious of crime and violence when in Côte-des-Neiges or Notre-Dame-de-Grâce compared to in the West Island. I lock the doors to my car in Côte-des-Neiges."[153]

Ultimately, the impact of lumping together "street gangs," violence and people in Black communities, is that everyone feels ill-at-ease as long as it creates repercussions in everyday life. This was brought up in all groups and there were numerous examples:

> "One time at La Ronde there were some Black people that were really in a row. A woman passed by and said to her son: See what I mean when I say that these people are always aggressive. You need to be careful with them, when I tell you not to get mixed up with them, not to go out with them, you don't listen to me. I was walking by with a friend. That's just another example that I have, because of street gangs people are definitely afraid."[154]

> "These days it's at the point where they associate gangs with Haitians, and now when there's a crime, it's the Africans, the Cubans doing that kind of thing, but once they

[149] Boy 15-20 years, Black Anglophone group.
[150] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[151] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[152] Girl 15-20 years, Haitian group.
[153] Mother, Black Anglophone group.
[154] Girl 15-20 years, African group.

> see it's Black people, they say it's Haitians." "Before that it was the Jamaicans, now it's fallen on us." "And how do you feel about that?" "Helpless."[155]
>
> "A Black person has just got in a fight and it's: The Blacks! That bugs me because one person's bad act tarnishes his whole community, and that's really it and I would like them to realize that. That maybe yes *you're* violent, but the guy walking next to you might not be, but he's seen as such, he's labelled violent because of you."[156]

Thus, often with a certain fatalism, participants referred to the kind of situation where young people are double victims of violence, both agents and victims at the same time. This ripple effect has consequences for all Black communities. Those present also denounced the attitude of the media that only reinforce the racialization of violence by handling information in a biased and sensationalized manner, especially when it is an issue involving of street gangs:

> "There's all kinds of violence that you don't necessarily see but that still happens. I'll give you an example, last year I think, a woman was attacked by four youth. It's violence, it's a shame, but nobody realizes what happened after that. There was psychological violence, because the Haitians, well everyone who was Black, had an awful time just going about, with hate letters circulating on the Internet and in the bus for signatures. That's psychological violence, in the extreme, because parents who had just immigrated reined in their children because they were ashamed, and the kids were frustrated because they were categorized. Now I don't want to diminish the harm done to that woman. It's just that for a crime that one person commits, the community pays. And I think this is violent, because it prevents you from moving forward. It harms you. I can't do that because I'm like them. I'm considered to be like them. And yet this kind of violence that happened to the old lady occurs regularly at the Snowdon metro. It happens in Petite-Bourgogne. It goes on in the metros, elderly people get attacked by Whites, Blacks, Chinese, anybody who feels like it…"[157]
>
> "There are many forms of violence, it's just what sells newspapers, what makes people all watch TV at 6 p.m., and then they're watching and sure enough such and such happened in Montreal-North in a neighborhood where you know. There are a lot of Haitians, where there are lots of members of a cultural community other than Quebecois. Like the street gangs in Gatineau, no one will talk about that. Well if there was bloody score-settling, like in Gatineau…You know here you are in Montreal-North, you're Black, you're a youth between 12 and 30 years old. It's clear that if you commit a violent act, that's the way it is, it's connected to street gangs…You're a gangster…because you're Haitian, because you're Black although, if someone does the same thing, it's something else. The other day, a husband killed his wife. They call that a crime of passion. People go to work: Hey did you hear the story, a crime of passion! But why can the same thing happen with two people, the same thing, with two Black people: Oh well the Blacks! A murder! Oh the Blacks. I knew it, they're all the same! The event is interpreted differently, all depending on your culture, your social status, where you live, lots of factors. It's really something."[158]

[155] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[156] Girl 15-20 years, African group.
[157] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[158] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.

"Violence in the black community is more publicized. White violence tends to be subtler…"[159]

[159] Father, Black Anglophone group.

3.2.4 Summary: Street gangs

- The image of street gangs is complex. It is related to the status of youth, identity and social questions, delinquency and deviancy, as well as societal responses. The subject of street gangs is not a neutral one. It carries socially, ideologically, politically, and scientifically-loaded connotations. One of which is the “awareness” created about street gangs, depending on who has the power of speech, the media interest in events associated with them, the socio-historical position of the minorities in a given context and the social representation of youth as presenting a certain danger.

- Street gangs were a major issue in the interviews on violence. They concerned all members of the groups, but interest did vary according to residential neighborhood, individual history, age, and gender. Also, young people used the term “street gang”, adults, and more specifically those in the Haitian community, referred to a broader notion of “delinquency” and “vagrancy” that they situated in a system in conflict with the “state”. Members of the African community spoke more of a new phenomenon of protection and defense against groups that already exist. But all the participants agreed about the stigmatizing effects of street gangs on Black communities.

- One of the difficulties of this street gang issue is the use of the generic term “gang“ to describe different realities, identity perspectives and actions. Adolescents differentiated clearly between what we could call criminalized street gangs, cliques and gangs of friends.

- At first, the boys especially, situated violence within an historical context of society, presenting it as a kind of “tradition“.

- But soon after, they commented with a certain nostalgia on a generational transition from the street skirmishes of the past, with a certain nostalgia. Note that young people did not have any historical knowledge about the conflicts splitting apart the various gangs in Montreal.

- All agreed that the phenomenon was deteriorating by:
    - ✓ The seriousness of the acts committed, explained, according to them, by increased access to sophisticated firearms, the arrival of new drugs and the corresponding escalation in violence;
    - ✓ The expansion of street gangs to territories outside of Montreal;

- ✓ The consequence of keeping violence as a taboo that no one has wanted to recognize and speak about early enough, plus the slow institutional response;
- ✓ A broader social problem including various recurring social issues and the large proportion of young people in certain districts of Montreal.

- One of the main issues is the existing confusion amongst youth as to who's who and who does what amongst youth in street gangs:
  - ✓ There is a question of individual choice as to the attraction of street gangs hold and whether or not to become delinquent with real criminalized gangs;
  - ✓ The large majority of young people establish their identity through adolescent culture, by following trends;
  - ✓ Cliques are strongly "integrative" with youth involved in small-scale delinquency.

- These cliques exert a strong identity attraction by appealing to individuals through:
  - ✓ The channelling of confused frustration into access to a certain success and power;
  - ✓ The desire to be seen and recognized by the group;
  - ✓ The desire to be "popular," "in the game," to be "*chill,*" or "tough";
  - ✓ Power of the group along the principle of strength in numbers;
  - ✓ Group pressure on the marginalized individual.

- According to young people, the reasons for joining are:
  - ✓ A poor education or a lack of education;
  - ✓ Character weakness when faced with persuasion by others;
  - ✓ The power of peer group influence;
  - ✓ Lack of love;
  - ✓ The attraction of violence and the pleasure that certain people gain from it;
  - ✓ A search for power, and for money;
  - ✓ Imitation.

- A recurrent theme in the discussions was the quest for respect through violence or the spiral into an endless cycle of fear and protection.

- Another line of thought suggested was that the individual, somewhat in spite of himself, "falls into" the gang situation, by the very fact that he lives and resides in a given district in the city. This connection is symbolized by wearing a bandana, mainly red or blue, a sign of belonging

to a particular group and city neighborhood. This identification with neighborhood follows young people like a label. The consequences being:

- ✓ Endangering oneself, especially younger children who are unaware of the violence lurking behind image and the style;
- ✓ De facto territorialization of youth that imposes limits on their movement in the city;
- ✓ Limitation on interaction between young people;
- ✓ Always being conscious of the need to be careful whom you talk to.

- The majority of young people affirmed they still felt safe in their own milieu because they knew the people and were used to their neighbourhood. But they were conscious that something could always happen.

- The major impact of this lumping together of “street gangs, violence and people from Black communities” is that everyone feels ill at ease, even in daily life. This issue was raised in all the groups with numerous examples given.

- Participants described a situation, often with certain fatalism, where youth are double victims of violence, both agents and victims, and by ripple effect, the whole of the Black community. They also denounced the attitude of the media that only reinforced the racialization of violence, by its biased and sensationalized treatment of information related to street gangs.

Chapter 4

Overview and testimonials: violence and institutions

This chapter examines relationships between institutions. Here, we look at how institutional staff applies constraints, institutional values and the messages conveyed and the way these are interpreted by the population. The two main issues, related particularly to youth, are the relationship between adolescents and law enforcement and violence in school. A third issue revolves around families and educational values.

4.1 THE POLICE

According to participants, relations between adolescents and law enforcement tend to occur in two main contexts: first around parks, in the street and on public transit. The issue here is one of free circulation in public space. The second occurs during police checks and arrests, in which case the issue is the legitimacy of police action.

4.1.1 Violence as an issue of circulation in public space

It should be noted, that all groups of adolescents mentioned interaction with police was:

> "Looking at the police, everybody here has been through a situation, everybody! With police, it's: You there, what are you doing here? For sure!"[160]

The first scenario, frequently described, usually unfolds around parks, in areas where young people play and hang out:

> "We were playing basketball in the parks and the police came. (…) I don't know what they wanted, because there were lots of Blacks around. After that the police would appear, as soon as there were Blacks, even around 6:30 p.m., the police were always there. 6 p.m. and there they were, all summer, three cars at a time. Sometimes they drive around. Two hours later, they're back." "And what do you think of that?" "They'd do better being at the places where there are real fights rather than staying here, when we're only playing basketball, they come to harass us for no reason."[161]

[160] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.

