Blackening the City: Counter Cartographies as a Tool for Community Planning

by

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Abstract

Blackening The City: Counter-Cartographies as a Tool for Community Planning engages with the concept of counter cartographies as a tool for creating spatial equity, underpinned by Black Feminist Theory. Historically and currently, the spatial distribution of cities is heavily skewed to favour those in positions of power. Practices have focused on the needs of socioeconomic elites and prioritized the city as a vehicle for economic success, rather than the success of its residents. Access to social services, transportation, safe and affordable housing, healthcare, and other necessities need to be prioritized in marginalized communities for them to thrive. Black Feminist Theory offers a theoretical lens through which planning processes can be viewed, as it centres the intersection of racialized and gendered oppression towards creating equitable spaces. Black Feminist Theory elevates marginalized voices, as they are the most knowledgeable of the issues they face.

This study focuses on Jane and Finch, a community in Toronto that is predominantly made up of visible minorities, with Black people making up just over twenty six percent of the population. The community is heavily stigmatized, due to stereotypes associated with racialized, migrant, and low-income communities. This study documents ways in which Black women move through and connect with their community using counter cartographic methodologies. Participants in this study are community members engaged in a participatory counter mapping workshop and walking interviews. The information gathered through walking interviews point to the several common spatial experiences of Black women, including consistent uprooting and movement, the need to create spaces where we can experience joy, and the need for resistance in hegemonic spaces. The mapping workshop shed light on themes surrounding desires for community and belonging, increased community resources and programs, safety, cleanliness, and infrastructural changes. A spatial analysis is then performed on the data collected, that culminates in an online mapping tool that writes the community from the view of its residents, and serve as a planning consulting and advocacy tool.

Counter cartographies offer a vehicle through which Black Feminist Theory can be applied. Through using counter cartographic tools and methods, this study rewrites space through a gendered and racialized lens, and subverts the power imbalance that exists in traditional mapping. The final mapping tool includes the knowledges of Black women in Jane and Finch, and visualizes narratives of marginalized communities, voices, and geographies. This study investigates the use of counter cartographies as a vital planning tool towards creating more equitable communities where the needs of marginalized people are met, and their dreams and desires are written into their landscapes. Since urban planners regularly consult maps, I conclude that counter cartographies aid in reworking the underpinnings of planning, and thus ground planning in anti-colonial and anti-oppressive knowledges and practices.

The mapping tool that accompanies this paper can be found here:

https://yorku.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/9948ce10aeac4c0c913fdf7d5c2a2a27

Key Terms: Black Feminism, Counter Cartographies, Participatory Urban Planning, Spatial Equity

Foreword

My mother's stories guide me, as her mother's guide her, and her mother's guide her. These stories are embedded in our geographies, and unpack our inexplicable ties to place. Written into Black women's geographies are histories of oppression, pain, violence, resistance, sisterhood, and joy.

My portfolio project *Blackening the City: Counter-Cartographies as a Tool for Community Planning* works to bring these geographies of oppression and knowledges into current planning engagement practices, towards my fulfilment of the MES degree. The area of concentration in my Plan of Study is spatial equity underpinned by Black Feminist Theory. Contributing to my area of study were the following components: Black Feminist Geographies, Radical Planning, and Healthy Communities. This portfolio investigates prominent theories and components of Black Feminist Geographies, and highlights the participatory nature of radical planning towards the creation of healthy communities that reflect the needs and desires of its members. This research highlights theoretical understandings of equitable community building and community engagement, while exemplifying practical ways in which planners can engage with marginalized communities. My work was inspired by a similar project I worked on in during my 2021 MITACS internship with Esri, called the 'Every One Every Day' project, where I created a community map and educational resource surrounding the Regent Park community. The project was designed and implemented by the Centre for Social Innovation Institute to create community connection through a series of workshops alongside the mapping tool. Similarly, I hope the Jane and Finch community map can continue to be used to provide community members as well as planners and other stakeholders with an understanding of community knowledges, stories, and opinions on Jane and Finch.

This research heavily contributes to my ongoing academic and career goals of participating in a pivoting of community planning towards deep and intentional community engagement, contrary to the typical top-down, inaccessible nature of urban planning.

Dedication

An Ode to those who fought before me

To my ancestors who were kidnapped and violated;
To the ones who threw their bodies to the sea, rather than await the destitute ahead;
To the ones who died silently aboard their captors ships;
To the ones who escaped and lived on the run in a land unknown;
To the ones whose quiet resilience was survival;
To the ones who fought for abolition;
To the ones who suffered segregation;
To the ones whose bodies were chained and jailed;
To the ones whose society failed them;
To Dubois, and Crenshaw, and Mckittrick, and Maynard, and Manning-Thomas;
To Pitter, and Moriah, and Hanson, and Holness;
To Black historians, philosophers, geographers, and planners;
To Black parents, caregivers, educators, and learners;
To my mom, my dad, and my three brothers;
Thank you all, for paving the way
Thank you for fighting for all of us

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The Harriet Tubman Institute funded my research by providing me with a grant that I used towards research participant honorariums, research materials, as well as meals and transportation for the participants. This funding ensured that my research was reciprocal in nature, which is imperative for deep and respectful community engagement. I am extremely thankful that the Harriet Tubman Institute provided me with this financial support, as well as resource support through sharing my work with their network. I am also appreciative of the Black Planning Project, who worked with me to create social media posts and recruit participants for my research. I would also like to thank the Jane and Finch Community Centre for providing me with space to host my research, as well as promoting the workshop to Jane and Finch community members. These organizations were integral to the success of my research, and I look forward to continuing to collaborate with them in the future.

My Esri internship in 2021 was imperative to my understanding of ArcGIS software and all its interactive capacities. I worked alongside Susie Saliola on this project, who is an incredible educator and advocate for alleviating systemic oppressions. I am extremely privileged to have had the opportunity to have participated in this research and gain extensive knowledge about Esri software.

My friends both within and outside of the EUC program have kept me grounded and joyful. They have consistently reminded me of the importance of play amidst hard work. Through the EUC program I met Alix, Farida, Jo, and Kafia, who I have formed a collective of placemakers, artists, and cartographers with called 'The Reimagining the City Collective.' I consistently learn from and laugh with these friends. Outside of the program, Afeez, Anika, Jasmine, Nancy, and Neissah have been an incredible and supportive group of friends.

My parents and eldest brother, Jamal, have listened to me endlessly about the themes of my research, edited my work, and gifted me books, all in support of me and my research.

Thank you to my research participants, who trusted me to share and represent their stories and support the goals of my research.

Lastly, I'd like to acknowledge and sincerely thank my partner, Antony, for his consistent efforts to support me throughout this research journey. He is always ready with a box of tissues and a pumpkin spice latte, an ear to bounce ideas off of, and any other emotional support I needed.

Thank you.

Land Acknowledgement

In writing about the linkages of history, geographies, and temporality, the clear acknowledgement of the Indigenous knowledges and histories embedded in the Toronto landscape is essential to Black Feminist Geographies and anti-colonial work. Toronto sits on the traditional lands of the Haudenosaunee, Anishinabewaki, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Mississauga, and Wendake-Nionwentsïo nations (Native-Land, n.d.). While land acknowledgements provide a preliminary step to engaging with anti-colonial and landback work, additional steps are required towards truth and reconciliation. As planners, deep engagement practices, such as the ones studied in this research, with local Indigenous communities and organizations can aid in creating landscapes that reflect the needs and desires of local Indigenous communities.

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Introduction

Geo-spatial relations are coloured by an individual's socio-economic disposition in society. Identities such as race, gender, class, ability, and orientation impact the ways in which people interact with space. *Blackening The City: Counter-Cartographies as a Tool for Community Planning* explores the ways in which Black women, who face both racialized and gendered oppression, interact with their community through walking interviews. This work focuses on the Jane and Finch community in North York, Toronto, Ontario, as it is a heavily racialized and stigmatized community. In addition, an online community mapping tool created with ArcGIS software provides a potential opportunity for deep community engagement. Through using engagement tools that identify and prioritize marginalized voices, planners can work towards creating communities that provide for the needs of all of its members. This research is underpinned by Black Feminist Theory, which works to address and dismantle oppressive hierarchical structures through uplifting, understanding, and prioritizing the voices of marginalized people, particularly Black women, when they speak to their own subjugation.

This research is quite reflective of my positionality and my experiences. I am a Black, Queer, and Disabled woman, and my life has been strongly shaped by my marginalized identities. I have experienced violence in both public and private spaces, and knowing that this is a common experience for those with similar identities to mine is not comforting. My Black, Queer, and disabled womanhood has provided me with community, shared experiences, comradery, and sisterhood alongside pain, fear, and rage in the current white supremacist context. Those close to me will often hear me say “I simply wish to not be observed,” as observation in normative space is alienating, underpinned by degrading views of Black women, and, in many cases, has led to violent encounters. As I have gotten older, I have become increasingly resistant to societal attempts to eradicate my being. I take up space where my body is undesirable, I am loud where white supremacy demands silence, I am combative where society requires obedience. While I do work to engage in my own pockets of joy, through things such as baking, dancing, and building and participating in community, the weight of anti-Blackness, and the violence I have experienced as a result of it, can sometimes feel all encompassing. My research is intentional in its subversive nature, as this is a way in which I can actively work towards creating a space for more joy, community, and peace for Black women. I sit in a position of privilege as a middle-class person who has the opportunity to be a part of a master’s cohort

and engage in this sort of research, and I want to use this privilege for the betterment of the Black community. Jane and Finch is a community I lived in for five years, where I built most of my community while doing my undergraduate degree. I know that the university has caused harm in the community that cannot be undone, but as a Black woman who has lived in the community, I hope to provide a new space of positive and collaborative interaction with Jane and Finch community members.

To answer the questions of how counter cartographies and spatial analysis tools can be used to create more equitable urban planning practices, I use fieldwork to inform ways in which urban spaces can be reframed to include the voices and needs of marginalized people. Walk-alongs are research method I use, as they provide space for marginalized people to identify ways in which they navigate space, how space has and can continue to better serve them, as well as how it has and continues to oppress them. As Holgersson does, I used reflexive research, and use my ongoing learning to inform my research. I am also quite interested in the power subversion walk alongs provide. Creating spaces that are counter-hegemonic allow for the ideas, thoughts, and experiences of marginalized groups to be brought to the forefront. In my opinion, this is a way in which equitable place making can be achieved. These pockets of counter-hegemonic spaces serve as locations in which the dominating, white supremacist and classist system can be challenged and eventually destroyed. My research focuses on the Jane and Finch area, a heavily racialized and stigmatized neighbourhood in the City of Toronto.

Developing a listening infrastructure, the tools and practices I used to positively engage with community members, was crucial for creating a positive, non-extractive experience during my research. A listening infrastructure considers the barriers to participation and ways to alleviate them, the relational space between researchers and participants that occurs during the research process, and methods for attentively listening and understanding research participants (O'Donnell et al., 2009). Listening infrastructures position participant knowledge and narratives as factual data points, and consider research surrounding the socioeconomic, cultural, political, and geographical dispositions of the participants as contextual data (Moore & Elliott, 2015). A major goal of my research was to create a space where listening is intentional and adept, to avoid reproducing systems of oppression that can often take place during research in marginalized communities.

I use a mixed method, qualitative design for my research. I engage community members in a participatory counter mapping workshop and walking interviews, as well as perform spatial analysis on the data collected, that culminated in an online mapping tool that writes the community from the view of its residents, and serve as a planning consulting and advocacy tool. A community owned and populated tool such as this one could be an incredibly useful method for bridging community knowledge with maps, which are heavily referenced by planners. Spatializing community knowledge can help planners to understand the socio-spatial needs of the communities they serve, and be more responsive to these needs in their planning decisions.

This paper is broken down into five parts. 'Part 1: Black Feminism meets Lynch' provides an overview of Black Feminist Theory and contextualizes it in the counter mapping work of Kevin Lynch. 'Part 2: Methodologies' details the walking interview and counter mapping methodologies used for community engagement in this research. 'Part 3: Walking Along the Intersection: Moving through space as a Black Woman' provides the findings from the walking interview with four Black women from the Jane and Finch community. 'Part 4: Counter Cartographies in Jane and Finch' details the demographics information and findings from the counter cartographies workshop held in the Jane and Finch Earlyon Centre. During this workshop, community members were asked to use the mapping tool to identify and describe important locations in the Jane and Finch community. Lastly, part 5 of this paper outlines conclusions from the walking interviews and counter cartographies workshop, lessons learned from these methodologies, and opportunities for planners to better engage with the communities they serve.

Part 1: Black Feminism meets Lynch: Grounding Participatory Counter Cartographies

This section offers an overview of historical debates in Black feminist thought, Black feminist geographies, and counter cartographies to establish the theoretical underpinnings of this research. The section first explores normalization of whiteness in space, and the ways in which this normalization privileges and prioritizes white people. It then explores the pillars of Black Feminist Theory and Black Feminist Geographies. Lastly, Kevin Lynch's *The Image of the City* (1960) and it's core themes are explored.

Urban space is created with a "normative" body in mind. Assumptions of normativity are embedded in the colonial history and ongoing practices of place-making and are underpinned by intersectional discrimination (Parker, 2016). White, straight, and able-bodied masculinity is considered "norm" societally, and current planning practices, such as disparities in resource allocation, the abundance of environmentally hazardous infrastructure in low-income and racialized communities, condofication and gentrification, are the spatial manifestation of this normalization (Shabazz, 2014). City and planning governance, infrastructural developments and allocations, and socio-political representations within cities are expressions of the wants and needs of normative bodies (Parker, 2016). Debates in critical urban studies and Black urbanism have established how city and regional planning has historically privileged the needs and priorities of normalized bodies and people in the creation of and access to space (Shabazz, 2014). White men have been historically positioned favourably under capitalism. They are seen as the highest contributors to economic growth, and therefore the overall well-being of the city (Shabazz, 2014). Rutland (2018) describes this concept as the *Homo economicus*, in which because white men are seen as the most monetarily valuable members

of a city, cities are designed to suite their needs and lifestyles. The concept of normative bodies is inherently hierarchical, and works to *other* bodies that do not fit into the norm paradigm. Identifying categories such as race, gender, sexuality, class and ability are often incorrectly described as binary and used by dominant groups to regulate which communities have access to and belonging within space through policing, financial, and physical barriers. (Davies & Knox, 2007). Marginalized communities are continually further subjugated by planning practices and are forced to actively try to create space within the context of discriminatory landscapes (McCaan, 2002). Policing and politicization of marginalized bodies in an effort to maintain normativity in space in turn produces a counter-space (McCaan, 2002). A well-known Canadian example of this is the case of Africville, Nova Scotia (Darity, 2008). The community formed by formerly enslaved Black people was consistently encroached upon by nearby Halifax (Darity, 2008). Land in the community was expropriated for a railway which cut through the centre of the community (Darity, 2008). In 1947, the community was rezoned for industrial use and a dump and incinerator that were both environmentally and medically hazardous were added to the community (Clairmont & Magill, 1999). An advisory committee that was formed without the inclusion or input of any Africville community members alongside Halifax city officials made the decision to displace and relocate community members, labelling it an 'urban renewal' effort (Bobier, 2008). The case of Africville exemplifies the use of planning practices, including rezoning, urban renewal, and 'community engagement' via the advisory board as methods for anti-Blackness and subjugation in urban planning.

At the juncture of Blackness and womanhood, racialization, and misogyny, Black Feminist Thought captures the thoughts, ideas, and needs of Black women, in direct contradiction to our subjugation upheld by the historical and current white supremacist, patriarchal society we live in (Hill Collins, 2014). Patricia Hill Collins outlines three key

ways in which Black women are oppressed under white supremacy (2014). Firstly, the exploitation of Black women's labour, with its genesis in the capturing and enslavement of Africans, has created long-standing socioeconomic disenfranchisement (Hill Collins, 2014). Second, this oppression has continued to be cemented by denying Black women the personhood, rights, and privileges that white men receive (Hill Collins, 2014). Lastly, Black women are subjugated through stereotypical depictions such as "mammies, jezebels, and breeder women of slavery… Black prostitutes, and ever-present welfare mothers of contemporary popular culture" (Hill Collins, 2014, p.5). Black Feminist Theory divulges the needs, ideas, and desires of Black women, that our subjugation has worked to quell (Hill Collins, 2014).

For Black women, both anti-racist and feminist movements in North America have historically excluded us, through focusing on Black men and white women respectively (Crenshaw, 1991). Though slavery was abolished in 1833 in Canada, anti-Black racism through segregation, the Jim Crow era, discriminatory regulations and treatment, and state-sanctioned violence have continued to marginalize Black communities across the country (Maynard, 2017). Organizers and drivers of the Black movements of the 1940s to 1970s in Canada exchanged ideas, support, and resources with their American Civil Rights counterparts, displaying unity across the Black diaspora in North America (Waters, 2013). Black organizers in Canada such as the South Essex Citizen's Advancement Association (SECAA), the Negro Citizenship Association (NCA), the Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NSAACP), and the Canadian Negro Women's Association (CNWA) based in Toronto (Waters, 2013) campaigned on issues such as segregation, blackface and minstrel shows, and discrimination through housing, migration, and labour (Maynard, 2017). Black women have always been a part of these movements, and

Black Feminist Thought has drawn significantly from the goals and ideologies underpinning Black liberation movements (Hull et al., 1982).

Despite the value and contributions of Black women to these Black liberation movements, a lack of gendered liberation in the movements' mandates evinced their political exclusion. In a 1970s Black Nationalist pamphlet, men were described as having "knowledge of the world [that] is broader, [awareness] that is greater, [understanding] that is fuller, and [application] of this information [that] is wiser" (Hull et al., 1982, p.19). Similarly, despite Black women's contributions to feminist movements since their inception, co-option of these movements by white, middle-class women excluded Black women from the movements' goals and efforts (Hull et al., 1982). Famous suffragist Nellie McClung, for example, is well known for her role in the Person's Case of 1929 which sought to name women as persons in Canada (Devereaux, 2005). McClung also strongly advocated for the preservation of the white race, as well as eugenics towards disabled people, women of colour, and Indigenous women (Devereaux, 2005). Both movements, while working towards dismantling systemic injustices done to Black men and white women, still bolstered their socio-political standing through utilizing male privilege and whiteness respectively as oppressive tools. Thus, Black women continued to organize and theorize, but with a specific concern for Blackness in conjunction with womanhood (Hull et al., 1982).

Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term 'Intersectionality' to describe the unique position of people, particularly Black women, who sit at the intersection of multiple marginalized identities (1991). Both Black Feminist Theory and Intersectionality can be utilized to "better acknowledge and ground the differences among us and negotiate the means by which these differences will find expression in constructing group politics" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1299).

All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us are Brave is both the title of Hull, Bell Scott, and Smith's 1982 Black Feminist anthology, as well as a poetic description of the intersection of Blackness and womanhood. It describes the societal equation of femininity to white women, and Blackness to masculinity. "And Some of Us are Brave" describes both the existence and naming of Black women, seen as oxymoronic when the identities are tied to one another, as a courageous stance against and subversion of social expectations of Blackness as masculine, and womanhood as white (Hull et al., 1982). This courage has been integral to Black women's movements across the diaspora throughout time. In Sojourner's Truth's 1851 speech at the Women's Suffrage Convention in Ohio, she asked the question, "Ain't I a woman?" (Moïse, 2018). The question interrogated the audience's perception of womanhood, and asserted that Blackness and womanhood can exist simultaneously and can be interlinked identities (Moïse, 2018). In the chapter "A Black Feminist Statement," the Combahee River Collective describes the Black Feminist movement as the struggle against oppression through axes such as race, gender, sexuality, and class (Hull et al., 1982). This is done through increasing visibility of Black women's thoughts, positionality, ideas, and experiences (Hill Collins, 2014). Truth, Crenshaw and Hill Collins' works lie amongst numerous well known Black Feminist theorists and activists, such as bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Angela Davis, Viola Desmond, Harriet Tubman, Toni Morrison, and Dionne Brand. In addition to well known activists and theorists, "thousands upon thousands" (Hull et al., 1982) of people who experience racialized and gendered oppression contribute to Black Feminist Theory through their everyday experiences of intersectional marginalization. These experiences create pockets of wisdom and knowledge that culminate into collective understandings of intersectional oppression held by Black women. These knowledges and understandings contribute to Black Feminist thoughts, theories, and activism spatially and temporally across the African diaspora.

Place-making as it currently exists is an oppressive tool that is systemically maintained. The ways in which cities are built, governed, studied and represented are shaped by discriminatory ideas and practices (Parker, 2016). Identities that exist outside of normative restrictions are seen as a disruption to the geographic status quo (Davies & Knox, 2007). This disruption is often met with resistance and violence both from authoritative powers and individuals or groups of dominant identities.

In Katherine McKittrick's *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle,* Black Feminist Theory underpins the reading of geography by highlighting the ways in which Black women engage with space (2006). Black women's experiences, both joyous and contentious, as well as our ways of knowing, are written into our geographies (McKittrick, 2006). Eurocentric depictions of space work to subdue these ways of knowing, and instead normalize whiteness in space, towards the socioeconomic and spatial marginalization of Black women (McKittrick, 2006). McKittrick works to unearth Black Feminist Geographies, to make evident these landscapes of oppression, offering a reading of geography that aids in understanding Black women's subjugation and work towards alleviating it (2006). McKittrick's work highlights Black Feminist Geographies through stories and archival research, as Black women's socio-spatial subjugation has been maintained through constant displacement and the rendering of Black communities as "ungeographic", or without histories rooted in space (McKittrick, 2006). Racist and colonial efforts to uproot and geographically subjugate Black people have been conducted via the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the slave auction block (where Black people were bought and sold despite community and family ties in specific locations), segregation, gentrification, and displacement. The oppression of Black people has been intrinsic to the production of white supremacist spaces, allowing for the hierarchical socioeconomic condition that privileges whiteness, as well as the building and creation of geographies that marginalize Black people

(McKittrick, 2006). I would argue that the attempt to render us ungeographic has instead led to the contrarian hyper-geographic disposition, wherein Blackness is embedded in a multitude of geographies across the world. These embedded histories across space and time must be unearthed, uncovered, and exposed, in order to 1. recognize anti-Blackness and work to abolish it (especially in a Canadian context where the position of Blackness as a new and welcomed arrival has directly worked to benefit Canada's image on a global stage) and 2. connect Blackness to space towards Black liberation.

As a method of engaging in this uncovering, unearthing, and exposing Black Feminist Geographic work, I suggest the use of counter cartographies. Cartography is widely represented and accepted as an empirical and objective field, where maps are simply a representation of space as it exists. In actuality, space is experienced subjectively, and maps are subjective representations of space, often working to continually reproduce colonial views of space under the guise of mimesis (Huggan, 1989). In 'State Projects of Legibility and Simplification,' Scott (1998) explains the use of maps as a colonial and capitalist tool. Laws regulating land ownership have prioritized simplification, despite the histories, cultures, and customs that vary by community (Scott, 1998). This simplification provided a homogeneous method of commodifying land and associating authoritative power with land owners (Scott, 1998). Maps, thus, became a tool for "[creating] a manageable and reliable format for taxation," (Scott, 1998, p.36). The creation of map is steeped in colonial (land ownership) and capitalist (land commodification) goals. Counter cartographies in contrast serve as narratives of resistance, contestation, and power subversion (Culcasi, 2011). Counter cartographies are created by marginalized people to highlight socio-spatial inequality (Culcasi, 2011). Since maps are consistently used by planners as a tool for understanding and addressing spatial problems (Hornsey, 2012), counter cartographies are a necessary intervention for reimagining the city that supports the needs of its residents. Some examples

of counter cartographies include Queering the Map (n.d.), where LGBTQ2IA+ experiences are archived across the world; Palestine Open Maps (2018), which draws from historic maps to archive Palestine's history; and Native-Land (n.d), which depicts geographies by Indigenous territories. In addition to being a tool that can tie Black histories to space, counter cartographies can "write" spaces that explore Black geographic futurisms. When underscored by Intersectionality and Black Feminist Theory, counter cartographies can be used as a tool for 'Blackening' space.

Walcott (2003) describes blackening as "a practice of racialization," but led and defined by Black people rather than typical racializing processes defined by whiteness (p. 167). The process of redefining Blackness, grounded in geography and defined by Black people, is a move towards empowerment and creating spaces that provide for our needs and desires. Black Feminist Theory and Intersectionality are currently missing from orthodox urban planning and mapping practices. Using these theories to understand the relationship between Black women and space can serve as a planning tool for creating landscapes that emphasize safety, care, and futurisms for a heavily subjugated group of people.

Kevin Lynch's *The Image of the City* uses counter cartographies to assess the imageability of three United States cities (1960). Lynch defines imageability as

> that quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer. It is that shape, [colour], or arrangement which facilitates the making of vividly identified, powerfully structured, highly useful mental images of the environment. (1960, p. 9).

Imageability considers the identity, structure, and meaning of environmental images (Lynch, 1960). High imageability in an environment provides observers with a sense of recognition,

home, and well-being (Lynch, 1960). Lynch's theory of imageability is predominantly concerned with recognition of physical city components, but I believe that it can include feelings of selfhood and community in space, through the users' ability to see. Lynch conducted these counter mapping activities in Boston, Jersey City, and Los Angeles (1960). Participants were interviewed in each city, and were asked to give descriptions, provide locations, draw pictures and maps, and imagine trips to different locations as a part of the interviews (Lynch, 1960). Broadly, Lynch found that participants drew clear class distinctions across the study areas, and pointed to clear ways in which city elements symbolize the passing of time, such as newer versus older areas (Lynch, 1960). Participants were able to adapt to their surroundings, and drew identity and meaning from locations and components of their environments (Lynch, 1960). Lynch describes five key types of elements found in an urban environment. The first is paths, which clear channels through which observers move, including streets, transit networks, and walkways. The second element is edges, which act as both penetrable and impenetrable boundary lines between two different city components, such as shorelines, walls, and fences. Thirdly, districts refer to clearly recognizable areas that have a common theme throughout, such as the Financial District in Toronto. Fourth, nodes are focal points that can be entered. Lastly, landmarks are focal points that cannot be entered, and may be nearby (such as a statue) or at a distance (such as a mountain) from the observer (Lynch, 1960, pp. 47-48).

In this project, I will explore themes of Black Feminist Theories in the context of community engagement and counter cartographies towards the creation of equitable communities. With accessible and equitable community engagement that bolsters the voices of historically disenfranchised communities, planners can create cities that not only benefit the *Homo economicus*, but provide spaces in which marginalized communities can thrive as well. Below, I explore two methods for deep community engagement employed in this research.

Part 2: Methodologies

2.1 Walking Interviews

'Keep Walking: Notes on how to Research Urban Pasts and Futures' by Helena Holgersson (2017) is a chapter from the Walking through Urban Research book. Holgersson discusses the use of walking as an imperative urban research tool. Holgersson advocates for the use of walk alongs as a necessary tool for inclusive urban research (2017, p.71). Walk-alongs consider social aspects of urban planning, and how conflicts of interest in space are continually negotiated in daily life (Holgersson, 2017, p. 71). Much of Holgersson's work is based in sociologist Pepper Glass' theorizing surrounding go-alongs (2017, p. 71). Glass considers the past to be something that is performed, rather than a static state of being (Holgersson, 2017, p. 71). Glass argues that the past is an analytic theme, and challenges ethnographers to look at how and why people speak about the past in the way they do (Holgersson, 2017, p. 72). Historical context situates present data, and walking serves as a way to contextualize ethnographic data temporally and spatially. Collective memory serves as an objective fact as well as a tool of the present (Holgersson, 2017). Listening to walking stories is, thus, evidentiary of the multiple ideas, experiences, and 'truths' that can exist in space and across time. The past is utilized to negotiate place in a city with stratified socioeconomic conditions (Holgersson, 2017).

Holgersson also references Margarethe Kusenbach, who describes walk-alongs as go alongs that involve moving through familiar spaces on foot (2017). Kusenbach discusses the use of natural go-alongs versus contrived go-alongs (Holgersson, 2017). Holgersson uses contrived walk-alongs during their research, by asking interviewees to be brought somewhere meaningful (2017). Kusenbach has outlined five analytic themes that are

explored during go-alongs. The first, perception, looks at how different people perceive the same environment. The second, spatial practices, consider the meaning different people place on the same activities. The third theme, biographies, ties the stories of different people to specific places. The fourth, social architecture, considers how people relate to other people in the same space. Kusenbach's final theme, social realms, considers how place works to shape social interactions (Holgersson, 2017, p. 73). Holgersson created an additional theme, the role of the researcher, which underscores how the use of walk-alongs can be used to shift power dynamics in space (Holgersson, 2017, pp. 73-74). In Holgersson's research experience, they found that those of marginalized identities were empowered when given the space to move through and discuss familiar spaces, whereas those in positions of power lost authority outside of their workplaces (Holgersson, 2017, p. 74). Subverting power dynamics in space is great method for researchers to demonstrate reciprocity to marginalized interviewees.

Hart discusses the use of critical ethnography as a means to "[illuminate] power-laden processes of constitution, connection, and disconnection; and for identifying slippages, openings, contradictions, and possibilities for alliances" (2006, p. 977). Walk-alongs are a powerful tool for this illumination as they bring to light themes of oppression and privilege in space.

Lave discusses how in their own work, theory and fieldwork continually inform each other, allowing for reflexive research that reflects ongoing learning (Lave & Kvale, 1995, p. 223). Similarly, Holgersson's research is informed by the knowledge they gain from community members as well as ethnographic theories. Gillian Rose also discusses the necessity of reflexivity in location-based research (1997). Rose describes how "facets of the self… as well as aspects of social identity – are articulate as 'positions' in a multidimensional geography of power relations" (Rose, 1997, p. 308). Holgersson intentionally described the

positionalities of the participants in each walk-along, and was able to articulate how these positionalities related to the participants performance of space and time.

Participants will consist of Black women, as they lie at the intersection of racial and gendered marginalization. As a largely subjugated group, my research will consider how Black women move through the city, and if the city supports their movements and activities. I did four walking interviews, as well as a larger counter mapping workshop with seventeen participants. The walking interviews provided an open-ended space for participants to highlight significant locations in their community, with the goal of autonomous and meaningful discussion with the participants. Walking interviewees were asked the following questions:

- Why is this place significant? Do you have any stories or memories to share about this location?
- Do you have a positive or negative relationship with this place? Why?
- Do you feel safe in this space? Why?
- How do you access this space? Is it accessible?
- How would you change or improve this space?

These questions were derived from common themes that arouse in Black Feminist Geographies surrounding spatial access, safety, and Black Feminist knowledges written into space. The responses given and locations walking interview participants chose provided grounding themes of ways in which spatial subjugation impacts marginalized people. The themes identified from these interviews included hyper-geography, in which spatial marginalization causes a constant state of movement, carving spaces for Black joy, in which

participants identify efforts to create spaces were Blackness is normalized and joy can be experienced, and lastly, resistance in hegemonic spaces, where participants counter expectations of whiteness and maleness in spaces they encounter daily.