What was emphasized here was the difference between a preventative police presence and an excessive presence. The latter was felt to be constraining due to constant surveillance.

The second scenario is the stepping-up of regulations, under the guise of a campaign against misbehaviour, which only leads to increased infractions. The latter was justified to a degree because some felt that there was a disparity between the gravity of the act itself and the resulting fines:

> "You're not allowed to walk on the grass. You're not allowed to spit. It's all because of the gangs that they did that."[162]

The final scenario involves issues while simply walking in the street and the feeling of being watched and followed by police cars:

> "Also sometimes you're walking, they're following you in a car and they follow you the whole way."[163]

> "It was St. Jean Baptiste, around midnight or 1 a.m., I was going through the area to get home and the police were following me and checking me out. I walked a bit faster to try to get rid of them, but then they accelerated and cut me off. There I was stuck in a corner. Then they asked me for my cards, but I didn't have a card. But how come you don't have a card? Well I was 16 at the time, I didn't have a card then, besides it was St. Jean Baptiste and you don't have to have to walk around with your cards in the street. But you better walk home because otherwise you'll be arrested and all that. On what grounds, by whose order? Refusal to comply, blah, blah, blah."[164]

These are not isolated incidents. In each group, as soon as the subject of youth and their activities was brought up, several people commented on excessive police presence and intervention, that resulted in a climate of surveillance and a restriction of free movement in public space. At this juncture, both young and adult participants brought up the issue of harassment, indeed intimidation of people from Black communities:

> "Sometimes they insult us themselves. There are evenings in Marquette park when we play basketball and they appear just like that and take someone off and just leave with them. And no one has done anything. They come by saying: Oh, we heard there were complaints about disturbances. But no one called anyone. But do they arrest a person because they're looking for him? It's just to intimidate someone, to make him talk about things. And after that, they let him go. They don't even take him to the station."[165]

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[161] Girl 15-20 years, Haitian group.
[162] Girl 15-20 years, Haitian group.
[163] Boy 15-20 years, Haitian group.
[164] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[165] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.

> "The police just comes and harasses us… cops bullying over Blacks cause people to be violent. People are provoked through."[166]

> "Just to give you an example, I started my degree in 2000 in Trois-Rivières. I didn't have a computer at the time, so I did my work in the computer lab, I wasn't far from the university. And since I had to go through a residential area, there were always cops around. It was normal to have them around there. Except that it was always the same car stopping you. It's the same people stopping you for a whole semester. Now one time when he stopped to ask for my I.D., I was walking…You know you're walking, you've got your bag, your coat, this and that. I'm not stopping, at one point I didn't stop. It's horrible, it's a real pressure. At first I took it really personally, but after a while I thought well, just ignore them that's all. If they want, they'll do what they want to do…Besides, I don't have a criminal record, I haven't done anything. They don't even have the right. Actually I was living in a lady's basement. The first time: Yes but what are you going to do in that apartment? I'm a student... she's renting her residence to a student. The area is a ten-minute walk from the university. Yes but, what do you have in your bag? I gave him everything. But now, before I just open my bag I say: Why? You have to tell me why I have to open my bag? When you get interrogated like that twice a week, for a month, it's frightening, there's something that's…"[167]

So the idea, pretty commonly expressed, is that there is a moving away from "normal" help and protection on the part of the police, applicable to all citizens, towards a kind of police harassment, experienced as racially targeted and conveying a sense of injustice and reactive violence.

4.1.2 Violence as a relationship of power and of legitimacy

In this second part, we address a wider and more serious level of violence in connection with the police force. Adolescents reported various incidents when they had experienced police checks. Some dubbed this "criminal profiling" others as "racial profiling". Actually the line between the two remains quite vague. In fact at this time, we are currently witnessing a debate around a "common" definition of profiling between various decision-making bodies (Conseil interculturel de Montréal, 2006, Commission ontarienne des droits de la personne, 2005, Service de police de la ville de Montréal, 2004, Turenne, M., 2004[168]). However, what we are interested in here is profiling itself, and its consequences, the feelings of disrespect, categorization, permanent suspicion, humiliation and being

[166] Father, Black Anglophone group.
[167] Young man 20-30 years, African group.
[168] CONSEIL INTERCULTUREL DE MONTRÉAL (2006). *États des lieux sur le profilage racial.* CRI, Montréal.
COMMISSION ONTARIENNE DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE (2005). *Politique et directives sur le racisme et la discrimination raciale*. Ottawa, juin.
SERVICE DE POLICE DE LA VILLE DE MONTRÉAL (2004). Le profilage racial et illicite. In *Politique d'intervention, Procédure,* 259-1.
TURENNE, M. (2004). *Profilage racial: tour d'horizon.* Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse, Montréal.

lumped together with street gangs. These feelings cannot be dismissed easily. Adults also brought this up, but totally in the specific context of traffic arrests:

> "And these are things I see often, things that happen that I find quite frustrating, because as a person, as a citizen and everything, X and I, we've been stopped. OK, I'm stopped on foot, it's for my own security, I get stopped in a car, it's for checks. OK, I get stopped in a bus, I haven't found a reason yet. I get stopped in a cab with him. I still can't find a reason, understand? It's like soon they'll stop me in the street and they'll ask me what time I woke up this morning."[169]

> "Another time, I got stopped in a bus because there were two Blacks. I was with one of my friends who is Black too, because they were looking for two Black people with those coats with the fur, the big coats that everyone has. We get in the bus and there was me, my friend and lots of other people, plus there were other Black people in the bus and then, the 69 stops at the bottom of the hill. The police car cuts in front of the bus to stop it, and two police officers get into the bus. We're right at the back of the bus thinking it would be really funny if they came and arrested us. And then suddenly: Excuse-me, what are you doing here? We're taking the bus." Laughter in the group. "And then they tell us: We're looking for Black people that have coats like yours. It's pretty vague, something most people don't know, that according to human rights the police can't do that. They can't just stop you in order to stop you because they're the police. They have to have the right to or they need to have a specific reason to do it. Oh, because they're looking for two Blacks who held-up a Dunkin' Donuts at the corner of Lacordaire and Henri-Bourassa. I'm like OK. Can we see your cards? Why? Listen if you don't want to show us your cards, it's refusal to co-operate. So I say OK. And then we show our cards."[170]

> "I remember the last time, I was working at the park next to Henri-Bourassa school and I was sitting on a bench, talking to a kid. Four police patrol cars appeared and shouted at me: Hey you, you with the number 5 sweater, come here! So I approach them: What's the problem? Oh, we were told that there was a youth in Henri-Bourassa Park who had a fight with another youth and the other youth fitted your description. I say: OK, what was the description? Oh it was a young guy with a number 5 sweater on. You know, the sweater everyone's wearing! So then I said: Listen, I'm on the job, I'm a street worker, I work with Café Jeunesse. Then I wanted to show them my cards and I started to do it but they said: No, we didn't ask you to do anything and put your hands where we can see them. I got the impression that…I'm a coordinator, can't you see that? No wait a minute. Then they called…I don't know who, other people with walkie talkies: Hello! Hello! Hello! Hello!"[171]

> "There are times when I'm dressed hip-hop, in winter here it's happened to me a lot, with big coats, fur and all that, two or three times the police stopped me just like that, the car stops: Mister, do you live in this area? And I say: But what's it to you if I live in this area? Can we see your papers? Why? Because you look like somebody we recognize. And it's always the same line: You look like someone we're looking for. But

[169] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[170] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[171] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.

> I say to myself, if you tell the same person the same thing several times, what does it do? And you haven't got anything. I show my papers, I don't have any problems with the police. I don't have any prior convictions. And they take me off right there during the day with lots of people passing by that see you there, there's one outside waiting for the other one who is checking you. Can you imagine the impression it gives to people who know you? You know what it does? It's humiliating! And to see that they do this to you each time, but that you haven't got anything to do with it. You haven't done anything wrong. Meanwhile there are people who sell drugs, who are going to kill people. They aren't stopped. But just because you've got a big coat, they're going to go as far as checking whether you've got anything on you, even as far as taking off your hat, touching your hair, I have a lot of hair…this kind of thing is very frustrating. What I'm saying is that the police also *initiate* violence with young people."[172]

> "You know when there's a gang of Black people and all. I live in Laval, in the Saint-François neighbourhood, two Black people, three Black people, aren't allowed to walk together. It has to be a minimum of two Blacks, otherwise the police stop you. So in fact you're really not allowed to be in a gang."[173]

The next examples, mentioned mostly by adolescents, were of police behaviour during arrests and checks. This was perceived as an abuse of power on the part of certain police officers:

> "Like one time, I was leaving a basketball match and walking with my cousins. And then suddenly three police cars come towards us and tell us: Get on the ground! They point their guns at us. So we get on the ground, they search us, we wait for them to take away the weapons, we've just come from a basketball game. Then after that they arrested us, they put cuffs on me, and they checked to see whether we had a record or something. Give us your cards. We handed them over but they kept me in cuffs. Then my cousin said: I don't have anything, I haven't done anything. They punched him right there. With police, you don't even have the right to respond, it's yes or no. When I get stopped, I don't say anything. Then they tell me: Say something. I just give them my cards, it ends there. Because if I talk, I know that if they hit me I'll react and I'm not going to allow that to happen even if it is a police officer. You have the same respect as me, I have the same respect as you. It's just that sometimes police officers think that because they're police officers, they have the right to do what they want. It's abuse of power!"[174]

Excessive intervention includes not offering an explanation for arrest but also actions that can be more serious in nature. Harassment moves into police violence:

> "He's my friend, he gets arrested, but the police officers didn't take him to the station. They go into an alley and beat him up there. After that they let him go. He never lodged a complaint. Because he was scared and because the officers said that if he lodged a complaint, the next time they saw him they'd beat him up again. So he never lodged a complaint." "This happened under what circumstances?" "For no reason, he

[172] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[173] Girl 15-20 years, African group.
[174] Boy 15-20 years, African group.