2.2 Participatory Counter Mapping

Participatory Counter Mapping provided a community-centred overview of the Jane and Finch neighbourhood. In Kevin Lynch's *The Image of the City* (1960), he considers criteria of good city form, and uses the process of mental mapping to depict the city through the lens of its participants. This powerful tool of participatory mapping can provide planners with the image of the city as seen by its inhabitants, allowing for more informed and positively impactful planning practices. Lynch considers the performance of the city in five key areas: vitality, or the biological needs of a city's residents; the sense of the physical and perceived surrounding environment; the fit, which denotes how well the needs of a city's residents work within the city's form; the city's accessibility to services, other people, places, and information; and the level of control citizens have over the environment (Lynch, 1960). Lynch also breaks down the physical characteristics of the city into paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks (1960).

Lynch's theories of participatory mapping will underscore my counter mapping of the Jane and Finch community, combined with modern technology such as ArcGIS software. The mapping will also track demographics data, to ensure a wide range of voices, particularly racialized and marginalized voices, are included in the engagement tool. I actively worked to be non-prescriptive of the boundaries of the community and locations to be discussed during the workshop, to assess what community members considered to be the boundaries or extent of 'Jane and Finch,' components the community placed the most importance of. Contrary to Lynch's work, mine actively sought to identify and bolster the voices of marginalized voices

in the community, while Lynch did not actively work to identify marginalized voices and had predominantly white and middle-class participants. As such, his work only reflects the city from a privileged, normative viewpoint. Additionally, while Lynch focuses on city form to articulate the quality, efficiency, and coherency of a city, my work focuses on the stories and meaning evoked from city components by marginalized communities. These meanings point to the multiple truths that exist in space and across time, as highlighted by Holgersson, while illustrating them in a mapping tool that can be utilized by planners.

2.3 Study Area

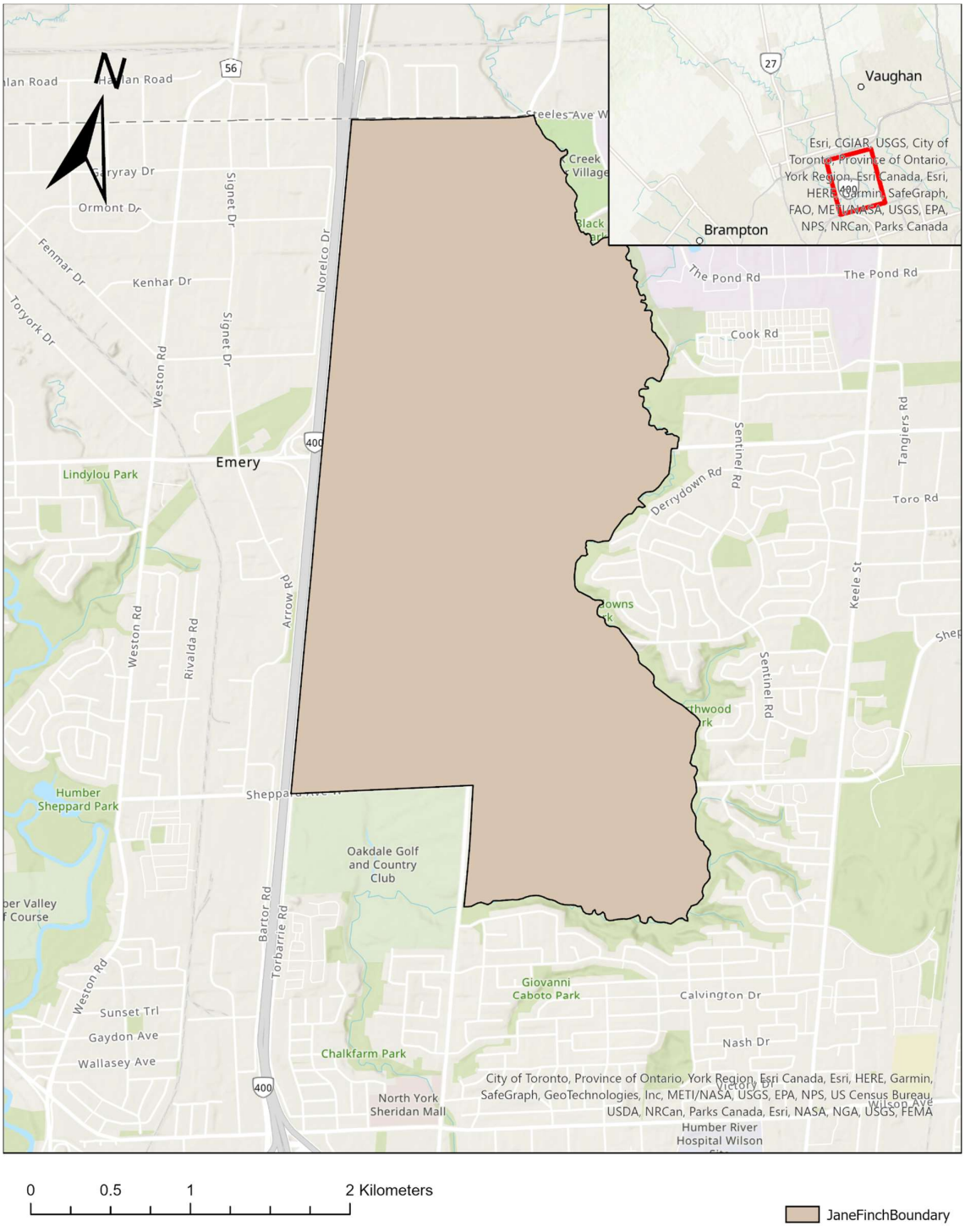

Figure 1: Map of Jane and Finch Boundary defined by the City of Toronto

The Jane and Finch community (Figure 1) is surround by Shoreham Drive to the North, Driftwood Avenue to the East, Grand Ravine Drive to the South, and Highway 400 to the West (Eizadirad, 2017).

The community has a population of about 80,150, and a population density of 3817 people per kilometre squared (Eizadirad, 2017), about 12% lower than The City-wide density (Stats Canada, 2016). Documentation of Indigenous history in the area dates to as early as 1400 (Eizadirad, 2017). Toronto sits on the traditional lands of the Haudenosaunee, Anishinabewaki, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Mississauga, and Wendake-Nionwentsïo nations (Native-Land, n.d.). In the area now known as Jane and Finch, communities lived in longhouses before being violently dispossessed in the 1550s (Eizadirad, 2017; Downsview Weston Action Committee, 1986). Up until the end of WWII, the land was used by settlers for farming (Eizadirad, 2017). In 1954, the land was expropriated by the provincial and federal government to create affordable homes for newcomers, as immigration policies allowed for more migrants to enter the country (Eizadirad, 2017). Between 1961and 1971, the population in Jane and Finch increased by 2538%, from 1301 to 33, 030. The rapidly growing community, with highly racialized and migrant residents, have continually been characterized as criminal and unsafe by media and dominant discourse within and outside of Toronto (Eizadirad, 2017). The following section provides accounts of socio-spatial experiences of Black women in the Jane and Finch community to challenge such stereotypes. These accounts showcase how racialization and gendering shape the ways in which Black women move through space, as well as their consistent efforts to recontextualize space in ways that support their well-being.

Part 3: Walking Along the Intersection: Moving through Space as Black Women

This section begins with direct quotes from each walking interviewee are used to describe locations in the community deemed important by the interviewees. Interviewees were asked to choose significant or important locations, with either positive or negative connotations. The voices are used directly as to ensure that the opinions, ideas, and experiences of the participants are adequately portrayed, particularly within a community, Black women, whose voices are often suppressed. The locations explored include the Finch West TTC Station, York University, Finch Hydro Corridor Recreational Trail, Jane and Finch Mall, the Beauty Supply Warehouse on Keele Street, Trethewey Drive, an Ethiopian Orthodox church on Bloor, and the Emmett Avenue Community Garden (Figure 2). The sections below are not the entire transcripts, but rather key stories, ideas, and thoughts about each location directly quoted from each participant. My questions and comments are omitted from these quotes to focus on the voices of the participants. After the descriptions and significance of each location from the lens of the interview participants, the common themes amongst the interviewees are explored. These themes include experiencing hyper-geography, or consistent movement/displacement due to the socioeconomic disposition, the Blackening of space, in which the participants have actively worked to normalize Blackness and experience joy in specific spaces, and resistance in hegemonic space, where participants have countered laws and expectations in normative spaces.

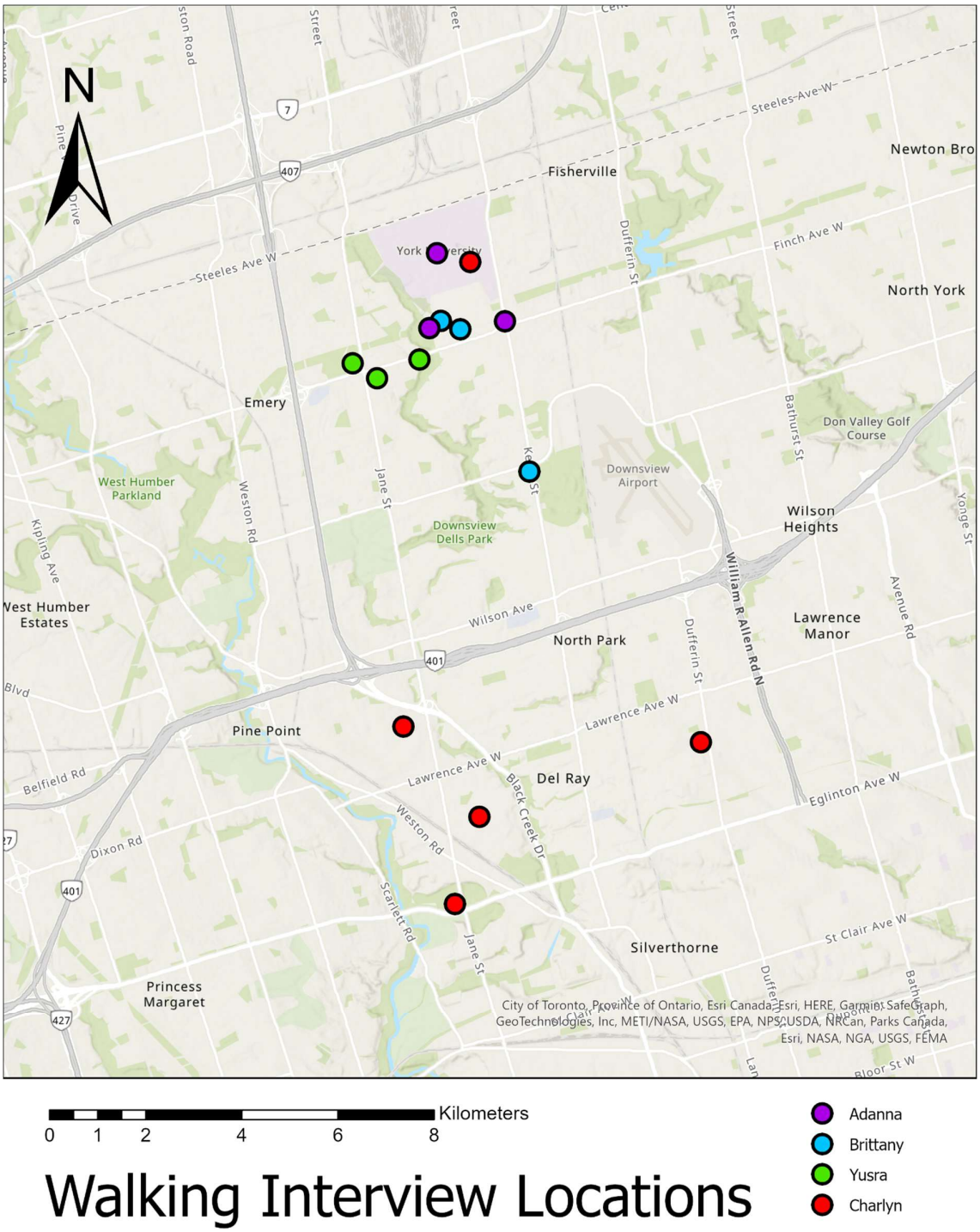

Figure 2: Walking Interview Locations

3.1 Adanna

“As a kid you have dreams, right? But then you grow up and it’s like the world’s crushing my dreams.” - Adanna (Interview, June 2, 2022)

Adanna is a twenty-four-year-old Nigerian-Canadian woman who has lived in the Jane and Finch community for the past six years. Adanna currently works as an administrative assistant and lives with roommates. Adanna aspires to work with survivors of abuse and hopes to move to the mid-town community in Toronto in the near future.

3.1.1 Finch West TTC Station

Yesterday when I was thinking about the locations I wanted to take you to, I started thinking about the start of my journey into like, working because me as a Black woman or like, as an immigrant, Black woman in this country, and in this area, my dad did help me a lot throughout my university career and stuff. So me, you know, growing up after, or I guess, maturing after graduating, my undergrad, finding a job was, like, monumental for me, like no matter how small or whatever, because I wasn't really… it's not something that I was really doing. So I'm, you know, starting my corporate journey here as a Black woman and seeing other people, you know, eight in the morning, like, you know, hustling, getting on the subway, it just would give me some sort of like, I guess. Kind of, I don't know, it just made me feel a sort of power. Like, yeah, I'm doing something for myself. I'm, you know, I'm getting up early. I see other people like me, we're all doing the same thing, which is trying to maybe climb the corporate ladder, whether it's trying to make money, whether that's, you know, whatever that is, so just seeing that energy and feeling that energy that I was living feeling right here walking. And, yeah, it was significant for me because it was something

new. And there's nothing. I feel that especially as a woman, working and providing for yourself, as a black woman, for me, it was huge.

Obviously the TTC does have a bad reputation in Toronto. There have like been a lot of like, bad news reporting about people just doing really terrible things. Honestly, to be very honest, I don't feel that safe. But I don't feel unsafe either. Like I'm never here feeling like oh my god, like someone's gonna do something to you. But I'm always also being aware of my surroundings. I'm not going to just not look around and know who's approaching me or whatnot.

when I see other black women on the subway, I'm like, it just, it's commendable. Because it takes a lot to get up every day as a Black woman, like, cuz I know. Like the energy I receive at work sometimes from you know, other people and honestly, women of colour in general, it's tough for people of colour. It's tough. Like I even have heard like, shocking comments from coworkers recently, like very jaw dropping comments, so it's tough to be out there. So when I see them it's commendable. Yeah, it's not easy to do it at all. It's really not. It's something we have to do to survive living in Toronto. I'd like to see us out here defying the norms and shattering or hoping to shatter glass ceilings and get there.

certain people become the regulars for the same bus times or the same bus schedules. I will see the same people on the subway and stuff and even some of like the TTC employees. a lot of them are Black women and I know that they earn, like the TTC people… they earn quite a bit of money. So, when I see the Black women, I'm like, "okay girl, You better work." I love to see that. I love to see them sitting there.

3.1.2 York University

First of all, I lived in Whitby, I went to high school in Whitby, and I was part of like, a friend group, like, you know, was a small group of very diverse girls like, just black girls and women of colour, and like we're literally like that small group like us, in this massive school that was all white. So we just wanted to obviously go to school with people that look like us that, you know, had a better culture kind of aligned with us. So yeah, York was one of them. I also applied to U of Ottawa because I have heard it is quite diverse, and it's super close to the country. I applied to UTS well, but York was my first choice because I just knew that there was like a big Nigerian community, and I am Nigerian. Yeah. So that's why I came here. And yeah, when I came here, there's so many people that look like me.

I did have like, a different perception of the Law and Society program a little bit. It didn't disappoint me, but it's not what I really expected. Like, I feel like I may be expected to learn more about the literal law like policies, you know, courtroom procedures and all that stuff. And it wasn't really exactly like that. But it didn't disappoint me, like I still, you know, gained a massive amount of knowledge. And it was very social science oriented. We maybe learned a little bit of economics a tiny bit, but like, yeah, it was very social science oriented. We learned a lot about women's rights, LGBTQ rights. You know, and just how the law comes into good society, and how it affects us, you know, I mean, the most vulnerable people in society which are women of colour.

Becoming a lawyer was a goal of mine for years. And then last year, those things just died out. I guess I was looking around, and I'm like, it will take me so long to get my law degree, and how much am I going to make? Like, how profitable is it going to be for me? After I go through, spend all this money on school and do all this justice, they'll be making the same as someone that, you know, that is straight out of like sixty to seventy thousand? Like, right out

of law school when I can climb the corporate ladder and be making so much more in the same time. I was so passionate about it. I wanted to do, I guess family, and I wanted to, but also criminal law because I wanted to help out women that were victims of intimate partner violence, like there are a lot of women that are incarcerated for killing their husbands out of self-defence. And a lot of even children sometimes that are in that position as well. So that was something that I was very passionate about, especially with my background. Like suffering from so much violence as a kid and so much abuse. So, it's something that I was passionate about, like it's like, helping children, women in that position. but this life is so hard. Like, obviously, as a kid, you have dreams, right? Yeah. But then you grow up and it's like literally world's crushing my dreams. In a perfect, perfect world, I would like to do that. I would be passionate about it, like I wouldn't dread my job. Like, I would be like, Okay, I'm gonna help this woman today. I wouldn't be so miserable. I'm getting yelled at on the phone by clients, so it's something that I would actually be passionate about 100%.

I had a class in Curtis called 'Gender and the Law.' it was honestly an amazing introduction into university and the stuff that I wanted to be learning about, because we're learning intimately about women's rights… You know, minority rights in general… I feel like it was significant to me. Because of, honestly, the TA that I had, she was like, such a powerful girl… I think her grandmother was Indigenous. So, she had a lot of intimate conversations that she would share with us that she had with her grandmother. And she, these are like, you know, first hand encounters with her grandmother, who, obviously, would be like an older woman, and could tell her stories about stuff from back in the day. So, she would relay those messages to us and like, she opened my eyes to stuff that I was blind to… She was so so brilliant, like, so brilliant and you know, she made the class like, amazing for me. She changed something in me for sure. I was not doing too well in first year, like at all. I was not handing in assignments on time and stuff, like petty shit. She said to me "you didn't hand in

six of your responses. Like what the fuck? You're so much better than that." She let me hand them all in at the end of the year, and it showed me she wanted me there. Me and her had very intimate conversations about being a Black Nigerian woman and stuff. I knew she did that because she wanted me to continue to succeed.

So, the same class, I'm talking about 'Gender and the Law.' The class is very, you know, obviously, female centred. Like, we're all talking about women business and women's rights. So, there's some men that get so fucking agitated when we talk about just like, when you're so like woman centric on anything. the class is pretty full. And we're literally about to leave, and this man is ranting going off at the prof. He was just going off about like, you know, just saying it's not all about women… and "what about men?" He was angry, he was screaming, like yelling. And the prof was like telling him "You need to relax." I don't think that was the first time either. But he was mad that day. Like something triggered him. But like it was just a blur. It's super blurry because it was so strange. And like, even the position as the prof as the technical person in charge, like power figure, he was still able to, like separate that with his positionality. You would never speak to a man like that in your life, you would never do it. He did it because it was a woman. he still was able to exercise his positionality as a man over her.

3.1.3 Finch Hydro Corridor Recreational Trail

I walk and I run here. I gained a lot of unhealthy habits during the pandemic, and I gained fifty plus pounds. I just didn't feel like myself like within like the span of year. In a year for nothing that you own to fit, like nothing fit. Yeah, I could only literally wear stuff like this because it's so stretchy, you know… I was like, Who is this person? So yeah, I just, you know, took control of my life. And literally all of it happened on this path. We started off with Chloe Ting, [a fitness Youtuber], which I did… for like a month. And it was all good

and dandy. And you know, then we're like, hey, let's just like switch it up and start running the path in March. And by July, August, September, I had dropped like 30 pounds. The way that even happened to me was like during the pandemic, I was in an extremely toxic relationship with a man that, you know, like, was just manipulative and stuff. Yeah, I just wanted to reclaim my health as a Black woman. And I was like, this path just helped me do that. And it's so freeing… it's just, I don't know, I never thought that I would find something like this in the York area. I see other Black women here. Getting their workouts in, and people literally, I don't even see anybody but people of colour, it's weird when you see a white person. I think fresh air and access to it like, especially for… like living in the city. So uncommon to have something like this.

I feel like because I've always been relatively this size my whole life, like I literally developed an eating disorder like, because I had a partner that kept talking about my body in a bad way. So, it triggered me in like the opposite way. Where I like would overeat. Like almost like, I don't know, it was just so weird. Like, I've never gone through something like that. he literally almost ruined my life. Like my confidence. He talked about me in such a bad view. Like I was smaller than this. And he was making comments about my body. I exhausted myself a lot while I was with that person, and I didn't realize, like, I wasn't realizing that I was not considering myself, or putting myself first. It wasn't until I started putting myself first consistently that I'm like, oh my God. Like, you have not been putting yourself first. I had been prioritizing this person by listening to their opinions when what *I* think and what *I* do should be what matters most to me.

3.2 Brittany

“We're the ones that make you money and you think that we're trying to steal from you. We don’t realize how powerful our dollars are.” - Brittany

Brittany is a twenty-four-year-old Black woman living in Jane and Finch and is a recent graduate from York University. Brittany runs a Black hair salon, and does braids, faux locs, twists, and other Black hairstyles. She aspires to work in the Tech industry and hopes to move from her current home that she shares with several roommates.

3.2.1 Finch Hydro Corridor Recreational Trail

I use this trail as a way to exercise, because the gym is just so far away, I don’t use the York gym anymore because I graduated. I'm actually going to consider using the York Alumni gym membership because that's probably the closest gym, other than Jane and Finch, which is just too far. Meaning I would have to take the bus and it makes no sense for me to take the bus every time I want to go to the gym. It's just such a waste of money. But yeah, so instead I use this path. I usually walk all the way to the starting over there. And I run from [the beginning] all the way to the end… and then I walk back home.

I just started doing it because I wanted to like lose weight. I gained a lot of weight because the pandemic and just working. And cuz I used to do overnight shifts as a security guard, I was just like, sleeping all day and eating and like I was gaining weight. I needed to be more healthy and exercise more. And this was kind of like, the only thing I could do… other than just like watching what I eat. So, I had to just find somewhere to run. I don't want to run through the neighbourhoods. This path is more like peaceful. You see a lot of kids, adults, everybody here. It's a very peaceful walk, I get to see nature, see different animals. I see the common squirrel.

There's also a really cool garden here. I guess it's for your viewing's sake. Oh, and the gardener is working right now actually. So, he's been doing this garden for like many decades. A long, long time and he just does it for fun. I appreciate his work, you know, yesterday I was just here, and I was taking a video and they are very nice gardens.

This whole system was part of like a bicycle highway. So, it's like this is route 21, [that's] route 44, so we have a lot of bikers that go through this route here. And also, there's kind of like a shortcut to Jane and Finch from here.

Last year I used to try to do my run in the afternoon, early afternoon like twelve, recent times I go just whenever. Sometimes I go in the evening at like six, I try to go before it gets dark. There [are] like a whole bunch of different characters that also come through here, so you just have to kind of protect yourself. It's like once you've entered this path, kind of like you have to, like, run to either end type thing. I have come in contact with people here, and it could have [gone] in a negative way, but it just didn't go that way.

That's why I don't walk it at night. Because there's no lights on the path… I wish there was a way to kind of make it safer. Maybe if we had like, more patrols with officers on bicycles here. Just to, you know, feel safe. But those are the main things I would change about it. Like we could expand it to also accommodate people who walk and bike as well. Because sometimes you can't really see behind you. Yeah, some of the cyclists get mad, like, "move out the way." I'm not trying to, like, take up the whole path, but you could have… a walking lane. Yeah, being able to go at all times of the day, it would be nice.

Maybe they're trying to do that to kind of preserve the nature, but I don't really know… because I've seen a lot of construction here. I don't know what they were doing here. But yeah.

When I walk here [when it's late], I don't listen to music with my earphones. And I look back every couple of seconds. Because I have been followed in this neighbourhood before. So yeah, that was scary. Very scary. I was alone. I was followed right here in this field. I was walking from the bus stop at Finch. I was walking through the apartments, you know, walking across the grass, and I passed the guy at one of the apartments in the parking lot… He was going the opposite direction towards the street… I was going towards Murray Ross. And then I was just kind of listening to music just going about my way. Then I got to… the beginning of my street and I turned back and he was right behind me. I was like, "Whoa!"

I ran and he just like walked away. That means he was following me the whole time. I was so scared. That's why I don't listen to music anymore because I couldn't hear anything. I found myself, even though I'm not supposed to, like bringing like a kitchen knife if I'm walking at night because I just don't know. Like, I know I'm not supposed to do such but it's just the experiences I've had in this neighbourhood [are] not good. And what I've heard, like stabbings and rapings, and, sorry, but like it's too much in this neighbourhood. I don't know what needs to be done. There needs to be more police circulation here. I personally feel comfortable with police… I feel like… it is true that the police can be harmful, but I also feel like they also are helpful. So, not every process is perfect. And that just seems to be the closest thing to safety. It's like, what else is gonna protect you? Who else? Yeah, so that's kind of my opinion on that.

3.2.2 Four Winds Plaza

Many businesses run through that place like, especially this one location. It's like different businesses open and close. But now there's a new kind of young business there. There's been a couple businesses there. I remember seeing them Jamaican, Korean, a place called the 6ix

Doughnuts is there now, Afro Spice is there, Nigerian restaurant that has some good, good, good food. It’s family owned.

The grocery store here is like a very good place to go to for your necessities, you know instead of having to go all the way to like, Walmart. If I can’t go to Walmart because I don't like using this one, the produce is always spoiled. There’s a new place called Chicken and tacos. Very popular like I haven't tried it because it's expensive but now when I come here, I see a lot of school kids eating there.

Yeah, they come here to get that place. A lot of the Africans, Nigerians, come here to get the Afro Spice but I think also African grocery store that just opened as well, Beside the laundry place so it's [become] a hub spot for like Africans. I like to cook stew, so I need a lot of peppers. Sometimes I get peppers from here [for] beef stew.

3.2.3 BSW on Keele

I used to work at the Black hair store down the street. they used to like search us, like only the Black people. There was a girl, a Black girl working there for over two years, over two years, and she still has not been promoted, versus somebody who just came three months ago, obviously a Korean lady, and she had the keys to the store already. And this Black girl is not even allowed to use the cash register. We're the ones that make you money and you think that we're trying to steal from you. We don't understand how powerful our dollars are, I just I wish we could actually like, use that and just like stop shopping in places where we are treated badly.

3.3 Yusra

“I never knew how to like really embrace my curly hair… But slowly I'm just starting to learn how to like love it a little bit more.”

Yusra is a twenty-one-year-old woman who has always lived in the Jane and Finch community. She lives at home with her Sudanese Canadian parents, and commutes to York University for classes. In her free time, Yusra enjoys spending time with friends, watching Korean Dramas, and karaoke.

3.3.1 Jane and Finch Mall

I used to come here often, back in high school. I haven’t been here in three years because of COVID. We would come to the Tim Horton’s here after school if we were hungry, and we would have to wait at the mall to catch the bus home. I have an embarrassing story about the Tim Horton’s. I had straightened my hair, and when my hair is straight, I usually like to play with it. I ended up flipping my hair into the coffee of the person sitting right behind me. He was pretty angry. It’s always funny to look back on that story. But yeah, I used to relax my hair when I was really young, until I realized I hated it and chopped it off. Because before like, I guess people equated straight hair to being beautiful. Even my mom, when she sees like, my hair, like really big. She's like, “Oh, it's a mess.” Like, “you need to like do something, you gotta tame it” or whatever. Yeah, so like, even growing up, I never knew how to like, really embrace my curly hair. Yeah, and so even now like I tie it up with buns or ponytails just to like hide it away. But slowly I'm just starting to learn how to like, love it a little bit more. With my mom, she straightens her hair so often it’s super damaged. She was traumatized about her hair, she was probably told it was too big, and now she straightens it all the time.

My mom and I often come to the grocery store here. I'm just starting to learn to cook. I realized I kind of needed to start cooking a little bit. However, I had zero experience in cooking, like I couldn't even cook an egg, it [was] so bad. And so, I started to like, cook a little bit more and in the beginning, my mom didn't trust me at all. She would just stand right behind me telling me what to do and yeah, like sometimes I'll get annoyed because I'm like, I kind of want my own space and stuff like that. But then eventually she realized, oh, yeah, you can. You're fine. Lately, within the last year, I just started cooking more and like experimenting with things even my mom never did. My mom didn't really, like, experiment with chickpeas. So, I started experimenting with chickpeas and making dishes with that as well. Searching up online, like, recipes and stuff like that. And just like doing it from there, just doing it. Sometimes my mom [is] not home and I'm like, I have nothing to eat. I'm just gonna have no choice but to learn how to cook as well. So, I just did it.

I think [another] one of my, I guess memories from here was… back in middle school. We had a trip where we came into this mall to bake gingerbread cookies. I remember… coming upstairs and there was around like, this area. I guess it was like a positive memory for me. I guess when you're like a little kid… trips are like everything to you. So just like being able to, like go out and do something as simple as just baking cookies. It meant quite a bit.

3.3.2 York Woods Library Theatre

That library was basically a staple thing for a lot of students in my high school as well. They provided… programs over there. My friends and I used to do a talent show, and in the basement of the library they had a studio where we would practice. I think a lot of people got their volunteer hours from there too, because, you know, like, people needed the forty [for high school], right? I didn't volunteer [there]. My dad was very paranoid about me going to that library a lot. Like if I did go to that library, he's like, I'm taking you there and I'm picking

you up. This is a very, like, interesting memory. It's actually really sad. I remember this one morning… I remember, I was running late. We drove in front of the library to get to my school that day. And unfortunately, my dad and I ended up seeing like a… I don't know if you've heard the story, but like this person was biking in this area, and they got hit by a car. So, like, while we were like passing by… they literally just put a bag over the body. In a way I think it traumatized my dad.

3.4 Charlyn

“I realized that a lot of our lives are tragic. But because we're living them. We don't see the tragedy within them.” – Charlyn

Charlyn is a 59-year-old Jamaican-born woman who lives in the Jane and Finch community. Charlyn is a writer, abolitionist, and community activist. Her stories surround her upbringing on Trethewey drive, and her movement around and outside of the Greater Toronto Area, as she fought for the well-being of herself and her three sons after witnessing and experiencing violence, isolation, and racism in the spaces they occupied. Charlyn has requested to wave her anonymity for this research.

3.4.1 Trethewey Drive

I grew up at Trethewey [Drive], which is just south of Lawrence. So, you know, it's the Jane strip. Each of the housings had a name. So Trethewey [Drive] was called the brown bricks. Gang-wise, it's Southside Jane strip.