> was just walking… walking in the street, around 1p.m. So the police officers stopped him and asked him: Where are you going? Talking stupid like that…Then they took him and beat him up." "They didn't know him from before?" "No, but it happens often, as soon as the police see us: It's come over here!"[175]

Several young people also described another facet of police violence, where the police appear out "to get them":

> "Abuse of power. They think that it's like the old days, when we were their slaves. They take advantage of it. Sometimes they'll be looking at you nastily… just to provoke you. So when you happen to look at them, they say: Don't look at me like that! You're a human being like me, don't look at me and I won't look at you either. I don't have anything against them. It's just that I've been stopped three times for no reason and it made me angry. Then my mother thought I was mixed up in something and she went to the police station to see if I was doing anything. And the police officer at the front looked to see if had a file, he had actually stopped me. But when he saw my mother, he didn't look at me, he had a big smile. Then I thought OK, I get it. If there are two of them in the car, they're going to do that, but if there's only one, they'll never dare. They'll go straight by, but when there are two and they're looking at you, how you walk or don't, they're going to make the most of it."[176]

Some young people spoke about racist attitudes:

> "They follow you all the way in a car. They wouldn't stop and say: Hey dirty Nigger! But I think OK. They do this to frustrate you so that you'll do something they can arrest you for. They push you to get all excited so you do something they can arrest you for."[177]

It is also a question of power relationships and the legitimacy of institutional violence, with the perception that a professional group just decides sometimes to apply "its own laws":

> "Sometimes, they make their own law. There are some too, if you stay in the metro, if you're waiting for a bus, they'll tell you: Oh, you'll have to wait outside. You're not allowed to stay in the metro. It can be raining or snowing. It's cold but they'll say you have to wait outside anyway. They just think that they have the right to do that, they can piss you off. You haven't done anything, but he gives you a record, wow, if he wants to, just for nothing."[178]

Then, there was a story from a young adult street worker who described several crisis situations involving youth where it had been impossible to reason with the police. He had felt a lack of respect for himself as a person and for his professional status:

[175] Boy 15-20 years, Haitian group.
[176] Boy 15-20 years, Haitian group.
[177] Boy 15-20 years, Haitian group.
[178] Boy 15-20 years, Haitian group.

> "It's often happened that I've had to intervene between a police officer and someone and it hasn't worked. Because there's a lot of abuse there, and it's things that don't filter well, during the work I do, I'm a street worker. There was an altercation in front of Henri-Bourassa school, with sixty or so young people. There were two of us and we managed to split up the fight, calm everyone down. Then the police arrived and made it a mess all over again. Then, there was this kid, I don't even think he was from the school, about 17 years old. He was waiting for the bus, in front of the school. They went and searched him, but he was just waiting for the bus. He didn't want to be searched, and then they jump on him. He defends himself, but they all get on him. There was a policewoman on his knees. There was one on his back and a third who had his leg pressed against his neck. I go there, I get down in front of the police officer and I say: Look, calm down. He looks at me and he continues, the other is still fighting him off. And then they lift him, they take him away. I get close to the police car. I want to get his name to help him file a report later and follow it up, but the officer gets in front of me: We're going to take you too. I told him: Look at my card, I'm a street worker. Move along or we'll take you too. I never saw the guy again because he didn't go to that school. So whatever happened to him, what kind of deposition he got, I have no idea."[179]

He also related another incident, this time in a park:

> "There you've got like twelve million police patrols that come, there's one that gets out a dog, you know he comes towards you, and I'm like: Oh shit! Hey you, get out of the park, get out of the park! But sir, I'm working. Well, show me your cards. You come towards me with a dog man, and yeah the dog is going bite my leg off! My first reflex, going through my pocket to get my cards? Come on, that's really ridiculous."[180]

He then summed it up but not without bitterness and a certain disillusionment:

> "In my work, honestly, it used to be magical thinking, that considering what I do, I should have a minimum amount of respect. But no, it's astounding. I've had this job for two years and I've learned to hate the police. I really thought I could discover the magic formula. Find out why they do things and go out and spread the news. But from what I see, from what I've learned, no. I thought there would be better cooperation and I really thought I could guide people, accomplish things, make things easier with them, but I realize that it's just an obstacle to my work. And I find that funny because in addition, in my line of work, I get noticed after the fact, if I appear, I'll stop them doing their job as they may want to do it, so then I'm at their mercy too."[181]

4.1.3 Violence as the limits of repression

[179] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group
[180] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[181] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.

Relations between people from Black communities and the police are thus not easy. Since the tragic deaths of young Black Montrealers and the J. Bellemare[182] and C. Corbo[183] reports, about fifteen years ago, the police community has launched programs to get closer to the community. Intercultural awareness has been included in police training. Monitoring committees have been set up and recent judgments have recognized the existence of racial profiling, etc. It's not that things have gotten better or worse, but clearly, this problem still exists with major consequences.

The first consequence, hardly trivial given the breach of the social contract it implies, is the question of institutional violence itself, and its legitimacy:

> "Violence is neither good nor bad, it's more when and how it is used. In the same way that the army will protect a country, one district will protect its own neighbourhood, but then it's seen negatively, because violence has bigger implications than just saying that youth are badly brought up, youth are this, youth are that. It's the image that's being conveyed. You award a medal because a guy killed five people. He becomes a war hero, and you punish the other one because he robbed a convenience store. You still have to balance things. Violence is misperceived, if it's just killing or hitting someone and the government does it, then it's legal. That's what I mean, you need to see where the real violence is. By addressing real violence then we can solve the violence in the streets."[184]

The second consequence is the sense that increased police pressure on young people in the past few years, especially on Black minorities, has been pointless:

> "Personally, forgive me but I'm really pessimistic about this, I think that there'll always be someone somewhere who will rebel. Personally, I think that it'll always be the same, because from year to year in some schools it gets worse. Then, if it gets fixed, it's just because we've tightened and tightened the screws in the end. Because in certain neighborhoods to stop this, in some neighborhoods three Black people are not allowed to walk together…I mean, really suspicious, it's clear that the police will stop you if you're four Black people together. It's clear, you're four Black people, it's clear to the police that it's negative. It really is. Then, let's say in the parks, it was reduced to about 9 p.m., just the time when the kids are having fun, all because of street gangs. So I get the impression we're always enforcing and at some point, we're going to suffocate because it seems to me that regulating these things at school, not allowing bandanas, not allowing sunglasses, not allowing you to go into school with gloves on, not allowing… up to what point do we go? Personally I think we're headed towards the negative, I'm sorry but that's what it is."[185]

[182] BELLEMARE, J. et al. (1988), op. cit.
[183] CORBO, C. (1992), op. cit.
[184] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[185] Girl 15-20 years, Haitian group.

The last consequence is a loss of trust in police work itself which can then become counter-productive:

> "No, because it's happened to me so many times, the police are not my friends now, really not my friends now. If I have a problem, if a thief came to the house, I'd call one of my friends before the police! Though we're supposed to learn about them and understand them, in doing our job, we learn to hate them more than anything else."[186]

The enforcement of laws and regulations is a difficult and constraining task by definition, but the ways in which this mandate is interpreted cannot be separated from the debate. Incidents like those reported here produce a ripple effect and ultimately end up opening the gates to racialization in police intervention.

[186] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.

4.1.3 Summary: Police officers

- This chapter focuses on the ways that institutional staff applies constraints, institutional values and the way that institutional messages are conveyed and interpreted by the population.

- As discussed by adolescents and young adults, relationships with police occurred in two contexts:
  - ✓ Around parks, in the street and in public transit, the issue is free movement in public areas;
  - ✓ During checks and arrests, where the issue is the legitimacy of police action.

- In the first context, several elements were emphasized:
  - ✓ The difference between a preventative police presence and excessive presence is the latter is felt to be constraining and is experienced as a kind of constant surveillance;
  - ✓ The feeling of being watched and followed in the street by police cars;
  - ✓ A stepping-up of regulations presented under the guise of a fight against misbehaviour, which also lead to increased infractions. There is a disconnect between the seriousness of the act itself and its enactment in fines;
  - ✓ Both youth and adults in the focus groups saw this as harassment, indeed intimidation of people from Black communities;
  - ✓ Thus, a widely shared idea is that there is of moving away from “normal” help and protection on the part of police, applicable to all citizens, to a feeling of police harassment, experienced as racially targeted and communicating a sense of injustice and reactive violence.

- In the second context, adolescents described a number of incidents they had experienced in connection with police checks, considered criminal profiling or racial profiling. The line between the two is vague. It is important to look at profiling itself such as its consequences, the feelings of disrespect, categorization, permanent suspicion, humiliation and being lumped together with street gangs. These feelings cannot be easily dismissed.

- Adolescents spoke of an abuse of power on the part of certain police officers during arrests and street checks. These include:
  - ✓ Refusal to provide an explanation or justification for the check or the arrest, seen as excessive;

- ✓ An inappropriate tone used during such incidents, perceived as a lack of respect;
- ✓ The use of racist comments on the part of the police officers;
- ✓ A feeling that the police are “out to get” young people;
- ✓ Behaviour that can become more serious spiralling into police violence.