As a little Black girl growing up in Canada in the 70’s, people would come up to me and rub to see if the colour of my skin would come off. There weren't a lot of other Black students at my school. My classmates would line up in front of me and my little brother as we were

going to school and chat “nigger, nigger". And this one woman, she looked like a hippie, you know, one of those weed smoking flower girls, would come out every day with her daughter and be like, “hey, Come alone.” She'd be like my mom; she'd walk in front of us and say, “don't you talk to them!” Every day, I remember that.

3.4.1.1 As Above, So Below: Witnessing Community Violence from Trethewey Balconies

In 1994, When Clinton Gayle was accused of shooting police officer Todd Baylis on Trethewey, my children were there. They were all on the balcony of the apartment building where my mother lived. At the time, I had moved up to Oakville, but I still came down to see my mother because it was so white in Oakville, I didn't have any friends. I often drove to see my mom, and it was on one of these visits to my mom when Clinton Gayle got shot. Clinton Gayle called my mother ‘mom,’ but he wasn't really our family. We know that. Like you have auntie but that's not really your auntie. Clinton and my mom were really close. My children were on the balcony, because the thing is, every time we came and they won a soccer game, because they were prolific soccer players, all three of them, Clinton would give them a treat, like a new game. So, my sons were like, “Oh, we got to go play Clinton’s game for two hours or so.” When the police shot him, those guys were on the balcony and my eldest son, I explicitly remember him shouting “Clinton, get up! Get up!” and that traumatized him. He had nightmares for days. He kept waking up and saying, "I keep seeing the shooting." What my boys saw was what the news didn't want to get out. They saw what really happened. Todd Baylis’ partner ran out first, ran to the wall, and he shot and shot. It was an accident when he killed Todd Baylis. But during that time Clinton Gayle was running. The whole replaying of the story in the news was that Clinton Gayle came out and pounced on him. Nothing like that happened. But our stories were not meant to be told realistically like that. I think they did a W5 story on that, where they talk to the people in the community

that said no, this is what we saw. Todd Baylis' partner came and looked around and stood over Clinton and went to shoot him. The whole high rise, 710 and 720 Trethewey, were yelling "don't shoot!" and people started throwing stuff down. One of them from the second floor, where my mother lived, was my children's father. And he specifically stood up. He was visible because it was only the second floor, and they marked him. After that, he owned an auto body repair shop. He was terrorized, terrorized to the point where he closed the shop and left Canada. It was really bad. He feared so badly for every aspect of his life.

Clinton Gayle was like Canada's OJ Simpson. Police shooting with Clinton Gayle. It was huge. And, of course, they named the street off Trethewey beside the police station after Todd Baylis and triggered the whole community for months after. One woman used to come to the spot where Todd Baylis died and light a candle. And after I think about three or four times, my mom wet her up. She just threw things off the balcony at her, and she had to stop because you can't generate a murderer and a liar. It was so wrong. And they will never give that up. The truth of that will never come out. That's why Gayle will never come out of prison. Clinton Gayle, to this day is serving two lives.

In 1999, my oldest, at the age of sixteen, was charged with first degree murder. He was charged as an adult. He was the last transferred hearing of a young offender to adult court. So, they gave him life. That's where the tragedy becomes even more of a tragedy, because here comes my son who witnessed everything with Clinton Gayle, now going to prison. Originally, he was only given a life seven, meaning that in seven years he'd be eligible for parole. But what happened was some injustice. When he turned 20, because he was still in young offender 'til he was twenty, something happened in the legality of it, because even now, he will tell you they came and told him to sign a paper, but there was nothing on the paper. And somehow, they use that paper to transfer him to a federal institution. And it kind

of repurposed his sentencing. So now he was an adult during the sentence. So, there was never going to be a chance for parole. They worked really well into the system. I brought that up too because the crown was responsible for sentencing. Clinton was the same crown for my son and like, that's no coincidence. Yeah, that's no coincidence. My eldest went to Collins Bay at [age] twenty. That's where Clinton Gayle was. That's in Kingston. And I remember My son telling me like, they had him locked up in solitary for two years. Because they didn't know he was a young offender. He was still eighteen. And I remember him calling me sometimes just crying. Because this is twenty-three hours in solitary, one hour out. He said the breaks in those time was when Clinton would come and look for him. Yeah, so there you go. He ended up in prison with somebody we considered like an uncle because Clinton and I were like brother and sister growing up.

I did introduce my sons to rap, I bought them Onyx cassettes, because it was real. It was the reality of what the rappers taught, that my boys were living. They were fifteen and fourteen when their brother got in trouble. So this so-called “gangster thing” was real for them. They weren’t, you know, gonna pretend to be thugs… Their brother would call them and tell them what he was going through. But they didn't stop getting in trouble. Until they kind of like woke up when all three of my sons were in young offender. When that happened, my eldest son wrote and told me “Mom, the teacher told us that she felt so sorry for you. Because all three of your sons [are] in prison.” But I knew we were gonna get through it. We were gonna be okay. And they [were]. They came up. They were like, Nah, no more. Yeah. This is it. Because my eldest son told them “Why make her cry anymore? She cried enough when I was going to court.”

My mom had passed on before my sons got in trouble. She would have been so supportive. But my father was not a nice man. And he would only come to court to tell his friends stories.

“Oh, my grandson's a murderer!” My brother stopped talking to me. My brother's wife had a baby just after my son got in trouble. My brother had suggested naming the baby after my son, and the wife was like, “no, no, no. Don't you remember? Charlyn’s son is a murderer. So no, don't call him that.”

I was blacklisted in my family. And in my community, people think, “oh, that's her. It's her son.” I wasn't not claiming it. I was devastated, the man my son killed had a family and he had children. It was witnessed by the community. The shooting happened off Weston Road. I remember coming home and seeing yet another incident at Weston Road. My balcony was high enough that you could see down there and [I remember] thinking, “oh my gosh, like what now.” I had a television set. After that, I stopped watching TV. I was looking at the TV and the shooting at Weston road. Three young offenders were arrested after a man was killed. Then my son walks through the friggin’ door. And that's when it came on the TV. I sat down for about ten minutes. I couldn't talk. I couldn't talk. Because there on the on the TV, you saw the person, but they hid the face because it was a young offender. You could see he had Afro puffs. My boys always had their hair growing, right? my son had Afro puffs, and he's like, “that's me. That's me.” And I'm like, “what happened?” And he explained what happened. He said, there was three of them [involved].

I called [a prominent Black judge in the community], who I went to grade school with. I'm like, “yo, my son got in trouble. What should I do?” And he's like, “don't talk to anybody.” And that's when he came around, started supporting us. Before my son had gotten in trouble for this, they caught him selling shit. And so, while he was in jail, they found out that it was him who did the murder, and then, you know, they come to your house, because he's a young offender. And they bring this thing, and Canadians, they're so effing polite. The cops knock on the door, and I'm like, “Hi.” And they said my son has just been charged with first degree

murder. And I said “oh, okay, thank you,” and closed the door, and then sat down and just died. I cried, and I cried. I cried for my mother because I wished she was there. And then after that, it was just the shaming. I cried for that. And then when it came up in the news, they couldn't say his name, right. But then after they transferred him to adult, then they start to call his name and people were like “Oh, my God. Isn't that Charlyn's son?” I had friends call me who never called me before. “Wow, did he do it?” Nobody said, “how are you?” or “I could follow you the court one day.” I went to court for two years by myself while my son was being sentenced. I remember him telling me how sometimes he felt like just jumping over and coming over to me because he saw me there. Every single time. Sometimes his brothers were with me, or just me. And he said, “I don't know how you did it. I don't know how you sat through that.” And here I am. I sat through it though. I went through it, and now sometimes I asked myself how I did that.

I’m talking about this to show the irony of our histories. How my son ended up in prison with Clinton, his so-called uncle. Clinton had to kind of protect him because there was this twenty-year-old in what they call they call “Collins Bay Gladiator School.” Because if you pass through gladiator school Collins Bay, you're good. Cuz that's how rough that prison is. In some ways that hardened them in the earliest part of his incarceration.

So, when this happened, I'd left my children's father and I was seeing this guy. Really nice man, you know, tall Black man and he was really comforting. he had children and I had children. And we talked about that even to this day. We were close, you know, I'd go his house and the boys had visits with his boys and, you know, him and I had such a good relationship. When my eldest son got arrested, I went to his house. The man I was seeing was in the kitchen with a friend, and he's like, “hold on, Charlyn, I'm coming.” He came back and he goes, “Man, some young guy just killed my friend’s son.” My God. tell you how I sat

down on the sofa. And he's like, “man, what you come to talk ‘bout?” I said, “that was my son.” To this day. I remember he said “Charlyn, listen…” And I'm like, “Okay, I'm gonna go.” He's like, “yeah, come back later.” Because he was comforting the guy. I'll never forget that. We are so inexplicitly tied. This almost degrees of separation. No, usually just one.

The man who was killed had children, they were on the balcony when my son shot him. I had the talk with my son. And I'm like, “you know, this one is between you and God. Because I never thought…” he goes, “I know, Mom.” So that's why he pleaded guilty.

3.4.1.2 Humber River Hospital, Church Location

Three of us came to Canada from Jamaica. My sister who's older, she just passed recently last year, my younger brother and myself. My mom brought three of us up. Around when my eldest was thirty-nine, my sister, Angeline, started using, it was the era of the crackheads. Her daughter, Kate, also unfortunately started using, and she had a baby in October ‘73. Angeline had a rough time, we had a really rough time because my father was just a monster. He’s ruined so many lives. So Angeline became a crackhead. And so did Kate, unfortunately. And then, Kate had children. The first child she had, I remember, we tried to take custody of it from CAS. The father got custody. Then she had a second child. When the second child was born, by this time, I had left my children's father and we had moved. My children’s father was abusive. Me and the boys we were living in Brampton. When Kate had a baby boy, the hospital called me because I was involved with the first child and said, “they're not gonna let her keep the baby.” He was born addicted to cocaine. So I went and I took custody of the baby. It was like three months old. It was really mythical how he appeared to us because he was so quiet. He would just stare in your eyes so intensely. My mom wanted to keep him. Kate had already gone back to smoking.

One night, I finally decide I'm gonna go to a club with a friend and my mom called me and she's like, “the baby's not well. You really should come back home, I'm trying to feed him and he's not eating,” and I'm like, “okay, okay, I'm gonna come back home.” And I remember getting in the car. I went to the house, and I went to the bedroom, and I picked the baby up and he had died. My mom didn't even know. It was so traumatic for her. She was devastated.

So, when the ambulance came, you should have seen the little thing they were trying to revive. Because he was so tiny, they had two fingers trying to revive them. They stopped the traffic at Trethewey, and they got a special ambulance and took him up to the hospital. The closest one, just trying to keep him alive. He didn't make it.

The police came the next day to charge my mother. She was devastated. “Oh, this is the apartment that Clinton Gayle was coming to,” was their first comment. She couldn't even speak. She had just witnessed her great grandchild die in her hand. I was like, “so why are you criminalizing her when this happened?” And the cops, I guess they didn't expect me to approach them like that. But I was like, “No, this is a child. Let's talk about the baby.”

“Well, we're going to do an investigation. The coroner's report is going to decide whether or not we charge your mother with murder.” Because she was integral in what happened with Clinton Gayle, he was coming to her apartment when the incident happened with him and the police. He was running to my mother’s building. When they realized the baby died of SIDS, they backed off because she had nothing to do with it. But it devastated her.

She had put him to bed, she didn't know. And I came and picked him up to check him in. And he just, flopped. And I'm like, “no, no.” My brother called the ambulance. And we went with the ambulance in a police car behind the ambulance to the hospital. And we were both like bawling. I remember because they're like “he didn't make it.” And they gave him to us to just say goodbye. And he still had the tube in his mouth. And it was so devastating.

when the police came, they asked “is this Angeline's grandchild?” because Angeline was still a well-known crackhead. And we're like, “yeah,” and the police officer goes, “I know where Kate is.” She went to the crack house, she got Kate, and brought her to the hospital. Kate just couldn't face it. She couldn't. She didn't ever come into the room. it was so, so, so, so sad.

I called the baby Simien because there was a mountain in Ethiopia called that. I remember thinking to myself, he would have been strong. He was buried in the same place that my mom and my sister are in now. When the man came up with the coffin, I forgot how tiny the baby was because he was premature. It was like a little shoebox, girl. Even the boys never got over it because we drove to Toronto, from Brampton with a car seat and a baby. And we drove back with an empty car seat. Jonathan kept saying “I hear the baby crying.” I'm like “me too.” I kept hearing him crying at night.

The baby died in May, and in October, my mom passed from a brain aneurysm. Before she died, my brother said she was never the same. He kept saying that she was crying. You could see that all the joy had left her face when she had to face that. After my mom passed, Jane and Trethewey was still an integral part of us, because she was well known to everyone as ‘granny.’ There was always a Granny. Granny, granny. And everybody knew her. So, when she died, they closed the buildings. She was in the ICU. The guys from the hood lined up, and the hospital staff had said “we don't usually allow this.” But they couldn't say no, because there was these young Black men crying, lining up to look at their granny for the last time.

3.4.2 York University

I was always a writer. As a child, I always wrote poetry, and I was really in touch with my creative side. When I came to Canada. It was [the] early 70s. You know, it was still very white. And the only Black bookstore was on Bathurst, I think they have a chair in front of Bathurst subway, for that for those couple that had that Black bookstore, and I used to go

there and hang out. They were so generous. The husband and wife who owned it gave me my first book of poetry. Alice Walker's ‘Good night, Willie Lee, I'll see you in the morning.’ I'll never forget that, I still have it. And that made me want to write. I applied to York, I applied to McMaster, and York accepted me. Out of 175 for the creative writing program, I think they only picked 25, and I was one of two Black people. The other guy, he didn't live it out. The teachers were good, but there was such instances of racism. They'd have events and they wouldn't invite me. So, I'd go to class the next day and everybody talking about oh so much fun at such and such house and I'd be like, “Okay, wow.”

this is the early 2000s. Because of what happened my son it that really gives you more to write and I just kept writing I didn't tell a lot of people what happened with my son. I didn't share it, but I lived it, right? That was that was really integral for me that being here and living. Because I stayed in Hamilton for the first year or two while you're going to York and there wasn't any subway or go bus then, girl. You had to come to Bay Street and take the bus up and come around, but I did it. I kind of lived at the Centre for Women and Trans People, because they supported me. I could stay overnight if I had late classes like back-to-back. I also worked in the bookstore. It was awesome! Because they accepted me. So it wasn't everywhere in York that you had this deep-seated racism.

I remember in my creative writing class there was a young man, he was going to read this part of his story, but he didn't really want to read it. And the professor was like, “no, no, go ahead, read it.” He's like, “but it's not really politically correct.” And he was looking around… We had to take from a writer that influenced us and write like that writer, so he had chosen a Southern writer that writes really prolifically. But she uses the N word a lot. I chose Toni Morrison. And then he started reading and “da da da da da nigger, da da da da da nigger,” and I was like, wow, because people looked away. Nobody looked at me. When the

prof looked at me, I looked at her and I looked at him and I got up and I left the class. I had a friend [who teaches here]. I went to her and told her and she helped me write a formal complaint, and it never got anywhere. Never got anywhere.

That was like so shocking, but it didn't impede my wanting to write. It just made me realize that, you know, this is gonna be really difficult to manoeuvre. But I'm gonna stick it out. the other guy, the other Black guy, he didn't finish, I think he went to Seneca to study screenwriting instead. Yeah, I still see him around campus. I think he was working at [the] archives. But it was awful to think that I would sit in the classroom in the 2000's at York University and hear that word. And I think the prof tried to apologize. Other students left as well, I left after the third N word. It stayed with me.

I stayed in the class. I proved myself and the prof was always counteracting stuff. We had an assignment about the first lines of a of a book, I picked Toni Morrison…. she spoke like lividly about why she wrote The Bluest Eye, [it] was because this poor little Black girl wanted to have blue eyes because she thought she'd be better off in the world. And this woman, this educated professor, had the nerve to say, she didn't like Toni Morrison, because writers shouldn't write about themselves. And that was like, you must be kidding. Because this is an is taken from a book of essays that she wrote. Toni Morrison explicitly talked about why she wrote The Bluest Eye, because those are important texts for us, as people of colour. Those are important texts for little Black girls and remember that end to Ntozake Shange's "For Coloured Girls who have considered suicide." For me, they were the most moving texts that I could have read. It made me such an active pro-Black person. And I beat it into my children, I used to buy them T-shirts that said "two Black and strong," like two Black kids, strong, accept your own and when they had poetry things at school, I'd send them reading Nikki Giovanni and 'Black like me.'

before my son got in trouble, there was a Black professor at York. He had a program back then, for young Black males. Nobody did shit like that. And I remember bringing the boys here. And it was way over there beside the law school, and they were talking to them [and I was] thinking “frig, I need to come to this university.” But then after that, I think it was maybe two years after that my son got in trouble. But this place has stayed an integral part of who I am.

The first telling of my story was to my friend, [who is a prominent Black writer]. And it was just in the basketball court. They were having an event there. And I was I just met her and I'm like, Yeah, you know, I'm studying writing here. And you know how to write a book about this and that and then she's like, “What are you writing about?” I noticed she was sad too. She had just lost her daughter to suicide. She told me that she also writes. One of her books is used here to teach, she’s an important black writer from that era, as early as the late 70s, early 80s. These were the activists that would be at Christie Pits protesting, Makeda Silvera, Dionne Brand, Lillian Allen. Their names were known for protesting. I was talking to [this writer], and I'm like, “Yeah, my son.” And she's like, “well, I just lost my daughter.” And that's how we became friends. And I spoke to her a couple of days ago. You know, she's still writing.

I think a lot of people felt that I made the shit up. Like they felt like I wasn't authentic. And I didn't think I had to prove myself. I had profs that I’d see around, and I tried to talk to them about it, but nobody wants to hear my story, it was too real. It was too real for them to realize except for Makeda Silvera and Dion Brand, who was like really motivating. Dion Brand kept saying to me “Charlyn, come do your master’s.” But I couldn't tell her that I didn't finish my BA. I was short one course. it was my first year. Science. I failed that bad boy three times. My brain is not a science brain. My brain is creative. But you have to have the science as part

of your first year. I took three different courses. One was that astrology because I thought, oh, I've always loved the moons and the stars. Failed that two times. After the third, I'm like, Okay, that's it. So that's what's holding me back from my degree.

But yeah. I was in school because I thought “I’m gonna keep my boys together.” You know, I'm gonna just make everything good. And I'm just gonna keep educating myself. And I did. I did. I just kept at it. I wouldn't let anything stop me. “I'm gonna finish” sounds like two diplomas and a degree and a half. But it was worth it, influenced them into seeing that there's more.

I’m writing a book right now. The idea was that the letters over the years between me and my eldest, I would incorporate and piece in between journal entries, because I journal, that was a survival thing, still is. I realized that that kind of writing it was really done in the 12th and 13th centuries, where people would write letters, and they became stories, there was a few histories of that. And I thought that would be so profoundly connected for me, because our letters were like his lifeline. Some of his letters are profound. I call it “Letters Between a Mother and Her Son.”

3.4.3 Ethiopian Orthodox Church

I go to the Ethiopian Orthodox church, to the English-speaking church we rent. We go to Jane and Bloor on Saturdays, but on Sundays, I'll go worship with Ethiopians. I've always been conscious of faith, but I don't really respect like, the missionary. I love to see the closeness in church and the singing, but hearing somebody telling me how he needs a new pair of shoes or the car needs fixing. Like, I didn't get that and this ‘peeking out of spirits.’ And I'm like, Nah, that was so spooky for me. It's just like, Okay, let's settle down. Tell me to read something or a study. I was always a studier of the Bible. And my children remember that. Because that's one thing they all got when they could read, a bible. Physically and historically, this is part of

our history as Jamaicans, right? Because we all came from some parts of Africa and was sent out into the West Indies. That's why I wanted to learn about Orthodoxy. My priest even met my son, and eventually drove up to the prison to see him. I've been baptized since three years now, four years. My eldest son was on the verge of being baptized. But now he's having a little conflict because part of the Ethiopian Orthodox religion, they fast, more than any other faiths, so 259 days. Every Wednesday and Friday are fast days, except for this period here, because we just finished the great length fast, which was fifty-five days. So from now till I think for the next 50 days, we don't fast. But when it ends, we go back to fasting every Wednesday and Friday. So no dairy, no eggs, no meat. My son had to have this diet. Every institution that he went to, it was always conflicting, you know, to have the priest write in and say, yes, he's of this faith, and this is his diet. So he's had some conflict with that because he gets moved around. And every institution you go to there's another chapter in where you have to get the letter sent. He wasn't baptized. But he's going to be eventually, I hope.

I have a counsellor off Trethewey. she's not Black, and there are things I can't tell her. I think, the last few years. It's really been the priests. Because there's this real sense of joining Orthodoxy. Priests are not like your regular pastors, and they go through like, a tremendous amount of training. They don't just wake up one day and say I've been touched. Some of them are monk priests. That means they leave their life and go live in the desert.

it's not a faith you wake up and join, you live it. You live that faith every day. You live the faith because you're continually tied to your history to your relationship spiritually and physically because of the fasting and mentally to and it's really been healing because I can tell my priests things that I could not say to anybody, and I didn't have to worry. Yeah, that's, you know, it's comforting. And I have a family now. And my granddaughter comes to church and they're like "who else brings her granddaughter church," and everybody wants to know

“where's your granddaughter?” She comes in and the priests love her because she's just so, you know. So cute.

3.4.4 Emmet Community Garden

Since 2008, it’s now 2022, and I'm still connected to the garden. I was there yesterday. That's where I still eat from really well. Now I'm trying to make it a BIPOC space. I've gotten grants to hire BIPOC, and still they're struggling with the racism. It's called Emmet community garden. It's at Eglinton and Emmet. And you're going to come visit when we start planting and see what a lovely community it is now. It's just adults, not as cold, and mostly by BIPOC. I was reading a letter I'd written about the garden, we're always being challenged, every year. It's like what Toni Morrison says, and I keep repeating that in my mind. We're always being asked to explain who we are and why we're here. I remember going through Toni Morrison's quote and seeing that quote, talking about you know, how, what racism does, what it instils in you, it actually makes you pause because we're always having to stop and explain who we are. So, our brilliance or greatness, you know, like, never comes out. It's never realized because we're still having to explain. ‘So why are you, a Black woman, at that garden?’

This one European man who's still trying to get back into the garden this year, by the way, asked me “why are you telling me that I can't garden here. I'm gonna call the City.” I'm like, “Okay, go ahead, call the City. This is the department that controls this garden.” He calls that department and of course… the head of that [is] Nigerian. So, then he comes back to the garden, he didn't know how connected I was to the garden, and saw the white [gardeners] and he's like “I called the city and they can’t help because the guy in the city, he's one of them.”

The gardeners told him “Go ahead. Call everyone because you’re not coming in here.” So, this year again, he wrote the City. And he's still trying to get back in the garden. Like we have

pictures of him. Yeah, videos of him at the fence, saying things like “all I have to do is just put some money on the table and have you just dancing for me!” And we're like, wow.

He didn't understand that we don't have individual plots. I made it communal. Because it was so isolating when they had the individual plots, and there was the most racism. Because all this time I'm working through with the garden, they were like, “This is my space,” a bigger space like that. And they'd see me and ask who are you? And I'm like, Well, I'm actually the coordinator of the garden. Another lady who worked there was like, “surely we can’t pay you enough for this.” I'm like, “No, but guess what? I'm not going anywhere. I'm still there.” The garden is an integral part of my life. Yeah, I'm fighting for that space.

3.5 Themes:

Below, three common themes across the walking interviews are explored to highlight commonalities in the socio-spatial experiences of Black women in the Jane and Finch community. The first theme is hyper geography, in which Black women must consistently move locations due to financial hardships, displacement, and to escape violent situations. The next theme is carving pockets of Black joy, in which Black women create spaces where they can experience joy. Finally, the theme of resisting white supremacy in space is explored, where Black women actively engage in resistance in hegemonic spaces.

3.5.1 Theme 1: Hyper Geography

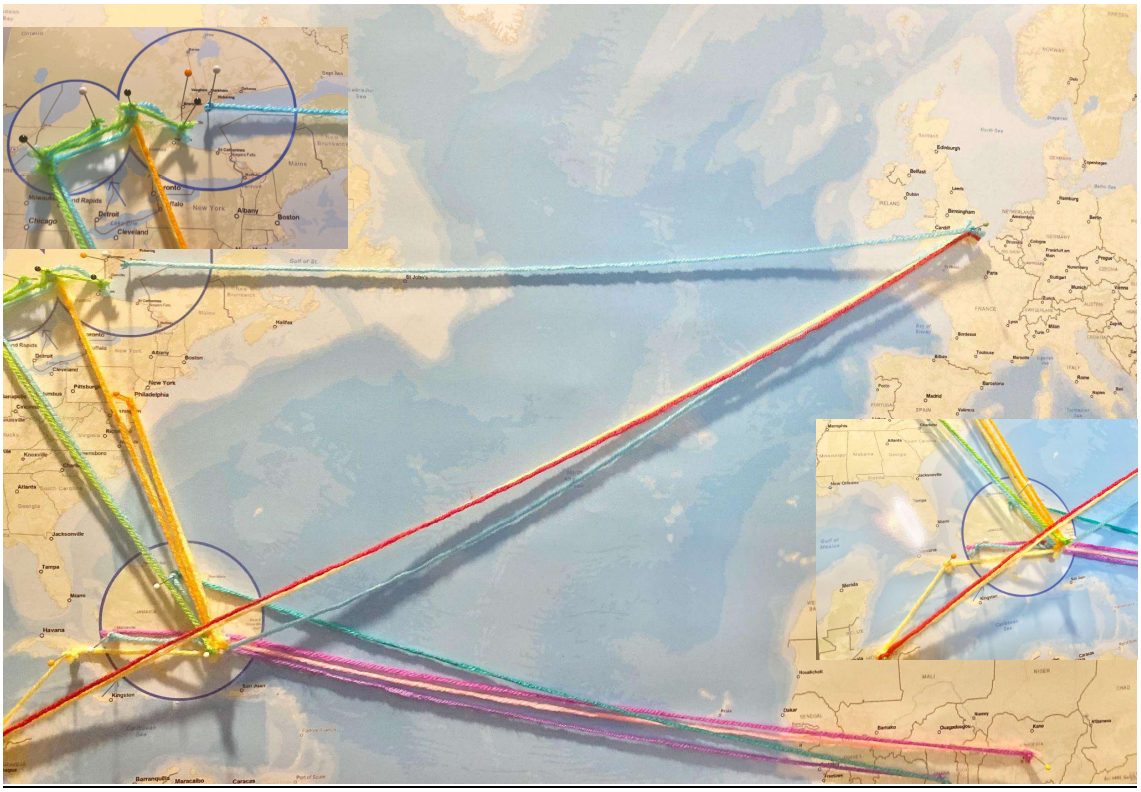

Figure 3: Hyper Geography Woven through Space, by Bria Hamilton

In section one, I described hyper-geography as a disposition " [where] Blackness is embedded in a multitude of geographies across the world." To exemplify this, I have used yarn to weave my family's history across space and time (Figure 3). The yarn is colour-coded by generation, beginning with lineage stolen from Africa and forced into the Americas during the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The history and geographies prior to more recent generations are lost and will likely never be recovered.

The yarn begins weaving again between one hundred and thirty to four hundred years later, depending on when my ancestral line reached Jamaica, and maps where my grandparents and their siblings resided. I then mapped my parents generation, followed by myself and my siblings. The yarn weaves into and around Jamaica; Toronto, Brampton, Mississauga,

Chatham, and Pickering, Ontario; London, UK; Cuba; Honduras; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and the United States. I am aware that I switch between naming cities, regions, and countries. This is due to the lost histories that have died with family members. While the map shows location and relative timelines based on generations, it doesn't share the complete stories woven into the landscapes. The hyper-geography has been caused by movement due to financial constraints, looking for new or better job opportunities, deportation, and efforts to reunite geographically distant family members. It also doesn't show when family members were left behind, a common experience in my family when parents and partners moved first to better the chances of getting citizenship for the rest of the family.

Three out of the four interviewees indicated a experiencing a state of hyper-geography, consistent movement and displacement that writes their histories into a multitude of geographies, caused by their socio-economic disposition. During her interview, Adanna discussed constant movement between Ontario and Southern Nigeria during her childhood. She had gone to boarding school there, and welcomed the movement as it allowed her to be removed from an abusive home situation for part of the year. Adanna would come back to Ontario every winter and summer. As an adult, Adanna moved to Jane and Finch for school and with the hopes of finding a community of BIPOC folks, Black women in particular. Since arriving, Adanna has moved several times due to the precarity of housing in Toronto. Currently, she is hoping to move to midtown and gain more housing permanence once she finds a job with a higher income. Her home now is a rooming house, and is not covered by the Residential Tenancies Act. Brittany has had a very similar Toronto experience to Adanna and is also hoping to move once her income increases.

Alternatively, Charlyn was born in Jane and Finch and spent much of her life in the community. She first moves from Jane and Finch to Oakville in 1989 with her family to buy

an affordable home. After experiencing extensive racism from her neighbours, including false police reports, the use of racial slurs, and even burning a cross in front of her home, Charlyn moved back to Jane and Finch to be near her community. When her sons began to get into legal trouble, prior to her eldest son's final incarceration, Charlyn sent her eldest to Jamaica for several years in the hopes that she would see a change in his behaviour. After her eldest returned to Canada, Charlyn separated from her abusive partner and moved to Brampton, once again because housing was more affordable. She later returned to Jane and Finch, where she had a connection to the community. Once her eldest son was incarcerated for first degree murder, Charlyn moved with her younger two sons to Hamilton, hoping that a change of community would help her other two sons stay out of trouble. Hamilton also had the added advantages of more affordable housing and being closer to the prison her eldest son was in. Charlyn's sons are now all adults, and she has moved back to Jane and Finch, where she feels she has the largest community connection.

In each instance, the socio-economic conditions of the participants drove their hyper-geographic states. The reasons interviewees consistently moved included reasons such as a desire for community connection (particularly the search for a community that is understanding of the racialized and gendered experiences the interviewees have had), housing precarity and affordability, and removing themselves from abusive living situations. For planners, identifying ways in which Black women are socio-spatially marginalized can provide opportunities for planning to be used to combat this marginalization. Access to affordable housing, infrastructure that facilitates community-building, and resources for people experiencing intimate partner violence are all ways in which these socio-spatial marginalizations can be addressed.