- Finally it is a question of power and the legitimacy of institutional violence, with the perception that a professional group can decide to apply “its own laws”.

- The consequences are:
  - ✓ A certain disillusionment as to the possibility of dialogue with police officers;
  - ✓ A loss of confidence in the police force;
  - ✓ The increased police pressure on youth, particularly on Black minorities in the past few years, has been pointless.

- Relations between people from Black communities and the police are thus not easy. Since the tragic deaths of young Black Montrealers and the J. Bellemare and C. Corbo reports, about fifteen years ago, the police community has launched programs to get closer to the community. Intercultural awareness has been made part of police training. Monitoring committees have been put into place and recent judgments have recognized the existence of racial profiling, etc. It’s not that things have gotten better or worse, but clearly, this problem still exists, with major consequences.

- The enforcement of laws and regulations is a difficult and constricting task by definition, but incidents like those reported here produce a ripple effect and lead to racialized police intervention.

4.2 SCHOOLS

In this second part, we look at the relationship between adolescents and their school milieu. First we will explore the participants' experiences in terms of the typology of school violence. Their main explanation for the violence phenomenon is the mass education of recent decades.

4.2.1 Violence as juvenile confrontation

Note that for participants, violence in school was a secondary concern, compared to the problems linked to racism, relations with the police and family violence.

Young people had differing opinions about increased violence at school, depending on the area they were educated in, so it was also fairly subjective. Some saw a general increase in violence all schools, a kind of social phenomenon. Others reported a relative state of calm or an actual decrease, based on a policy of fighting it and being aware of the phenomenon. This topic brought up street gangs and cliques again:

> "Currently you could say that violence is occupying a bigger and bigger place in schools, I mean that there's too much violence now in schools."[187]

> "Seven years ago, it was just street gangs, now the school principal starts to notice it in the school. I've been there for four years and it's getting calmer."[188]

Others downplayed it by saying that all schools have violent students, in the sense of aggressive characters. The discussion returned then to reactive violence:

> "In almost all schools, there are students that are violent you could say. But not violent, there are just some people that have a character that reacts to others. It'll depend on what he gets from another, whether he reacts violently, because there are some people that push others to react violently."[189]

There are also seasonal cycles of violence in school. Violence is more prevalent in summer than winter because youth are more often outside during good weather.

[187] Boy 15-20 years, African group.
[188] Boy 15-20 years, African group.
[189] Boy 15-20 years, African group.

For the past twenty years in Quebec, school violence has been the subject of studies[190] and numerous initiatives. The extent of the problem is difficult to assess. Whether we define it in terms of the Penal code or in terms of the school milieu or whether we approach it through the visibility of police intervention or by large scale self-revelatory studies[191], School violence involves lines of thought such as: risk factors related to students, school dropout rate, learning difficulties, social problems, pedagogical relationships, the school administration, partnership, street gangs, teacher stress, teacher training, etc.

For our participants, the first aspect described was that of threats, for some youth tied in with school violence. It's a problem of street gangs. However, the starting point for conflict was the schools themselves:

> "Violence, it's more student to student. It's threats, verbal or armed, after that if you want you hit, you punch. It's because like he said, you get out of school, they'll be there, you'll see! (…) For example, there was a guy there who lived in Rivière-des-Prairies, he moves here or he goes to a school in Montreal, and everyone knows he used to live there. For sure everyone will want to beat him up, because in Rivière-des-Prairies they wear red bandanas. They always think like that, or sometimes they come in front of the school to make trouble."[192]

Note that several young people thought that banning colors or other clothing symbolizing gangs in schools was counter-productive. Here we're back again to the notion of fashion and the search for identity by the majority of young people, and according to them, the ban creates the following effect:

> "Adding pressure is useless. There are people that put on the pressure, they say none of this or that color in schools, there's no point. There are people that decide on uniforms in the schools because of gangs, but gangs are always there. You change the uniform, the gang's still there. Quite the contrary, it makes it worse. It makes bigger gangs." "Why?" "How can I explain it… when they show it, I think there will always be some, but when they hide their identity, so they can't identify themselves, it's going to get worse you see. But it's like at school X, before there was a group that you saw were blues. Now that the whole school is the same, they assume everyone is blue, that's it."[193]

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[190] JEFFREY, D., SUN. F. (2006). *Enseignants dans la violence*. Sainte-Foy: Presses de l'Université Laval. JANOSZ, M., DENIGER, M.A. (2001). *Évaluation de programmes de prévention du décrochage scolaire pour adolescents de milieu défavorisés 1998-2000: Rapport de synthèse de recherche*. CRIRES, IRDS, Montréal. ROYER, E. (1995). *L'ABC de la réussite scolaire*. CRIRES, CEQ, Montréal: Editions Saint-Martin. GABOR, T. (1995). *La violence à l'école et la tolérance zéro: principes et prescriptions*. Solliciteur général du Canada, Ottawa.

[191] There is a ''black hole'' for delinquency and victimization, between the incidents that come to light with either school administration or the police, and actual facts. Self-revelatory studies using questionnaires, help to fill in this blank, by asking those directly involved about their acts of delinquency or their experiences of victimization.

[192] Girl 15-20 years, Haitian group.

[193] Boy15-20 years, Haitian group.

The second aspect of school violence mentioned by young people was taxing. This exists without any connection to street gangs:

> "But people, like with taxing, they'll threaten people. They want, who knows, something from another person. They'll go and intimidate him. They'll tell him things to get the thing they want: they might even hit him."[194]

However, it's not the type of incident that had actually been experienced by the young people we interviewed:

> "Has that ever happened to you?" "No, because we were lucky." "I don't see that." "At X school I don't really see it, maybe I don't pay attention to it."[195]

Finally, what stood out in discussion groups around school violence was the frequency of fights outside school. Reasons given varied considerably: an insult, an unpleasant remark, a spat, gang business, a fight in a sports area, jealousy over a girl or boyfriend. It is probably the most visible form of school violence, because these fights turn into collective situations:

> "Everyone is there, an audience!" Laughter in the group. "And everyone knows there's going to be a fight?" "Well not everyone, but sometimes it's right in front of school. When you go out you see it, so everyone ends up knowing, or else there are rumours."[196]

In fact, according to young participants, school violence has a sexual element. From the girls' point of view, violence between girls is different from that between boys both in form and in motive. Generally, girls fight amongst themselves and not with boys, though they do argue with them. These fights are justified by the need to look good in the eyes of others, to become popular, to be respected or just to amuse friends. The "tougher" the fight is, the more news gets around and the more popular they become. They also fight to defend themselves, to confront a conflict or to solve a problem, after stormy discussions provoked by gossip, false accusations, because one girl is prettier than another, etc. One of the young girls noted that she could also get angry without a valid reason. Violence is more verbal than physical with girls. Boys are able to become friends again after a fight, while it takes more time with girls, who hold grudges longer. Finally, violence amongst boys is more tied up with wanting to prove something, to be recognized, while girls fight more to protect their reputation. One of

[194] Girl 15-20 years, Haitian group.
[195] Girl 15-20 years, Haitian group.
[196] Girl 15-20 years, Haitian group.

the methods used is rumour or even, as certain researchers have found, indirect aggression, which tends to be more of a feminine approach.

The subject of increased female delinquency and more violent acts has been treated by several researchers (Tichit, L., 2005, Bertrand, M.A., 2003, Fournier, M., 2003, Lanctôt, N., 2003, Trépanier, J., 2002, Leschied, A.W., 2001, Artz, S., 1998[197]). Over a ten-year period, data from Statistics Canada has indicated a marked rise in violent delinquency amongst adolescent girls, even if its statistical visibility compared to the rest of juvenile delinquency remains weak: "*The number of adolescent girls accused of violent crimes has risen 127% compared to an increase of 65% in adolescents, even if adolescents are responsible for the majority of violent infractions, adolescent girls are responsible for just a third*[198]". From a theoretical point of view, contemporary research on delinquency questions the application of classical criminology theories to female samples. From a feminist perspective, the hypothesis has been made that violence and delinquency in girls are a function of power relationships between the sexes and of social representations dominant in a given society.

4.2.2 Violence as a mass phenomenon

Adolescents first blamed school violence on what could be called mass education[199]. One young person described the phenomenon in these words:

> "At school we meet people who come from everywhere, any kind of family, any kind of learning at home, we're meeting strangers, people of different origins, different

[197] TICHIT, L. (2005). Rapports sociaux de genre et construits ethniques: l'exemple des gangs de filles des minorités à Montréal. In Queloz et al. *Délinquance des jeunes et justice des mineurs. Les défis des migrations et de la pluralité ethnique.* Berne: Stampfli, 173-184.
BERTRAND, M.A. (2003). *La femme et la criminalité*. Montréal: Athéna Éditions.
FOURNIER, M. (2003). Jeunes filles affiliées aux gangs de rue à Montréal: cheminements et expériences. *Les cahiers de recherche criminologiques,* 39.
LANCTOT, N. (2003). La délinquance féminine: l'éclosion et l'évolution des connaissances. In LE BLANC, M., OUIMET, M., SZABO D. (2003). *Traité de criminologie empirique*. Montréal: PUM (3e édition), 421-467.
TREPANIER, J., QUEVILLON, L. (2002). Garçons et filles: définition des problèmes posés par les mineurs traduits à la cour des jeunes délinquants de Montréal (1912-1950). In BARD, C. et al. (2002). *Femmes et justice pénale (XIX-XXe siècle).* Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes.
LESCHIED, A.W. et al. (2001). Aggression in Adolescent Girls: Implications for Policy, Prevention, and Treatment. *Canadian Psychology*, 42, 3, August, 200-215.
ARTZ, S. (1998). *Sex, Power, and the Violent School Girl.* Toronto: Trifolium.

[198] STATISTIQUE CANADA (1999), *Juristat*, Ottawa, 19, 13.

[199] According to F. Dubet: *"The implementation of access for all to traditional fields of study, a synonym for justice and for equal opportunity, linked with the evolution of the labour matket, has lead to a change of the school's mission, its means of operation and the 'work of the student' (...) having spread, the new system is in the process of continuously diversifying. The fields of study multiply according to extremely pronounced hierarchical relations*.

> characters, different families. Each has their own way of behaving. There are also certain schools, but it depends on the people because certainly if there are people who've had bad educations, who can do anything and be violent, it's normal."[200]

There was only one direct mention of poverty, and this was true of all groups no matter what aspect of violence was being discussed.

The causes attributed to violence usually revolved around two main spheres, either the lack of poor education or bad influences.

Some adolescents had a theory as to the existence of a "hard core element'' of violent students in schools:

> "It's not schools that are violent, it's the people. It's a few individuals that go to schools that are violent, but not the school."[201]

Then, in a more descriptive way, they talked about the causes of violence in terms of competition or jealousy:

> "Say for example someone who doesn't have any money, he can envy people who are well off. (...) So if for example I'm with my friends, maybe I'll try to insult somebody, that way I'm going to prove to them that they're poorer than me."[202]

A lack of respect on the part of teachers was also brought up as a cause:

> "It can be several factors. It can be that in class things go badly, so everyone makes fun of you. The teacher can sometimes ridicule you. "[203]

Finally, there's the pressure from parents to succeed in school:

> "It could also be the pressure. Your parents tell you to do well, to succeed in school. (…) You feel trapped, everyone tells you what to do. In the end, you yourself aren't there, you don't exist. You're just the product of other people, you don't have a face. You don't have an identity. You have nothing. So somewhere at some point, it hurts. And a person is trying to get himself noticed, respected, as such, and is ready to do anything to be noticed, to be respected and often violence is the most effective way to be seen."[204]

[200] Boy 15-20 years, African group.
[201] Young woman 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[202] Boy 15-20 years, African group.
[203] Boy 15-20 years, African group.
[204] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.

Another form of violence is racism among students. It emerges during conflicts but can also be described as a difficulty in integrating. This scenario is quite often evoked where one is in a minority situation as the only Black person in a class:

> "It was more like the first year I arrived here, in my class, I was the only Black girl. (…) Well simply because I was Black and I wanted to join their group, it was just White girls. And they said: Oh no, if you come into our group, we won't talk to so and so anymore. So then I felt guilty because she lost her friends because of me."[205]

> "When my sister arrived on the first day of school, there was a little girl who told her she was dirty, that she hadn't washed herself. When she got home, she was crying. It was just because she was Black. (…) I didn't blame the little girl, you don't know what her parents might have told her. Maybe she'd never seen a Black person before in her life, but that for me is an experience of racism."[206]

This racism amongst students was sometimes considered as an actual statement of fact:

> "In terms of school, I've always felt this idea, this kind of racism... still lives on. You know it's true, it's a membership tie that people have: Black people stick together, White people stick together. But when it comes to getting together, there's always a wall between the two that doesn't come down."[207]

It can manifest itself in the lumping together of violence and Black people:

> "I haven't really experienced that, but certainly in the cafeteria when there's a fight, they'll always go look in the corner where the Blacks are. It's not really a case of racism, it's just that they'd never think it was White people fighting. They always think it's the Blacks. It's always like that."[208]

It can also take the shape of ridicule and stereotypes, such as a young girl saying how she was told that "Haitians are stupid and don't know how to dress" or "that they behave in one way, and the Jamaicans, another".

The adolescents also related various racist incidents with teachers. The scenario most often described was that of individuals racializing behavioral and disciplinary problems:

> "There was a teacher who always complained to the administration: The gang of Blacks is always yelling, they're always noisy, blah, blah, blah." "When the teacher came out he said: I'm sick of Black people!" "Then after, he came to grab my arm,

[205] Girl 15-20 years, African group.
[206] Young woman 20-30 years, African group.
[207] Young woman 20-30 years, African group.
[208] Girl 15-20 years, Haitian group.

> and I said: Don't touch me. He came towards me, saying: Oh don't worry, I'm not going to dirty myself! That gave me a shock. I felt attacked."[209]

In fact, this racism can be seen as a clash with the dominant knowledge base, where the attitudes of teachers are misperceived by youth particularly when population groups other than Quebecois are involved. The expression most often used by young people to describe this situation is "they talk to us stupidly". Nevertheless, the symbolic angle of violence in school was hardly touched on.

[209] Girl 15-20 years, African group.

4.2.3 Summary: Schools

- Over the past twenty years in Quebec, school violence has been the subject of studies and multiple initiatives. The extent of the problem is difficult to assess. School violence encompasses multiple lines of thought, such as: risk factors related to students, school dropout rate, learning difficulties, social problems, pedagogical relationships, school administration, partnership, street gangs, teacher stress, teacher training, etc.

- For participants, school violence was a secondary concern compared to problems linked with racism, relations with police and family violence.

- Young people had differing opinions as to the possible increase in school violence. This depended on the area they were educated in and also, their own subjectivity. Some saw a generalized increase in all schools as a social phenomenon; others on the contrary reported relative calm or a decrease. Still others downplayed school violence by adding that all schools have violent students.

- There are also seasonal cycles of school violence, more prevalent in summer than winter.

- For participants, the variables to consider were:
  - ✓ Threats, which some youth saw as related to the problem of street gangs, but the starting point of conflict being the schools themselves;
  - ✓ Taxing, which is not necessarily linked to street gangs;
  - ✓ Difference in the ways violence is acted out according to gender, such as indirect aggression;
  - ✓ Frequent fights outside school;
  - ✓ Racism between students during conflicts, also presented an integration obstacle in a group where Black people are in the minority;
  - ✓ Incidents with racist undertones involving teachers, the racialization of behavioural and disciplinary problems. Attitudes of domination, often unconscious on the part of instructors when dealing with populations other than Quebecois. Participants often summarized these incidents by the expression “they talk to us stupidly”;
  - ✓ The symbolic aspect of school violence was hardly brought up.

- Adolescents blamed the phenomenon of mass education for school violence:
  - ✓ Poverty was not often considered as a cause;
  - ✓ The causes of violence usually revolved around either bad education or lack of education or bad influences;
  - ✓ Some adolescents theorized about the existence of an element of violent students in schools.

- They also noted that school violence can occur as a reaction to:
  - ✓ Competition and jealousy;
  - ✓ Lack of respect;
  - ✓ Strong pressure to succeed.

4.3 FAMILIES

4.3.1 Violence as a reproduction of family dynamics

The subject of family violence as a source of violence in youth was extensively discussed in all groups, regardless of gender and age. Conjugal violence, as well as violence toward women and children are issues that have led to several awareness and prevention campaigns and research studies in Quebec, including initiatives within Black communities (Pontel, M., 2004, Iasenza, I., 1998, Lasry, J.C., Ducasse, M., 1989, Frederik, M., 1986[210]).

> "I see violence as something that maybe happened in their childhood, something like that makes them do this. Maybe they were harmed and they keep all the hurt and then transfer it to other people."[211]

Here we have a determinist vision of learned and acquired violence in families which conditions youth to become violent in turn, reproducing the family dynamic:

> "Maybe psychologically, a child finds it normal. And so that child is conditioned to do the same thing as his father and mother, because they are his only two examples. Without really having bad intentions, it's natural for him to do it in a way."[212]

However, some young people pointed out that violence can be learned elsewhere besides the family such as in the street, with friends or at school. And even if the family is the first socialization space because it provides a "solid basis", as the saying goes, it is not that much of a determinant. Thus, we return to the connection between the individual and violence:

> "We've seen cases of so-called exemplary families, but not the children, they're delinquent. I don't know, maybe they went out and learned outside the home, at school or in the street with bad influences. It's not necessarily the family. You'll also find violent parents with children that are quite peaceful. It depends on the definition, from one person to another."[213]

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[210] PONTEL, M. (2004). *Femmes noires et alors? Des Québécoises d'origine haïtienne disent la violence.* Bureau de la communauté haïtienne de Montréal et service aux collectivités, UQAM, Montréal. IASENZA, I. (1998). *Comment éduquer nos enfants sans utiliser la correction physique? Projet de partenariat entre Les Centres jeunesse de Montréal (DPJ) et la Maison d'Haïti*. Les CJM de Montréal, Montréal. DUCASSE, M. (1989). *Le problème des enfants maltraités et la communauté haïtienne.* Mémoire de Maîtrise, Département de Psychologie, Université du Québec à Montréal, Montréal.
LASRY, J.C., FREDERIK, M. (1986). Structure familiale et pouvoir conjugal dans les familles haïtiennes de Montréal. *Etudes ethniques au Canada,* 18, 2, 151-159.

[211] Boy 15-20 years, Haitian group.

[212] Young man 20-30 years, African group.

[213] Young woman 20-30 years, African group.