3.5.2 Theme 2 Carving Pockets of Black Joy / Blackening Space

Figure 4: Carving out Spaces for Black Joy Part 1, by Bria Hamilton

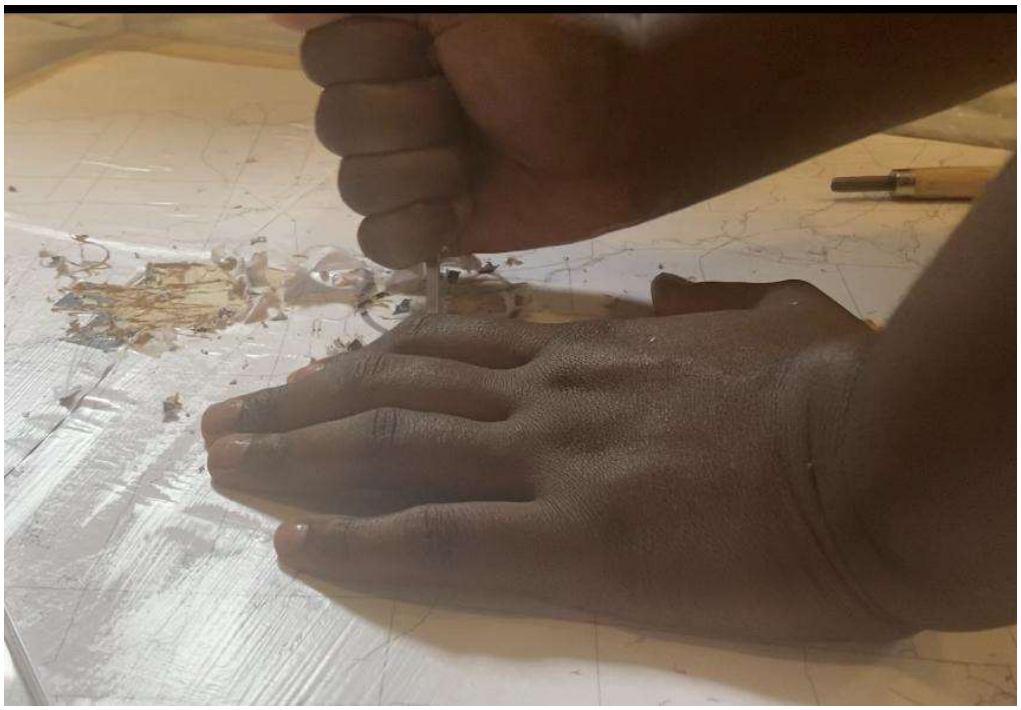

Figure 5: Carving out Spaces for Black Joy Part 2, by Bria Hamilton

Figure 6: Carving out Spaces for Black Joy Part 3, by Bria Hamilton

Carving out spaces of joy describes the process of Blackening, which is the racialization of space led and defined by Black people (Walcott, 2003), specifically for the purpose of creating spaces where Black people experience joy. In the above vignette (Figures 4 to 6), a

white map was plastered onto a piece of wood with the locations where walking interviewees experienced joy marked off. I then used a wood working knife to carve out these spaces before filling them in with black paint to symbolize the Blackening of space. The carving was also a laborious process, as is creating spaces of Black Joy in the context of a white supremacist society.

Analysis: each of the interviewees speak to spaces that bring them joy. Carving out pockets of Black Joy is a process of Blackening space in which the spaces are particularly created for Black joy, comrodery, and leisure. Contrary to dominant spaces where participants discuss feeling othered, experiencing misogynoir, and unsafety, Pockets of Black Joy are unique spaces where Blackness is centred and normalized, and Black participants in these spaces are able to temporarily prioritize joy over consistent racial terror in hegemonic, euro-centric spaces.

Adanna and Brittany refer to the Finch Hydro Corridor Recreational Trail, which they both use for exercise. Describing the trail, Brittany says “It's a very peaceful walk, I get to see nature, see different animals.” Adanna enjoys that she sees many BIPOC folks walking along the path as well, and that it feels safer that way.

Charlyn references the Ethiopian church she attends and the garden she works in as such spaces. On the church, Charlyn states “it's really been healing because I can tell my priests things that I could not take to anybody, and I didn't have to worry. Yeah, that's, you know, it's… comforting. And I have a family now.” She also describes the garden as an “integral” part of her life.

Pockets of Black joy experience constant threats from eurocentric constructs and institutions. Adanna and Brittany both expressed feeling unsafe on the trail after a certain time. The space

where Youffa danced, at the time we had attempted to visit it, was closed for reasons unclear. Charlyn described several attempts from a white community member to usurp her power as an employee of the garden and question her presence in the space. Pockets of Black joy subvert power dynamics that whiteness continually works to reclaim, and maintaining these spaces requires consistent work from Black people to maintain these spaces.

3.5.3 Theme 3: Resistance in Hegemonic Spaces

Figure 7: The Burning of Montreal, By Bria Hamilton

Marie-Joseph Angélique was an enslaved Black woman who lived in Montreal in the 1720s to early 1730s (Cooper, 2014). In December of 1733, Angélique asked her enslaver, Therese de Couagne Francheville, for her freedom. Francheville refused, and Angélique was said to have gone on a "small reign of terror," threatening Francheville and other members of the

household with roasting and burning (Cooper, 2014). In early 1734, Angélique was sold and expected to be transported along the St Lawrence River and eventually to the Caribbean once the weather was warmer (Cooper, 2014). In response to this, Angélique allegedly burned down her home and attempted to flee Montreal to Portugal, where she was born, with her French-born partner Claude Thibault. Angélique and Thibault were found two weeks later in a nearby town (Cooper, 2014).

On Saturday April 10, 1734, a fire spread throughout Montreal's Merchant's Corner, destroying homes, the convent, and the Montreal's first hospital, the Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal (Cooper, 2014). Angélique was accused of setting the fire and arrested the following day. Twenty-three people testified that they believed she had set the fire during the proceeding trial (Cooper, 2014). She was sentenced to torture and death by hanging and was hung on June 21, 1734.

It is unknown whether Marie-Joseph Angélique actually set the fire or not, but the Burning of Montreal and her accusation have become a symbol of resistance and freedom (Cooper, 2014). To create this vignette (Figure 7), I used a lighter to burn the relative location of where the Burning of Montreal occurred. The map represents the destruction and altering of space as a means of Black resistance. It represents the historic disjuncture between lawfulness and personhood for Black people, where both could not be maintained simultaneously.

Representations of this disjuncture between abiding laws and maintaining personhood were persistant throughout the interviews. Maintaining safety and a sense of self required resistance in hegemonic spaces in several of the interviews.

In Brittany's interview, she stated "I found myself, even though I'm not supposed to, like bringing like a kitchen knife if I'm walking at night because I just don't know. Like, I know I'm not supposed to do such but it's just the experiences I've had in this neighborhood is not

good." Feeling unsafe, particularly in regard to sexual violence, led Brittany to begin carrying a knife with her in her community, despite the possible legal trouble she could face if she were to be found with a weapon. Brittany's confession about carrying a weapon illegally is indicative the choices Black women must make between maintaining lawfulness or personhood in hegemonic spaces. She carries a weapon in the hopes that she is able to remain safe if she were to be confronted with racialized and gendered violence, and prioritizes maintaing safety, agency, and personhood by fighting off potential assailants over maintaining the laws that govern hegemonic spaces.

Similarly, Charlyn discusses the Tretheway community's response to the shooting of Todd Baylis. "Tod Baylis' partner came and looked around and stood over Clinton and went to shoot him. The whole high rise, 710 and 720 Trethewey, were yelling "don't shoot!" and people started throwing stuff down." From their balconies, community members threw items at a police officer, despite the potential legal issues that could arise or a violent response from the officer. Charlyn described this act of community resistance as heroic and life saving for Clinton Gayle. Contrarily, dominant discourses described Gayle as a "cop killer" (CBC News, 2001) and a "gun-toting crack dealer" (Douglas, 2019). Many of these discourses also positioned the shooting as an immigration issue, with one article stating that Gayle eluding his 1991 deportation order due to his file being lost by the Canadian Immigration Department "[compounded] the grief over Baylis's death" (Maclean's, 1994). Despite the depiction in dominant narratives of Clinton Gayle as a villain, community members worked to protect him and prevent a potential instance of police brutality against a Black person. A recent report by the Human Rights Commission of Ontario found that Black people represent seventy percent of deaths caused by police shootings in Toronto (2020), while only representing about eight percent of Toronto's population (StatsCan, 2016), a statistic that only cements what Black communities have already known and spoken about regarding Anti-Black fueled police

brutality. With this knowledge, Trethewey residents resisted another potential instance of a Black person dying via police shooting.

Part 4: Counter Cartographies in Jane and Finch

The Jane and Finch Counter Cartographies Workshop was held with the goal of utilizing a counter-mapping tool created with Survey123 in conjunction with ArcGIS Dashboards for equitable community engagement. The workshop was held at the Earlyon Centre at Jane and Finch Mall. The workshop had seventeen participants, the majority of whom were between the ages of 25 and 44 (Figure 8, Table 1). Most participants were visible minorities (Figure 9, Table 2), with the largest communities self-identifying as Asian (52.63%) and Black (31.58%). The majority of participants, 89.47%, were women (Figure 10, Table 3). About 21% of participants identified as persons with disabilities (Figure 11, Table 4). Almost half of participants have lived in the community for over ten years, and about 42% are newer arrivals to the community who have lived in Jane and Finch for five years or less (Figure 12, Table 5).

Participants were asked to use computers set up in the space to explore the mapping tool. The mapping tool begins by asking demographics questions such as age, race, ethnicity, and culture, housing tenure, occupation, and disability. Participants are then prompted to pick a period in time, past, present, or future, that they would like to describe using the mapping tool. Tying the temporal aspect to the questions will help to contextualize the stories or ideas being told. The past can reveal the roots of participants, lost or forgotten stories, or aspects of their community that no longer exist, and whether this lack of existence had a positive or negative impact on their lives. The present can help planners to understand how community members view their community currently. The present interpretation members have of their communication can highlight the essential components of their community that should be

preserved or expanded upon or reveal areas where there needs to be improvement. Lastly, the future can provide perspectives on whether community members feel safety, stability, and longevity in their community. The ideas and hopes community members have for the future of their community provide planners with an understanding of the trajectory their decisions should have.

Participants can then either type in an address, intersection, or the name of the location they wish to describe, or click a point to drop a pin on the map (Figure 13). Participants can then name the location they are describing, add additional written details, and/or a photo. Below is a summary of the results for each period in time.

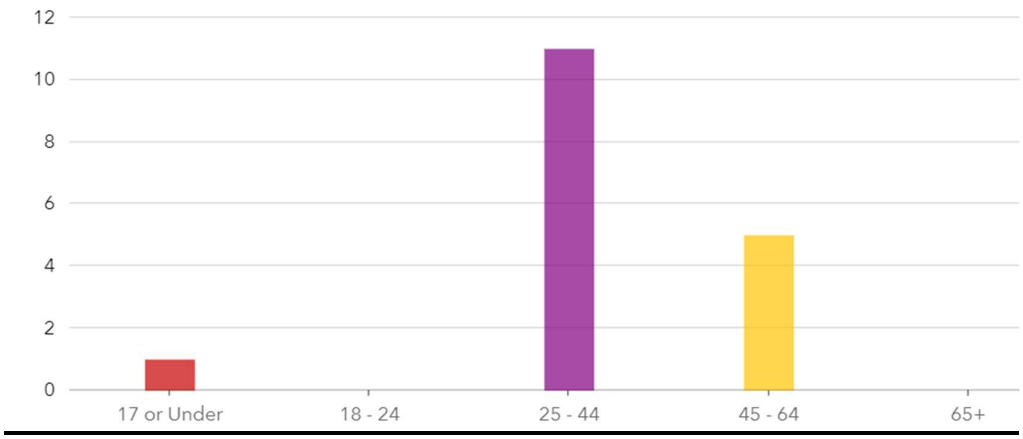

Figure 8: Age

Answers	Count	Percentage
17 or Under	1	5.88%
18 - 24	0	0%
25 - 44	11	64.71%
45 - 64	5	29.41%
65+	0	0%

Table 1: Age

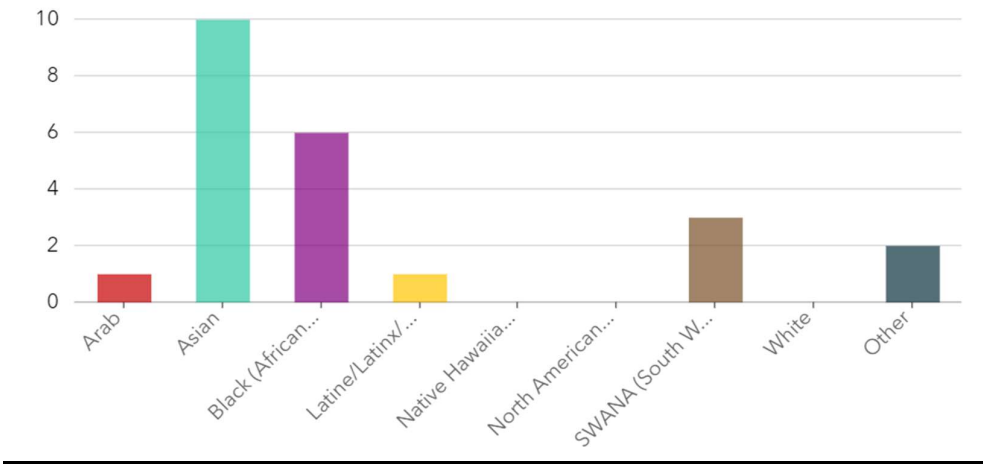

Figure 9: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture

Answers	Count	Percentage
Arab	1	5.26%
Asian	10	52.63%
Black (African or Caribbean descent)	6	31.58%
Latine/Latinx/Latin American	1	5.26%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0	0%
North American Indigenous	0	0%
SWANA (South West Asian and Northern African) / Middle Eastern	3	15.79%
White	0	0%
Other	2	10.53%

Table 2: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture

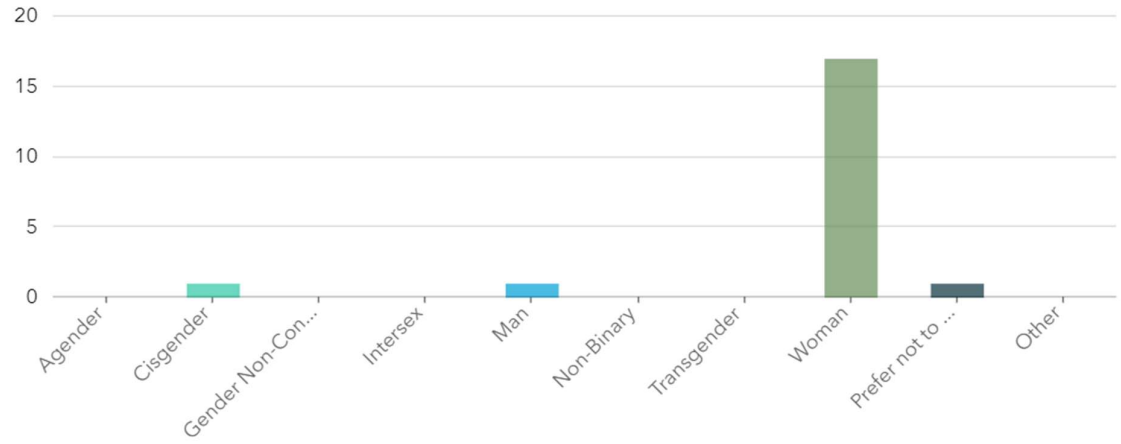

Figure 10: Gender

Answers	Count	Percentage
Agender	0	0%
Cisgender	1	5.26%
Gender Non-Conforming	0	0%
Intersex	0	0%
Man	1	5.26%
Non-Binary	0	0%
Transgender	0	0%
Woman	17	89.47%
Prefer not to answer	1	5.26%
Other	0	0%