Some of the boys actually looked at this family causality in terms of revenge and the entry into a cycle of violence:

> "If from the time he's little, he sees his father beating his mother, his big brother hits him so he hits back, and from the time he's very little he fights in kindergarten, and as he grows up he'll become the same thing. He'll want to get revenge in a way, but the person that hurt him, seeing as he won't necessarily get revenge on him, he'll get revenge on someone smaller. It has to continue, it's a cycle. "[214]

4.3.2 Violence as an issue of educational concepts and youth

As for parents, they situated family violence in a more political perspective, in the sense of a conflict of values with institutions (primarily the school and the Director of Youth Protection) over concepts of freedom and rights accorded to children:

> "There are other forms of violence that we have too on the family level, between children and parents that are confronted with other cultures, far from their own cultures of origin, and it's one of the adaptation problems for youth, who go out and find, in quotation marks, that open door we call freedom. And what makes them deviate, that's what is a little more accentuated in the Black communities, most of the immigrants, even if they're Latin-American. This phenomenon is somewhat generalized in parent-child relationships. We find it in many communities. This aggression is due to systems in the host society that don't necessarily reflect our values. So these things are misunderstood and misused, mostly by youth. And there are generational conflicts, because we were in different types of culture, we had other basic values. And all of a sudden, you find yourself confronted with that. You want to straighten out your children, no the others do that, why not us? And it causes lots of problems. That is the most widespread problem here. The biggest problem for families is that one."[215]

All the parents reported their anxiety at seeing their children "go wrong" and become delinquent. More specifically, they used the term "vagrant". The street was one of the first sources of this anxiety, followed by school. They questioned the degree of latitude given to the "state". They saw Quebec society as "too permissive", one that allowed young people freedoms that they are not ready to assume, considering the strict upbringing from their parents to ensure they have a solid foundation in life:

> "The children arrive and find other children who're already in the system and tell them: So, here in Canada, there's freedom. You're 16 years old and you don't have to

[214] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[215] Mother, Haitian group.

> go to school. The law says so. So we can go hang out if you want after, there's a school for adults, you'll have time to study. You know here we can go and work. There are systems, you can tell your parents that, for example, hey I'm old enough and I want to leave. You're free to go and live with a friend, right. There are lots of tips like that that take the children and lead them right off the path. Because most of the time, it's being adrift, it's not the right path. I don't know if the government really put that in place to help youth, a law that says that you can stop school at 16 years old..."[216]

Some also mentioned that too much importance is placed on children's opinions. So it is a question of disenfranchisement, a loss of parents' educational power:

> "And it provokes conflicts in families and sometimes it becomes physical. Apparently the child is always right. As soon as you call 911, they don't even know if he threw the first blow at his father or mother, it's the child that's right. When the police come, they ask more for the child's opinion than the parents'. And the system is there. Don't try and listen to the parents a bit more, just agree with the child. And then in this system, people are surprised that parents aren't able to keep their kids under control. Yes you're responsible. The phrase pops up all the time. They're not adult, you're responsible. Responsible for what, exactly? When you as a society have already put a system in place that doesn't even give a bit of authority, so you could insist, I say no, he can't go. Instead society opens the doors, yes you can go, and there's nothing you can do about it."[217]

The majority of young people were quite aware of this intergenerational conflict, which they described first as a lack of dialogue with their parents:

> "On some level the lack of dialogue pushes us to do whatever. Parents that aren't able to say, to take their children in hand and say, one day, see your future is like this."[218]

Sometimes the fear even seems mutual:

> "The lack of dialogue with our parents, our parents do it but other parents don't. Maybe they're afraid of their children. They're stronger, but they don't talk about the danger they're in. I think that's what it is."[219]

Some youth considered a strict education, controlling parents and a certain family pressure as potential catalysts of violence in themselves:

[216] Mother, Haitian group.
[217] Mother, Haitian group.
[218] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[219] Boy 15-20 years, African group.

> "Family, it's something that can really push somebody to do bad things, because you see that sometimes. There are parents that judge their children by the wrong things. Sometimes there's a kid there and just by the way he dresses the parents will judge him, say he doing bad things, he's vagrant, he's in street gangs, he's selling things. And you see that pushes him: just that can push him to do the worst things possible. (…) The first thing that can push someone toward funny business is parents."[220]

Finally, the accent was put on parents' narrow-mindedness:

> "They aren't open-minded at all. It's narrow-mindedness. They say: No, I was educated like this, I want to stay like this, and my children will be like this and their children will also be like this." "In my opinion, it's to protect themselves from life. It's clear, because they're afraid of losing their Haitian culture." "We already have the gold medal of a culture that is very, that is very mixed. It's as if we lost our roots. And then, there are parents who wonder where our culture will end up, who will promote it in the future, who is it that will want to talk about our culture one day?"[221]

[220] Young man 20-30 years, Haitian group.
[221] Young woman 20-30 years, Haitian group.

4.3.3 Summary: Families

- The subject of family violence as a source of violence for youth was brought up in all groups. A determinist vision of learned and experienced violence within families, conditions youth to become violent and in turn, repeating the family dynamic.

- Some youth downplayed the importance of the family by pointing out that violence can be learned elsewhere besides the family, such as on the street, with friends or at school. And even if the family is the first socialization space because it provides a “solid basis”, it is not that much of a determinant. We return to the relationship between the individual and violence.

- Some of the boys saw familial causality in terms of revenge and entry into a cycle of violence.

- Parents situated violence in a more political perspective. They saw it as a conflict of values with institutions (the school and the Director of Youth Protection mainly) over concepts of freedom and over rights accorded to children.

- All parents expressed their anxiety at seeing their children “going wrong” and becoming “delinquent” or “vagrant”. The street was one of the first sources of that anxiety, followed by school:
  - ✓ They saw this problem directly linked to the law and the “state”. Quebec society is “too permissive” and allows young people freedom they are not ready to assume, considering the strict education from their parents in order to ensure their future;
  - ✓ Too much importance is placed on the opinions of children;
  - ✓ There is a disenfranchisement of the parents’ educational power.

- The majority of young people were quite aware of this intergenerational conflict resulting in:
  - ✓ Lack of dialogue with parents;
  - ✓ Mutual fear;
  - ✓ They considered a strict education, controlling parents and family pressure to be potential catalysts of violence in themselves;
  - ✓ Finally, the emphasis was placed on parental narrow-mindedness.

Chapter 5

Preventing violence: An intervention plan

Establishing an action plan was also part of the research process. This was based on study results and problems raised during the focus group sessions. We approached it by listing themes and related issues one by one, then by defining objectives and suggesting potential projects. Herein are suggestions. Thereafter, the work group on *Violence within Black Communities* will develop an action plan with one or two projects and new partners. Five possible intervention objectives were defined:

- Objective 1: Act against violence (verbal, psychological or physical) amongst young Blacks in schools;
- Objective 2: Act against violence amongst families in Black communities;
- Objective 3: Act against violence from police toward young Blacks;
- Objective 4: Act against racism;
- Objective 5: Act on the identity crisis of young Blacks.

OBJECTIVE 1: ACT AGAINST VIOLENCE (VERBAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL OR PHYSICAL) AMONGST YOUNG BLACKS IN SCHOOLS

Reduce the incidence of the following problems identified in focus groups: intimidation, impact of street gangs, insults, denial, lack of respect, peer group pressure, family violence, drugs, easy access to firearms, replication of deviance models, taxing, fights, brutality.

- Do not allow violence to be used as a means of interaction between youth in school:
  - ✓ Research initiatives dealing with adolescents and violence at school;
  - ✓ Organize meetings between youth and school personnel;
  - ✓ Finalize and promote a Charter through school networks of target neighborhoods and mobilize youth for the project.

- Offer support to victims of violence:
  - ✓ Propose training sessions during pedagogical days;
  - ✓ Create an information kit;
  - ✓ Train young mediators and implement the program in targeted neighborhoods.

- Make youth aware of the consequences of violence in its many forms:
  - ✓ Organize sensitivity training sessions, in high schools, animated by youth with accessible language and content. (case studies, victim testimonials, role playing, etc.).

- Prevent youth from joining street gangs by intervening with young people:
  - ✓ Recruit ex-gang members;
  - ✓ Organize presentations in schools, during public events, and in churches.

OBJECTIVE 2: ACT AGAINST VIOLENCE AMONGST FAMILIES IN BLACK COMMUNITIES

Reduce the incidence of the following problems identified in focus groups: impact of family violence, lack of intergenerational dialogue, parental anxiety about juvenile delinquency.

- Sensitize families to the consequences of violence and offer them adequate support:
  - ✓ Develop information tools with accessible content and distribute them during community events and in churches;
  - ✓ Organize training sessions aimed at intervention workers;
  - ✓ Organize self-help family groups;
  - ✓ Make available information about violence and other aspects of family life.

OBJECTIVE 3: ACT AGAINST VIOLONCE FROM POLICE TOWARD YOUNG BLACKS

Reduce the incidence of the following problems identified in focus groups: intimidation, insults, denial, lack of respect, racial profiling.

- Improve relations between police and youth in Black communities:
  - ✓ Organize exchange workshops with mediation;
  - ✓ Organize sensitizing activities with Black communities and police forces;
  - ✓ Sensitize and train police forces regarding racial profiling.

- Increase young people's awareness of their rights and responsibilities and possible recourses in situations of conflict with the police:
  - ✓ Develop multimedia information tools (radio spots, TV/video, ads in community newspapers, plays developed and acted in by youth. etc.) to be distributed among youth;
  - ✓ Organize training sessions for intervention workers;

- ✓ Organize sensitivity training sessions, in high schools, animated by youth with accessible language and content. (case studies, victim testimonials, role playing, etc.).

- Facilitate and reinforce access to complaint procedures in situations of conflict with the police:
  - ✓ Inventory and analysis of existing projects:
  - ✓ Adapt and implement these programs in targeted neighbourhoods;
  - ✓ Set in place citizen mediation projects;
  - ✓ Create mobile legal clinics;
  - ✓ Inventory, development and distribution of tools explaining laws in layman's terms.

OBJECTIVE 4: ACT AGAINST RACISM

Reduce the incidence of the following problems identified in focus groups: numerous barriers, exclusion, rejection, lack of respect, stigmatization, discrimination, non-recognition of professional competency, harassment.

- Increase the Quebec population's awareness of the impact of racism and discrimination:
  - ✓ Organize thematic debates between key actors and broadcast them on community radio;
  - ✓ Organize special radio broadcasts "Features on Racism" centred on testimonials from daily life dealing with discrimination, stereotyping, prejudices, etc;
  - ✓ Inventory of citizen and community actions against racism;
  - ✓ Inventory of government initiatives and legal protections.

- Support victims of racism and assist them in their efforts:
  - ✓ Create mobile legal clincs;
  - ✓ Inventory, development and distribution of tools explaining laws in layman's terms.

- Encourage solidarity between the different Black communities:
  - ✓ Organize forums with a thematic schedule (common roots, racism and dispersion/diasporas, internalized racism, cultural conflicts, etc.).

OBJECTIVE 5: ACT ON THE IDENTITY CRISIS OF YOUNG BLACKS

Reduce the incidence of the following problems identified in focus groups: absence of positive role models, cultural conflicts (dominant culture versus minority culture), stigmatization of youth, victimization, symbolic and concrete exclusion, lack of communication.

- Teach youth from Black communities good citizenship and how to claim their place in Quebec society.

- Make society aware of the need to recognize the status of young people in Black communities:
  - ✓ Implement an "Agents of change" program for adolescents and young adults in Black communities;
  - ✓ Set up a work group representing the three main Black communities: Anglophones, Haitians and Africans;
  - ✓ Organize forums dealing with the realities of young Blacks in Quebec.

CONCLUSION

So, as we have seen, though the subject of violence is hardly a new one and has even mobilized a number of initiatives, clearly it is an issue that must addressed with ongoing vigilance.

Over and above the heterogeneity of Montreal's Black communities and apart from age, gender and different life histories, the group interviews have shown that the problems of individuals tend to revolve around a sense of violence in everyday life, with the consciousness of sharing a form of common experience intrinsically tied up with being part of a racialized minority. The focus groups were invaluable in establishing the contours of violence itself, identifying its various dimensions, spheres of activity and major issues. This then enabled us to then define and sort out the consequences, first in relation to the individual, then in terms of Black communities as a whole and finally in relation to institutions.

The subject of poverty or difficult social conditions rarely came up when discussing violence, instead what was emphasized was its devastating effects on the individual in an emotional and psychological sense, far more than a physical one. And it is the building-up and internalization of these effects that can provoke violence. It is in everyday life, in the most ordinary of situations (the workplace for adults or socialization space for young people) where the possibility constantly lies for racialized interaction, whether it is actually called racism, prejudice or indifference, or interpreted as such. It is elements like these that call for us to insist on and develop the kind of conditions that insure Quebec is an inclusive society.

The various issues involving youth all crystallize around the subject of juvenile violence and street gangs. Interview participants identified a number of very definite concerns: free circulation for young people public space; youth's visibility and expressiveness with a lack of outlets for same; the aimlessness of certain youth; school dropout rate; the sense of a limited future; the influence of fashion and implications vis-à-vis the cultural industry; the strength and influence of peer groups; the allure of violence, group delinquency situated with the larger context of Montreal; media sensationalism; identity issues and a difficulty in communicating with parents. All participants agreed that the most destructive aspect of all is the inevitable lumping together of violence and Black people

The many motives and scenarios that come into play must be identified and understood more succinctly if we are to come up with more effective responses to the problem.

Finally, the last sphere in which violence appears in Black communities occurs in relation to institutions. The institutions mainly discussed were the police, school and the family. Relations between youth notably and law enforcement, are not good, and there is still much room for dialogue, if there is a willingness to recognize and acknowledge a mutual responsibility for problems that have arisen. At school we encounter the complex problems of mass education and measures taken by different boards. This was the subject of much debate around the concepts of education, and the responsibility and role of both the school and the family.

Ultimately, the aim of the analysis of interview data was to isolate and identify each of the mechanisms underlying the violence perceived and experienced by the men and women of all ages in Black communities. This was to come to a better understanding and take a closer look at the incidents and emotions expressed, hoping from there to develop effective leverage so that future projects are as closely matched to reality as possible.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1: GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE

The aim of this research on violence affecting young people from the ages of 15 to 30 in Montreal's Black communities is to collect your testimonials, concerns and suggestions on the subject. This will help us establish recommendations and develop an intervention plan. This project is a coalition of various organizations from the Haitian, Anglophone and African communities. It is financed by the National Crime Prevention Centre. To maintain confidentiality, the researchers and community organizations agree not to divulge any personal information. We would like to thank you in advance for your participation.

1) If you had to define violence, how would you do it?

2) Generally speaking, what connection do you see between your community and the subject of violence?

3) What is your personal experience of violence?

4) What solutions would you propose for each theme?

5) Do you have any other comments to make on the subject?

APPENDIX 2: GROUP INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Are you male or female?

How old are you?

Where were your parents born?

If you or your parents immigrated recently, how long have you been in Quebec?

What neighbourhood do you live in?

Your status at present is: (check)

- ☐ Student
- ☐ Dropout
- ☐ Employed
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Employment Assistance
- ☐ Welfare
- ☐ Other (specify):

If you are a student, what school or training college do you attend?

If you work, what employment sector are you in?

Who do you live with on a regular basis, in the same home? (Check)

- ☐ Father
- ☐ Mother
- ☐ Brother(s)
- ☐ Sister(s)
- ☐ Children
- ☐ Uncles
- ☐ Aunts
- ☐ Grandparents
- ☐ Other (specify):

APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR KEY PEOPLE INVOLVED

This questionnaire has been designed for you as community and institutional professionals and experts, concerned with the problem. Its aim is to collect your testimonials, issues and suggestions on how to prevent the violence that is affecting young people from 15 to 30 in Montreal's Black communities. It will also help us pinpoint the successes, stumbling blocks and needs related to current projects or develop new proposals, so we have a frame of reference and supporting arguments for an intervention plan. This project is a coalition of various organizations from the Haitian, Anglophone and African communities. It is financed by the National Crime Prevention Centre and coordinated by the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles. We thank you in advance for your participation.

Name of community organization or institution, contact name, title:

Address:

1) Could you indicate your fields of activity (issues, target groups, geographical areas, or your areas of intervention and research?

2) Based on your experience, what are your observations on violence in Black communities: problems, types of violence, frequency, contexts, evolution etc?

3) What do you see as the causes?

4) What effects do you observe?

5) Às far as you know, what resources are available on this subject?

6) Do you know of any projects already developed on this subject? If so, what are the objectives, the target group, financing and results to date? (Thank you for attaching any supplementary information to this questionnaire).

7) How do you see these projects in terms of success, stumbling blocks or differences compared with the initial project concept?

8) What do you see as the needs and appropriate steps measures that should to be taken vis-à-vis this subject?

9) Do you have any observations, comments or suggestions that you would like to make about the subject of violence in Black communities?

APPENDIX 4: PARTICIPANT SAMPLE FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

Girls 15-20 years old				
First Name	**Âge**	**Country/Birth/ Parents**	**Years/Quebec**	**Residential Neighbourhood**
L.	15 years	Haïti	13 years	Rosemount-Petite-Patrie
C.	15 years	Haïti	20 years	Rosemount-Petite-Patrie
A.	20 years	Haïti	11 years	Rosemount-Petite-Patrie
Lo.	15 years	Haïti	20 years	Villeray
Ca.	15 years	Haïti	5 years	Villeray
N.	18 years	Haïti	18 years	Saint-Michel
Al.	19 years	Haïti	2 years	Villeray
S.	17 years	Haïti	5 years	Rosemount-Petite-Patrie
D.	15 years	Haïti	15 years	Montreal-North
F.	22 years	Rwanda	9 years	Rosemount-Petite-Patrie
B.	17 years	Dem.Rep..Congo	10 years	Laval
Li.	15 years	Dem.Rep..Congo	14 years	Jeanne-Mance
E.	15 years	Dem.Rep..Congo	13 years	Point St. Charles
I.	18 years	Cameroon	13 years	Petite-Bourgogne
Ala.	16 years	Canada		Côte-des-Neiges
P.	16 years	Canada		Notre-Dame-de-Grâce
First Name	**Occupation**	**Name of School**	**Work Sector**	**Reside With**
L.	Studies	Père-Marquette		Father/Sisters
C.	Studies/Work	Georges-Vanier	Food Service	Mother/Sisters
A.	Studies/Work	Marie-Médiatrice	Business	Mother
Lo.	Studies	Georges-Vanier		Father/Mother/Brothers Sisters
Ca.	Studies	Père-Marquette		Mother/Brothers/Sisters
N.	Studies	Marie-Médiatrice		Father/Mother/Brothers
Al.	Studies/Work	Marie-Médiatrice	Business	Father/Mother/Brothers Sisters
S.	Studies	Marie-Anne		Father/Brothers/Sisters
D.	Studies	Calixa-Lavallée		Mother/Sisters
F.	Studies	Emica		Mother/Brothers
B.	Studies	Cegep Ahuntsic		Mother/Brothers/Sisters Aunts
Li.	Studies	Jeanne-Mance		Mother
E.	Studies	Saint-Henri		Father/Mother/Brothers Sisters
I.	Studies	Lavoie		Mother/Sisters
Ala.	Studies			Mother/Brothers
P.	Studies			Mother/Brothers