Table 3: Gender

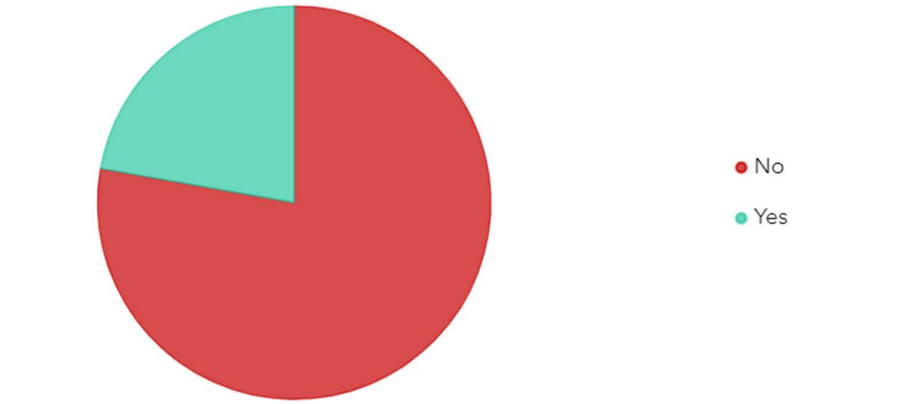

Figure 11: Disability

Answers	Count	Percentage
No	14	73.68%
Yes	4	21.05%

Table 4: Disability

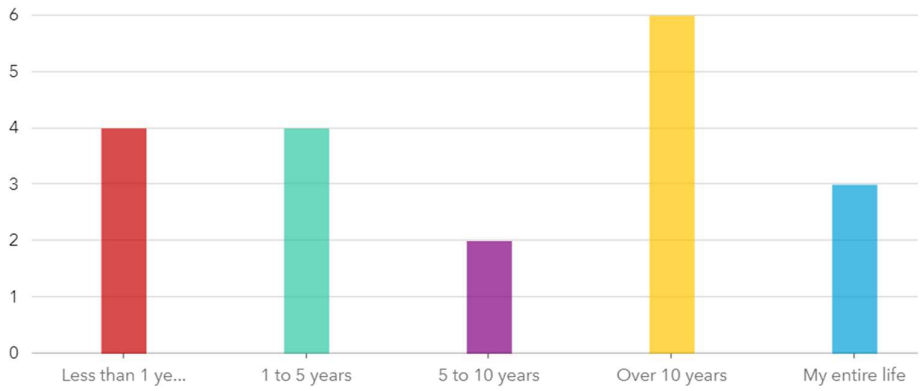

Figure 12: Length of Time in the Jane and Finch Community

Answers	Count	Percentage
Less than 1 year	4	21.05%
1 to 5 years	4	21.05%
5 to 10 years	2	10.53%
Over 10 years	6	31.58%
My entire life	3	15.79%

Table 5: Length of Time in the Jane and Finch Community

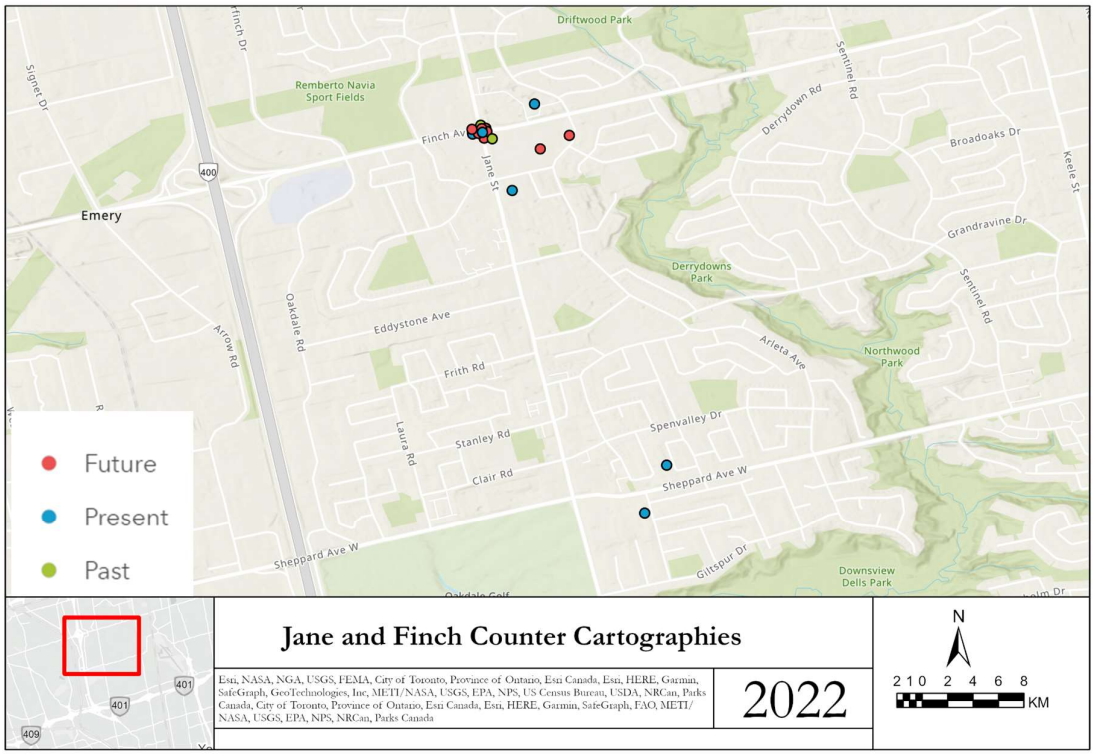

Figure 13: Jane and Finch Counter Cartographies Map

4.1 Past

Out of the eighteen participants, only two (11.76%) chose to discuss their past experiences in or knowledge held in the Jane and Finch community. Both participants discussed finding community and understanding in Jane and Finch, and the positive influence this had on their

lives (Table 6). One quote relates this to their experiences as an early childhood educator who arrived in the community less than five years ago. They explain how their job in a central part of the community helped them build connections and learn about the people they work with. The second discusses growing up in the community and the changes they have seen with increased programming and resources.

Theme	Quote	Location
Community Building	This is the place where I began to be part of this community. I have met a lot of families and wonderful people that have changed my perspective and have provided a sense of gratitude.	Jane and Finch Mall
Community and Resources	Since I am a youth and since I seen and witnessed everything while being a active youth in my community I have seen a lot of changes within my whole community as there are so many helpful and needing recourses for the community for the youth childs care services and adults itself!	Jane and Finch Community

Table 6: Narratives of the Past in Jane and Finch

4.2 Present

Six participants (about 35% of the participants) chose to discuss the present state of their community. In their responses, participants predominantly discussed their homes, the Earlyon Centre and other community programs, and the community broadly (Table 7). Common themes included a sense of community or belonging, access to resources through community programming, safety and cleanliness.

Theme	Quote	Location
Community/Belonging	“I feel safe and know my neighbours. There are a lot of people with the same background who share the same language (Sri Lankin). The neighbour’s opposite and across are all part of the same community.”	5 San Romanoway
	“My neighbourhood is called "maze" because it is a collection of townhouses that are difficult to navigate if you are not from the neighbourhood.”	1901 Sheppard Avenue west
	“It was my community and lots of friends there and memories”	jane and sheppard
Resources and Programs	“Shopping centre which has all type of shops. Also, there is a centre called early on in the same mall, they are conducting baby programs and other special programs for pregnant women and babies.”	Jane and Finch Mall
	“There is a clean park. I would like to see more parks in the future.”	5 San Romanoway

	“People say Jane and Finch is a bad community, but I think if you're looking for programs, especially children's programs, we have lots of them. People just have to use them. People are unaware of them. I live opposite 15 tobermory. We had a program there that people didn't want to come to because of a bad reputation. There needs to be more awareness, how good the programs are.”	Jane and Finch Community Centre
	“The area has seen a lot of change over the year - there has been a lot of change in the mall and sector- the community has seen alot of engagement”	2999 JANE STREET
Safety and Cleanliness	“The condo is very clean and has laundry in the place. I feel safe and know my neighbours.”	5 San Romanoway
	“Everywhere has bad people, bad things, but compared to back home we have a lot of things.”	Jane and Finch Community Centre

Table 7: Visualizing the Present in Jane and Finch

4.3 Future

The majority of participants, 52.94%, chose to describe their future predictions or desires for the community using the mapping tool. Most participants describing the future of Jane and Finch described the community broadly, rather than their predictions or desire for more specific locations or addresses (Table 8). The participants who chose to describe existing locations discussed the Jane and Finch Mall, where the workshop was taking place.

Theme	Quote	Location
Resources	"I heard of good things that are going to happen in the hub as the jane and finch community is getting really good!"	Jane and Finch Mall and Yorkgate Mall
	"Clean and beautiful environment around the Jane & Finch Mall."	
	"I would like more hospitals, schools, playgrounds, banks, grocery stores, doctors"	Jane and Finch Community
	"Community get togethers, things for the kids."	

	“Lots of green space, playground, water park ,petting zoo, hill for snow tubing skiing and outdoor ice skating rink, petting zoo outdoor gardens, indoor gardens”	
Infrastructure	“I want a new house. we're okay moving anywhere.”	Jane and Finch Community
	“I think there will be more houses, more cars”	
	“Bridges for cars to drive above and reduce traffic. There's so many accidents .”	
Sense of Self/Community	“a place where there is no longer a stigma or negative feelings towards this area.”	Jane and Finch Community
	“More connectivity.”	

Table 8: Hopes and Expectations for the Future in Jane and Finch

Through this workshop, I identified several additional themes relating to the ways in which community members interact with Jane and Finch. Across all temporalities, community building and connections were highlighted as an important component in the Jane and Finch community that needs to continually be fostered through destigmatizing the community, providing opportunities for connectivity, and supporting existing relationships. Resources were also mentioned in all three temporalities, with some participants highlighting the existing resources, while some are hoping to gain more community resources in the future. In the present temporality, safety and cleanliness were seen as positive aspects of the Jane and Finch community. In the future temporality, changes to the community such as an increase in affordable housing, more green space, and infrastructure for increased pedestrian safety were all mentioned as future desires for the community.

Part 5: Conclusion

Blackening the City: Counter Cartographies as a Tool for Community Planning provided two key methodologies for community engagement that can provide planners with insight into the histories, knowledges, needs, and desires held in the communities they work with. The methodologies used were: 1) walking interviews with a specific goal of engaging with a heavily marginalized community, Black women; and 2) a workshop that engaged community members in general in the use of a non-prescriptive community map to document the ideas, views, and knowledges held in Jane and Finch.

The first methodology, walking interviews, is a one-on-one interview in which the interviewee takes the researcher or planner to significant locations in their community. For marginalized communities in particular, having the agency to choose what is important and significant in their community, as opposed to these locations being decided by the researcher or planner, can feel empowering (Holgersson, 2017). Black women in particular were highlighted for this methodology, to gauge the thematic spatial relations of a group that experiences intersectional marginalization in hegemonic spaces. The themes derived from these interviews were Hyper Geography, in which Black people experience consistent uprooting and have their histories embedded in a multitude of places; Carving Spaces for Black Joy, in which Black people must consistently create spaces in which we can experience joy and where Blackness is normalized; and Resistance in Hegemonic Spaces, wherein Black people must actively resist anti-Blackness and oppression in the majority of spaces where whiteness is normalized. This methodology is quite useful to planners for identifying spatial inequalities experienced at the intersection of racialization and sexism, while providing a space for historically marginalized people to feel self-empowered. One major caveat of this methodology is that due to the interviews being one-on-one, they take a lot of allocated time. As well, without enough participants, themes derived from these interviews may not adequately represent the community.

The second methodology had a goal of using the lessons learned from the walking interview to gain a similar deep understanding of community experiences and how they are shaped by identity through an online tool that can reach a larger number of people while potentially gaining similar rich knowledge. The community map for this methodology was created with ArcGIS software, and was used to collect and spatially represent the stories, knowledge, ideas, and desires participants have for their community. Jane and Finch community members

participated in a mapping workshop where they learned how to use the mapping tool and were asked to input geographic points with descriptions of important locations in their community. Participants were asked to describe past histories and features in their community, the present state of their community, or their future predictions or desires for their communities. Themes found through the Community Map methodology included Community, Belonging, and Sense of Self; Community Resources and Programs; Safety and Cleanliness; and Infrastructure. While this methodology was able to capture and easily display the spatial distribution of qualitative community data, it posed several caveats. Firstly, many participants struggle with the digital literacy required to use an online mapping tool. Providing an accessible alternative for community members who are unable to access or use this tool would be necessary to reach, engage, and understand a plethora of community members. Secondly, proximity to and specificity of the spaces being discussed are essential in receiving rich data. During the walking interviews, physically being in the spaces we explored provided participants with visual and tangible evocations of their experiences, stories, and knowledges of these spaces. During the mapping workshop, the lack of specificity and physical connections to spaces led to participants describing the current spaces we were in (the Jane and Finch Mall), their homes (potentially due to this being a space they are most familiar with), or the community at large (speaking broadly to what they would like to see in the community without specific sites in mind). This could be quite helpful to planners looking to implement the needs of community members broadly, but would require the addition of site-specific consultations for specific buildings, roads, and other infrastructural community components.

From both the walking interviews and community mapping workshop, several important components for effective and deep community engagement became clear. Firstly, cultural competence, which was first used to discuss patient care in the medical field and is described as contextualizing engagement in the linguistic, socio-environmental, and cultural disposition of participants (Martinez & Peréa, 2012), is integral to deep community engagement. During the walking interviews, as a Black woman, I had the language and cultural understanding necessary to engage with the interviewees and gain a deep understanding of their socio-spatial relationships with the Jane and Finch community. During the workshop, there were some language barriers between myself and some of the participants, and perhaps additional cultural customs for engagement that I was unaware of. In creating engagement events, planners must research the community or space they will be running the events with, to

ensure they have engagement facilitators with the cultural competence to effectively run the sessions. Secondly, accessibility to engagement tools must be considered for deep community engagement. For use of digital tools such as the ArcGIS community map I created should have alternatives such as facilitators who can help participants use the tool or pen and paper counter-mapping options to ensure participants who lack the digital literacy for online tools are still able to engage. Accessibility considerations can also include providing honoraria, food, and transportation to participants, having multiple engagement opportunities at different times to engage with people with different schedules, and hosting engagement opportunities in physically accessible spaces. As mentioned above, physical proximity to the spaces being discussed in community engagement sessions can help provide participants with the soci-spatial context of the location to ensure a deeper understanding of how changes to the location can positively or negatively impact their communities. Lastly, engagement with communities should be intentional and exist at multiple stages throughout planning processes. This is to ensure that planners have a holistic understanding of the communities they serve, as well as consistently reflect on the planning decisions they propose and how these decisions impact community members.

Considerations of the impacts of these decisions are especially relevant for the most marginalized community members. Planners must actively work against reproducing white supremacist, sexist, Queerphobic, and ableist socio-spatial systems to create more equitable communities. Using a Black Feminist lens for planning and community engagement is a method for planners to effectively counter these hegemonic systems that oppress marginalized communities. Black women hold intersectional knowledges of oppression that deserve understanding, recognition, addressing, and compensation. Through the interviews and the mapping workshop, participants made the ways in which they invest in, connect with, and shape their communities explicit, despite the oppressive colonial, capitalist, and white supremacist underpinnings of city-building that actively work to thwart their involvement. Planners can be complicit or even agents of this oppression, or they can play an active role in countering it. I see planning as a discipline that can serve communities, rather subjugate them. As such, planners concerned with building vibrant, healthy communities that intentionally foster an environment where all its members can thrive, or plainly, planners who aim to be successful in their discipline, must intentionally seek out the knowledges held by the most marginalized members of their communities.

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