Boys 15-20 years old				
First Name	**Âge**	**Country/Birth Parents**	**Years/Québec**	**Residential Neighbourhood**
M.	16 years	Haïti	20 years	Rosemount-Petite-Patrie
Mi.	17 years	Haïti	13 years	Rosemount-Petite-Patrie
P.	17 years	Haïti	15 years	Villeray
Ma.	16 years	Haïti	20 years	Saint-Michel
J.	18 years	Haïti	20 years	Saint-michel
Mar.	17 years	Haïti	18 years	Villeray
D.	15 years	Haïti	19 years	Villeray
J.	16 years	Dem. Rep..Congo	1 year	Hochelaga-Maisonneuve
Di.	23 years	Dem. Rep..Congo	10 years	Hochelaga-Maisonneuve
A.	17 years	Dem. Rep..Congo	5 years	Rosemount-Petite-Patrie
R.	20 years	Dem. Rep..Congo	1 year	Hochelaga-Maisonneuve
Je.	25 years	Dem. Rep..Congo	4 years	Papineau-St.Catherine
G.	15 years	Dem. Rep..Congo	10 years	Jeanne-Mance
F.	16 years	Angola	4 years	Jarry-Pie-IX
Mab.	17 years	Dem. Rep..Congo	10 years	Jeanne-Mance
Am.	17 years	Rwanda	8 years	Jarry-Pie-IX
K.	15 years	Jamaica	20 years	Côte-des-Neiges
J.	16 years	Jamaica	15 years	Côte-des-Neiges
Ro.	15 years	Jamaica	17 years	Côte-des-Neiges
C.	17 years	Jamaica	18 years	Côte-des-Neiges
First Name	**Occupation**	**Name of School**	**Work Sector**	**Reside With**
M.	Studies	Georges-Vanier		Mother/Sisters
Mi.	Studies	Georges-Vanier		Father/Mother/Brothers/Sisters
P.	Studies	Marie-Médiatrice		Father/MotherSisters
Ma.	Studies	Père-Marquette		Mother/Brothers/Sisters/Aunts
J.	Studies	Père-Marquette		Mother/Brothers
Mar.	Studies	Marie-Médiatrice		Mother/Brothers/Sisters
D.	Studies	Georges-Vanier		Mother/Brothers/Sisters
J.	Studies	Chomedey-Mais.		Mother/Brothers/Sisters
Di.	Studies	UQAM		Father/Mother/Brothers/Sisters
A.	Studies	Père-Marquette		Mother-in-Law/Sisters
R.	Work		Various	Mother
Je.	Work		Admnistration	Brothers/Sisters
G.	Studies	Pierre-Dupuis		Mother/Brothers/Sisters/Grand parents
F.	Studies	Pierre-Dupuis		Mother/Sisters/Grandparents
Mab.	Studies	Jeanne-Mance		Foster Family
Am.	Studies	Louis-J.-Papineau		Foster Family
K.	Studies			Mother/Sisters/Grandparents
J.	Studies			Mother/Sisters
Ro.	Studies			Father/Mother/Sisters
C.	Studies			Father/Mother/Brothers

Young Women 20-30 years old				
First Name	**Âge**	**Country/Birth Parents**	**Years/Quebec**	**Residential Neighbourhood**
L.	25 years	Haïti	25 years	Parc-Extension
C.	19 years	Haïti	20 years	Ahunstic
S.	24 years	Dem. Rep..Congo	6 years	Hochelaga-Maisonneuve
R.	25 years	Dem. Rep..Congo	1 year	Downtown
Ra.	21 years	Niger	20 years	Côte-des-Neiges
Si.	24 years	Jamaica	30 years	Côte-des-Neiges
K.	22 years	Jamaica	35 years	Côte-des-Neiges
First Name	**Occupation**	**Name of School**	**Work Sector**	**Reside With**
L.	Studies/Work	Cégep M-Victorin	Modelling	Mother/Sisters/ Niece
C.	Work		Food Service	Sisters
S.	Work		Business	Mother/Fathers/Sisters
R.	Studies	UQAM		Father/Mother/Brothers Sisters
Ra.	Studies/Work	U. de Montréal	Business	Alone
Si.	Work		Sales	Children
K.	Work		Computers	Husband/Children

Young Men 20-30 years old				
First Name	**Age**	**Country/Birth Parents**	**Years/Quebec**	**Residential Neighbourhood**
K.	24 years	Haïti	30 years	Montreal-North
S.	20 years	Haïti	20 years	Montreal-North
P.	19 years	Haïti	25 years	Pie-IX
L.	19 years	Haïti		Pie-IX
M.	23 years	Haïti	30 years	Montreal-North
Lo.	21 years	Salvador	10 years	RDP
Bo.	24 years	Haïti	30 years	Montreal-North
Al.	23 years	Cuba	5 years	Montreal-North
MK.	18 years	Haïti	20 years	Montreal-North
D.	26 years	Haïti	20 years	Saint-Léonard
Mu.	29 years	Dem. Rep..Congo	7 years	Saint-Laurent
La.	30 years	Gabon	8 years	Saint-Laurent
N.	30 years	Jamaica	30 years	Côte-des-Neiges
I.	25 years	Barbados	15 years	Côte-des-Neiges
O.	24 years	Saint-Vincent	25 years	Côte-des-Neiges
B.	28 years	Saintt-Vincent	25 years	Côte-des-Neiges
V.	22 years	Jamaica	30 years	Côte-des-Neiges
A.	23 years	Jamaica	30 years	Côte-des-Neiges
W.	22 years	Jamaica	35 years	Côte-des-Neiges

First Name	Occupation	Name of School	Work Sector	Resides With
K.	Work		Social Work	Mother
S.	Studies	Louis-Fréchette		Mother/Brothers
P.	Studies	Henri-Bourassa		Father
L.	Studies	Louis-Fréchette		Father
M.	Studies	Louis-Fréchette		Girlfriend
Lo.	Studies/Work	Louis-Fréchette	Food Service	Mother
Bo.	Work		Social Work	Mother
Al.	Studies/Work	Henri-Bourassa	Business	Alone
MK.	Studies/Work	Henri-Bourassa	Business	Father/Mother/Brothers
D.	Work		Security	Alone
Mu.	Work		Music	Wife/Children
La.	Work		Accounting	Wife
N.	Work		Food Service	Wife
I.	Work		Landscaping	Wife/Children
O.	Work		Food Service	Wives/Children
B.	Work		Accounting	Parents
V.	Studies/Work		Food Service	Parents
A.	Studies			Mother
W.	Studies			Mother

Parents				
First Name	**Age**	**Country/Birth Parents**	**Years/Quebec**	**Residential Neighbourhood**
R.	45 years	Haïti	22 years	Saint-Léonard
B.	48 years	Central African R.	7 years	Saint-Léonard
S.	35 years	Dem.Rep..Congo	6 years	Rosemount
G.	52 years	Dem. Rep..Congo	18 years	Laval
Bi.	38 years	Dem. Rep..Congo	9 years	Ville d'Anjou
J.	50 years	Dem. Rep..Congo	10 years	Petite-Patrie
I.	33 years	Dem. Rep..Congo	15 years	Petite-Patrie
R.	43 years	Dem. Rep..Congo	8 years	Hochelaga-Maisonneuve
D.	45 years	Senegal	7 years	Dollard-des-Ormeaux
A.	58 years	Mali	21 years	
Al.	61 years	Dem. Rep..Congo	8 years	Quartier Benoît
Je.	44 years	Dem. Rep..Congo	10 years	Saint-Laurent
V.	60 years	Dem. Rep..Congo	12 years	Petite-Patrie
C.	45 years	Saint-Vincent	20 years	Côte-des-Neiges
Ro.	53 years	Barbados	25 years	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce
Mi.	50 years	Jamaica	30 years	Côte-des-Neiges
Ma.	43 years	Saint-vincent	28 years	Côte-des-Neiges
J.	49 years	Jamaica	15 years	Côte-des-Neiges
First Name	**Occupation**	**Name of School**	**Work Sector**	**Reside With**
R.	Unemployed			Husband/Children
B.	Studies		Health	Children

S.	Unemployed			Mother
G.	Nurse		Hospital	Mother/hildren
Bi.	Welfare		Temporary	Children
J.	Unemployed			Chldren
I.	Employed		Law	Couple
R.	Self-Employed		Computer	Wife
D.	Employed		Finance	Wife
A.	Self-Employed		Engineering Consultant	Wife
Al.	Welfare			Wife
Je.	Employed		Communications	Children
V.	Unemployed			Wife/Children
C.	Employed		Customer Service	Children
Ro.	Unemployed			Wife/Children
Mi.	Employed		Customer Service	Wife
Ma.	Employed		Travel Agent	Children
J.	Employed		Hospital	Husband